

CHAPTER III

Mortification¹

751. Like penance, mortification has a part in the cleansing from *past faults*, but its chief purpose is to safeguard us against sin in the *present* and in the *future*, by weakening in us the love of pleasure, the source of our sins. We shall, therefore, explain the *nature*, the *necessity* and the *practice* of mortification.

Nature	{	Various names
		Definition
Necessity	{	For salvation
		For perfection
Practice	{	General Principles
		Mortification of the exterior senses
		Mortification of the interior senses
		Mortification of the passions
		Mortification of the higher faculties

ART. I. THE NATURE OF MORTIFICATION

After explaining the *scriptural* and the *modern* terms whereby mortification is designated, we shall give its *definition*.

752. I. Scriptural terms used to designate mortification. In Holy Writ we find seven principal expressions that describe mortification in its different aspects.

¹ The word *renoucement*: "*Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth cannot be my disciple.*"² This presents mortification as a giving up of external goods in order to follow Christ as the Apostles did: "*Leaving all things they followed him.*"³

¹ ST. THOMAS, whose principal texts are quoted by TH. DE VALLGORNERA, *op. cit.*, 9, II, disp. II-IV; PHILIP. A. S. TRINITATE, *op. cit.*, p. P., Tr. II, disc. I-IV; ALVAREZ DE PAZ, t. II, lib. II, *De mortificatione*; SCARAMELLI, *Guide ascétique*, Tr. II, a, 1-6; RODRIGUEZ, *Practice of Christian Perfection*, Part II, Tr. I and II; TRONSON, *Exam. part.*, CXXIX-CLXIX; MGR GAY, *Christian Life and Virtues*, Tr. VII; MEYNAUD, *Tr. de la vie intérieure*, l. I, ch. II-IV; A. CHEVRIER, *Le Véritable disciple*, II^e P., p. 119-323; ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Devout Life*, Part III, C. 23-28, 34; MEYER, *Science of the Saints*, C. 5-7; MATUREN, *Self-Knowledge and Self-Discipline*; MESCHLER, *Three Fundamental Principles of the Spiritual Life*, P. II.

² Luke, XIV, 33. — ³ Luke, V, 11.

² Mortification is likewise an act of *abnegation* or *self-renunciation*: "*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.*"¹

³ But mortification also has a positive aspect: it is an act that maims and cripples the inordinate inclinations of nature: "*Mortify therefore your members*... *But if by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live.*"²

⁴ Nay more, mortification is a *crucifixion* of the flesh and its lusts, whereby we attach, as it were, our faculties to the law of the Gospel by devoting them to prayer and labor: "*They that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences*..."³

⁵ This crucifixion, if it persists, produces a sort of *death* and *burial* whereby we seem to die completely to self and to be buried with Christ, to live with Him a new life: "*For you are dead: and your life is hid with Christ in God*..."⁴ *For we are buried together with him by baptism into death.*"⁵

⁶ To indicate this death, St. Paul makes use of another expression. Since in Baptism a new life is given us, supernatural life, the while our own natural life subsists with the threefold concupiscence, the Apostle, calling the latter the old man and the former regenerated man, declares that we must *put off the old man* and *put on the new*: "*Stripping yourselves of the old man... and putting on the new.*"⁶

⁷ And since this is not done without a struggle, he says that life is a fight: "*I have fought the good fight*"⁷, and that Christians are the athletes who *chastise* their body and bring it into subjection.

From all these and similar phrases it follows that mortification comprises a twofold element: one *negative* — detachment, renunciation, despoilment; the other *positive* — the struggle against the evil tendencies of nature, the effort to curb and deaden them, a crucifixion, a death of the old man and his lusts, in order to live Christ's own life.

753. II. Modern expressions designating mortification. Today milder expressions are preferred which indicate rather the *object* to be attained than the *effort* to be undergone. It is said, for instance, that we must *reform ourselves*, *exercise self-control*, *train the will*, *practice self-discipline*, *turn our soul towards God*. These expressions

¹ Luke, IX, 23. — ² Coloss., III, 5. — ³ Rom., VIII, 13. — ⁴ Galat., V, 24.
⁵ Coloss., III, 3. — ⁶ Rom., VI, 4. — ⁷ 1 Coloss., III, 9-10. — ⁸ 11 Tim., IV, 7.

are exact, provided it is kept in mind that we cannot work out our reform nor master ourselves except by fighting against and mortifying the inordinate tendencies of our nature; that the training of the will is not accomplished without thwarting and curbing our lower faculties; that we cannot direct the course of our life towards God but by detaching ourselves from creatures and stripping ourselves of our vices. In other words, the two aspects of mortification must be duly combined, as is done in Holy Writ: the end to be attained must be kept in view in order to give us courage, but we should not lose sight of the effort necessary to the attainment of this end.

754. III. **Definition.** Mortification, then, may be defined as *the struggle against our evil inclinations in order to subject them to the will, and the will to God.* It is not so much a virtue as an ensemble of virtues — the first degree of all the virtues — which consists in overcoming the obstacles that stand in the way so as to restore to our faculties their lost balance and reestablish among them their right order. Thus it is easily seen that mortification is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. We mortify ourselves only to live a higher life; we despoil ourselves of external goods only the better to lay hold of spiritual goods; we renounce self but to possess God; we struggle but to obtain peace; we die to ourselves but to live the life of Christ, the life of God. Hence, the end of mortification is union with God.

ART. II. THE NECESSITY OF MORTIFICATION

We may consider this necessity from a twofold point of view, that of *salvation* and that of *perfection*.

I. *The Necessity of Mortification for Salvation*

There is a kind of mortification which is *necessary for salvation* in this sense, that if we fail to practice it, we run the risk of falling into mortal sin.

755. ¹ Our Lord speaks of it in a very clear way concerning faults against chastity: "Whosoever shall look on a woman *to lust after her* hath already committed adultery with her in his heart."¹ There are looks, then, that are gravely sinful, such as are prompted by evil desire. In this case mortification of the eyes is imperative under pain

of mortal sin. Our Lord says so in no uncertain language: "And if thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee. For it is expedient for thee that one of thy members should perish, rather than thy whole body be cast into hell."¹ It is not question here of putting out one's eyes, but of turning them away from such sights as are a cause of sin. St. Paul gives us the reason for these serious injunctions: "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."²

As we have said, (n. 193-227) the threefold concupiscence that remains with us, spurred on by the world and the devil, often inclines us to evil and endangers our salvation, unless we take heed to mortify it. Hence, the absolute necessity of waging a constant warfare against our evil tendencies; of fleeing from the *proximate occasions* of sin, that is, from such things or such persons as, given our past experience, are to us a serious and a probable danger of sin; of renouncing thereby a great many pleasures towards which our nature draws us.³ There are then certain practices of mortification which are imperative; without them we should fall into mortal sin.

756. ² Other practices of mortification there are which the *Church* prescribes in order to determine the general obligation so often repeated in the Gospel. Such are: abstinence from flesh-meats on Fridays, the *fast* of Lent, the Ember Days and the Vigils. These laws bind under pain of grievous sin all those who are not legitimately excused. Here we must make a remark that is of importance. There are persons who for good reasons are dispensed from these positive laws; but they are not thereby exempt from the natural, divine law of mortification, and hence must comply with it in some form or other. Should they fail in this, they will ere long experience the rebellion of the flesh.

757. ³ Besides these practices of mortification enjoined by divine and by ecclesiastical law, there are others which, when temptations grow more severe, individuals must undertake with the advice of their spiritual director. What these mortifications are shall be indicated in n. 767 and following.

¹ *Matth.*, V, 29. — ² *Rom.*, VIII, 13.

³ We treated more at length of these occasions of sin in our *Synopsis Theologiae Moralis*, De Pœnitentiâ, n. 524-536.

II. Necessity of Mortification for Perfection

758. This necessity follows from what we have said of the nature of perfection, which consists in the love of God unto *sacrifice* and the *immolation of self* (n. 321-327). This is so true, that, according to the Imitation, the measure of our spiritual growth depends upon the measure of violence we do to ourselves: *In proportion as thou dost violence to thyself the greater progress wilt thou make.*¹ It will suffice, then, to recall briefly a few of the motives that may aid the will in the discharge of this duty; they are drawn from the point of view of our relation to *God*, to *Jesus Christ*, and from that of our *personal sanctification*.²

1° MORTIFICATION IS NECESSARY FOR OUR UNION WITH GOD

759. A) We cannot attain to union with God without mortification, without detaching ourselves from the *inordinate love of creatures*.

St. John of the Cross says: "A soul will become like unto the creature to which it cleaves; as the attachment grows, the identification asserts itself; for love establishes the equal adjustment of the lover to the thing beloved.... Therefore, he who loves a creature stoops down to its level—nay, even lower, since love is not content with equality, but descends to slavery. This is why a soul under subjection to anything apart from God becomes incapable of entering into that pure union with Him and of being assimilated to Him, for the utter nothingness of the creature is farther from the sovereignty of the Creator than darkness is from light." Now, the unmortified soul soon clings to creatures in an inordinate way; for since the Fall, the soul of man feels itself drawn to them, captivated by their charms, and delights in them as if they were ends in themselves, instead of making them stepping stones unto God. To break this charm, to escape this snare, it is absolutely necessary that we *detach* ourselves from whatever is not God, or at least, from whatever cannot be looked upon as a means leading us to Him. This is why Father Olier, in comparing the condition of Christians to that of Adam in the state of innocence, sees a vast difference between the two: "Adam sought God, served Him, and adored Him in His creatures; Christians, on the contrary, are forced to seek God through faith, to serve Him and adore Him in the inaccessible heights of His own Being and of His holiness."³ For this we have the grace of baptism.

760. B) By Baptism a real contract is concluded between God and ourselves. **a)** God on His part cleanses us from the stain of original sin, adopts us as His children, and admits us to share in His life, engaging Himself to bestow

upon us all the graces necessary to the preservation and development of that life. We know the liberality wherewith He has fulfilled His promises. **b)** On our part, we bind ourselves to live like true children of God, to strive to become perfect as Our Heavenly Father is perfect. This, however, we can do only if we practice mortification; for, on the one side, the Holy Ghost, given us in Baptism, "urges us to embrace contempt, poverty, suffering; and, on the other, our flesh longs for honor, pleasure, riches."¹ Within us, therefore, rages a conflict, an incessant struggle; nor can we be faithful to God unless we renounce the *inordinate* love of honor, pleasure, and riches. Thus in the rite of Baptism, the priest marks us with two Crosses, one upon the heart to stamp thereon the love of the Cross, the other upon our shoulders to give us the strength to carry it. We should be untrue to our baptismal vows, if we did not carry our cross by waging war against the lust for honor through humility, against the lust for pleasure through mortification, against the lust for riches through poverty.

2° MORTIFICATION NECESSARY FOR OUR CONFORMITY TO CHRIST

761. A) Through Baptism we have been incorporated into Christ, we have become His members, and as such, it is from Him we are to receive life, and motion, and inspiration, and thereby be made *conformable* to Him. But the Imitation tells us that "*The whole life of Christ was a cross and a martyrdom.*"² Ours, then, cannot be a life of pleasure and honors, but it must be a life of mortification. This is what our divine Head clearly tells us: "*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.*"³ If there is any one who must follow Jesus, it is he who seeks after perfection. But how can a lover of pleasure, of honors, of riches follow Jesus? How can one follow Christ, if one is unwilling to carry his cross daily—the cross that God Himself has chosen for him and sent to him? How can such a one follow Him Who from His very entry into the world embraced the Cross, Who throughout His entire life sighed for sufferings and humiliations, Who was wedded to poverty at the Crib and Whom poverty followed unto Calvary? "*It is shameful,*" says St. Ber-

¹ OLIER, *Cat. for an Int. Life*, Part I, Lesson VII.

² *Following of Christ*, Bk. II, C. XII, v. 7.

³ *Luke* IX, 23. Read the beautiful commentary on this text in the Circular Letter to the Friends of the Cross by the Blessed L. GRIGNON DE MONTFORT.

¹ *The Following of Christ*, Bk. I, C. 25.

² These motives are similar to those we explained with regard to penance, n. 736 and foll. Penance is in reality but mortification that repairs past faults.

³ *Cat. for an Int. Life*, P. I, Lesson IV.

nard,¹ "that we appear as delicate members, shrinking at the least smart of pain, under a Head that is crowned with thorns." Therefore, if we wish to become like unto Jesus Christ and reflect His perfection, we must like Him carry our Cross.

762. B) If we aspire to a life of apostolic service, we find therein a new motive for the crucifixion of our flesh. It is through the Cross that Jesus saved the world; it is likewise through the Cross that we shall co-operate with Him in the salvation of our brethren; and the fruitfulness of our zeal will grow in proportion as we share in the Savior's sufferings. This was what compelled St. Paul to fill up in his flesh that which was wanting of the passion of His Master in order to obtain graces for the Church.² This is the motive that in the past sustained and even now sustains so many souls who consent to be victims, that God may be glorified and that souls may be saved. No doubt, suffering is hard to bear, but when we look upon Jesus walking before us with His Cross borne for our own salvation and that of our brethren; when we contemplate His agony; when we see Him unjustly condemned, scourged, tormented with a crown of thorns; when we hearken to the jeers, the insults, the calumnies He silently endured — how dare we complain! "Ye have not yet resisted unto the shedding of blood."³ If we prize at their worth our souls and the souls of our brethren, can we make so much of a few fleeting pangs of suffering endured for the sake of a glory that will have no end, endured in union with Our Lord and Master, as our share in His work of saving souls for whom He shed the last drop of His Blood?

These motives, high as they are, are entered into by some generous souls from the very moment of their turning to God. By proposing such motives to them, a spiritual director will further their purification and sanctification.

3° MORTIFICATION NECESSARY FOR OUR OWN SANCTIFICATION

763. A) We must secure our *perseverance* in good, and mortification offers without doubt one of the best means we have to keep free from sin. What causes us to surrender to temptation is the love of pleasure or the horror of hardship, the hardship of the struggle. Mortification combats this twofold tendency, which is really but one; for by having

us break with some few legitimate pleasures, it arms our will against those that are unlawful, thus giving us an easier victory over sensuality and the love of self; "*inveighing against sensuality and self-love*", as St. Ignatius puts it. If, on the contrary, we yield to pleasure, allowing ourselves all lawful joys, how shall we be able to resist when our sensuality, hankering after new delights, dangerous or wrong, feels itself as if overpowered by the force of habit? The bias is so strong, that where our sensuous nature is concerned, it is easy to fall into the abyss, by a sort of vertigo. Even when it is question of pride, the downward plunge is far more rapid than we think: we lie about a trifle to cover up a fault, to escape humiliation; and then when we approach the tribunal of penance we run the risk of failing in sincerity through the dread of a mortifying avowal. Our safety demands, therefore, a warfare against self-love as well as against sensuality and greed.

764. B) To avoid sin is not sufficient; we must *grow* in perfection. Here again, what is the great stumbling-block, if not the love of pleasure and a dread of the cross? How many would wish to be better than they are, to aim at perfection, were it not that they shrink from the effort required, from the trials sent by God to His best friends? Such persons must be frequently reminded of what St. Paul said time and again to the first Christians, that is to say, that life is a struggle; that we should blush for shame if we show less courage than those who strive for an earthly reward and who in order to assure victory deprive themselves of sundry pleasures, willingly submitting to a stern and arduous discipline: "*And they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown: but we an incorruptible one.*"¹ Do we dread pain? Let us ponder the terrible sufferings of Purgatory (n. 734) which will be our lot for years should we persist in living heedless of mortification and ready to indulge in all those things that delight us. How much wiser are the children of this world! Many a one undergoes hard labor and at times endures harsh treatment that he may earn a living and secure decent comfort in his declining years; and we would be loath to impose a hardship on ourselves for the sake of an eternal abode in the Kingdom of Heaven! Is this rational?

We must, then, realise that there is no perfection, no possible attainment of virtue without the practice of morti-

¹ *Sermo V in festo omnium Sanctorum*, n. 9.
² *Coloss.*, I, 24. — *3 Heb.*, XII, 4.

sation. How can we be chaste without deadening that sensuality that urges us so strongly toward evil and dangerous pleasures? How can we be temperate unless we curb our greediness? How practice poverty, nay justice, if we do not combat our greed? How be humble, meek, kind, if we exercise no control over the passions of pride, anger, envy, jealousy, that lurk in the recesses of every human heart? There is not one virtue which, in our fallen condition, we can practice for any length of time without effort, without a struggle and, hence, without the practice of mortification. We can, therefore, say with Father Tronson that "just as a lack of mortification is the cause of all our vices, mortification is the foundation and the source of all our virtues."¹

765. C) We can go further and add that mortification, notwithstanding the privations and sufferings it imposes, is even here on earth rich in goods of the highest order. The mortified Christian is as a rule more truly happy than the worldling who abandons himself to every pleasure. This is what Our Lord Himself teaches when He says: "*Every one that hath left house or brethren... shall receive an hundredfold and shall possess life everlasting.*"² St. Paul speaks the same language. After having spoken of modesty, that is, of moderation in all things, he adds: "*And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*"³ Of this he was himself the living example. In truth he had much to suffer. He recounts at length not only his own inner conflict, but also the terrible ordeals he had to undergo for the preaching of the Gospel. He adds however: "*I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation.*"⁴

And so it was with all the Saints. Undoubtedly, they had to endure long and painful trials; but the martyrs amid their tortures gave testimony that "*they had never been so happy.*" Reading the lives of the Saints we meet two striking facts: the dreadful ordeals they sustained, the mortifications they willingly embraced; and then their patience, their joy, their peace in these sufferings. They came to love the cross, to lose all fear thereof, nay, to sigh after it, to count as lost the day wherein they had but little to suffer. This is a psychological phenomenon which puzzles the worldly, but which is a comfort to men of good-will. No doubt, one could not ask of beginners such love of the cross; but one can, showing them the example of the Saints, make them understand that the love of God soothes the pain of mortification,

¹ *Examen parlé*, 1^{er} Ex. de la Mortification.

² *Math.*, XIX, 29; *Mark*, X, 29-30, where it is said: "*An hundred times as much, now in this time.*"

³ *Philipp.*, IV, 7. — *4 II Cor.*, VII, 4

and, if they consent to enter whole-heartedly into the practice of offering small sacrifices within their strength, that they will come themselves to love the cross, to long for it and to find in it true spiritual comfort.

766. The author of the Imitation expresses this in a text which briefly sums up the advantages of mortification: "*In the cross is salvation: in the Cross is life; in the Cross is protection from enemies. In the Cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness; in the Cross is strength of mind; in the Cross is joy of spirit. In the Cross is height of virtue; in the Cross is perfection of sanctity.*"¹ The love of the Cross is but the love of God unto the immolation of self. And this love, as we have said, is the embodiment of all the virtues, the very essence of perfection and therefore the strongest defence against our spiritual enemies, the fountain-spring of consolation, the best means of growing in the spiritual life and of assuring our salvation.

ART. III. THE PRACTICE OF MORTIFICATION ²

767. Principles. 1^o Mortification must include the whole man, body and soul; for each of our faculties unless well-disciplined may be the cause of sin. It is true, indeed, that the will alone sins, but it has for accomplices and instruments our body with its exterior senses and our soul with all its faculties. Hence, it is the whole man that must be disciplined, that is, mortified.

768. 2^o Mortification is the enemy of pleasure. True, pleasure of *itself* is not an evil; rather, it is a good when subordinated to its God-given end. God has willed to attach a certain pleasure to the fulfilment of duty in order to facilitate its accomplishment. Thus, we find a certain enjoyment in eating and drinking, in our work, and in other duties. In the divine plan, therefore, *pleasure is not an end, but the means to an end.* Hence, the enjoyment of pleasure in view of a more perfect acquittal of duty is not proscribed; it is rather in accordance with the order established by God. But to seek pleasure as an end in itself without any relation to duty, is at least dangerous, since it exposes one to slip from lawful to unlawful pleasure. To enjoy pleasure to the exclusion of duty is a sin more or less serious, because it is a violation of the order established by God. Mortification,

¹ *The Following of Christ*, Bk. II, c. 12.

² Since mortification is defined as the struggle against our evil inclinations, it must be practiced first of all in resisting temptations. This aspect of mortification will be treated in nos 900 and following. It is next practiced in overcoming our evil inclinations, our vices. This will be seen in nos 818 and following. Here we speak only of the mortification of our faculties, or rather of their inordinate tendencies.

It must be noted that the word mortification is not used in exactly the same sense when we speak of the mortification of our sins and vices as when we speak of the mortification of our faculties. In the former case it means *destroying, putting to death*; in the latter it means *correcting, training, disciplining*.

therefore, consists in foregoing *evil* pleasures, pleasures contrary to God's providential plan, or to His Law, or to the law of the Church; in renouncing dangerous pleasures, so as not to run the risk of sin; in abstaining from *certain licit pleasures*, so as to insure the dominion of the will over our sensuous nature. With this same end in view we not only forego some pleasures, but likewise impose upon ourselves some positive practices of mortification; for it is a matter of experience that nothing is so effective in breaking down the lure to pleasure as the voluntary undertaking of some additional labor, the shouldering of some additional burden.

769. 3^o Mortification, however, must be practiced with *prudence* and *discretion*. It must be properly fitted to the *physical* and *moral* strength of each, and must be in keeping with the accomplishment of one's duties of state. 1) We must spare our *physical* strength, for according to St. Francis de Sales, "We are exposed to great temptations both when the body is overfed and when it is too enfeebled." 1 In the latter case one becomes an easy prey to neurasthenia, which subsequently demands a letting down that may prove dangerous. 2) We must take into account our *moral* strength, that is to say, we must refrain from imposing upon ourselves from the outset excessive privations which we could not long sustain, and the giving up of which may lead us to laxness. 3) Above all, our mortifications must be such as would be compatible with the duties of our state, for the latter are obligatory and take precedence over practices of supererogation. Thus it would be wrong for a mother to practice such austerities as would prevent her from fulfilling her duties towards her husband and her children.

770. 4^o There is a hierarchy in the practices of mortification. Those that mortify our *interior* faculties have a greater worth than those that mortify our *exterior* senses, because the former attack more directly the root of the evil; yet we must not lose sight of the fact that the latter aid in a great measure the exercise of the former. Who- ever would attempt to mortify the imagination without mortifying the eyes will hardly succeed, for the very reason that these furnish our fancy with sensible images whereon it thrives. To jeer at the austerities of former Christian days is a baneful error of *modern times*. As a matter of

¹ *Devout Life*, Part III, c. XXIII.

fact the Saints of all ages, those that have been beatified in these latter days as well as those of old, have severely chastised their bodies and their exterior senses, well aware that man's whole being must be brought into subjection, that in the state of fallen nature, man's whole being must be crucified if he is to belong wholly to God. We shall therefore examine in succession the entire range of mortifications beginning with those that are *exterior* in character, finally arriving at those of a more *interior* nature. This is the logical order; in actual practice we must learn how to combine them, and make proper use of them.

§ I. The Mortification of the Body and the Exterior Senses

771. 1^o **Its motives.** a) Our Lord recommended to His disciples the moderate practice of fasting and of abstinence, the mortification of sight and of touch. St. Paul was so alive to the necessity of mortifying the flesh that he punished it severely in order to escape sin and final reprobation: "*But I chastise my body and bring it into subjection: lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway.*" 1 The Church herself prescribes for the faithful certain days of fast and of abstinence.

b) Why this? No doubt the body, well held in check, is a profitable servant, nay, an indispensable one, whose strength must be preserved to place it at the soul's service. But in the state of fallen nature, the body seeks after the joys of the flesh regardless of what is licit or illicit; it has a special tendency towards forbidden pleasures, and at times rebels against the higher faculties when these stand in the way. This enemy is so much the more dangerous, because it is ever with us, at table, in our room, abroad; and because it often meets with abettors ready to excite its sensuality and lust. The senses are but so many openings for forbidden pleasure. We are obliged therefore to keep an ever-watchful guard over our body, to overpower it and bring it into subjection. If we fail in this it will betray us.

772. 2^o **The Modesty of the Body.** If we wish to mortify the body, we must begin by a faithful observance of the prescriptions of modesty and good deportment. Here we find an extensive field for mortification. The rule we must follow is the principle of St. Paul: "*Know*

¹ *I Cor.*, IX, 27.

*you not that your bodies are the members of Christ... that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost?"*¹

A) We must, then, hold our body in reverence, as a holy temple, as a member of Christ. Let there be nothing about us savouring of those fads, more or less indecent, designed to excite the unwholesome curiosity of lust. Let our dress be in harmony with our condition in life, plain and modest, ever becoming, ever decent.

The wisest recommendations on this subject are those of St. Francis de Sales: "Be neat, Philothea; let nothing be negligent about you;... but at the same time, avoid all affectation, vanity, curiosity, or levity in your dress. Keep yourself always, as much as possible, on the side of plainness and modesty, which, doubt not, is the greatest ornament of beauty, and the best excuse for the want of it.... Women who are vain, are esteemed to be very weak in their chastity; at least, if they are chaste, it is not to be discovered amid so many toys and fopperies..."² S. Louis briefly says, "that one should dress in accordance to one's condition in life, so that the wise and the good might not say: 'you are too fastidious,' nor the young remark, 'you are too negligent.'"

As regards religious and priests, they have rules that prescribe the form and quality of their dress, and they should conform to those directions. It is needless to say that worldliness and affectation would be out of place in them and could not but shock worldlings themselves.

773. B) Good deportment likewise furnishes everyone with ample opportunity for the practice of mortification, an excellent way of mortifying the flesh without endangering our health or attracting undue attention, and of gaining a wonderful control over the body. Examples of good deportment are: the avoidance of anything like lack of poise or of any bodily pose that smacks of primness or softness; an erect, easy and natural carriage of the body; holding the same even posture for a considerable space of time; not to lounge when sitting or lean when kneeling; to avoid all brusqueness of movement or manner and ill-regulated gestures.

774. C) There are other positive means of mortification which penitent souls inspired by generosity delight to employ in order to subdue their bodies, to temper the importunities of the flesh and give vent to their holy desires. The more customary ones are small iron bracelets clasped to the arms, chains worn about the loins, hair-shirts, or a few strokes of the discipline when this last can be done without attracting any notice.³ As to all such practices one must faithfully

¹ *1 Cor.*, VI, 15, 19. — ² *Devout Life*, Part III, c. XXXV.

³ To resume the practices of corporal mortification is one of the most effective means of regaining lost joy of spirit and fervor of soul: "Let us go back to our bodily mortifications. Let us bruise our flesh and draw a little of our blood, and

follow the advice of one's spiritual director, shun whatever tends to evince any singularity or to flatter vanity not to speak of whatever would be against the rules of hygiene and personal cleanliness. The spiritual director should not give his sanction to any of these extraordinary practices except with the greatest discretion, only for a time, and on trial. Should it come to his notice that any inconveniences arise therefrom, he must bring them to a halt.

775. 3° **Modesty of the Eyes.** A) There are looks which are *grievously sinful*, that offend not only against modesty, but against chastity itself; from such we must evidently abstain.¹ Others there are which are *dangerous*; for instance, to fasten our eyes on persons or things which would of themselves be apt to bring on temptations. Thus Holy Scripture warns us: "Gaze not upon a maiden: lest her beauty be a stumbling-block to thee."² Today, when indecency in dress, exhibitions of the stage and of certain types of drawing-room entertainment create so many dangers, what great care must we not exercise so as not to expose ourselves to sin!

776. B) The earnest Christian who wants to save his soul at all costs goes even further so as to make the danger more remote. He mortifies the sense of sight by repressing idle, curious glances and by duly controlling his eyes in all simplicity without any show of affectation. He takes the opportunity whenever offered of directing his looks towards those things that tend to raise his heart towards God and the Saints, such as holy pictures, statues, churches and crosses.

777. 4° **Mortification of the Ear and the Tongue.** A) The mortification of these senses demands that we speak no word nor lend a willing ear to utterances that hurt brotherly love, purity, humility and the other Christian virtues; for, says St. Paul, "Evil communications corrupt good manners."³ How many souls have been turned from their godly ways by giving ear to impure conversations or to words against their neighbor. Obscene words induce a morbid curiosity, excite the passions, kindle desire, and incite to sin; whilst unkind words stir up strife and divisions even in the home, give rise to suspicion, enmity and rancor. We must, therefore, watch over the least of

we shall be happy as the day is long. If the Saints are such gay spirits, and monks and nuns such unaccountably cheerful creatures, it is simply because their bodies, like St. Paul's, are chastised and kept under with an unflinching sharpness and a vigorous discretion." (FABER, *The Blessed Sacrament*, Book II, Section VII).

¹ *Matth.*, V, 28. — ² *Eccli.*, IX, 5. — ³ *1 Cor.*, XV, 33.

our words and we must know how to close our ears to whatever may sully purity, hurt charity or disturb peace.

778. B) The better to succeed in this, we shall at times mortify our *curiosity*, refraining from asking questions that would satisfy it, or repressing that itch for gossip that draws us into idle conversations not altogether devoid of danger: "*In the multitude of words there shall not want sin.*"¹

C) Since negative means do not suffice. We should take care to direct our conversation to subjects not merely harmless, but good, elevating and edifying, without however growing burdensome to others by too serious remarks that do not naturally suggest themselves.

779. 5° The Mortification of our other senses. What we have said with regard to sight, hearing and speech, is applicable to the other senses as well. We shall return to the sense of taste when we speak of gluttony, and to the sense of touch when we treat of chastity. As to the sense of smell, suffice it to say that the immoderate use of perfumes is often but a pretext for satisfying sensuality, and at times a ruse to excite lust. Earnest Christians should use them with moderation; clerics and religious should never use them.

§ II. Mortification of the Interior Senses

The two interior senses to be mortified are the *imagination* and the *memory*, which generally act in accord, memory-activities being accompanied by sense-images.

780. 1° Principle. These are two valuable faculties, which not only furnish the mind with the necessary material whereon to work, but enable it to explain the truth with the aid of images and facts in such a manner as to make it easier to grasp, and render it more vital and more interesting. The bare, colorless and cold statement of truth would not engage the interest of most men. It is not question, then, of atrophying these faculties, but of schooling them, of subjecting their activity to the control of reason and will. Otherwise, left to themselves, they literally crowd the soul with a host of memories and images that distract the spirit, waste its energies, cause it to lose priceless time while at prayer and work, and constitute the source of a thousand temptations against purity, charity, humility and other virtues. Hence, of necessity they must be disciplined and made to minister to the higher faculties of the soul.

¹ *Proverbs*, X, 19.

781. 2° Rules to be followed. **A)** In order to check the wanderings of the memory and the imagination, we must, first of all, strive to expel from the outset, that is, from the very moment we are aware of them, all *dangerous* fancies and recollections; for such, by conjuring up some crisis of the past, or by carrying us along midst the seductive allurements of the present, or on to those of the future, would constitute for us a source of temptation. Furthermore, since frequent day-dreaming by a kind of psychological necessity leads us into dangerous musings, we should take heed to provide against idle thoughts, by mortifying ourselves as regards useless fancies, which constitute a waste of time and pave the way to others of an even more perilous nature. *Mortifying idle thoughts*, the Saints tell us, *is dealing death to evil ones.*

782. B) The best means to attain this end is to apply ourselves whole-heartedly to the performance of the duties of the moment, to our work, to our studies, to our ordinary occupations. Besides, this is likewise the best means of doing well what we are about, by making all our activities converge towards the production of the one action: "*Do well whatever you do.*" Let young men remember that in order to succeed either in studies or in their profession, they must give more play to the mind and the will than to the lower faculties. Thus, whilst making provision for the future, they should avoid all dangerous flights of the imagination.

783. C) Lastly, the memory and the imagination will prove most helpful if they are employed to nourish our piety, by searching in the Scriptures, in the Liturgy, and in spiritual writers the choicest texts, the most beautiful similes, the richest imagery, and if the imagination is used to enter into God's presence, to picture in their details the mysteries of Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin. Thus, far from stunting this faculty, we shall fill it with devout representations which will displace dangerous fancies and enable us the better to grasp and present to our hearers the beauty of the Gospel-scenes.

§ III. The Mortification of the Passions:

784. The passions in the *philosophical* sense of the term are not necessarily nor wholly evil. They are active

¹ St. THOMAS, Ia II^e, q. 22-48; SUAREZ, disp. III; SÉNAULT, *De l'usage des passions*; DESCURET, *La médecine des passions*; BELOUINO, *Des passions*; IH. RIBOT,

forces, often impetuous, that may be used for good as well as for evil, provided we learn to control them and direct them towards a high purpose. In popular parlance, however, and with certain spiritual writers, the word is used to designate *evil* passions. We shall, then — 1^o recall the principal *psychological notions* concerning the passions; 2^o indicate their *good* and their *bad effects*; 3^o give rules for their *right use*.

I. The Psychology of the Passions

Here we but recall briefly what is explained at length in Psychology.

785. 1^o **Notion.** Passions are *vehement movements of the sensitive appetite toward sensible good, reacting more or less strongly on the bodily organism.*

a) At the bottom of passion, therefore, there is a certain knowledge, at least a sense-knowledge, of a good hoped for or already possessed, or of an evil opposed to the said good. From this knowledge spring the movements of the sensitive appetite.

b) These movements are *vehement* and thus differ from affective conditions, pleasant or unpleasant, which are calm, peaceful, and free from the eagerness and the violence found in passion.

c) It is precisely because they are *vehement* and act strongly upon the sensitive appetite that they have their *reaction upon the physical organism*. This is due to the close union that exists between body and soul. Thus, anger causes blood to rush to the brain and strains the nerves; fear causes us to turn pale; love dilates the heart and fear contracts it. These physiological effects do not reach the same degree in all subjects; they depend upon the individual temperament and the intensity of passion itself, as well as upon the measure of control acquired over self.

786. Passions differ from sentiments, which are movements of the will, and which presuppose, therefore, an intellectual knowledge; although they are strong, they lack the violence of passions. Thus there is a passion of love and a sentiment of love, a passionate fear and an intellectual fear. We may add that in man, a rational animal, the passions and the sentiments almost invariably blend in varying proportions, and that is through the will aided by grace that we transform the most ardent passions into lofty sentiments by bringing the former under the sway of the latter.

787. 2^o **Their Number.** Eleven are generally enumerated, all of which proceed from love, as Bossuet¹ lucidly

shows: "Our other passions refer but to love, love which embodies or stimulates them."

1) *Love* is a yearning for union with a person or thing that pleases us; we thereby crave possession of it.

2) *Hatred* is an eagerness to rid ourselves of what displeases us; it is born of love in the sense that we hate that which militates against what we love. We hate disease only because we love health; we hate no one, except those who place an obstacle to our possessing what we love.

3) *Desire* is a quest for an absent good and proceeds from the fact that we love that good.

4) *Aversion* (or flight) makes us shun or repel *approaching* evil.

5) *Joy* is the satisfaction arising from a *present good*.

6) *Sadness*, on the other hand, makes us grieve over and shrink from a *present evil*

7) *Courage* (daring) makes us strive after union with the object loved, the acquisition of which is difficult.

8) *Fear* prompts us to shrink from an evil difficult to avoid.

9) *Hope* eagerly bears us toward the thing loved, the acquisition of which is possible, though difficult.

10) *Despair* arises in the soul when the acquisition of the object loved seems *impossible*.

11) *Anger* violently repels what hurts us, and incites the desire of revenge.

The first six passions which take rise in what is called the *concupiscible appetite*, are generally known to modern psychologist as *pleasure-passions*; the other five, proceeding from what is termed the *irascible appetite*, go by the name of *aggressive passions*.

II. The Effects of the Passions

788. The *Stoics* assumed that the passions were radically evil and must be annihilated. The *Epicureans* deified the passions and loudly proclaimed the necessity of obeying them; modern Epicureans reëcho their cry in saying that *life must be lived*. Christianity shuns these two extremes. Nothing, it holds, that God has bestowed on our nature is loved not only with His will, but with His heart; He wept over dead Lazarus and over faithless Jerusalem; He let Himself be roused to righteous indignation; He felt fear, underwent sadness and weariness; yet He knew how to keep these passions under the control of the will and subordinate them to God. When, on the contrary, passions are ill-ordered they are productive of the most harmful results. Hence, they must be mortified and disciplined.

789. The Effects of ill-ordered Passions. Passions are said to be *ill-ordered* when directed towards some sen-

¹ *La psychologie des sentiments; La logique des sentiments; PAVOT, The Education of the Will; Cursus Asceticus*, I, P. 157-236; MEYER, *The Science of the Saints*, II-IV; MESCHER, *Three Fundamental Principles of the Spiritual Life*, P. II, C. X-XV; P. JANVIER, *Carême 1905*; H. D. NOBLE, *L'éducation des passions*.

² *De la connaissance de Dieu et de soi-même*, C. I, n. 6.

sible good which is forbidden, or even towards a good which is lawful, but is pursued with too much eagerness and without any reference to God. Such ill-regulated passions have the following effects :

a) They produce *blindness of soul*, for heedless of reason, they move headlong toward their object, led on by attraction or by pleasure. This constitutes a disturbing factor which tends to unbalance our judgment and becloud right reason. The sensitive appetite is by nature blind; and should the soul allow itself to be guided by it, it will likewise become blind. The soul then, instead of being guided by duty, allows itself to be fascinated by the pleasure of the moment; it is as if a cloud stood between it and the truth. Blinded by the passions, the soul no longer sees clearly the will of God, the duty to be fulfilled; it is no longer competent to form a sane judgment.

790. b) Ill-ordered passions *wear* and *torture* the soul.

1) The passions, says St. John of the Cross,¹ "are as impatient little children that can never be pleased, that ask their mother now for this, now for that, and are never satisfied. A miser tires of digging in vain for a treasure; likewise the soul wearies of seeking what its appetites demand. If one of these appetites is satisfied, others arise and wear us out, because they cannot all be satisfied... Appetites afflict the soul, enervate it and trouble it as the wind agitates the sea."

2) Hence, a suffering all the more intense, the more ardent the passions, for they torture the soul until they are satisfied, and just as the appetite for food is whetted by eating, so the passions ever crave for more. If conscience offers resistance, they lose patience, they fret, they importune the will to yield to their ever-recurring desires. This is an unspeakable torture.

791. c) Ill-ordered passions also *weaken the will*. Drawn hither and thither by these rebellious passions, the will is forced to scatter its efforts in every direction and by so doing to lessen its strength. Every concession it makes to the passions increases their demands and diminishes its own energies. Like the useless, rapacious, parasitic shoots that sprout round the trunk of a tree, uncontrolled appetites

¹ *The Ascent of Carmel*, Bk. I, C. VI; See chapters VI-XII of the same book, wherein the Saint explains in a wonderful way the hurtful effects of the appetites, that is, of the passions. We but briefly sum up his thought.

grow and sap the strength of the soul. A time comes when the weakened soul becomes the prey of laxness and lukewarmness and is ready to make any surrender.

792. d) Ill-ordered passions, lastly, *blemish the soul*. When the soul, yielding to the passions, joins itself to creatures it lowers itself to their level. Instead of being the faithful image of God it takes on the likeness of the things to which it clings; specks of dust, blots of grime sully its beauty and impede a perfect union with God.

"I do not hesitate to affirm," says St. John of the Cross,¹ "that one single disordered passion, even if it lead not to mortal sin, is enough to cause the soul such a state of darkness, ugliness and uncleanness, that it becomes incapable of intimate union with God so long as it remains a slave of this passion. What then shall we say of the soul that is marred by the ugliness of all its passions, that is a prey to all its appetites? At what infinite distance will it not be from divine purity? Neither words nor arguments can make us understand the divers stains which all these appetites create in the soul. Each one of them in its own way places its share of filth and ugliness in the soul."

793. Conclusion. If we wish, then, to attain to union with God, we must repress all inordinate movements of the passions, even the most trifling; for perfect union with God presupposes that there be nothing in us contrary to the divine will, no wilful attachment to creatures or to self. The moment we deliberately allow any passion to lead us astray, this perfect union no longer exists. This is especially true of habitual attachments. These paralyze the will even if they be in themselves trivial. St. John of the Cross² says that "it makes little difference whether a bird be tied by a thin thread or a heavy cord; it cannot fly until either be broken."

794. Advantages of well-ordered passions. Passions are helpful when they are well-ordered, that is, when they are directed towards good, when they are controlled and made subservient to the will of God. They are live, powerful forces that stir our mind and will to action and thus render them signal help.

a) They act upon the mind by stimulating our ambition to work, our desire to know the truth. When we are passionately interested in any object, we are on the alert to know all about it; our minds grasp the truth more readily; the impression made upon our memory is more lasting. An inventor, for instance, burning with love for his country

¹ *Ascent of Carmel*, Bk. I, C. XI. — ² *Ascent of Carmel*, Bk. I, C. XI.

works with greater zest, perseverance and insight because of the very fact that he wants to serve his country. In like manner a student inspired by the high purpose of putting his knowledge at the service of his countrymen makes greater efforts and obtains greater results. But above all, he who passionately loves Jesus Christ, will study the Gospel with greater zeal, understand it better and relish it more; the words of the Master are for him so many oracles that shed upon his soul a glowing light.

795. b) Well-ordered passions, likewise, exert their influence upon the *will*, grouping and multiplying its energies. Whatever is done out of love, is done more thoroughly, more whole-heartedly, pursued more perseveringly and attended by greater success. What does not a loving mother do to save her child? What acts of heroism does not patriotism inspire? A Saint in whom love for God and for souls is a passion balks at no effort, at no sacrifice, at no humiliation if he can but save his brethren. Undoubtedly, it is the will which dictates such acts of zeal, but it is a will inspired, stimulated, and sustained by a hallowed passion. When both the sensitive and intellectual appetites, that is to say, when the heart and the will join forces and work along the same lines, the attendant results are evidently of far greater import and much more lasting. Hence, the importance of knowing how to put the passions to good use.

III. *The Good Use of the Passions*

After recalling the psychological principles that will make our task easier, we shall show how evil passions are resisted, how passions are directed towards good, and how they are controlled.

1° PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES TO BE APPLIED *

796. To attain mastery over the passions, we must first of all, count on the grace of God and, therefore, on prayer and the Sacraments; but we must also employ the *sound tactics* furnished by psychology.

a) Every idea tends to evoke a corresponding act, especially if the idea is attended by live emotions and associated with strong convictions.

Thus the thought of sensual pleasure, vividly depicted by the imagination, provokes a sensual desire, often a sensual act. On the other

hand, the thought of noble deeds and their happy results excites the desire of performing such acts. This is especially true of the idea that does not remain cold, colorless, abstract, but, accompanied by sensitive images, becomes concrete, real and thereby captivating. It is in this sense that we can say that thought is *power*, a dynamic force, the beginning of action. If then, we are, to master our ill-ordered passions, we must cautiously banish every thought, every fancy that presents evil pleasure in an attractive guise; and, if we want to foster well-ordered passions or good sentiments, we must welcome the thoughts and the images that picture the beautiful side of duty, of virtue, and we must make these as vivid and as concrete as possible.

797. b) The influence of an idea abides as long as that idea is not obliterated and supplanted by a stronger one. Thus sensual desire continues to make itself felt so long as it is not driven out by some nobler thought which takes possession of the soul. Hence, if we would be rid of such desires we must through some reading or engaging study apply ourselves to an entirely different or to an absolutely contrary trend of thought; and should we wish to strengthen some good desire, we must dwell on it and think of such things as will tend to feed it.

c) The influence of an idea grows by being associated with correlative ones that enrich and broaden it. Thus the thought and the desire of saving our soul grow more intense and more active if associated with the idea of working for the salvation of our brethren. The life of St. Francis Xavier is a striking example of this.

798. d) Lastly, an idea attains its maximum power, when it becomes *habitual, absorbing*, a sort of *fixed idea*, the motive-power of action. This is exemplified in the sphere of the natural by the single-mindedness of those who hold but one purpose in view, for instance, that of bringing about some particular discovery; in the realm of the supernatural it is illustrated by those who are deeply impressed by some Gospel-truth which becomes the ruling principle of their life, for example: "Sell what thou hast and give to the poor. What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul? For to me, to live is Christ."

We must, therefore, aim at burying deep into our souls some *directing thoughts*, and then embody them in a maxim that makes them real and keeps them ever before our mind, such as: "*My God and my all! To the greater glory of God! God alone suffices! He who possesses Jesus, possesses all things! To be with Jesus is a sweet paradise!*" With a motto of this kind, we shall more easily triumph

* EXMIEU, *Le gouvernement de soi-même*, t. I, 3^e Principe.

over ill-ordered passions and make a right use of well-ordered ones.

2° HOW TO WAGE WAR AGAINST ILL-ORDERED PASSIONS

799. As soon as we are aware of any ill-ordered movement of the soul, we must have recourse to every natural and supernatural means to stay and curb it.

a) From the outset, we should with the help of grace avail ourselves of the power of inhibition wielded by the will to thwart such motion.

We should avoid *exterior* acts and gestures which would but stimulate or intensify passion. Thus, if we feel roused to anger, we should avoid excited gestures, and words, holding our peace until calm is restored; if it be question of a too ardent attachment to some person, we should avoid any meeting, any conversation with that person, and above all we should refrain from showing, even in an indirect way, the affection we feel. In this wise, passion gradually subsides.

800. b) If it be question of some *pleasure*-passion one must strive to forget the object of that passion.

In order to accomplish this: 1) one must apply the mind and the imagination to any wholesome activity apt to divert attention from the object of passion; one must seek to engage all the powers of the mind on some absorbing subject of study, on the solution of some question or problem, or find distraction in play, social intercourse, conversation, walks, etc... 2) Then, when calm ensues one should have recourse to such moral considerations as may strengthen the will against the allurements of pleasure: considerations of the *natural* order, such as the untoward consequences, for the present and the future, with which a dangerous attachment, a too sentimental friendship may be fraught (n. 603); but above all, one should appeal to *supernatural* considerations, for instance, that it is impossible to advance in the way of perfection so long as we cling to such attachments, that these are but chains we forge for ourselves, that we thereby risk our salvation, that through our fault scandal may be given, etc.

If it be some *aggressive* passion with which we have to deal, anger for example, we must first of all, through instant flight, allow the passion time to cool; then we can take the offensive, face the difficulty, convince ourselves through rational considerations and chiefly through motives of faith that it is unworthy of man, unworthy of a Christian to yield himself a willing prey to anger or to hatred; that serenity, self-control is the highest, the noblest course to follow, the one most consistent with the Gospel.

801. c) Lastly, *positive acts directly opposed* to the harassing passion must be elicited.

If we experience dislike for any one we must act as if we wished to gain his good graces, strive to serve him, be amiable towards him and above all pray for him. Nothing so empties the heart of all bitterness as an earnest prayer offered for an enemy. If, on the contrary, we feel a too ardent affection for any one we shall avoid his company or, if this be impossible, treat him with that cold formality, that sort of courteous

indifference wherewith we treat the rank and file of human beings. These contrary acts finally succeed in weakening passion.

3° THE DIRECTION OF PASSIONS TOWARDS GOOD

802. We have said that the passions are not in themselves evil; all can without exception be turned to good.

a) *Love* and *joy* can be directed towards pure and lawful family-affection, towards good and supernatural friendship, but chiefly towards Our Lord, Who is the most tender, the most generous, the most devoted of friends. This, then, is what matters most, that we center our hearts on Him by reading, meditation, and by actually carrying out in our lives the teachings contained in the two chapters of the Following of Christ, "*On the love of Jesus above all things*," and "*On familiar friendship with Jesus*," two chapters which have proved a potent source of inspiration to many souls.

b) *Hatred* and *aversion* can be turned against sin, against vice, and against whatever leads to them, in order that we may loathe them and fly from them: "*I have hated iniquity*,".

c) *Desire* is transformed into lawful ambition; into the natural ambition of doing honor to one's family, one's country, and into the supernatural ambition of becoming a saint, an apostle.

d) *Sadness*, instead of degenerating into melancholy, becomes a sweet resignation under trials, which are for the Christian soul a seed of glory; or it is changed into tender compassion for the suffering Christ, loaded down with insults; or it is turned towards afflicted souls.

e) *Hope* becomes a Christian virtue of unflinching trust in God and multiplies our energies for good.

f) *Despair* takes the form of a rightful mistrust of self, based upon our own insufficiency and our sins, but tempered by trust in God.

g) *Fear* is no longer that sense of depression which weakens the soul; but in the Christian it is a source of power. The Christian fears sin, he fears hell; but this righteous fear inspires him with courage in the struggle against evil. He fears God above all, he dreads to offend his Maker and treads under foot human respect.

h) *Anger* instead of causing us to lose self-control, is but a just and holy indignation that strengthens us against evil.

i) *Boldness* becomes *prowess* in the face of obstacles and dangers; the greater the difficulty we encounter, the more eager we are to make efforts to overcome it.

803. To attain these happy results, there is nothing like *meditation*, accompanied by devout affections and generous resolutions. Thereby, we conceive an *ideal*, and form deep-seated *convictions* that help us daily to approach that ideal. The purpose in view is to evoke and nurture in the soul such *thoughts* and *feelings* as are in harmony with the virtues we want to practice, and to remove images and impressions allied to the vices we want to shun. These

results cannot be better realized than by the practice of daily meditation after the manner noted in no. 679 and following. In this intimate converse with God, infinite Truth and infinite Goodness, virtue becomes every day more attractive and vice more loathsome, whilst the will strengthened by convictions draws the passions towards good instead of allowing itself to be drawn by these towards evil.

4° HOW TO MODERATE THE PASSIONS

804. a) Even when the passions are directed towards good, one must know how to temper them, that is to say, one must know how to make them obey the dictates of reason and the control of the will, both reason and will being guided in turn by the light of faith and by grace. Without this restraining influence, the passions would at times run to *excess*, for they are by nature too impetuous.

Thus, the desire to pray fervently may become a strain; love for Jesus may manifest itself in forced emotions which wear out both body and soul; untimely zeal results in overstrain, indignation degenerates into anger, and joy into dissipation of mind. We are particularly exposed to such excesses in this age in which the feverish activity of our fellow-men readily becomes contagious. Even when these vehement impulses are directed towards good, they weary both mind and body and cannot, in any event, be of lasting duration, for *vigilance is shortlived*, whereas it is sustained effort that best secures spiritual progress.

805. b) We must, therefore, submit our activity to the control of a wise director, and follow the dictates of Christian prudence.

1) In the training of our desires and of our passions there must be a certain *habitual* moderation, a kind of calm tranquillity, and we must avoid being constantly under a strain. We have a long journey ahead and it is important that we save our strength, since our poor human machine cannot be forever under pressure without danger of collapse.

2) Before a great expenditure of effort, prudence demands that we enforce a certain rest, that we put a certain curb upon our ambitions, even the most legitimate, and upon our zeal, even the most ardent and the purest. Our Lord Himself gave us the example in this. From time to time He invited His disciples to rest: "*Come apart into a desert place and rest a little.*"¹

Thus directed and tempered, the passions, far from constituting an obstacle to perfection, will be effective means of daily growth in holiness.

¹ *Mark.*, VI, 31.

§ IV. The Discipline of the Higher Faculties

The higher faculties, the *intellect* and the *will*, which make man what he is, need likewise to be disciplined, for they also have been affected by original sin, n. 75.

I. *The Discipline of the Intellect*¹

806. We have been endowed with understanding, that we may know truth, and above all that we may know God and things divine. It is God Who is the true light of the mind. He illumines us with a twofold light, that of *reason* and that of *faith*. In our present state, we cannot come to the fulness of truth, without the joint help of these two lights. To scorn either of them is to blindfold our eyes. The discipline of the intellect is all the more important, since it is the intellect that enlightens the will and enables it to direct its course towards good. It is the intellect which, under the name of *conscience*, is the guide of our moral and our supernatural life. That it may rightly fulfil its office, its defects must be corrected. The chief of these are ignorance, curiosity, hastiness, pride and obstinacy.

807. 1° Ignorance is overcome by a constant and systematic application to study, above all, to the study of whatever refers to our last end, and to the means of attaining it. It would be irrational to concern ourselves with all sciences and neglect the science of salvation.

Indeed, each one must study those branches of human knowledge that relate to his duties of state; but the foremost duty being that of knowing God in order to love Him, to neglect this would be inexcusable. Yet, how many Christians there are, who, though well versed in some branch or other of learning, have but a very imperfect acquaintance with Christian truths, Christian doctrines, Christian morals, and Christian asceticism!

808. 2° Curiosity is a disease of the mind, which is one of the causes of religious ignorance, for it leads us to seek too eagerly the knowledge of things that delight us rather than of things that are profitable to us, and thus to lose precious time.

In order to overcome curiosity we must: 1) study before all else, not what is pleasing, but what is profitable, especially what is necessary. "*What is more necessary comes first*", said St. Bernard, and we must not be occupied with the rest except by way of recreation. Hence, books that feed the imagination rather than the mind should be read

¹ *Cursus Asceticus*, I. P., 94-102. MATURIN, *Self-Knowledge and Self-Discipline*, P. 141-179; PAYOT, *The Education of the Will*, Bk. II, C. I, II.

sparingly; such are, for the most part, novels, newspapers and reviews of a worldly character. 2) In reading, we must avoid any undue eagerness, the desire to *rush through* a volume. It is especially when we read serious works that it is important to go slowly, the better to understand and to relish what we read (n. 582). 3) This will be all the easier, if we study, not from curiosity, not merely for the sake of knowledge, but from a supernatural motive, to improve ourselves and to enlighten others: "*That they edify others, and this is charity... that they be edified themselves, and this is prudence.*"¹ For, as St. Augustine tells us, knowledge should be put to the service of love: "*Let knowledge be used in order to erect the structure of charity.*"² This holds true even in the study of things spiritual. Some there are who seek in the pursuit of such studies satisfaction for their curiosity and their pride rather than the purification of their heart and the practice of mortification.³

809. 3° Pride is to be avoided, that pride of intellect which is more dangerous and more difficult to overcome than the pride of will, as Scupoli + says.

This is the pride that renders faith and obedience to superiors difficult. One wants to be self-sufficient; the more confidence one has in one's own judgment the more reluctantly does one accept the teachings of faith, or the more readily does one submit these to criticism and to personal interpretation. In like manner, one so trusts to one's own wisdom, that it is with repugnance that others are consulted, especially superiors. Hence, regrettable mistakes occur. Hence comes also obstinacy of judgment, resulting in the final and sweeping condemnation of such opinions as differ from our own. Herein lies one of the most common causes of strife between Christian and Christian, at times even between Catholic writers. St. Augustine calls those who cause unfortunate dissensions, destructive of peace and of the bond of charity, "*Dividers of unity, enemies of peace, without charity, puffed up with vanity, well pleased with themselves and great in their own eyes.*"⁵

810. To heal this intellectual pride: 1) we must first of all submit ourselves with childlike docility to the teachings of faith. We are undoubtedly allowed to seek that understanding of our dogmas which is obtained by a patient and laborious quest with the aid of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, especially St. Augustine and St. Thomas; but as the Vatican Council⁶ says, this must be done with piety and with discretion, following the maxim of St. Anselm: "*Faith, seeking understanding.*" Thus we avoid that hypercritical attitude that attenuates and minimizes our dogmas under pretense of explaining them. We submit our judgment not only to the truths of faith but to the directions of the Holy See. With regard to such questions

¹ S. BERNARD, *In Cant.*, sermon XXXVI, n. 3.

² *Epist.*, LV, C. 22, n. 39, P. L., XXXIII, 223.

³ SCUPOLI, *Spiritual Combat*, C. IX. — ⁴ *Loc. cit.* — ⁵ *Sermo III* Pasche, n. 4.

⁶ DENZING., n. 1796.

as are open to discussion, we give others the same freedom as we claim for ourselves and refrain from taking an attitude of contempt for the opinions of others. Thus, minds are at peace.

2) In the discussions, we hold with others, we must seek, not the satisfaction of our pride and the triumph of our ideas, but the truth. It seldom happens that there is not in the contrary opinions a kernel of truth that has so far escaped our notice. The best means of drawing close to the truth, as well as of observing the laws of humility and charity, is to listen attentively and without prejudice to the reasons adduced by our opponents and to admit whatever is true in their remarks.

To sum up, in order to discipline the mind we must study what is most necessary and pursue this study with method, with perseverance and with supernatural motives, that is to say, with the desire to know and to love the truth and to live by it.

II. *The Training of the Will*

811. 1° **Necessity.** The will is in man the governing faculty. Being free, the will imparts its freedom, not only to the acts it performs itself, but to those acts it *bids* the other faculties perform; it gives them their merit or their demerit. The discipline of the will means the discipline of the entire man, and a well-disciplined will is one that is strong enough to *govern* the lower faculties and docile enough to *submit* itself to God. These are the two functions of the will.

Both are difficult. Ofttimes the lower faculties rebel against the will and submit only when one has learned to add tact to firmness; for the will does not exercise an *absolute* power over our sense faculties, but a kind of moral influence, a power of persuasion that leads them to compliance (n. 56):

Hence, it is only with difficulty and through oft-renewed efforts that we succeed in bringing the sense faculties and the passions under the sway of the will. Likewise, it is not easy to yield full submission of the will to God, because we aspire to a certain independence, and because God's will, in order to sanctify us, often demands sacrifices from which we naturally shrink. We often prefer our own tastes, our own whims, to the holy will of God. Here again, mortification becomes a necessity.

812. 2° **Practical means.** In order to effect the right education of the will, we must render it *supple* enough to obey God in all things and *strong* enough to control the body and the sensitive appetites. To attain this end, *obstacles must be removed* and *positive means* employed.

A) The chief obstacles are : a) *from within* : 1) *lack of reflection* : we do not reflect before acting and follow the impulse of the moment, passion, routine, caprice. We must take thought before acting and ask ourselves what God demands of us. 2) *Over-eagerness*, which, producing too great a strain, depletes the energies of body and soul to no purpose, and often causes us to stray in the direction of evil. We need self-possession and self-restraint even in doing good. 3) *Indifference*, may start up a lasting fire rather than a darting flame. 4) *Indecision, sloth, lack of moral stamina*, which paralyze or atrophy our will-power. We must, then, strengthen our convictions and build up our energies. 4) *The fear of failure*, or lack of confidence, an attitude which notably weakens our power. We must, therefore, remind ourselves that, with God's help, we are sure of attaining good results.

813. b) To these interior obstacles are added others coming from *without* : 1) *human respect*, which makes us slaves of other men and causes us to stand in fear of their criticisms or their mockery. This is combated by realizing that what matters is not man's judgment, always liable to error, but the ever-wise and infallible judgment of God; 2) *bad example*, which draws us all the more easily as it is in accord with the tendency of our nature. We must remember that the only model we are to imitate is Jesus Christ, Our Master and Our Head (n. 136 and foll.), and that the ways of the Christian must go counter to the ways of the world (n. 214).

814. B) The positive means consist in a harmonious combination of the work of the *mind*, the *will* and *grace*.

a) It is the province of the *mind* to furnish those deep-seated convictions that are at once a guide and a stimulus to the will.

These convictions are those calculated to determine the will in the choice of what is in conformity with the will of God. They are thus summed up : God is my one end and Jesus Christ is the way which I must take to reach Him ; I must, then, do all things for God, in union with Jesus Christ. Only one obstacle sin, can come in the way of the attainment of my end. I must, then, flee from sin and should I have the misfortune of falling into it I must immediately atone for it. Only one means is necessary and suffices to avoid sin, always to do the will of God. I must, then, ever strive to know His will and conform my conduct to it. In order to succeed in this, I shall frequently repeat the words of St. Paul at the moment of his conversion : "*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*"¹ In the evening, in my examination of conscience, I shall reproach myself for the least failing.

815. b) Such convictions exert a powerful influence upon the will, which, in turn, must act with *decision, firmness*,

and *constancy*. 1) *Decision* is necessary. Once we have reflected and prayed, according to the importance of the action we are about to perform, we must make an immediate decision, in spite of the amount of hesitation we may feel. Life is too short to lose time in such long deliberations. We take sides with what seems to be more in accordance with the divine will, and God Who sees our good dispositions will bless our action. 2) We must be *firm* in this decision. It is not enough to say : *I should like, I wish; these are but yearnings*. We must say : *I will, and I will at all costs*, and then set ourselves to the task without waiting for the morrow or for some grand opportunity. It is firmness in small things that secures fidelity in the greater. 3) This firmness, however, is *not synonymous with violence*; it is *calm*, for it must endure; and in order to give it *constancy*, we must often renew our efforts without ever allowing ourselves to be discouraged by failure; we are never vanquished except when we give up. In spite of a few failures, in spite even of a few wounds, we must consider ourselves the victors, because supported by God's grace, we are in reality invincible. If we have the misfortune of falling, we rise immediately. For the Divine Healer of souls there is no incurable wound, no incurable illness.

816. c) In the last analysis it is upon the grace of God that we must learn to rely. If we beg for it with humility and confidence, it will never be refused to us, and with it we are invincible. We must, then, often renew, especially before every important action, our convictions regarding the absolute necessity of grace; we must ask for it with insistence, in union with Our Lord so as to make its best-owal more certain. We must remind ourselves that Jesus Christ is not only our *model* but our *co-worker*, and lean confidently upon Him, assured that in Him we are powerful to undertake and to bring to completion all things pertaining to salvation : "*I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.*"¹ Then, our will is strong, since it shares in the very strength of God : "*The Lord is my strength;*"² it is free, for true liberty does not consist in yielding to our passions, but in securing the triumph of reason and will over instinct and sensuality.

817. Conclusion. Thus will be accomplished the purpose we have assigned to mortification — to bring our

¹ *Acts*, IX, 6.

² *Phil.*, IV, 13. — ² *Ps.* CXVII, 14.

senses and our lower faculties under subjection to the will and the will to God.

CHAPTER IV

The Struggle against the Capital Sins¹

818. At bottom this struggle is but a species of mortification.

In order to complete the purification of the soul and prevent it from relapsing into sin, we must set upon the source of the evil in us, which is the threefold concupiscence. The general characteristics of this we have already described in numbers 193-209; but being the root of the seven *capital sins*, these evil inclinations must be known and attacked. They are tendencies rather than sins; however, they are called *sins*, because they lead to sins; they are termed *capital*, because they are the fountain-head or source of other sins.

These tendencies can be referred to the threefold concupiscence in this way: from pride are born *vain-glory*, *envy*, and *anger*; from the *concupiscence of the flesh* issue *gluttony*, *lust*, and *sloth*; lastly, the concupiscence of the eyes is one with *avarice* or the inordinate love of riches.

819. The struggle against the seven capital sins has always had a prominent place in Christian spirituality. Cassian treats of it at length in his *Conferences* and in his *Institutes*;² he enumerates eight instead of seven, because he distinguishes pride from vain-glory. St. Gregory the Great³ clearly distinguishes the seven capital sins, all of which he traces to pride. St. Thomas also traces them all to pride and shows how they can be logically classified, if account is taken of the *special ends* towards which man is drawn. The will may be drawn towards an object by a twofold motion, the search for some apparent good, or flight from an apparent evil. The apparent good sought by the will may be: 1) *praise or honor*, a *spiritual* good, pursued in an inordinate manner by persons who are vain; 2) the preservation

¹ CASSIAN, *De concubiorum institutis*, l. V. c. I, P. L., XLIX, 202 and foll.; *Collationes*, coll. V. c. X, *ibid.*, 621 and foll.; ST. JOHN CLIMACUS, *Scala Paradisi*, XXII, P. G., LXXXVIII, 948 and foll.; ST. GREGORY THE GREAT, *Moral.*, l. XXXI, c. XLV, P. L., LXXXVI, 620 and foll.; ST. THOMAS, I-II, q. 84, a. 3-4; *De Malo*, q. 8, a. 1; ST. BONAVENTURE, *In II. Sent.*, dist. XLII, dub. III; NOËL ALEXANDRE, *De Peccatis* (Theol. cursus *Migne*, XI, 707-1168); ALVAREZ DE PAZ, t. II, Lib. I, P. 2, De extirpatione vitiorum; PHIL. DE LA SIE TRINITÉ, P. I, Tr. II, disc. II and III, De vitiorum eradicatione et passionum mortificatione; CAKID, *Bona, Manuductio ad cætum*, cap. III-IX; ALIBERT, *Physiologie des Passions*, 1827; DESCURET, *La Médecine des Passions*, Paris, 1860; PAULHAN, *Les Caractères*, Paris, 1902; LAUMONIER, *La Thérapeutique des péchés capitaux*, Paris, Alcan, 1922.

² *De concubiorum institutis*, Lib. V. C. I; *Collat.*, col. V. c. X.

³ *Moral.*, C. XXXI, c. 45, P. L., LXXXVI, 620-622.

of self or of the race, *corporal* goods, sought after excessively by *glutinous* and *impure persons* respectively; 3) *external* things, loved to excess by such as are *avaricious*. The apparent evil from which we flee may consist: 1) in the effort required for the attainment of good, which effort the *slothful* evade; 2) in the prospect of lost prestige, which both the *jealous* and the *irritable* dread, though in different ways. Thus, the differentiation of the seven capital sins is based on the seven special ends which the sinner has in view.

We shall follow that division which shows the connection between the capital vices and our threefold concupiscence.

ART. I. PRIDE AND THE VICES RELATED THERETO¹

§ I. Pride

820. Pride is a *deviation* of that legitimate sentiment which prompts us to prize what is good in us, and to seek the esteem of others in the measure in which this is useful. There is no doubt that we *can* and that we *must* prize the good which God has given us, acknowledging that He is its first principle and last end. This is a sentiment that honors God and makes for self-respect. We may also desire that others see and appreciate the good that is in us and that they give glory to God for it, just as we ourselves must in turn recognize and appreciate their good qualities. This mutual regard fosters good relations among men.

However, these two tendencies may either go astray, or go beyond due limits. At times we forget that God is the source of these gifts, and *we attribute them to ourselves*. This constitutes a disorder, for it denies, at least implicitly, that God is our first principle. In like manner we are tempted to act for self, or to gain the esteem of others, instead of acting for God, and of referring to Him all the honor. This is again a disorder, for it denies, at least in the same implicit manner, that God is our last end. Such is the twofold disorder found in this vice. We can, then, define pride as an *inordinate love of self, which causes us to consider ourselves, explicitly or implicitly, as our first beginning and last end*. It is a species of idolatry, for we make gods of ourselves, as Bossuet remarks (n. 204). The better to combat pride, we shall expose: 1° the *principal forms* it takes, 2° the *faults* it engenders, 3° its *malice*, 4° the *remedies* to be applied.

¹ ST. THOMAS, II^a II^e, q. 162, q. 132; *de Malo*, q. 8-9; BOSSUET, *Tr. de la Concupiscence*, c. 10-23; *Sermon sur l'Ambition*; BOURDALOUE, *Carême*, Sermon, pour le mercredi de la 2^e sem.; ALIBERT, *op. cit.*, t. I, p. 23-57; DESCURET, *op. cit.*, t. II, p. 191-240; PAULHAN, *Les Caractères*, p. 167; BEAUDENOM, *The Path of Humility*; THOMAS, *L'Éducation des sentiments*, Paris, Alcan, 1904, p. 113-124, 133-148; LAUMONIER, *op. cit.*, C. VII.

I. The Principal Forms of Pride.

821. 1° The first form of pride is to regard oneself, explicitly or implicitly, as one's own *first principle*.

A) There are but few who go as far as to consider themselves *explicitly* as their own first principle.

a) This is the sin of atheists, who wilfully deny God, because they want no master, "No God, no Master." Of such the Psalmist speaks when he says: "The fool hath said in his heart: there is no God."¹ b) This was, *equivalently*, the sin of *Lucifer*, who, desiring to be a *rule unto himself*, refused to submit to God; the sin of our first parents, who wishing to be like God wanted to know of themselves what is good and what is evil; the sin of *heretics*, who like Luther refused to acknowledge the authority of the Church established by God; the sin of *rationalists*, who in their pride of intellect refuse to submit their reason to faith. This is also the sin of *certain intellectuals*, who, too proud to accept the traditional interpretation of dogmas, attenuate and deform them to make them conform to their own views.

822. B) A greater number fall into this fault *implicitly* by acting as if the *natural* and *supernatural* gifts which God has freely bestowed upon them were in every sense their own. True, they recognize in theory that God is their first principle, but in practice they esteem themselves beyond measure, as if they were the source of the qualities they possess.

a) Some there are who *delight* in their qualities and their worth as if these were due solely to themselves. "The soul," says Bossuet, "seeing its own beauty, has delighted in itself and has become absorbed in the contemplation of its own excellence. It has failed for an instant to refer all it has to God; it has forgotten its own dependence; it has first centered upon self and then surrendered to it. But in seeking to free himself from God and the laws of justice, man has become the slave of his sin."²

823. b) Graver still is the pride of those who, after the manner of the Stoics, attribute to themselves the *virtues they practice*, the pride of those who imagine that the free gifts of God are the *wages due their own merits*, or that their good works are more their own than God's, who in reality is their principal cause; the pride of those who look complacently upon such good works, as if these were wholly their own.³

824. C) By the same principle we *exaggerate our personal qualities*.

a) We close our eyes to our defects, we look at our good qualities through magnifying glasses, as it were, and we end by attributing to ourselves qualities we do not possess or, at least, qualities which have only the appearance of virtue. Thus, we give alms for show and we believe ourselves charitable when we are simply proud; we fancy we

are saints because we enjoy sensible consolations, or because we have given expression to beautiful thoughts, or taken good resolutions, whilst in reality we have not advanced beyond the first few steps on the way to perfection. Others pride themselves on being broad-minded because they make little of small practices, wishing to sanctify themselves by doing great things. b) From this there is but one step to an *unjust preference of self to others*. We examine their defects with a microscope, and we are scarcely conscious of our own; we see the mote in the neighbor's eye, but not the beam in our own. At times we come, like the Pharisee, to despise our brethren; at other times, without going that far, we unjustly lower them in our estimation, and we believe ourselves above, whilst in reality we are below them. It is by the selfsame principle that we seek to lord it over our brethren and have our superiority over them recognized. e) In relation to *Superiors*, this pride takes the form of censure and fault-finding, prompting us to scrutinize minutely all their acts, all their moves, we want to pass judgment on all things, to control all things. Thus we render obedience far more difficult for ourselves; we find it hard to submit to the authority and the decisions of superiors; to ask their permission becomes a hardship; we aspire to independence, that is, to be ourselves our own first principle.

825. 2° The second form of pride consists in considering ourselves, explicitly or implicitly, as *our last end*, by performing our actions without referring them to God, and by desiring to be praised for them as if they were exclusively our work. This fault proceeds from the first, for whoever looks upon himself as his own first principle will also to be his own last end. Here we must recall the distinctions already made.

A) Hardly any one *explicitly* considers himself as his own last end, except an atheist or an unbeliever.

B) Yet, many behave in practice as if they shared in this error. a) They want to be praised, to be complimented upon their good works, as if they were themselves the principal authors, and as if they were responsible only to themselves. Instead of referring all to God, they expect congratulations for success, as if all the honor were due to them. b) They are prompted by *egotism*, they act for their own ends, caring little for the glory of God, and still less for the welfare of their neighbor. They even go so far as to take for granted that others must organize their lives to please and to serve them; thus they make themselves the *center*, and so to speak, the end toward which others are to gravitate. What else is this if not the unconscious usurpation of the rights of God? e) There are devout persons who, without going so far as to seek self in piety; they complain of God when He does not flood them with consolations; they pine with grief when in the midst of dryness, and thus form the false idea that the aim of piety is the enjoyment of consolations, forgetting that the glory of God must be the supreme end of all our actions, above all, of prayer and spiritual exercises.

826. We must, then, acknowledge the fact that pride, under one form or the other, is a very common fault, even

¹ Ps. XIII, 1.—² Tr. on *Concupiscentie*, C. XI.
³ Ibid., C. XXIII; OLIER, *Introd.*, C. VII.

among those who follow the path of perfection, a fault that stays with us through all the stages of the spiritual life and disappears only when we die. Beginners are hardly aware of it because their study of self does not reach deep enough. Their attention must be drawn to this point; the more common forms of this fault must be indicated to them, so that they may make these the subject of their particular examination.

II. Defects Born of Pride

The chief ones are *presumption*, *ambition*, and *vain-glory*.

827. ¹⁰ *Presumption* consists in an inordinate desire and hope whereby we want to do things which are beyond our strength. It proceeds from too high an opinion of ourselves, of our natural faculties, of our knowledge, of our strength, of our virtues.

a) From the *intellectual* point of view we think ourselves capable of approaching and solving the most difficult questions, or at least of undertaking studies which are beyond the reach of our talents. We easily persuade ourselves that we abound in judgment and wisdom, and instead of learning how to doubt, we settle with finality the most controverted questions: b) From the *moral* point of view we fancy that we are possessed of sufficient light to be our own guides, and that it is hardly profitable to consult a spiritual director. We convince ourselves that in spite of past faults we need fear no relapses, and we imprudently walk into occasions of sin, and then we fall. From this come discouragement and vexation that often result in fresh falls. e) From the *spiritual* point of view, we have but little relish for hidden and mortifying virtues, preferring those that are more brilliant: instead of building upon the sound foundation of humility, we dream about greatness of soul, about strength of character, about a magnanimous spirit, about apostolic zeal, and about the imaginary successes we lay in store for the future. The first serious temptations, however, make us aware that the will is still weak and wavering. At times we make little of the ordinary ways of prayer, and of what are called the little exercises of piety, aspiring to extraordinary graces while we are still only at the beginning of the spiritual life.

828. ²⁰ This *presumption*, added to pride, begets *ambition*, that is to say, *the inordinate love of honors, of dignities, of authority over others*. Because we presume overmuch on our strength, and because we consider ourselves superior to others, we want to dominate them, to rule them and impose upon them our ideas.

This disorder, says St. Thomas,¹ may show itself in three ways: 1) One seeks for undeserved honors, honors which are above one; 2) one seeks them for oneself, for

one's own glory, and not for the glory of God; 3) one takes delight in honors for their own sake, without making them redound to the good of others, contrary to the order established by God Who requires superiors to procure the welfare of those under them.

This ambition invades every sphere of life: 1) the *political* realm, where men aspire to rule others, and that ofttimes at the price of so many meannesses, so many compromises, so many questionable practices, in order to secure the votes of constituents; 2) the *intellectual* domain, wherein men seek stubbornly to impose their ideas on others, even with regard to questions open to free discussion; 3) *civil* life, where men vie for the first places,¹ high office, and the plaudits of the crowd; 4) even the *ecclesiastical* state is not exempt, for as Bossuet² remarks, "How many safeguards have not been found necessary, even in ecclesiastical and religious elections, in order to curb ambition, to prevent factions, intrigues, underhand dealings, and the most criminal pledges and practices, simoniacal contracts, and other such irregularities too common in these matters? We cannot boast that these safeguards have uprooted such abuses; they have hardly done more than to conceal or to restrain them in part." And, as St. Gregory³ notes, are there not those, even in the ranks of the clergy, who want to be called doctors, and eagerly seek the first places and the praise of men? "They seek to appear learned, they long to excel others, and, as Truth bears witness, they crave the first salutations in public, the first places at table, the highest seats in councils."

This fault, then, in more general than one would at first sight believe, and is closely allied with vanity.

829. ³⁰ *Vanity* is an *inordinate love for the esteem of others*. It differs from pride, which is pleasure taken in one's own excellence; it generally springs from pride. When one has conceived too high an esteem for oneself one naturally desires the approbation of others.

830. A) **The Malice of Vanity.** We may rightfully desire the esteem of others, if we wish that our qualities, natural or supernatural, be acknowledged in order that God be glorified and that our influence for good be extended. Such a desire is not sinful, for it is in order that what is good should be esteemed, provided we acknowledge God as the author of that good and that He alone must be given the praise for it.⁴ The most that can be said against such desires is that it is dangerous to center our thoughts upon them, because we run the risk of seeking the esteem of others for selfish purposes.

¹ It is not solely among the learned and the wealthy that this defect is found, Bossuet speaks (*Tr. on Concupiscence*, C. XVI) of the country-folk who peevishly contend for the more honorable places in the churches, going so far as to say that they will cease to attend divine services unless their wishes are given heed.

² *Tr. on Concupiscence*, C. XVI. — ³ *Pastoral*; P. I, C. I, P. L., LXXVII, 14.

⁴ Cf. St. THOMAS, IIa IIæ, q. 132, a. 1.

¹ *Sum. theol.*, IIa, IIæ, q. 131, a. 1.

The disorder, then, consists in wanting to be held in esteem for one's own sake, without referring this honor to God, Who has placed in us whatever good we possess; it may also consist in wanting to be esteemed for the sake of vain things, undeserving of praise; or it may consist in seeking the esteem of those whose judgment is worthless, of wordlings for instance, who hold in esteem only vain things.

No one has given a better description of this fault than St. Francis de Sales: "We call that glory *vain* which we assume to ourselves, either for what is not in us, or for what is in us, and belongs to us, but deserves not that we should glory in it. The nobility of our ancestors, the favor of great men, and popular honor, are things, not in us, but either in our progenitors, or in the esteem of other men. Some become proud and insolent, either by riding a good horse, wearing a feather in their hat, or by being dressed in a fine suit of clothes; but who does not see the folly of this? for if there be any glory in such things, the glory belongs to the horse, the bird, and the tailor... Others value themselves for a well-trimmed beard, for curled locks, or soft hands; or because they can dance, sing or play; but are not these effeminate men, who seek to raise their reputation by so frivolous and foolish things? Others, for a little learning, would be honored and respected by the whole world, as if every one ought to become their pupil, and account them his masters. These are called pedants. Others strut like peacocks, contemplating their beauty and think themselves admired by every one. All this is extremely vain, foolish, and impertinent; and the glory which is raised on so weak foundations is justly esteemed vain and frivolous."¹

831. B) Faults that spring from vanity. Vanity produces many faults which are but its outward manifestation. The principal ones are *boasting, ostentation* and *hypocrisy*.

1) *Boasting* is the habit of speaking of self or of those things that can redound to our advantage with a view to gaining the esteem of others. There are those who speak of themselves, of their family, of their success with a candor that amuses their hearers; others cleverly turn the trend of conversation to a subject wherein they can display their knowledge; others timidly speak of their defects, harboring the secret hope that these will be excused and their good qualities thereby made more apparent.²

2) *Ostentation* consists in drawing to self the attention of others by a certain way of acting, by pompous display, and by singularity.

3) *Hypocrisy* takes on the outward appearance of virtue to cover very real vices.

III. The Malice of Pride

To form a right idea of this malice we may consider pride in itself and in its effects.

¹ *Devout Life*, III, C. IV.

² *Spirit of St. Francis de Sales*, c. XIX.

832. 1^o In itself: A) Pride properly so called, that pride which consciously and wilfully usurps, even if implicitly, the rights of God, is a grievous sin, nay it is the gravest of sins, says St. Thomas,¹ because it is a refusal to submit to God's sovereign will.

a) To want to be *independent*, to refuse obedience to God or to His lawful representatives, in a serious matter, constitutes a mortal sin, since one thereby revolts against God, our rightful Sovereign.

b) To attribute to oneself what evidently comes from God, and especially the gifts of grace, constitutes likewise a grievous fault, for it is to deny implicitly that God is the first principle of whatever good is in us. Some are guilty of this, for example, those who say that they have "made themselves what they are."²

c) One sins gravely, again, when one wants to act *for oneself to the exclusion of God*, for this is to deny God His right to be our last end.

833. B) Mitigated pride, which indeed acknowledges God as the first principle or last end but does not render Him all that is due to Him, and implicitly robs Him of a part of His glory, is without doubt a venial fault. Such is the fault of those who glory in their good qualities or their virtues, as if they were convinced that all is theirs in their own right. It is also the fault of the presumptuous, of the vain, of the ambitious, who, however, do nothing against a divine or a human law in serious matter. At all events, such sins can become mortal if they lead to acts that are grievously reprehensible. Thus, vanity, which in itself is but a venial fault, becomes a grievous one when it causes us to contract debts which we are unable to pay, or when it seeks to stir in others an inordinate love. Pride, then, must be examined also in its results.

834. 2^o In its effects: A) Unrestrained pride produces at times *disastrous effects*. How many wars have been started through the pride of rulers and sometimes through the pride of nations themselves!² Without going that far, how many family discussions, how many personal hatreds are not due to this vice? The Fathers rightly teach that it is the root of all other vices and that it vitiates many a virtuous act, since it causes men to perform them from selfish motives.³

835. B) Taking the point of view of perfection, the one with which we are concerned, we can say that pride is the archenemy of perfection because it creates in the soul

¹ *Sum. theol.*, II^a II^{ae}, q. 162, c. 5-6.

² St. CHRYSOSTOM, *in Ep. II ad Thess.*, C. I, homil. I, n. 2, P. G., 471.

³ St. GREGORY, *Moral.*, I, XXXIV, c. 33, n. 48, P. L., LXXVI, 744.

a barren waste and is the source of numerous sins. a) It deprives us of many graces and much merit:

1) It deprives us of many graces, because God Who is bountiful with His grace to the humble, withholds it from the proud: "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble."¹ Let us weigh well these words: God resisteth the proud, "Because", says Father Olier, ² "the proud man, challenging God to His face, is resisted by the Almighty in his insolent and horrible pretensions; and, since God wills to remain what He is, He lays low and destroys such as rise up against Him."

2) It deprives us of much merit. One of the essential conditions for meriting is purity of intention. But the proud man acts for self or in order to please men, instead of acting for God, and thus deserves the reproach addressed to the Pharisees, who paraded their good works before men and who for this reason could expect no recompense from God: "Take heed that you do not your justice before men to be seen by them: otherwise you shall not have reward of your Father who is in heaven.... Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward."³

836. b) Pride is likewise a source of many faults:

1) Personal faults: through presumption one exposes oneself to danger and falls; through pride one fails to ask earnestly for the graces one needs and likewise falls; then come discouragement and the temptation to conceal sins in confession. 2) Faults against the neighbor: through pride one is unwilling to yield, even when in the wrong; one is caustic in speech; one indulges in harsh and heated discussions which bring dissension and discord; hence, acrimonious words, even unjust ones, against one's rivals in order to belittle them; hence, bitter criticism against Superiors and refusal to obey their orders.

837. c) Finally, pride is a source of unhappiness to those habitually given to it. Because we want to excel in all things and lord it over others, we have neither peace nor contentment, for we know no rest as long as we have not succeeded in vanquishing our antagonists and, since this is never fully accomplished, we are troubled, ill at ease and unhappy.

IV. The Remedies against Pride

838. We have already said (n. 207) that the great remedy against pride is the acknowledgment of the fact that God is the Author of all good, and that therefore to Him alone belongs all honor and glory. *Of ourselves* we are but nothingness and sin, and hence merit nothing but forgetfulness and contempt (n. 208).

839. ¹⁰ **We are but nothingness.** Beginners must form this conviction through meditation by pondering leisurely the following thoughts: I am nothing, I can do nothing, I am worth nothing.

A) I am nothing. — True, it has pleased the divine goodness to choose me out of millions of possible beings, to give me my existence, to endow me with life, with a spiritual and immortal soul, and for this I am bound to thank Him daily. Yet, a) *I came from nothing*, and by the very force of my being *I tend towards nothingness*, whereto I should surely return were it not for the abiding action of my Maker which sustains me. My being, then, is not mine, but is wholly God's, and it is to Him that I must render homage.

b) This being God has given me is a living reality, a great boon for which I shall never be able to return Him due thanks. Yet, wondrous as this being of mine is, side by side with the God-head it is as mere nothingness: "*And my substance is as nothing before thee,*"¹ for it is so imperfect. 1) This being is a *contingent being*, which could well cease to exist without detracting anything from the world's perfection. 2) It is a *borrowed being*, given to me on the explicit condition of remaining under the sway of God's supreme dominion. 3) It is a *frail being*, unable to subsist of itself, a being that ever needs the unceasing sustaining power of its Maker. Such being is, therefore, essentially *dependent* upon God, and has no other reason for its existence than that of giving glory to its Creator. To forget this dependence, to act as if our good qualities were absolutely our own and to boast of them, is an error hard to conceive; it is madness and injustice.

840. What we say of man considered in the order of nature is even truer of him in the *order of grace*, whereby we share in the life of God, wherefrom issue all our worth

¹ James, IV, 6. — ² Introduction, c. VI. — ³ Matt., VI, 1-2.

and all our grandeur, that grace which is essentially a free gift of God and of Jesus Christ, which we cannot for long keep without the help of God, and wherein we cannot grow without His supernatural concurrence (n. 126-128). For this especially we must say: "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift."¹ What ingratitude and injustice to attribute to self the least part of that gift essentially divine! "What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"²

841. B) Of myself I can do nothing. True, I have received from God wondrous powers that enable me to know and love truth and goodness. These faculties have been perfected by the supernatural virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. These gifts of nature and of grace blending so harmoniously and complementing one another so perfectly surpass all wonder. Yet, *of myself*, of my own accord, *I can do nothing* to set them in motion to work out their perfection. I can do nothing in the *natural* order without the concurrence of God; I can do nothing in the supernatural order without actual grace, not even conceive a good thought unto salvation, nor a desire supernaturally good. Knowing this, could I take pride in those natural and supernatural powers as if they were entirely my own? Here again there would be ingratitude and madness and injustice.

842. C) I am worth nothing. In truth, if I consider what God has placed within me, what He works in me through His grace, I am worth a great deal, I am beyond price: "For you are bought with a great price"³... *You are worth what God is worth.* I am worth the price which was paid for me, and the price paid for me was the blood of God Himself! Does the glory of my redemption and of my sanctification belong to me or to the Almighty? There can be no uncertain answer to such question. But still, urges my vanquished self-love, I have something that is my own, something that invests me with greatness, my free co-operation with God's concurrence and His grace. Indeed, we have therein our share, yet *not the principal* share. That free consent is the mere exercise of faculties freely bestowed on us by God, and at the very moment we give it, God is working within us as its principal cause: "For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to

accomplish."¹ Besides, for the one time that we agree to follow the impulse of grace, how many times are there when we resist grace or co-operate only half-heartedly? Truly, there is nothing wherein we should glory; rather there is cause for humiliation.

When a great artist creates a masterpiece, it is to him that we attribute it and not to the third or fourth rate artists who have been his collaborators. With far greater reason must we give to God the credit for our merits as their first and principal cause, since God, as the Church says with St. Augustine, but "*crowns His own gifts when He crowns our merits.*"

Therefore, from whatever point of view we see ourselves, whether we consider the great worth of the gifts wherewith we have been endowed, or the great value of our merits themselves, we find no cause for boasting, but cause for paying tribute to God and for thanking Him from our inmost heart. Moreover, we find that we have to beg His pardon for the bad use we have made of His gifts.

843. 2^o I am a sinner, and as such I merit *contempt*, all the contempt which it may please God to heap upon me. To convince ourselves of this, it suffices to recall what we have said about *mortal* and *venial* sin.

A) If I have committed but a single mortal sin, I have merited eternal humiliation, since I have merited hell. True, I entertain the hope that God has pardoned me, yet it remains none the less true that I have criminally assailed the majesty of God, that I have attempted a species of deicide, perpetrated a sort of spiritual suicide (n. 719), and that in order to atone to the Divine Majesty for that offence, I must be ready to accept, nay, even to wish for every possible humiliation, every slander, every calumny, every injury, every insult. All this is far below the just deserts of him who has offended a single time the infinite majesty of God. And if I have offended against it a great many times, what must be my resignation, nay, my joy, when the occasion offers to expiate my sins by enduring a shame that lasts but for a short time!

844. B) We have all committed *venial sins* and, no doubt, *deliberate* ones, thus making a willing choice in favor of our own wills and our own pleasure as against the will and the glory of the Almighty. This, we have said, (n. 715) constitutes an affront to the Divine Majesty, an offence meriting such abject humiliations, that, should we spend

¹ *Phil.*, II, 13.

² *11 Cor.*, IX, 15. — ³ *1 Cor.*, IV, 7. — ³ *1 Cor.*, VI, 20.

the whole of our lives in the exercise of humility, we should never be able of ourselves to give back to God the glory that we have unjustly taken from Him. If this way of speaking seems to us an exaggeration, let us recall the tears and the austerities which the Saints, who had been guilty of but venial faults, thought always insufficient for the cleansing of their souls and inadequate to repair the outrages offered to the majesty of God. These Saints saw this in a clearer light than we do, and if we think otherwise it is because we are blinded by our pride.

As *sinner*s, therefore, far from seeking the esteem of others, we must despise ourselves and accept all the humiliations that God may see fit to send us.

§ II. Envy¹

845. Envy is at once a *passion* and one of the *capital sins*. As a *passion* it consists in a sort of deep sadness experienced in the sensitive part of our nature because of the good we see in others. This sensitive impression is accompanied by a contraction of the heart, slowing the activity of this organ and producing a feeling of anguish.

Here we are mainly concerned with envy inasmuch as it is a capital sin, and we shall explain: 1° its *nature*, 2° its *malice*, 3° its *remedies*.

846. 1° **The Nature of Envy.** A) Envy is a *tendency to be saddened by another's good as if that good constituted an affront to our own superiority*. Often it coincides with a desire of seeing the neighbor deprived of the particular good that offends us.

This vice proceeds *from pride*, which can bear neither superior nor rival. When we are persuaded of our own superiority, we are saddened to see others better gifted than we are or, with no greater gifts than ours, succeeding better than we do. The object of envy is chiefly some brilliant quality; yet, with men of a serious turn of mind envy bears also upon solid qualities and even upon virtue.

This fault manifests itself in the pain we experience upon hearing the praises of others, and in the subsequent attempt we make to depreciate this good opinion by criticizing those that are thus commended.

847. B) Envy is often confounded with jealousy. They differ, however, in that the latter consists in an excessive love of our own good accompanied by the fear lest we be deprived of it by others. A student holding the first place in class, upon noting the progress made by a classmate, becomes jealous of him because he fears the latter may take away his rank. If we enjoy the affection of a friend and we fear this affection may be alienated by a rival friend, we become jealous of him. A man who has a large clientele, fearing lest it be reduced by a competitor, may likewise become jealous. Hence arises the jealousy at times abounding among professionals, among writers, and sometimes even among priests. The difference between envy and jealousy, to put it briefly, is this: *we are envious of another's good, and jealous of our own*.

C) There is also a difference between *envy* and *emulation*. The latter is a praiseworthy sentiment, urging us to imitate, to equal, and, if possible, to surpass the good qualities of others, but always by means that are fair.

848. 2° **Malice of Envy.** We can make a study of this malice *in itself* and in its *effects*.

A) *In itself*, envy is by nature a *mortal sin*, because it is directly opposed to the virtue of charity which requires us to rejoice in the good fortune of others. The more important the good we envy, the graver is our sin. Thus, says St. Thomas,¹ to make envy bear upon the spiritual goods of the neighbor, to be saddened at his spiritual progress or his apostolic success is a very grave sin. This is true only when these envious impulses are *fully consented to*; however, often they are mere emotional impressions, or at most, feelings in which there is but little reflection and will. These latter constitute only a venial fault.

849. B) In its *effects* envy is at times very culpable:

a) It stirs within us sentiments of *hatred*: we run the risk of conceiving a hatred for those whom we envy or of whom we feel jealous and, as a result, of speaking ill of them, of blackening their character, of calumniating them, of wishing them evil.

b) It tends to sow discord, not only between strangers, but between related families, and even among members of the same family. We need only to recall the history of Joseph and his brothers. These dissensions may go very far towards creating enmities and scandals. At times envy divides the Catholics of a given region to the great detriment of the Church.

c) It urges men on to the *immoderate quest for riches* and

¹ ST. CYPRIAN, *De zelo et livore*, P. L., IV, 637-652; ST. GREGORY, *Moral.*, I, V, c. 46, P. L., LXXV, 727-730; ST. THOMAS, II-II, q. 36; *De Malo*, q. 10; ALBERT, *op. cit.*, t. I, p. 331-340; DESCURET, t. II, p. 241-274; LAUMONIER, *op. cit.*, C. V.

¹ *Sum. Theol.*, II^a II^a, q. 36, a. 4, ad 2.

for honors: in order to surpass those whom we envy, we indulge in overtaxing work, take steps of a more or less questionable nature, by which we sin against loyalty and even against justice.

d) It *disturbs our peace of soul*: we know no peace nor tranquillity as long as we do not succeed in eclipsing, in subjugating our rivals, and since this happens but seldom, we live in perpetual anguish.

850. 3° **The Remedies For Envy.** They are *negative* or *positive*.

A) The negative means consist: a) in scorning the very first intimations of envy and of jealousy that arise in the heart, in crushing such sentiments as something vile, as one would crush a viper; b) in *distracting the mind*, by occupying ourselves with any other thing, and when calm returns by constantly bearing in mind that the good qualities of our neighbor do not lessen ours, but are a stimulus to imitation.

851. B) Among the *positive* means, two are especially important.

a) The first is drawn from the fact of our incorporation into Christ: we are all brethren, members of a mystical body the head of which is Christ; the good qualities and the attainments of one member redound to all the others. Instead, then, of being saddened at the superiority of our brethren we must rejoice, according to the teaching of St. Paul, ¹ since their superiority contributes to the common good and to our own particular welfare. If it be the virtues of another that we envy, "instead of bearing them envy and jealousy on account of those virtues, as occurs often through the suggestion of the evil one and of self-love, you should unite to the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, honoring in Him the source of those virtues, and begging of Him the grace to share and partake therein. You will see how useful and how profitable such practice is to you."²

852. b) The second means consists in cultivating that noble and Christian sentiment of *emulation*, which prompts us to imitate and even surpass the virtues of our neighbor, with the help of God's grace.

In order that emulation be good and remain free from envy, it must be: 1) *right in its object*, that is to say, it must bear not on the successes, but the virtues of others, and this in order to imitate them. 2) It must be *worthy in its motives*, seeking not to vanquish others, humiliate them, bring them under subjection, but to make us better, in order that God may receive greater honor and the Church greater prestige. 3) It must be *fair in the means* it employs to attain its ends; not intrigue, not subterfuge nor any other unlawful proceeding; but effort, labor, the right use of the divine gifts.

Thus understood, emulation is an effective remedy against envy, since it works harm to no one and is at the same time an excellent stimulus. For to consider as models the best among our brethren in order to follow in their steps or to go even further than they do, is in reality to acknowledge our own imperfections and to seek to remedy them by profiting by the example of those around us. It is to imitate St. Paul, who invited his disciples to be imitators of himself as he was of Christ;³ it is to follow the same Apostle's advice to the Christians: "Let us consider one another to provoke unto charity and to good works;"⁴ it is to enter into the spirit of the Church, which, in proposing to us the Saints for our imitation, provokes us to a high and hallowed emulation. Thus, what would have been envy, proves to be an occasion for the cultivation of virtue.

§ III. Anger ³

The vice of anger is a perversion of that instinctive feeling that prompts us, upon attack, to resist force with force. We shall speak of: 1° its nature, 2° its malice, 3° its remedies.

I. The nature of Anger

853. There is a *passion of anger* and a *sentiment of anger*.

1° Anger considered as a *passion* is a violent need of reaction caused by physical or moral suffering or annoyance. This vexation excites a violent emotion which arouses our energies to overcome the difficulty. We are then prone to vent our anger upon persons, animals and things.

There are two principal forms of anger: the *red rage* of the strong, and the *white rage* of the weak. In the first kind of anger the heart throbs violently and pushes the blood to the surface; breathing becomes rapid, the face reddens, the neck swells, the veins expand

¹ 1 Cor., XI, 1. — ² Hebr., X, 24.

³ St. GREGORY, *Moral.*, I, VI, c. 45. P. L., LXXV, 727-730; St. THOM., IIa IIæ, q. 158; *De Malo*, q. 12; DESCURET, *op. cit.*, t. II, 1-57; THOMAS, *op. cit.*, ch. IX, p. 94-103; LAUMONIER, *op. cit.*, ch. VI.

¹ Rom., XII, 15, 16.

² OLLIER, *Cat. for Int. Life*, II, Lesson XIII.

under the skin, the hair stands on end, the eyes sparkle and bulge out of their sockets, the nostrils widen and speech becomes raucous and halting, the muscles gather strength, the whole bodily frame is set for the onslaught and an irresistible motion strikes, breaks, or violently brushes aside the obstacle. White rage causes the heart to contract; breathing becomes difficult, the face assumes a death-like pallor, a cold sweat oozes from the brow, the jaws clench, and the person keeps an ominous silence. However, such pent up agitation ends, by bursting forth into a rage and finds an outlet in the discharge of violent blows.

854. ²⁰ Anger as a *sentiment* consists in a vehement desire to repel and punish an aggressor.

A) There is a lawful sentiment of anger, a righteous indignation, which is the ardent, but rational desire to visit upon the guilty a just retribution. Thus it was that Our Lord was roused to anger against the money-changers whose traffic defiled His Father's house,¹ whilst on the other hand Heli, the high-priest, was severely reproved for not having curbed the shameful conduct of his sons.

That anger be legitimate, it must be: **a)** *just* as to its *object*, seeking to punish only those that deserve punishment, and only in the measure in which they have merited it; **b)** *tempered* by moderation in its *execution*, going no further than the offence demands and adhering to the requirements of justice; **c)** *animated* by *motives of charity*, not degenerating into sentiments of hatred, but aiming solely at the restoration of order and the amendment of the guilty. If any of these conditions are lacking, there is moral guilt. Lawful anger belongs chiefly to those in authority, like parents and superiors, yet it is at times the right and the duty of those in the ranks to resort to it in order to defend their common interests and prevent the ascendancy of the wicked, for there are men whom kindness fails to move and whom the fear of punishment alone can touch.

855. **B)** Anger as a capital vice is a violent and inordinate desire of punishing others, regardless of the three conditions we have noted. Often anger is accompanied by *hatred*, which seeks not merely to repel aggression but to take revenge. Such a sentiment is more deliberate, more lasting, and has, therefore, more serious consequences.

856. ³⁰ There are *degrees* of intensity in anger: **a)** at first, it consists in a mere impulse of *impatience*; the least annoyance, the least failure elicits a show of *temper*. **b)** This is followed by *agitation* which produces undue irritation and which manifests dissatisfaction by uncontrolled gestures. **c)** At times anger reaches the stage of *violence*, culminating not only in words but even in *blows*. **d)** It can develop into *fury*, which is temporary insanity: in this stage one is no longer master of self; one breaks forth into incoherent speech and into such wild gesticulation that it would seem real insanity. **e)** Lastly, anger at times degenerates into implacable *hatred*, breathing vengeance, and

going so far as to desire death to the adversary. It is important to discern these degrees of anger in order to estimate its malice.

II. The Malice of Anger

It may be considered in *itself* and in its *effects*.

857. ¹⁰ In order to determine the exact malice of anger considered **in itself** we must make important distinctions: —

A) When anger simply consists in a *transient impulse of passion*, it is of itself a *venial sin*, because it exceeds proper measure, but it is only a venial sin because, as we presuppose, there is no violation of the great virtues of justice or charity. However, there are instances when anger is so intense that self-control is lost and grave insult is offered to the neighbor. If these impulses, even though born of passion, are deliberate and wilful they constitute a grievous fault; but often this is not the case.

858. **B)** Anger that goes as far as *hatred* and rancor, when deliberate and wilful, is of itself a *mortal sin*, for it grievously violates charity and often justice. It is in this sense that Our Lord says: "But I say to you that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."¹ Still, if this impulse of hatred is not fully deliberate, the fault will only be venial.

859. ²⁰ The *effects* of anger when not repressed are at times terrible.

A) Seneca has described them in expressive words. He attributes to anger treasons, murders, poisonings, divisions in families, dissensions and civil wars with all their horrible aftermath.² Even when anger does not reach such extremes, it is the source of a great number of faults, because it disturbs the peace of families and gives rise to fearful enmities.

860. **B)** From the point of view of *perfection*, it is, St. Gregory³ tells us, a great obstacle to spiritual progress, for if it is not curbed it makes us lose: 1) *good judgment*, mental poise; 2) *gentleness* which is the charm of social relations; 3) the sense of *justice*, for passion blinds us to the rights of others; 4) the *spirit of recollection*, so indispensable to an intimate union with God, to peace of soul, to a ready compliance with the inspirations of grace.

¹ *Matth.*, V. 22. — ² *De ira*, I. l. n. 2. — ³ *Moral.*, I. c. l. P. L., LXXV, 724.

III. Remedies against Anger

These must attack the *passion* of anger and the sentiment of *hatred* which it at times engenders.

861. 1° We must make use of every means at our disposal in order to overcome the *passion* of anger.

A) Physical *hygiene* offers some means that combine to prevent or soothe anger, such as correct diet, lukewarm baths, abstinence from stimulants and particularly from intoxicants. Such hygienic measures have importance in this matter because of the close union that exists between body and soul. However, account must be taken of temperament and health, and therefore prudence demands the advice of a physician.¹

862. B) Withal, *moral hygiene* is even better. a) A good preventive of anger is to acquire the habit of reflecting before acting so as not to allow ourselves to be swept away by the first assaults of passion. This is uphill work, but most effective. b) When despite all, this passion has taken our heart by surprise, "it is better to drive it away speedily than enter into a parley; for, if we give it ever so little leisure, it will become mistress of the place, like the serpent, who easily draws in his whole body where he can once get your forces; not violently, not tumultuously, but mildly, and yet seriously."² Otherwise, whilst trying to repress anger with impetuosity we should but add to our perturbation. c) The better to check anger, it is useful to divert the mind, that is to say, to turn our thoughts to anything except the one thing liable to excite it. Therefore, we must banish all thought of past injuries, all suspicion, etc. d) "We must invoke the assistance of God when we find ourselves excited to wrath, in imitation of the Apostles when they were tossed by the wind and the storm upon the waters; for He will command our passions to cease, and a great calm shall ensue."³

863. 2° When anger gives rise to sentiments of *hatred*, of *rancor*, or of *vengeance*, we can uproot these only by charity based on the love of God. At such times we must remind ourselves that we are all children of the same heavenly Father, all incorporated into the same Christ, all called to the same eternal happiness, and that these great

¹ Cf. DESCURET, *La Médecine des Passions*; J. LAUMONIER, *La thérapéutique*... p. 167-174.

² St. FR. DE SALES, *Introd.* to a *Devout Life*, P. III, C. VIII.

³ St. FR. DE SALES, *loc. cit.*

truths exclude every sentiment of hatred. Therefore: a) we should recall the words of the *Lord's Prayer*: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," and since we crave divine pardon, we should more willingly pardon our enemies. b) We should not lose sight of the example of Our Lord, still calling Judas His friend in the very moment of his treason, praying on the Cross for His executioners, and we should ask Him to give us the strength we need to forgive and forget. c) We should avoid all thoughts of injuries received and of what relates to them. Perfect souls pray for the conversion of those who have hurt them, and in this prayer they find a wonderful balm for the wounds of their souls.

Such are the chief means given us to triumph over the first three capital sins, pride, envy and anger. We now turn to consider the faults that have their source in sensuality: *gluttony*, *lust*, and *sloth*.

ART. II. SINS THAT PROCEED FROM SENSUALITY

§ I. Gluttony

Gluttony is the abuse of that legitimate pleasure God has attached to eating and drinking, which are necessary means of self-preservation. We shall explain: 1° its *nature*, 2° its *malice*, and 3° the *remedies* against it.

864. 1° The **Nature** of Gluttony. Gluttony is an inordinate love of the pleasures of the table. The disorder lies in pursuing this satisfaction *for its own sake*, in considering it, either explicitly or implicitly, as an end in itself, as do those "whose God is their belly;"² or in pursuing the said delight *to excess*, at times even to the detriment of health, by disregarding the rules of sobriety.

865. Theologians point out four different ways in which we may violate these rules.

- 1) Eating when there is no need, eating between meals, and for no other reason than that of indulging our greed.
- 2) Seeking delicacies or daintily prepared meats, the more to enjoy their relish.
- 3) Going beyond either appetite or need, gorging oneself with food or drink with danger to health.
- 4) Eating with avidity, with greed, after the manner of certain animals. This fashion of eating is considered ill-mannered by the world.

¹ ST. THOMAS, IIa IIæ, q. 148; *de Malo*, q. 14; JAUGEY, *De quatuor virtut. cardin.*, 1876, p. 569-579; LAUMONIER, *op. cit.*, ch. II.
² *Philipp.*, III, 19.

866. ²⁰ The **Malice** of gluttony comes from the fact that it makes the soul a slave to the body, it brutalizes man, weakens his intellectual and moral life, and insensibly paves the way to voluptuous pleasure, which at bottom is one in kind with it. To determine the malice of gluttony we must make a distinction.

A) Gluttony is a *grievous* fault: **a)** when it goes to such lengths that for a notable space of time it incapacitates us for the fulfilment of our duties of state or for the compliance with divine or ecclesiastical laws, for example, when it injures our health, when it is the cause of useless expenditures which endanger the interests of our home, when it makes us violate the laws of fast or abstinence. **b)** It is also a grave fault when it is the *cause* of other grievous faults.

By way of example: "Excess in eating and drinking" says Father Janvier¹; "paves the way to *unchastity*, the offspring of gluttony, the lust of the eyes and ears demanding to be fed with unwholesome shows and licentious songs; the lust of the imagination and the memory, which search in the past for impressions apt to enkindle the fire of concupiscence; the lust of the mind, which, going astray, fastens itself upon unlawful objects; the lust of the heart, which longs after carnal affections; the lust of the will, which surrenders to be a slave to sense... *Intemperance at the table leads to intemperance in speech.* How many are the faults committed by the tongue in the course of those sumptuous and protracted feasts! How many *improprieties*....! How many *indiscretions*! We betray secrets we had pledged ourselves to keep, professional secrets, sacred trusts, and we deliver to evil tongues the good name of husband, wife and mother, the honor of a family, and perhaps the future welfare of a nation. How many faults against *justice* and against *charity* are not thus committed! Back-biting, calumny, and slander reveal themselves with dismal frankness in their most indefensible forms.... How many *imprudences* are committed! We become entangled in situations in which we cannot remain without outrage to all the laws of morality."

867. B) Gluttony is a *venial fault* when one yields to the pleasure of eating and drinking in an immoderate manner, yet without falling into grave excess, and without exposing oneself to violate a grave precept. Thus it would be venially sinful to eat or drink more than is proper in order to show one's appreciation of a fine repast, or in order to please a friend.

868. C) From the point of view of *perfection*, gluttony constitutes a serious obstacle: **1)** It fosters a spirit of immortification, which weakens the will, whilst it develops a love for sensual pleasure predisposing the soul to dange-

rous surrenders. **2)** It becomes the source of many faults, by exciting excessive mirth which leads to dissipation, garrulousness, jokes of a doubtful character, to lack of restraint and of propriety, and thus lays the soul bare to the attacks of the evil one. Hence, it is important that we should combat this vice.

869. 3^o Remedies. Our guiding principle in the struggle against gluttony is that pleasure is *not an end* but a *means*, and that therefore it must be subjected to right reason enlightened by faith, (n. 193). Faith, however, tells us that the pleasure of eating and drinking must be sanctified by *purity of intention, moderation and mortification.*

1) First of all, we must take our repasts with a *right and supernatural intention*, not like the animal that merely seeks its pleasure, not like the philosopher who goes not beyond a naturally good intention, but as Christians the better to work for God's glory; in a spirit of *gratitude* towards God, Who in His goodness deigns to give us our daily bread; in a spirit of *humility*, saying, like St. Vincent de Paul, that we do not deserve the bread we eat; in a spirit of *love*, placing our renewed strength at the service of God and of souls. Thereby we comply with the advice of St. Paul to the first Christians, an advice recalled in many communities at the beginning of meals: "*Whether you eat or drink... do all to the glory of God.*"¹

870. 2) This purity of intention will make us observe the rules of *sobriety*, for wanting to take our food in order to acquire the strength needed for the fulfilment of our duties of state, we shall avoid all excess that might compromise our health. Health-experts tell us that "sobriety (or frugality) is the essential condition of physical and moral vigor. Since we eat to live, we must eat sanely in order to live sanely. Hence, we must not exceed in food or in drink.... We must leave the table with a wholesome sensation of sprightliness and vigor, and with our appetite not completely satiated, thus avoiding the heaviness that comes from an excess of rich fare."²

We must, however, note that the measure is not the same for all. Some need, in order to escape tuberculosis, a more abundant diet; others, on the contrary, to escape arterio sclerosis, must check their appetite. With regard, then, to the quantity of food one must abide by the advice of a competent physician.

¹ *J. Cor.*, X, 31.

² E. CAUSTIER, *La Vie et la Santé*, p. 115.

¹ *Carême*, 1921, Retraite pascale, Excès de table.

871. The Christian must add to sobriety *certain practices of mortification*. A) Since it is easy to overstep the mark and to yield too much to sensuality, we must at times forego certain foods we relish, and which, though useful, are not necessary. We thereby acquire a certain ascendancy over sensuality, we free the spirit from slavery to the senses, and give it more leisure for prayer and study, and we avoid many dangerous temptations.

B) An excellent practice is that of accustoming oneself to take no meal without some element of mortification. Such privations have the advantage of strengthening the will without injury to health, and are for this reason generally preferable to greater mortifications which we perform but rarely. Generous souls add a motive of charity, setting aside a part of their food for the poor and therefore for Christ living in them. St. Vincent Ferrer¹ points out that what we thus set aside must not be waste-matter, but some choice morsel, no matter how small. Another good practice is the habit of eating a little of something we dislike.

872. C) Among the most beneficial practices of mortification, we place those that relate to *intoxicating beverages*.

Let us recall the principles that bear on this matter:

- a) *in itself* the moderate use of alcoholic drinks is not sinful.
- b) To abstain from them in a spirit of mortification, or for the sake of good example, is assuredly most praiseworthy. There are priests and laymen belonging to social organizations who forego entirely the use of liquor, the more easily to deter others from its abuse.
- c) There are cases when such abstinence is morally necessary to avoid excess. 1) When through heredity one has a certain inclination towards intoxicants; for in this case the mere use can develop an almost irresistible propensity, just as but a spark is needed to set inflammable matter afire. 2) When one has had the misfortune of contracting the inveterate habit of drinking to excess; then the only effective remedy will consist in total abstinence.

§ II. Lust*

873. 1° **The Nature of Lust.** Just as God has willed to attach sense-pleasure to the nutritive functions in order

to help man's self-preservation, so He has attached a *special* pleasure to the acts whereby the propagation of the human species is secured.

This pleasure is permissible to married people, provided they use it for the purpose for which marriage was instituted; outside of this it is strictly forbidden. In spite of this prohibition, there is in us an unfortunate tendency, more or less violent, especially from the age of puberty or adolescence, to indulge in this pleasure even out of lawful wedlock. This is the tendency that is called *lust* and which is condemned by the sixth and ninth commandments:

"*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*"
 "*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.*"

It is not merely *exterior* actions that are prohibited, but also *interior acts*, fancies, thoughts, desires. And this rightly so, for if one deliberately dwells upon impure imaginations or thoughts, upon evil desires, the senses become excited, whilst an organic disturbance is produced, which is too often but the prelude to actions against purity. Therefore, if we wish to avoid such acts, we must fight against dangerous thoughts and fancies.

874. 2° **Gravity of faults against purity.** A) When one seeks and *directly* wills the evil pleasure, there is always *mortal sin*, for to endanger the preservation and propagation of the human race is a grave disorder. Now, were the principle to be admitted that one may seek voluptuous pleasure in thoughts, in words, or in actions otherwise than in the right use of marriage, it would be impossible to restrain this passion, the demands of which increase with the satisfactions accorded, and soon the purpose of the Creator would be frustrated. This is what experience shows: there are but too many young people who render themselves incapable of transmitting life, because they have abused their bodies. Hence, as regards evil pleasure directly willed, there is no lightness of matter.

B) There are cases in which this pleasure is not directly sought; it may follow from certain actions otherwise good or at least indifferent. If one does not consent to this pleasure, and has, besides, a reason sufficient to justify the performance of the action, there is no guilt and no cause

de jeune homme, Paris, 1900; *Vie de jeune fille*, Paris, 1903; FONSAGRIVES, *Conseils aux parents et aux maîtres sur l'éducation de la pureté*; MARTINDALE, S. J., *The Difficult Commandment*; GUIBERT, *Purity*; FOERSTER, *Marriage and the Sex Problem*; CATTERER-KRUS-VAN DER DONCKT, *Educating to Purity*; Mgr. DUBOURG, *Sixième et neuvième commandements*; *Après la vingtième année*.

¹ *La Vie Spirituelle*, II^e Part., ch. III.

* St. THOM., IIa IIæ, q. 153-154; S. ALPHONSUS, I, III, n. 412-485; CAZELMAN, *Medicina pastoralis*; ANTONELLI, *Medicina pastoralis*, Rome, 1905; SURRELD, *Vie*

for alarm. If, on the other hand the actions that give rise to such sensations are neither necessary, nor really useful, like dangerous readings, shows, conversations, lewd dancing, then it is evident that to perform such actions is a sin of imprudence, more or less grave, in proportion to the gravity of the disorder thus produced and of the danger of consent to the evil pleasure.

875. C) From the point of view of *perfection*, there is, next to pride, no greater obstacle to spiritual growth than the vice of impurity. **a)** When it is question of solitary acts or of faults committed with others, it is not long before *tyrannical habits* are formed which thwart every impulse towards perfection, and incline the will towards debasing pleasures. Relish for prayer disappears, as does love for austere virtue, while noble and unselfish aspirations vanish. **b)** The soul becomes a prey to *selfishness*. The love once borne to parents and friends gradually dies out; there is but the desire which becomes a real obsession to indulge at any cost in evil pleasures. **c)** The balance of the faculties is destroyed: it is the body, it is lust that takes command, the will becomes the slave of this shameful passion and soon rebels against God, Who forbids and punishes these unholy pleasures.

d) The sad effects of this surrender of the will are soon apparent: the mind becomes dull and weak because the vital forces are used up by the senses: taste for serious studies is lost; the imagination gravitates towards lower things; the heart gradually withers, hardens, and is attracted only by degrading pleasures. **e)** In some cases the physical frame itself is deeply affected: the nervous system, over-excited by such abuses, becomes irritated, weakened, and "incapable of fulfilling its mission of regulation and defence;"¹ the various bodily organs function but imperfectly; nutrition is improperly accomplished, strength is undermined and the danger of consumption threatens.

Evidently, a soul that has thus lost its balance, no longer thinks of perfection. It recedes from it daily, considering itself fortunate if it can gain control over itself at least in time to insure its salvation!

876. 3° The Remedies. To withstand so dangerous a passion, we need *deep convictions, protection against dangerous occasions, mortification and prayer.*

A) Deep convictions bearing at once upon the *necessity* of combatting this vice and upon the *possibility* of succeeding in the struggle.

a) What we have said about the gravity of the sin of lust shows how necessary it is to avoid it in order not to run the risk of everlasting punishment. To this we may add two motives furnished by St. Paul:¹ **1)** We are the living temples of the Holy Trinity, temples hallowed by the presence of an all-holy God, and by a participation in the divine life (97, 106). Nothing so defiles this temple as the vice of impurity which desecrates both the body and the soul of the Christian. **2)** We are the members of Jesus Christ, into Whom we have been incorporated by Baptism. We must, therefore, honor our body even as Christ's own body. And we would profane it by acts contrary to purity! Would not this be a sort of sacrilege? And to think that we would perpetrate it just to relish a vulgar pleasure which lowers us to the level of the brute!

877. b) Many say that continence is impossible. So thought St. Augustine before his conversion, but once converted to God and sustained by the example of the Saints and the grace of the Sacraments, he realized that all things are possible once we know how to pray and how to fight. The truth is that of ourselves we are so weak and the evil at times so alluring, that we would finally yield; but as long as we lean upon divine grace and make earnest efforts, we emerge victorious from the severest temptations. Let no one assert that continence in youth is detrimental to health. Honorable and notable physicians have refuted this in the resolutions of the Brussels International Congress:² "Young men must, above all, be taught that chastity and continence are not only not harmful, but even commendable from a purely medical and hygienic point of view." As a matter of fact, there is no known disease resulting from the practice of continence, whilst many are found to originate in the opposite vice.

878. B) Avoidance of the occasions. That chastity is preserved chiefly by fleeing dangerous occasions is an axiom with spiritual writers. When we realize our frailty, we do not run useless risks. As long as such occasions are not *necessary* they must be carefully avoided: "*He that loveth the danger shall perish in it.*"³ When it is question of readings, visits, meetings, dangerous entertainments from which we can exempt ourselves without any considerable inconvenience, there is no reason for hesitation; instead of looking for these we must flee from them as we would from a dangerous reptile. When these occasions *cannot be avoided*, then we must strengthen the will by interior dispositions that make the danger more remote. Thus St. Francis

¹ *I Cor.*, III, 16; VI, 15-20.

² II^e Congrès de la Conf. internationale, 1902. Examine many other testimonials in *Le problème de la chasteté au point de vue scientifique* by F. ESCLANDE, 1919, p. 122-136.

³ *Ecclesi.* III, 27.

de Sales declares that if dances cannot be avoided they should at least be indulged in with modesty, self-respect, and good intentions.¹ How much more necessary is this today, when so many indecent dances are in vogue!

879. C) There are, however, occasions that cannot be avoided. They are those we daily encounter, whether in ourselves or in our surroundings, and which we can overcome only by mortification. We have already said in what this virtue consists, and how it is to be practiced, n. 754-815. We can but recall a few points connected more directly with the virtue of chastity.

a) The eyes should be especially guarded, for imprudent glances enkindle desires and these in turn entice the will. This is why Our Lord declares that "*whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.*"² and He adds that if our right eye is to us an occasion of scandal it must be plucked out,³ that is to say, forcefully withdrawn from the object that scandalizes us. This modesty of the eyes becomes more imperative than ever today, since one is more liable to meet almost everywhere with persons and things apt to be a source of temptation.

b) The sense of touch is fraught with even more danger, for it provokes sensual impressions which easily tend towards illicit pleasure. Hence, one must abstain from such bodily contact or caresses as cannot but excite the passions.

c) As regards the *imagination* and the memory, let one follow the rules laid down in n. 781. As to the will, the task is to strengthen this faculty by a virile education according to the principles explained in n. 811-816.

880. d) The *heart* also must be mortified by struggling against whatever may be sentimental or dangerous in the domain of friendship (n. 600-604). Of course, a time comes when those looking forward to married life first fall in love. This love is lawful, but it must ever remain chaste and supernatural. Even engaged persons, then, should avoid all signs of affection that are not according to the rules of propriety and should bear in mind that their love, to be blessed by God, must be pure.

With regard to those who are as yet too young to think of marriage, they must be on their guard against that sentimental and sensual affection, which, whilst enervating the heart, prepares for dangerous surrenders. One cannot play with fire and not be scorched. Besides, if one expects that the heart pledged in marriage be pure, must one not offer a heart equally pure?

¹ *Introd. to A Devout Life*, III P., C. XXXIII.

² *Matth.*, V, 28. — ³ *Matth.*, V, 29.

881. e) Lastly, one of the most profitable forms of mortification is a constant and earnest application to the fulfilment of our *duties of state*. Idleness is an evil counsellor; work, on the contrary, by engaging the whole of our activity keeps our imagination, our mind, and our heart away from dangerous objects. We shall speak of this again in n. 887.

882. D) Prayer. **a)** The Council of Trent tells us that God does not command the impossible, but that He requires us to do what in our power lies and to pray in order to obtain the grace of accomplishing that which, of ourselves, we are incapable of performing.¹ This injunction holds particularly in matters of chastity, with regard to which most persons, even those in the holy state of marriage, encounter special difficulties. To overcome these, frequent prayer and the consideration of the great truths of religion are necessary. Such oft-repeated elevations of the soul towards God gradually wean us away from sensual pleasures and make us rise to joys that are pure and holy.

b) To prayer must be joined the *frequent reception of the Sacraments*. **1)** When we *approach frequently the tribunal of penance*, making a frank avowal of faults and imprudences against purity, the grace of absolution, together with the counsels we receive, strengthen the will against temptation. **2)** This grace is further increased through *frequent Communion*. The intimate union with Him Who is the God of all holiness cools the fires of concupiscence, awakens the soul to the reality of spiritual goods, and thus withdraws it from attachments to degrading pleasures. It was through frequent Confession and Communion that St. Philip Neri reclaimed youths addicted to the vice of impurity, and even to this day there is no more efficacious remedy either to preserve or to strengthen this virtue. If so many young men and young women escape contagion from vice, it is due to the fact that they find in religious practices an antidote to the temptations that surround them. No doubt, the use of these means of defence requires courage, earnestness and repeated effort, but with prayer, the Sacraments, and a determined will we can surmount all obstacles.

¹ Sess. VI, De Justificatione, C. XI.

§ III. Sloth¹

883. Sloth is connected with sensuality, for it proceeds from love of pleasure, inasmuch as it inclines us to avoid effort and hardship. There is in all of us a tendency to follow the line of least resistance, which paralyzes or lessens our activity. We shall explain: 1° the *nature* of sloth; 2° its *malice*; 3° its *remedies*.

884. 1° **Nature of sloth.** A) Sloth is an inclination to idleness or at least to aimlessness, to apathy in action. At times this is a *morbid disposition* due to poor condition of health. More frequently it is a *disease of the will*, which fears effort and recoils from it. The slothful want to escape all exertion, whatever might interfere with their comfort or involve fatigue. Like the real parasite, they live on others to whatever extent they can. Tractable and submissive as long as no one interferes with them, they become surly and peevish when one would rouse them from their inaction.

B) There are various degrees of sloth. a) The *indolent* man takes up his task reluctantly, and indifferently; what he does, he does badly. b) The sluggard does not absolutely refuse to work, but he delays and postpones indefinitely the accepted task. c) The truly lazy man wants to do nothing that proves irksome and shows a distinct aversion to all real work, whether physical or mental.

C) When sloth bears upon spiritual exercises it is called *spiritual sloth*. This consists in a species of dislike for things spiritual, which tends to make us negligent in the performance of our exercises of piety, causes us to shorten them or to omit them altogether for vain excuses. This is the foster-parent of lukewarmness, of which we shall speak when treating of the *illuminative way*.

885. 2° **Malice of sloth.** A) To understand the malice of sloth we have to remember that man was made to labor. When God created our first parents, he placed them in a garden of delights, "*to dress it and to keep it*."² This is because man, unlike God, is not a perfect being, having many faculties which must act in order to be perfected. Hence, it is a *necessity* of man's *nature* that he should labor to cultivate his powers, to provide for his physical and spiritual wants and thus tend towards his goal. The law of work, therefore, is antecedent to original sin. But because man sinned, work has become for him not merely a law of nature, but also a *punishment*, in the sense that work has become

¹ St. THOM., II^a II^e, q. 35; *de Malo*, q. II; NOËL ALEXANDRE, *op. cit.*, p. 1148-1170; MËLCHIOR CÂNO, *Victoire sur soi-même*, ch. X; FABER, *Groweth in Holiness*, XIV; LAUMONIER, *op. cit.*, ch. III; VUILLERMET, *Soyez des hommes*, Paris, 1908, XI, p. 185. — ² Gen., II, 15.

burdensome and a means of repairing sin; it is in the sweat of our brow that we must eat our bread, the food of the mind as well as that of the body.¹

The slothful man fails in this twofold obligation imposed both by natural and positive law; he *sins* more or less grievously according to the gravity of the duties he neglects. a) When he goes so far as to neglect the *religious* duties necessary to his salvation or sanctification, there is *grievous* fault, and so also when he willfully neglects, in matters of importance, any of his *duties of state*. b) As long as this torpor causes him to fail in civil or religious duties of lesser moment, the sin is but venial. However, the downward grade is slippery, and if we do not struggle against sloth it soon becomes more dangerous, more baneful and more reprehensible.

886. B) Because of its baneful *consequences*, spiritual sloth constitutes one of the most serious obstacles to *perfection*.

a) It makes life more or less *barren*. One can well apply to the soul what the Scripture says of the field of the slothful man:

"I passed by the field of the slothful man,
and by the vineyard of the foolish man:
And behold it was filled with nettles, and
thorns had covered the face thereof, and
the stone wall was broken down.....
Thou wilt sleep a little, said I,
Thou wilt slumber a little;
Thou wilt fold thy hands a little to rest:
And poverty shall come to thee as a runner:
And beggary as an armed man."²

Indeed, this is what one finds in the soul of the slothful man: instead of virtues, vices thrive there, and the walls which mortification had raised to protect virtue, crumble little by little, and open a breach for the enemy, sin, to enter in.

887. b) *Temptations* soon become more importunate and more besetting: "For idleness hath taught much evil."³ It was idleness and pride that brought Sodom low: "Behold this was the iniquity of Sodom thy sister, pride, fulness of bread and abundance and the idleness of her and of her daughters."⁴ Man's heart and man's mind cannot for long remain inactive; unless they be engaged by study

¹ Gen., III, 19. — ² Prov., XXIV, 30-34.
³ *Eccles.*, XXXIII, 29. — ⁴ *Ezech.*, XVI, 49.

or other work, they are soon filled with a host of fancies, thoughts, desires and emotions. In the state of fallen nature, what has full sway within us when we do not react against it, is the threefold concupiscence. Sensual, ambitious, proud, egotistical, selfish thoughts then gain the upper hand and expose us to sin.¹

888. C) Our eternal salvation therefore and not merely our perfection is here at stake; for besides the actual faults into which idleness causes us to fall, the mere fact of failing to fulfil important duties incumbent upon us, is sufficient cause for reprobation. We have been created to serve God and to fulfil our duties of state. We are laborers sent by God to work in His vineyard; but an employer does not ask his employees simply to abstain from doing harm; he wants them to work. Therefore, if without doing anything positive against the divine law, we fold our arms instead of working, will not the Master upbraid our slothfulness? "Why stand ye all the day idle?"² The barren tree, by the mere fact that it bears no fruit, deserves to be cut down and thrown into the flames: "*Every tree therefore that doth not yield good fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the fire.*"³

889. Remedies. A) To reclaim the slothful it is necessary first of all to form in them strong *convictions* concerning the necessity of work; to make them understand that both the rich and the poor come under this law, and that its infringement may involve eternal damnation. This is the lesson given us by Our Lord in the parable of the barren fig-tree: for three years the owner came seeking fruit from it, and finding none, he ordered it to be cut down: "*Cut it down therefore. Why cumbereth it the ground?*"⁴

Let no one say: I am rich, I need not work. If you are not obliged to work for yourself, you must do it for others. God, your Lord and Master commands you; if He has given you strength, brains, a good mind, resources, it is in order that you may employ them for His glory and the welfare of your brethren. And, indeed, the opportunities are not lacking: how many poor need aid, how many ignorant need instruction, how many broken hearts are there to be comforted, what openings are offered for the carrying out of projects that would give work and daily bread to those who have neither! And, does not the rearing of a large family entail labor and toil if the future of the children is to be safeguarded? Let us keep in mind the universal law of Christian fellowship whereby the toil of each is the service of all; whilst sloth is detrimental to the common weal and to our individual welfare.

¹ MELCHIOR CANO, *La Victoire sur soi-même*, ch. X.
² *Matth.*, XX, 6. — ³ *Matth.*, III, 10. — ⁴ *Luke*, XIII, 7.

890. B) Besides having convictions, it is necessary to make a *sustained and intelligent effort* in accordance with the rules laid down, n. 812, for the training of the will. Since the slothful instinctively shrink from effort, they must be shown that in point of fact there is no creature more wretched than the idle man; not knowing how to employ, or as he himself says, how to kill time, he is a burden to himself, all things bore him, and he becomes wearied of life itself. Is it not preferable to exert ourselves, to become useful, and secure some real contentment by striving to make those around us happy?

Among the slothful there are those that do expend a certain amount of activity at play, sport, and worldly gatherings. These must be reminded of the serious side of life and of the duty incumbent upon them of making themselves useful in order that they may turn their activities into worthier fields of action, and conceive a horror of being mere parasites. Christian marriage with its attendant obligations frequently proves an excellent remedy for sloth. Parents realize the necessity of working for their offspring and the inadvisability of entrusting to strangers the care of their interests.

What one must constantly bear in mind is the *end of life*: we are here below in order to attain, through work and virtue, a place in heaven. God is ever addressing to us these words: "*Why stand you here all the day idle?..... Go you also into my vineyard.*"¹

ART. III. AVARICE ²

Avarice is related to the *concupiscence of the eyes*, of which we have spoken in n. 199. We shall explain: 1° its *nature*, 2° its *malice*, 3° its *remedies*.

891. 1° Nature of Avarice. Avarice is the *inordinate love of earthly goods*. To point out wherein the *disorder* lies, we must first recall the end for which God has given man temporal goods.

A) God's purpose is twofold: our own personal benefit and that of our brethren.

a) Earthly goods are given us to minister to our temporal needs of body and soul, to preserve our life and the life of those dependent upon us, and to procure the means of cultivating our mind and developing our other faculties.

¹ *Matth.*, XX, 6, 7.

² St. THOMAS, II^a II^a, q. 118; *de Malo*, q. 113; MELCHIOR CANO, *op. cit.*, ch. XII-XLIII; MASSILLON, *Discours synodal*, De l'avarice des prêtres; MONSABRÉ, *Retraites pascales*, 1892-1894; Les idoles, la richesse; LAUMONIER, *op. cit.*, ch. VIII.

Among these goods: 1) some are *necessary* for the present or the future: it is our duty to acquire them through honest work; 2) others are *useful* in order that we may gradually increase our resources, safeguard our welfare or that of others, contribute to the common good by promoting the arts or sciences. It is not at all forbidden to desire these for a good purpose, so long as we give a due share to the poor and to good works.

b) These goods are also given us that we may aid those of our brethren who are in need. We are, therefore, in a measure *God's stewards*, and should use our superfluous goods for the relief of the poor.

892. B) Now we can more easily show wherein lies the **disorder** in the love of earthly goods.

a) At times it lies in the *intention*: we desire wealth for its own sake, as an end in itself, or for other purposes which we ourselves set up as our ultimate end, for instance, to seek pleasures or honors. If we stop there and do not see in riches means to higher ends, then we are guilty of a sort of *idolatry*; we worship the golden calf; we live but for money.

b) The *disorder* further manifests itself in the *manner of seeking* riches: we pursue them with eagerness, by all kinds of means, regardless of the rights of others, to the detriment of our health or that of our employees, by hazardous speculation at the risk of losing all our savings.

c) The disorder likewise shows itself in the *way we use money*: 1) we spend it reluctantly and in a niggardly manner, because we wish to accumulate it in order to feel more secure, or to wield the influence that comes with riches. 2) We give little or nothing to the poor and to good works. To *increase our capital* becomes the supreme end of life. 3) Some reach the point where they love their money as an idol, they love to hoard it, to feel it: this is the classical type known as the miser.

893. C) Avarice is not generally a vice of youth, which as yet thoughtless and improvident, does not dream of hoarding money. There are, however, exceptions found among young people who are by character gloomy, worrisome, crafty. But it is rather in middle life or old age that this fault shows itself, for it is then that the fear of *avant* develops, based sometimes upon the thought of sickness or accidents that might incapacitate for work. Bachelors and spinsters are particularly exposed to avarice, because they have no offspring to care for them in their old age.

894. D) Modern civilization has developed another form of this insatiable love of riches, plutocracy, the hankering thirst for becoming millionaires or multi-millionaires, not in order to safeguard one's future or that of one's family, but to attain the power and control which money gives. Vast sums at one's command secure a vast influence,

a power oftentimes more effective than that of governments. Iron-, steel-, oil-magnates, money-kings, rule sovereigns as well as peoples. This reign of gold often degenerates into intolerable tyranny.

895. 20 The Malice of Avarice. A) Avarice is a sign of *mistrust in God*, Who has promised to watch over us with the care of a father, and not to allow us to lack the things we need, provided we trust in Him. He would have us consider "the birds of the air that sow not nor do they reap, nor gather into barns, and the lilies of the field that labor not, neither do they spin."¹ This is not to encourage us to sloth, but to calm our anxieties and urge us to place our confidence in our Heavenly Father.² But the avaricious man instead of putting his trust in God, puts it in the abundance of his riches, and insults God by distrusting Him: "*Behold the man that made not God his helper: But trusted in the abundance of his riches and prevailed in his vanity.*"³ This lack of confidence in God is accompanied by too great a confidence in self and personal efforts; man wants to be his own *providence* and thus he falls into a species of idolatry making money his god. Now, no man can serve two masters, God and Wealth: "*You cannot serve God and mammon.*"⁴

This sin is of *itself grave* for the reasons just adduced. It is likewise grave when it causes one to infringe upon important rights of others through the employment of fraudulent means to obtain and retain wealth; to sin against *charity* by omitting necessary almsgiving, or to fail against *religion*, by allowing oneself to become so absorbed in business that one disregards religious duties. It constitutes but a venial sin when it does not cause one to fail in any of the great Christian virtues, duties to God included.

896. B) With regard to *perfection*, the inordinate love of riches is a very serious obstacle.

a) It is a passion that tends to *supplant God in the human heart*. That heart which is God's temple is crowded with all sorts of desires bent upon the things of earth, filled with all sorts of anxieties and distracting preoccupations. Yet, to effect our union with God, we must empty our heart of all creatures, of all worldly cares; for God wants "the whole soul, the whole heart, the whole time, the whole activity of his wretched creatures."⁵ We must, above all, empty the heart of all pride; but attachment to riches develops pride, since we place greater confidence in our riches than in our God.

¹ *Matth.*, VI, 26-28. — ² *Matth.*, VII, 24-34. — ³ *Ps.* LI, 9. — ⁴ *Matth.*, VI, 24. — ⁵ *Olier*, *Introd. aux vertus*, c. II.

To fasten our heart on riches is to hinder the love of God, for *where our heart is there is also our treasure*.¹ To detach the heart from riches is to lay it open to God. A soul despoiled of riches has God for its possessions; *its wealth is the wealth of God Himself*.

b) Avarice also leads to lack of mortification and to sensuality, for when we have money and love it, we either wish to enjoy the pleasures that money can procure, or if we forego these pleasures, our heart clings to the money itself. In either case money becomes an idol that makes us turn away from God.

897. 3^o Remedies of Avarice. A) The great remedy is the profound conviction, resting upon reason and faith, that wealth is not an end, but a *means* given us by Providence to provide for our needs and those of our brethren; that God ever remains the Sovereign Master of all; that we are in truth but administrators who must one day render an account to the Sovereign Judge. Riches moreover are goods that *pass away* with time, goods we cannot take along with us into the next world. If we are wise, we shall lay up treasures not for this world but for eternity. "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth: where the rust and moth consume and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven where neither the rust nor the moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."²

B) The most effective way of detaching ourselves from riches is to *invest our wealth in the bank of heaven* by giving generously to the poor and to good works. A gift to the poor is a loan to God; it yields a hundredfold even in this world, in the joys which come to us from giving happiness to those around us. But above all, it yields a hundredfold for heaven, where Christ, considering as given to Himself what we have bestowed upon the least of His children, will take care to give us imperishable goods in exchange for those we sacrificed for Him. The truly wise, therefore, are those who exchange the treasures of this earth for those of glory. To seek God and holiness is the sum-total of Christian prudence: "*Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice: and all these things shall be added unto you.*"³

898. C) Perfect souls go further: they sell all to give to the poor, or they renounce all ownership by the religious vow of poverty, or they retain their capital but use the

income only according to the advice of a wise spiritual director, and thus while they remain in the state in which God's providence has placed them, they live in the practice of detachment of mind and heart.

CONCLUSION

899. Thus the struggle against the seven capital sins uproots the inordinate tendencies of the threefold concupiscence. No doubt, there will always remain in us some of those tendencies to try our patience and to remind us of our weakness, but they will prove less dangerous, and, aided by God's grace, we shall overcome them more easily. In spite of our efforts temptations will arise in the soul but it will be to give us occasions of gaining new victories.

CHAPTER V

The Struggle against Temptation

900. Notwithstanding the efforts we put forth to eradicate vice, we must expect temptations. We have spiritual foes, the world, the flesh, and the devil, n. 193-227, which cease not to lay snares for us. It is necessary, therefore, to treat here of *temptation in general and of the chief temptations of beginners*.

ART. I. TEMPTATION IN GENERAL¹

901. Temptation is a *solicitation to evil on the part of our spiritual foes*. We shall explain: 1^o The *providential purposes* of temptation. 2^o The *psychology* of temptation. 3^o The *attitude* we must take towards temptation.

I. The Providential Purposes of Temptation

902. God Himself does not tempt us directly; "Let no man, when he is tempted, say that he is tempted by God. For God is not a tempter of evils: and he tempteth no man."¹ But He allows us to be tempted by our spiritual enemies, at the same time giving us the graces necessary to

¹ RODRIGUEZ, *Prat. de la perfect.*, II^e Part., 3^e Tr.; ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Devout Life*, P. IV C. III-X; SCARAMELLI, *Guide ascét.*, t. II, art. X; SCHRAM, *Instit. théol. myst.*, § CXXXVII-CXLIX; MEYER, S. J., *Science of the Saints*, IV; FABER, *Growth in Holiness*, XVI; DE LEHEN, *The Way of Interior Peace*, P. III, C. IV; P. DE SMEDT, *Notre vie surnat.*, III^e P., ch. III; RIBET, *L'Ascétique*, ch. X; MGR. GAY, *Vie et vertus chrét.*, t. I, tr. VIII; DOM LEHOUBEY, *Le saint Abarodon*, p. 332-343; BRUNETEAU, *Les Tentations du jeune homme*, 1912.

² James, I, 13.

³ Matth., VI, 21. — ² Matth., VI, 19-20. — ³ Matth., VI, 33.

resist : " 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." ¹ And this for excellent reasons of His own.

¹ He wants to *make us merit heaven*. Undoubtedly He could have bestowed upon us eternal life as a pure gift, but in His wisdom He has willed that we merit it as a *reward*. He even wills that the recompense be in proportion to the merit and hence in proportion to the obstacle overcome. Temptation, which imperils our frail virtue, is certainly one of the most trying hardships; to struggle courageously against it is one of the most meritorious acts we can perform; and once we have triumphed with God's grace, we can repeat with St. Paul, ² that we have fought the good fight, and that it only remains for us to receive the crown of justice which God has prepared for us. The more we have done in order to merit that crown, the greater shall be our honor and our joy.

903. ² Temptation is likewise a *means of purification*. 1) It reminds us that through lack of vigilance and of effort in the past we have fallen, and it becomes thus an occasion for new acts of contrition, shame, and humiliation, which make for the purification of the soul. 2) It obliges us at the same time to put forth earnest and sustained efforts lest we fall; it makes us atone for our negligences and for our surrenders by the performance of contrary acts which further purify the soul. This is why when God wants to purify a soul more perfectly in order to raise it to contemplation, He allows it to undergo horrible temptations, as we shall see when treating of the unitive way.

904. ³ Lastly, temptation is an *instrument of spiritual progress*. a) It is like a stripe of the lash that awakens us at the moment we would lull ourselves to sleep and relax. It makes us realize the necessity of forging ahead, of not halting midway, but of ever aiming higher, the more surely to remove the danger.

b) It is a *school of humility*, of distrust of self. When tempted we realize more fully our weakness, our powerlessness; we feel more keenly the need of grace, and we pray with greater earnestness. We see all the better the necessity of mortifying in us the love of pleasure, the source of our temptations, and we embrace more eagerly the little

crosses of every day in order to weaken the power of concupiscence.

c) It is a *school of love of God*; for to insure our power of resistance, we throw ourselves into God's arms there to seek for strength and shelter; we are more grateful to Him for His unfailing grace; we act towards Him as children of a most loving Father to Whom we have recourse in all our trials.

Hence, temptation possesses manifold advantages and it is on this account that God allows His friends to be tempted: " Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove you." ¹

II. The Psychology of Temptation

We shall describe : 1° The *frequency* of temptation. 2° The *divers phases* of temptation. 3° The *signs* and *degrees of consent*.

905. 1° **The Frequency of Temptation.** The frequency as well as the violence of temptations vary greatly. Some persons are often and violently tempted; others are tempted but rarely and without being deeply stirred. There are many causes that account for such diversity :

a) First of all, there are *temperament* and *character*. Some persons are extremely passionate and at the same time weak of will; often tempted, they are upset by temptation. Others are well-balanced and energetic; seldom tempted, they keep their peace in the midst of temptation.

b) *Education* accounts for other differences : there are souls who have been reared in the fear and love of God, in the habitual fulfilment of stern duty, and who have almost invariably received none but good example. Others have been brought up in the love of pleasure, in the dread of any kind of suffering, and have seen too many examples of worldliness and sensuality. It is evident that the latter will be more violently tempted than the former.

c) God's *providential designs* must also be taken into account. There are souls whom He destines for a holy calling and whose purity He shelters with a jealous care. There are others whom He likewise destines to sanctify, but whom He would have pass through severe tests in order to ground them in virtue. Lastly, others there are whom He does not destine to such a high vocation, and who will be more or less frequently tempted, but never beyond their strength.

906. 2° **The Three Phases of Temptation.** According to the traditional doctrine, as expounded by St. Augustine, there are three different phases in temptation : suggestion, pleasure and consent.

¹ 1 Cor., X, 13. — ² 11 Tim., IV, 7.

¹ Tobias, XII, 13.

a) *Suggestion* consists in the proposal of some evil. Our imagination or our mind represent to us in a more or less vivid manner the attraction of the forbidden fruit; at times this representation is most alluring, holds its ground tenaciously and becomes a sort of obsession. No matter how dangerous such a suggestion may be, it does not constitute a sin, provided that we have not provoked it ourselves, and do not consent to it. There is sin only when the will yields consent.

b) *Pleasure* follows the suggestion. Instinctively our lower tendencies are drawn towards the suggested evil and a certain pleasure is experienced. "Many a time it happens," says St. Francis de Sales¹ "that the inferior part of the soul takes pleasure in the temptation, without there having been consent, nay against the soul's superior part. This is the warfare which the Apostle St. Paul describes when he says his flesh wars against his spirit." This pleasure does not, as long as the will refuses to consent to it, constitute a sin; yet it is a danger, since the will finds itself thus solicited to yield consent. The question then is: will it yield or not?

c) If the will witholds acquiescence, combats the temptation, and repels it, it has scored a success and performed a highly meritorious act. If, on the contrary, the will delights in the pleasure, *willingly* enjoys it and consents to it, the sin is committed.

907. 3^o **Signs of Consent.** The better to explain this important point, let us see what are the signs of lack of consent, imperfect consent, and perfect consent.

a) We may judge *that there has been no consent*, if in spite of the suggestion and the instinctive pleasure accompanying it, we experience disgust, chagrin at seeing ourselves thus tempted; if we struggle so as not to be overcome; if we hold the proposed evil in horror;² especially if we turn to God in prayer.

b) We may be *culpably* accountable for the temptation in its cause, when we perform an action which we could avoid, foreseeing that it will be to us a source of temptation: "If

I know," says St. Francis de Sales¹ "that some certain conversation leads me to temptation and to a fall, and I do voluntarily indulge therein, I am, doubtless, culpable of all the temptations that shall arise." Yet, one is guilty only to the extent of one's prevision, and if this is but vague and indistinct, the guilt is lessened in proportion.

908. c) One may consider consent to be imperfect:

1) When one does not repulse the temptation *as soon* as its dangerous character is perceived.² There is then a fault against prudence, which without being grave puts us in the danger of consenting to the temptation.

2) When one momentarily *hesitates*. One would fain relish somewhat the forbidden pleasure, but one is loath to offend God, that is, after a moment's hesitation, one repels the temptation. Here again there is a venial fault of imprudence.

3) If temptation is resisted in a *half-hearted way*. One does resist, but in a feeble, indolent manner, a half-resistance which implies a half-consent, hence a venial fault.

909. d) Consent is *full and entire*, when the will, weakened by first concessions, lets itself be drawn to taste willingly the sinful pleasure, despite the protests of conscience, which recognizes the evil. In such case, if the matter be grievous, the sin is mortal; it is a sin of thought or "morose delectation," as theologians call it. If to the thought is added desire, the fault is graver still. Lastly, if from desire one passes on to the *act*, or at least to the quest and pursuit of means adapted to the execution of one's designs, then there is a sin of *action*.

910. In the different cases we have explained, doubts arise at times regarding the consent or half-consent given. Then we must make a distinction between the *delicate* and the *lax* conscience; when it is question of the former, one may rule out consent, for the person is not in the habit of yielding consent, and if he had consented in this particular case he would know it. When it is question of the latter, the presumption is that the person has given full consent, for if he had not, his soul would not be troubled.

¹ *Devout Life*, Part IV, C. III.

² St. Francis de Sales tells (*Devout Life*, Part IV, C. IV.) how St. Catherine of Siena, having been violently tempted against chastity, was asked by Our Lord: "Tell me, did those filthy thoughts in your heart give you joy or sorrow, regret or delight?" She answered: "Extreme regret and sorrow." Thereupon Our Lord comforted her by adding that her sorrows were of great merit and of great profit.

¹ *Devout Life*, P. IV, C. VI.

² "We are sometimes surprised by certain symptoms of pleasure which immediately follow the temptation, before we are well aware of it. This at most can be a light venial sin; but it becomes greater, if after we have perceived the evil which has befallen us, we stop some time, through negligence, to determine whether we shall admit or reject that delectation." (*Devout Life*, P. IV, C. VI.)

III. Our Attitude Towards Temptation

There are three main things to be done, if we are to overcome temptations and make them rebound to our profit: 1° we must *forestall* temptation; 2° *fight* it strenuously; 3° *thank* God after victory or *rise up* after a fall.

911. 1° Forestall temptation. We know the proverb that says: *One ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure*; this is but what Christian wisdom teaches. When Our Lord took the three Apostles into Gethsemane, He said to them: "*Watch ye: and pray that ye enter not into temptation.*"¹ Watchfulness and prayer are the two great means of forestalling temptation.

912. A) To watch means to put a sentry, as it were, about the soul, lest it be taken by surprise. It is so easy to fall in an unguarded moment! This watchfulness implies two main dispositions: *distrust of self* and *trust in God*.

a) We must avoid that proud *presumption* that thrusts us into the *midst of dangers*, under the pretence that we are possessed of sufficient strength to triumph over them. This was the sin of St. Peter, who at the moment Christ was prophesying the desertion of the Apostles exclaimed: "Although all shall be scandalized in thee, yet not I."² Let us, on the contrary, be mindful of the words of St. Paul: "*Wherefore, he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall,*"³ for if the spirit be willing, the flesh is weak, and safety lies only in the humble mistrust of self.

b) But, we must likewise avoid those *vain terrors* which only increase the danger. It is indeed true that of ourselves we are weak, but we are invincible in Him Who strengthens us: "And 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."⁴

c) This proper mistrust of self makes us *shun all dangerous occasions*, this or that association, such or such amusement, etc.... which we know by experience expose us to fall. It declares war against *idleness*, one of the most dangerous of occasions, n. 885, as well as against that *habitual indolence* which relaxes all the springs of the will, and

prepares it for every kind of surrender.¹ This mistrust holds in horror those empty day dreams, which people the soul with a host of living phantoms that become threatening ere long. In a word, such mistrust leads to the practice of mortification, under the forms pointed out in nos. 767-817, the compliance with our duties of state, the leading of an interior life, and the exercise of zeal. In such an intense spiritual life there is but little room left for temptation.

d) Vigilance should center round the soul's weak point, since the onslaughts generally proceed from that side. In order to fortify this weak spot, we make use of the *particular examination*, which concentrates our attention during an appreciable length of time upon this defect, or rather upon the contrary virtue. (n. 468.)

913. B) To watchfulness we must join *prayer*, which, placing God on our side, renders us invincible. God is concerned in our success, for it is He Whom the devil assails in us, it is His work which he would wreck in us. We may, therefore, call upon the Almighty with a holy assurance, certain that He wants to help us. Any kind of prayer vocal or mental, private or public, prayer of adoration or prayer of petition, is good against temptation. One may, especially in times of calm, pray for help in the moment of temptation. When this moment does arrive, one has but to raise the heart to God in order to resist more successfully.

914. 2° Resisting Temptation. This resistance will vary according to the nature of the temptations. Some of these recur frequently, but are less serious; these must be treated with scorn, as St. Francis de Sales² so well explains:

"As to these smaller temptations of vanity, suspicion, impatience, jealousy, envy, fond love, and such like trash, which like flies and gnats continually hover about us, and sometimes sting us on the legs, the hands or the face; as it is impossible to be altogether freed from them, the best defence that we can make is not to give ourselves much trouble about them; for although they may tease us, yet they can never hurt us, so long as we continue firmly resolved to serve God earnestly. Despise then these petty attacks, without so much as thinking of what

¹ This softness is well described by MGR. GAY, *Christian Life and Virtues*, Tr. VIII. "Such a soul sleeps and hence it is exposed to the enemy's blows. The slothful, indolent, remiss, pusillanimous soul which all sacrifice fills with terror, which all real work lays low, no matter how teeming it may be with desires, remains barren in good resolves and even more so in good deeds. That soul that spares itself in all things, yields to well-nigh all its propensities and lets itself be carried along with the stream."
² *Devout Life*, P. IV, C. IX.

¹ *Math.*, XXXVI, 41. — ² *Mark*, XIV, 29.
³ *I Cor.*, X, 12. — ⁴ *I I Cor.*, X, 13.

they suggest. Let them buzz and hover here and there around you; pay no more attention to them than you would to flies."

Here we concern ourselves chiefly with *serious temptations*. These must be fought *promptly, energetically, perseveringly, and humbly*.

A) *Promptly*, without parleying with the enemy, without any hesitation. At the outset the temptation is repelled easily enough, for it has not yet gained a foothold in the soul; if we wait until it has gained entry, the repulse will prove far more difficult. Hence, let there be no debate. Let us associate the idea of illicit pleasure with all that is repelling, with the serpent, with a traitor that wishes to ensnare us, and let us remember the word of Holy Writ: "*Flee from sins as from the face of a serpent: for if thou comest near them they will take hold of thee.*"¹ We effect this flight by prayer and by turning our minds to something else.

915. B) *Energetically*, not indolently and with regret, for this would be like inviting the temptation to return, but with determination and vigor, showing the horror in which such a proposal is held: "*Go behind me, Satan.*"² There are, however, different tactics to be employed, according to the kind of temptations that assail us: if it is question of those temptations to *alluring pleasures*, we must turn away from them and take to flight by concentrating our attention on any other matter calculated to engage our faculties. Direct resistance in such instances generally increases the danger. If it be question of temptations of *aversion* towards duty, of antipathy, hatred, human respect, the better course often lies in facing the difficulty squarely and honestly, and in having recourse to the principles of Christian faith in order to overcome it.

916. C) *Perseveringly*, for at times after having been routed, temptation returns with renewed obstinacy, and the devil brings with him from the desert seven other spirits worse than himself.³ Equal tenacity, and not less, must be matched against this persistence of the enemies of our soul; he that fights unto the end, overcomes. To be all the more assured of victory we should make the temptation known to our spiritual director.

This is the advice given by the Saints, especially St. Ignatius and St. Francis de Sales: "For you must observe," says the latter, "that

the first condition that the enemy of salvation makes with a soul which he desires to seduce, is to keep silence; as those who intend to seduce maids or married women, at the very first forbid them to communicate their proposals to their parents or husbands; whereas God requires, when he sends inspirations, that we should make them known to our superiors and directors."¹ In truth, it seems as if a special grace were attached to this openness of heart. A temptation disclosed is a temptation half-vanquished.

917. D) *Humbly*. Humility attracts grace, and grace gives us the victory. The devil who sinned by pride, flees before a sincere act of humility; and the threefold concupiscence, that holds its power from pride, is easily overcome when by humility we have, so to speak, laid its head low.

918. 3° *After temptation* we must be on our guard against examining too closely whether we consented or not; such an imprudent course might bring about a recurrence of the temptation and create a new danger. Besides, it is easy to see from the testimony of our conscience, without any probing search, whether we came out victorious.

A) If we have had the good fortune of overcoming, let us thank God with our whole heart, God Who gave us the victory. This is a duty of gratitude, and the best means of obtaining new graces at the opportune moment. Woe to the ungrateful who, attributing to themselves the victorious issue, do not think of returning thanks to God! They will ere long be made to know from experience their own weakness.

919. B) If, on the contrary, we have had the misfortune of *succumbing*, let us not lose heart. Let us remember the welcome accorded the Prodigal Son, and let us, even as he did, cast ourselves at the feet of God's representative, with the same heartfelt plea: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee: I am not worthy to be called thy son."² And God, still richer in His mercies than the father in the parable, will give us the kiss of peace and restore us to His friendship.

In order, however, to prevent new falls, the repentant sinner will take the occasion of his fault to humble himself sincerely before God, to acknowledge his incapacity to do any good, to place his trust in God, to be all the more cautious, and return to the practice of penance. A fault thus repaired will not constitute a serious obstacle to perfection.³ Those who act thus, "rise," as St. Augustine rightly

¹ *Devout Life*, P. IV, C. VII. — ² *Luke*, XV, 21.

³ Cf. Tissot, *Profiting by Our Faults*.

¹ *Ecclesi.*, XXI, 2. — ² *Mk.*, VIII, 33. — ³ *Matth.*, XII, 45.

remarks, "from a fall to be more humble, more prudent, more earnest."¹

ART. II. THE CHIEF TEMPTATIONS OF BEGINNERS.

Beginners are subject to all kinds of temptations, springing from the sources we have indicated. There are some, however, that seem to be peculiar to them: 1° *illusions*, proceeding from consolations and from aridity; 2° *inconstancy*; 3° *over-eagerness*; 4° at times, *scruples*.

§ I. Illusions of Beginners with regard to Consolations²

920. God generally bestows sensible consolations on beginners in order to draw them to His service; He then deprives them of these in order to test and to strengthen their virtue. There are some persons who because they enjoy many consolations think they have already attained to a certain degree of sanctity; if the consolations happen to vanish and spiritual dryness or aridity takes their place they think themselves lost. It is, therefore, important in order that they may forestall both presumption and discouragement, that the true doctrine concerning consolations and aridity be explained to them.

I. Consolations

921. 1° **Nature and Origin of Consolations.** a) *Sensible* consolations are *tender emotions that affect our sensibility and cause us to experience a feeling of spiritual joy*. The heart expands and throbs with more energy, the circulation of the blood is accelerated, the features beam, and at times tears of joy flow. Sensible consolations differ from the *spiritual* consolations generally granted to more advanced souls: the latter are consolations of a higher order, acting upon the *intellect* by enlightening it, and upon the *will* by drawing it to prayer and to the practice of virtue. However, these two kinds of consolations often intermingle, and what we are about to say can in some measure be applied to both.

b) These consolations may proceed from three sources :

¹ *De corrept. et gratiâ*, cap. 1.

² ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Devout Life*, P. IV, C. XII-XV; F. GUILLORÉ, *Les secrets de la vie spirituelle*; FABER, *Growth in Holiness*, XXIII; DOM LEHODEV, *Le Sacrat Abandoni, The Ways of Mental Prayer*, P. II, C. VI; DE SMEDT, *Notre vie surnaturelle*.

1) From God, Who acts towards us as a mother towards her child and attracts us to Himself by means of the sweetness He makes us find in serving Him, in order to wean us away more easily from the false pleasures of the world.

2) From the devil, who acting upon the nervous system, upon the imagination and upon the feelings, is able to produce certain sensible emotions which he will later use to urge us on to ill-considered austerities, to vanity and to presumption soon to be followed by discouragement.

3) From our *nature*. There are imaginative, emotional, sanguine temperaments, which, while they apply themselves to piety, naturally find therein food for their emotions.

922. 2° **Advantages of consolations.** Consolations, assuredly, have their advantages:

a) They *facilitate the knowledge of God*: the imagination helped by grace, delights in representing the loveliness of God, and the heart rejoices in it. Then one loves to pray, to meditate at length, and the soul realizes better the goodness of God.

b) Consolations contribute to the strengthening of the will, which, finding the lower faculties to be no longer hindrances, but valuable helps, detaches itself all the more easily from creatures; it loves God more ardently, forms more vigorous resolutions, and keeps these more easily because of the aid obtained through prayer. Loving God with a sensible affection, the will courageously endures the little sacrifices of every-day life, and even undertakes on its own initiative certain mortifications.

c) Consolations help us to form *habits* of recollection, of prayer, of obedience, of love of God, which remain in some measure even after the consolations themselves have disappeared.

923. 3° **Dangers.** Withal, these consolations have also their dangers:

a) They excite a sort of *spiritual greed*, which makes us cling rather to the consolations of God than to the God of consolations, so much so that when spiritual comforts vanish, spiritual exercises and duties of state are neglected. Even whilst we enjoy these consolations, our devotion is far from being solid, for while we shed tears over Our Lord's sufferings, we refuse to sacrifice for Him this or that sentimental friendship or to undergo for His

sake such or such privation. But solid virtue exists only when our love for God is carried as far as sacrifice, n. 321. "There are many souls who experience these tendernesses and consolations, and who, nevertheless, are very vicious, and consequently, have not a true love of God, much less true devotion."

b) These consolations often foster *pride* under one form or the other. 1) *Vain self-complacency*; for when we enjoy consolations, and prayer becomes easy, we readily believe ourselves to be saints, whilst in truth we are but novices in the ways of perfection. 2) *Vanity*: we wish to speak of these consolations to others in order to make known our worth; and in such cases God often withdraws them for a notable period of time. 3) *Presumption*: we think ourselves invincible and at times expose ourselves to danger, or at least, we begin to relax, when we ought to redouble our efforts and forge ahead.

924. 4° **Our Attitude towards Consolations.** In order to profit by divine consolations and escape the pitfalls we have pointed out, the following rules are to be observed:

a) We may wish for such comforts conditionally with the intention of using them in order to love God and to fulfil His holy will. Thus the Church has us ask for the grace of consolation in the *Collect* of Pentecost: "That we may ever enjoy His consolation." Consolations are a gift of God the purpose of which is to aid us in the work of our sanctification. We must, therefore, hold them dear, and we may well ask for them provided we submit ourselves to the holy will of God.

b) When such consolations have been granted us, let us receive them with *gratitude* and with *humility*, acknowledging ourselves unworthy of them and attributing all the merit to God. If He does vouchsafe to deal with us as with little children, let us bless Him for it; but let us also recognize that we are as yet far from perfect, since we stand in need of the milk of children: "*Who need milk and not solid food.*"² Above all, let us not boast of them, for this would be the surest and quickest way of losing them.

c) Having received them with a humble heart, let us employ them with the utmost care according to the pur-

poses of the Giver. He gives them to us, says St. Francis de Sales, "to make us sweet towards every one and excite us to love Him. The mother gives little presents to her child to induce him to embrace her; let us then embrace our blessed Savior Who grants us favors. But to embrace Him is to obey Him, to keep His commandments, do His will, and follow His desires with a tender obedience and humility."¹

d) Lastly, we must realize that these consolations will not last forever, and we must humbly beg of God the grace to serve Him in dryness of soul, when it will so please Him. In the meantime, instead of trying to prolong these consolations by our own mental efforts, we must moderate them and cling steadfastly to the God of all consolations.

II. Aridity

In order to strengthen us in virtue, God visits us from time to time with aridity. We shall explain: 1° the *nature* of aridity; 2° its *providential purpose*; 3° our *attitude* towards it.

925. 1° **Nature of Aridity.** Aridity is a *privation* of those *sensible and spiritual consolations* which make prayer and the practice of virtue easy. In spite of oft-renewed efforts one no longer relishes prayer; one even experiences a sense of weariness; one finds prayer irksome and the time given to it endless; faith and trust seem dormant; once alert and joyous, one lives now in a sort of torpor and acts only by *sheer force of will*. This is, indeed, a most painful condition, but one not devoid of advantages.

926. 2° **Providential purpose of Aridity.** a) When God sees fit to visit us with aridity, it is in order to *detach* us from all created things, even from the happiness derived from devotion, that we may learn to love God *for His sake* alone.

b) He wants likewise to *humble* us, by showing us that consolations are not our right, but entirely free gifts.

c) God thereby also effects a further purification of the soul from past faults, present attachments and all manner of self-seeking. When we have to serve God without any relish, on principle and by sheer will-power, we suffer keenly, and our suffering becomes an act of expiation and atonement.

¹ ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Devout Life*, Part IV, C. XIII.
² *1 Cor.*, III, 2.

³ *Devout Life*, Part IV, C. XIII.

d) Lastly, God thus *strengthens* us in virtue, for in order to persevere in prayer and in well-doing the will must be energetically and steadily exercised, and it is by such exercise that we are grounded in virtue.

927. 3^o Our Attitude towards Aridity. a) Since dryness at times proceeds from our faults, we must first of all carefully search ourselves, yet without over-anxiety, in order to see if we are not the responsible cause 1) by reason of our tendencies, more or less consented to, towards self-complacency and pride; 2) by a sort of spiritual sloth, or, on the other hand, by an untimely and excessive straining of the mind; 3) by seeking after human consolations, after personal attachments that are too sentimental, after worldly pleasures; for God will not have a divided heart; 4) by a want of frankness towards our spiritual director: "For, since you try to deceive the Holy Ghost" says St. Francis de Sales, "it is no wonder that He withholds from you His consolations."¹ Once the cause of aridity is discovered one must with due humility strive to remove it.

928. If we are not responsible for this aridity, it is important that we should draw profit from the ordeal. 1) The great means is to convince ourselves that it is more meritorious to serve God in the absence of attraction and warm emotions than in the midst of many consolations; that in order to love God it is enough *to will* to love Him, and besides, that the most perfect act of love consists in having our will conform to that of God. 2) In order to render such an act still more meritorious we can do no better than to unite ourselves to Jesus, Who in the Garden of Gethsemane consented to experience sadness and weariness of soul out of love for us, and to repeat after Him: "Not my will, but thine be done."² 3) Above all, we must never lose heart, nor subtract anything from our exercises of piety, from our efforts, from our good resolutions; but rather imitate Our Lord, Who "being in an agony, prayed the longer."³

929. Advice for the spiritual Director. In order that penitents may thoroughly understand these practical lessons regarding consolations and aridity, spiritual directors should frequently insist on them, for penitents are often persuaded that they are better off when things go according

to their wishes than when they go against the grain. Gradually, however, they are enlightened, and once they have learnt not to exalt themselves in their own eyes in time of consolation and not to be discouraged during periods of dryness, they make progress more rapidly and more steadily.

§ II. Inconstancy of Beginners

930. 1^o The Evil. When a soul gives itself to God and begins to advance in the spiritual life, it is sustained by divine grace, by the attractiveness of the novelty and by a certain urge towards virtue, which removes many an obstacle. A moment arrives, however, when God's grace is given in a less sensible manner, when the soul grows weary of essaying again the self-same efforts, which seem to be thwarted by the self-same difficulties. It is then that the soul is liable to relax and falter.

This tendency to inconstancy and tepidity shows itself 1) in our *spiritual exercises*, which we now perform with less attention, which we shorten or omit; 2) in the *practice of virtue*: we entered full-heartedly into the ways of penance and mortification, but now we find this hard and irksome and we relax our efforts; 3) in the *habitual sanctification* of our actions: we had been accustomed to renew frequently the offering of our actions, in order to insure the purity of our intention; now we find this practice fatiguing, we neglect it with the result that soon many of our actions are inspired by routine, curiosity, vanity, sensuality. It is impossible to make progress with dispositions such as these, for we arrive nowhere without a sustained effort.

931. 2^o The Remedy. A) We must realize that the work of perfection is a work of long endurance, demanding much steadiness of purpose, and that only those succeed who despite partial setbacks return again and again with fresh energies to the task. This is just what men do to succeed in business, and this is what must be done by anyone who wants to advance in holiness. Each morning we must ask again the question whether we cannot do *more*, and especially whether we can not do *better* for God; and every evening we must examine to see if we have carried out, at least in part, our program for the day.

B) Nothing insures constancy so well as the particular examination, n. 468. By concentrating our attention upon one objective, one virtue, and by rendering to our confessor an account of the progress made, we are certain to advance, even though we may not be aware of the fact.

What we have said regarding the training of the will, n. 812, is likewise a very apt means to overcome inconstancy.

¹ *Devout Life*, Part IV, C. XIV.
² *Luke*, XXII, 42. — ³ *Id.*, XXII, 43.

§ III. Over-Eagerness of Beginners

Not a few beginners, full of good will, apply themselves too eagerly and too anxiously to the work of their perfection and end by fatiguing and exhausting themselves in futile efforts.

932. 1° **The Causes.** a) The chief cause of this defect is the *substitution of one's own activity for that of God*. Instead of reflecting before acting, of asking light from the Holy Ghost and following it, such beginners thrust themselves headlong into action. Instead of taking counsel with their spiritual director, they act first, and afterwards confront him with the accomplished fact. Hence, numerous imprudences and many wasted efforts.

b) Often presumption enters into the case. They would like to emerge hastily from the discipline of penance and promptly arrive at the desired union with God. But alas! many an unforeseen obstacle appears; they then lose heart, retrace their steps and at times fall into grievous faults.

c) At other times, it is *curiosity* which predominates. They seek continually new means of perfection, try them a while and soon discard them before giving them a chance to produce their effects. They continually plan new projects of reform for themselves and for others and forget to carry them out. The net result of such over-exertion is the loss of interior recollection; it is excitement and trouble without any solid gain.

933. 2° **The Remedies.** a) The chief remedies are submission to and *entire dependence upon the action of God*, mature reflection before acting, prayer to obtain divine light, consultation with and docility towards a spiritual director. Just as in the workings of nature it is not violent force that yields the best results, but rather well controlled energy, so in the spiritual life it is not feverish efforts that make for progress, but calm and well-directed ones.

b) But if beginners are to submit themselves to the action of God, they must combat the causes that produce such over-eagerness; they must fight 1) a natural vivacity of character that inclines to hasty decisions; 2) a presumption that arises from too high an esteem of self; 3) curiosity that is forever in search of novelties. They should, therefore, direct their attacks successively against these defects by means of the particular examination, and then God will

take once more His rightful place in their souls and lead them calmly and sweetly along the paths of perfection.

§ IV. Scruples¹

934. Scruples are a disease, physical and moral, which produces a sort of derangement of conscience, and causes one to harbor vain fears of having offended God. This disease is not restricted to beginners; still, it is found in them as well as in the more advanced souls. Hence, we must say a word about them and explain: 1° the *nature*, 2° the *object*, 3° the *disadvantages* and *advantages* of scruples, and 4° the *remedies* against them.

I. Nature of Scruples

935. The term scruple (from the Latin *scrupulus*, pebble) was employed for ages past to designate a weight under which only the most sensitive scales would tilt. In the moral sense, it stands for some trifle which only the most delicate conscience would notice. Hence, this word has come to be commonly used to designate *the anxiety about having offended God which certain souls feel for little or no reason*. The better to know the nature of scruples we shall explain their *origin* and *degrees*, as well as the *distinction* between a scrupulous and a delicate conscience.

936. 1° **Origin.** Scruples arise sometimes from *purely natural* causes and sometimes they are due to *supernatural* intervention.

a) From a *natural* point of view, scruples are often a *physical* and *moral* disease. 1) The *physical* ailment which brings about this disorder is a sort of *nervous depression*, which hinders a well-balanced decision on moral questions and tends to produce without solid reasons the *obsessing idea* that one has sinned. 2) There are also moral causes which produce the same effect, such as a *meticulous* mind, a mind that loses itself amid the most trifling details, that wants to reach absolute certitude in all things; a *beclouded* mind, that represents God not as a just judge, but as

¹ St. IGNATIUS, *Exercit. spirit.*, Regulæ de scrupulis; ALVAREZ DE PAZ, t. II, lib. I, Part. III, cap. XII, § V; SCARAMELLI, *Guide ascétique*, t. II, art. XI; SCHRAM, *Inst. theol. mystica*, t. I, § 73-83; STALPHONSUS, *Theol. moralis*, t. I, De conscientia, n. 10-19; LOMBEZ, *Interior Peace*, P. II, C. VII; FABER, *Growth in Holiness*, XVII; DUBOIS, *L'Âge conducteur des âmes scrupuleuses*; DE LEHEN, *The Way of Interior Peace*, P. IV; RAYMOND, *Spiritual Director and Physician*, P. II; A. EYMIEU, *Le gouver. de soi-même*, t. II, L'obsession et le scrupule; DOM LEHOEY, *Le saint Abandon*, p. 407-414.

a merciless one; a mind that confuses feeling with consent in human acts, and imagines, that because the imagination has been for long alive to vivid impressions, sin has been committed; an *obstinate* mind, that prefers its own judgment to that of the confessor for the very reason that it lets itself be led by impressions rather than by reason.

When these two causes, physical and moral, are present, the evil is more deeply rooted and the cure is more difficult.

937. b) Scruples can also arise from a *preternatural intervention* on the part of *God* or of the *devil*.

1) God allows us to be thus obsessed either as a punishment, chiefly of our pride, of our inclinations to vain complacency, or as a *trial*, to make us expiate our past faults, to detach us from spiritual consolations, and bring us to a higher degree of sanctity. This is the case especially with the souls whom He wants to fit for contemplation, as we shall explain when treating of the unitary way.

2) The devil also at times injects his activity into the morbid predisposition of our nervous system in order to create a turmoil in our souls. He persuades us that we are in the state of mortal sin in order to hinder us from receiving Holy Communion, or to hamper us in the discharge of our duties of state; above all, he strives to deceive us as to the gravity of some act or other in order to make us sin, because of a false conscience, even when there is no matter for sin and much less for grievous sin.

938. 2° **Degrees.** Evidently there are many degrees in scruples. a) At the outset it is simply question of a *meticalous* conscience, extremely fearful, which sees sin where sin does not exist; b) then it is a matter of transient scruples which one submits to the judgment of one's spiritual director, accepting forthwith his decision; c) lastly, it is a case of scruples *properly so called*, tenacious and obstinate.

939. 3° **Distinction between a Scrupulous and a Delicate Conscience.**

a) Their genesis or starting-point is not the same. The delicate conscience loves God ardently and, in order to please Him, wants to avoid the least fault, the slightest wilful imperfection. The scrupulous conscience is led on by a certain egotism which causes an inordinate eagerness for absolute certainty of one's state of grace.

b) The *delicate* conscience, possessed of a horror of sin and knowing its own feebleness, has a *rational*, yet quiet fear of displeasing God; the scrupulous conscience harbors vain fears of sinning in every circumstance.

c) The *tender* conscience knows how to *discriminate* between *mortal* and *venial sin*, and, in case of doubt, abides by the judgment of the spiritual director; the scrupulous conscience peevishly questions the decisions of the spiritual director and submits to them only with difficulty.

Whilst scruples are a real evil to be carefully avoided, there is nothing more precious than a delicate conscience.

II. The Subject-matter of Scruples

940. 1° Sometimes scruples are *universal*, bearing on all subjects. Before an action, they magnify beyond all proportion the dangers that may be encountered in this or that circumstance; after an action, they fill the soul with groundless anxieties and easily convince it of having sinned gravely.

941. 2° More often scruples bear upon a number of *particular subjects*:

a) *Past confessions*: even after having made several general confessions, one is not satisfied, one fears lest all has not been accused, or lest sorrow has been defective, and one wants always to begin all over again. b) *Evil thoughts*: the imagination is filled with dangerous or obscene thoughts, and since these make a certain impression, one fears one has given consent, nay one is sure of having consented, although one was quite displeased at them. c) *Blasphemous thoughts*: because such ideas cross the mind, one is persuaded of having acquiesced in spite of the horror one experiences. d) The virtue of *charity*: one has for instance, listened to conversations against the neighbor without protesting; one has, through human respect, neglected the duty of fraternal correction, one has scandalized the neighbor by indiscreet talk, or one has failed, upon witnessing a crowd congregate, to ascertain whether an accident had occurred where the ministrations of a priest might have been needed to give absolution to the dying; in all this, grievous sins are seen. e) The correct pronunciation and enunciation of the words of Consecration, the integral recitation of the Divine Office, etc....

III. Disadvantages and Advantages of Scruples

942. 1° When one has the misfortune of allowing oneself to be governed by scruples, baneful effects follow for body and soul: —

a) Scruples gradually induce a *weakening* and a certain *unbalancing* of the nervous system. Fears and continual anguish exercise a depressing action on bodily health; they

may even become a real *obsession* and bring about a species of monomania, bordering on insanity.

b) *Scruples becloud* the mind and *distort* the judgment: little by little one loses the ability to discern between what is sin and what is not sin, what is grievous and what slight; and the soul becomes much like a ship without a rudder.

c) *Loss of true devotion* is often the sequel. The strain of living in anxiety and vexation turns one into a terrible egotist, for whom everybody becomes an object of mistrust, even God, Whom one deems too severe. Complaints arise that He leaves one in that wretched state. Evidently, the heart is incapable then of any genuine devotion.

d) Finally, come *faults* and even *grave falls*. 1) The scrupulous spend their strength in useless efforts over trifles, and retain but little energy to meet important issues, for the attention cannot be directed to bear with equal intensity upon the entire line of battle. Hence, surprises, faults, and at times even grievous sins. 2) Besides, they instinctively seek relief for their sorrows; but finding no solace in piety, they seek it elsewhere, in reading and in associations that are dangerous. This is sometimes the occasion of lamentable falls which throw them into a deep state of dejection.

943. 2^o On the other hand, if we know how to *accept scruples* as a *trial*, and to correct them gradually with the help of a wise spiritual director we derive from them priceless advantages.

a) They serve to *purify the soul*. By being intent on avoiding the least sin and the least wilful imperfection, we acquire a great purity of heart.

b) They lead us to the actual exercise of *humility* and *obedience* by obliging us to refer our doubts in all simplicity to our spiritual director, and to follow his counsel with entire submission not only of will, but of judgment.

c) They contribute to increase the *purity of our intentions* by detaching us from spiritual comforts and by having us cling solely to God for Whom our love increases the more He puts us to the test.

IV. Remedies against *Scruples*

944. *Scruples* must be attacked before they take deep root in the soul. Now the great remedy and indeed the only remedy is **obedience**, full and absolute obedience to

an enlightened spiritual director. The light of conscience has become dim and we must seek enlightenment elsewhere. A scrupulous person is exactly like a ship without rudder or compass. The spiritual director, therefore, must *win his confidence* and must know how to wield authority over him if he is to effect a cure.

945. 1^o Before all else, it is necessary to gain his confidence; for we do not easily obey those whom we do not trust. This, however, is not always easily accomplished. True, the scrupulous soul instinctively feels the need of a guide, but some scrupulous persons do not dare abandon themselves entirely to the said guide; they want to consult, indeed, but also to discuss the reasons. Now, one must not enter into any discussion with the scrupulous, but speak to them with authority, telling them categorically what they must do.

To *inspire this confidence* the spiritual director must merit it both by his *competence* and his *devotedness*.

a) He will allow the penitent to speak first, limiting himself to a few remarks here and there to show that he has thoroughly understood. After that he will put a few questions to the penitent, to which the latter will answer yes or no, and thus the director will himself conduct the methodical examination of the penitent's conscience. Then he will add: I understand your case, you suffer in this or that manner. To see that he has been well understood is already a great comfort to the penitent, and at times suffices to win his confidence.

b) *Devotedness* must be joined to competence. The spiritual director should therefore show himself patient, listening quietly to the lengthy explanations of the penitent, at least at the beginning. He must be *kind*, taking an interest in that soul and expressing the desire and the hope of curing it. He must be *gentle*, refraining from taking a tone of severity or harshness, even when he is obliged to use the language of authority. Nothing wins confidence better than this union of kindness and firmness.

946. 2^o Once the spiritual director has gained the confidence of his penitent, he must exercise his authority and exact **obedience**, saying: If you want to be cured you must obey blindly; in obeying you are always safe, even if your spiritual director be mistaken, for God demands of you only one thing just now, and that is obedience. This is so true that if you think that you cannot obey me, you

must seek another spiritual director. Blind obedience alone can cure you, and it will certainly do so.

a) In giving his orders the spiritual director, must be direct, clear and precise, avoiding any equivocation; he must be *positive*, speaking categorically, never conditionally; for instance, he will not say: If that disturbs your peace, do not do it; rather he will say: Do this, avoid that, spurn such temptation.

b) Generally *no reasons must be given for the decisions*, especially at the beginning. Later on when the scrupulous penitent is capable of understanding them, and of feeling their weight, the director should briefly state these reasons in order to form his conscience little by little. But *there must be no discussion* of the decision itself. If there be any obstacles to prevent its immediate execution, they are to be taken into account, but the decision stands.

c) The spiritual director must not *reverse his judgments*. Before giving a decision he considers it fully, and gives no orders that he cannot insist upon; but once an order has been given, it must not be revoked so long as there is no new fact requiring a change.

d) To ascertain if the order has been clearly understood, penitents should be asked to *restate* it, and then it but remains to have them *carry it out*. This is difficult; but they must be plainly told that they must report on it, and that if they have failed to follow the advice given, they will not be listened to until they have complied. There will be ample opportunity, therefore, to repeat the same injunction many times. This is to be done without losing patience, but with increasing firmness, and in the end the scrupulous persons will yield obedience.

947. 3° When the moment arrives, the spiritual director must inculcate the **general principle** that will enable scrupulous penitents to disregard all doubts and if need be, he will have them put this principle in writing in this or a similar form: *I am in conscience bound to take only evidence into account, that is to say, a certitude that excludes all doubt, a certitude as clear as the one that tells me that two and two make four*. I cannot, therefore, commit a sin either mortal or venial, unless I am absolutely certain that the action I am to perform is forbidden under pain of mortal or venial sin, and that *fully aware* of this fact, I *will* nevertheless to do it just the same. I will, therefore, pay no attention whatsoever to probabilities, no matter how

strong they may be, I will hold myself bound solely by clear-cut and positive evidence. Barring such, there is no sin. When the penitent proceeds to accuse himself of having committed a venial or a mortal sin, the confessor must ask: Can you affirm under oath that before acting you saw clearly that this action was a sin and that seeing this you gave full consent? Such a question will give precision to the general principle laid down and will make it better understood.

948. 4° Lastly, this general **principle must be applied** to the specific difficulties that arise.

a) With regard to a *general confession*, after allowing it *once*, the confessor should permit no repetition except when there is *certainty* on these two points: 1) a mortal sin was *committed*, and 2) this sin has *never been accused* in any valid confession. As for the rest, after a certain lapse of time the spiritual director should declare that the past must not be touched upon under any circumstances and that, should some sin have been omitted, it has been already pardoned along with the others.

b) With regard to *interior sins*, thoughts and desires, the following rule should be given: *during the crisis*, divert your attention by thinking of any other thing; *after the crisis*, do not examine yourself to see if you have sinned or not (this would bring back the temptation), but pursue the even tenor of your way by devoting yourself to your duties of state, and receive Holy Communion as long as there is no evidence that you have given full consent (n. 909).

949. c) *Communion* is often a torture to the scrupulous. They fear lest they be not in the state of grace or be not fasting. Now, 1) the *fear* lest they be not in the state of grace proves that they are not certain of that fact; hence, they should after a sincere act of contrition approach the Sacrament of the Altar; this contrition together with Holy Communion will put them in the state of grace if they are not in it. 2) The Eucharistic fast must not prevent the scrupulous from receiving Holy Communion unless they are *absolutely* certain of having broken it.

d) *Confession* for the scrupulous is a still greater torture, and therefore, it must be simplified for them. They should be told: 1) You are not bound to accuse any except mortal sins. 2) As to *venial* faults, make mention only of those that happen to come to your mind during your short examination of conscience, which should not exceed five minutes. 3) With regard to *contrition*, devote a little longer

time to ask it of God and to excite yourself to it, and then you will have it. Should the penitent answer: "I do not feel sorry," the confessor should reply that sorrow to be real need not be felt, since it is an act of the will which has nothing to do with feeling. In certain cases, when scruples are very intense, one must go further and prescribe to the penitent that he limit himself to this generic accusation: "I accuse myself of all the sins committed since my last confession and of all those of my past life, especially against this or that virtue."

950. 5° Replying to Difficulties. Sometimes a penitent will say to his confessor: You take me for scrupulous, whereas I am not. The confessor will answer: It is not for you but for your confessor to decide that. Are you absolutely sure that you are not scrupulous? Are you calm and at peace after making your confessions? Are you not troubled with such doubts and worries as most persons never experience? You are, therefore, not in a normal state; you are affected with some physical and moral disturbance, and therefore, need special treatment. Obey without argument, and you will be cured; otherwise your trouble will only be aggravated.

By this and other like means one finally succeeds, with God's grace, in curing this distressing malady of scruples.

APPENDIX: THE DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS¹

951. The different kinds of spirits that act in us. In the preceding pages we have spoken many times of *diverse interior promptings* that urge us to good or to evil. The importance of recognizing the *source* of these *promptings* is evident.

In theory they may proceed from six different causes:

- a) from *ourselves*: from the spirit which urges us towards good, from the flesh that urges us towards evil.
- b) from the *world*, in so far as, through our senses, it exercises its influence over our interior faculties to draw them towards evil (n. 212).
- c) from the *good angels*, who inspire in us good thoughts.
- d) from the *demons*, who act upon our interior and exterior senses to prompt us to evil.
- e) from *God*, Who alone can penetrate into the inmost recesses of the soul and Who never urges us but to what is good.

¹ St. THOM., 1^a II^{ae}, q. 80, a. 4; *De Imitatione Christi*, l. III, c. 54. De diversis modis naturæ et gratiæ; S. IGNATIUS, *Exercit. spirit.*, Regulae aliquot, etc.; SCARAMELLI, *Du discernement des esprits*, trad. Brassevin, Paris, 1910; CARD. BONA, *De discernement spirituum*; KUBERT, *L'Ascétique*, ch. XL; MGR. A. CHOLLET, *Discernement des esprits*, *Dict. de Théol.*, t. IV, 1375-1415. avec une abondante bibliographie; CLARE, *The Science of the Spiritual Life*, 41-47.

952. In practice it suffices to know whether these promptings arise from a *good* or from an *evil principle*: from a good principle, God, the good angels or the spirit aided by grace; from an evil principle, the devil, the world or the flesh. The rules by which we can distinguish the one from the other are called rules for the *discernment of spirits*. St. Paul laid the foundations of these rules by distinguishing within man the flesh and the spirit, and outside of man, the Spirit of God that leads us to good, and the fallen angels that solicit us to evil. Since then, spiritual writers like Cassian, St. Bernard, St. Thomas, the author of the Imitation and St. Ignatius, have drawn up rules to ascertain the divers promptings of nature and of grace.

953. Rules of St. Ignatius which apply especially to beginners.

The first two rules refer to the different attitudes which the good and the evil spirits take with regard to *sinners* and to fervent souls.

1° First rule. To *sinners* who do not put any curb on their passions, the devil proposes pleasures and delights in order to hold them fast and immerse them deeper in vice; the good spirit, on the contrary, stirs their conscience with uneasiness and remorse in order to make them emerge from their sad plight.

Second rule. When it is question of souls that have *sincerely returned to God*, the devil excites in them sadness, torments of conscience, and creates and all manner of difficulties in order to make them lose heart and halt their advance. The good spirit, on the contrary, inspires them with courage, energy and good thoughts to make them grow in virtue. By the fruits then will the tree be judged; whatever hinders progress comes from the evil one, whatever promotes it proceeds from God.

954. 2° Third rule. This rule deals with *spiritual consolations*. These proceed from the good spirit: 1) when they arouse fervor, first a spark, then a flame, lastly a glowing fire of divine love; 2) when they cause tears that are a true expression of interior compunction or of love for Our Lord; 3) when they increase faith, hope and charity, and bring quiet and peace to the soul.

955. 3° The following rules (4 th — 9 th) have reference to *spiritual desolation*: 1) Desolation here means either spiritual darkness or the inclination of the will towards the lower things, the things of earth, which render the soul sad, tepid, and sluggish. 2) In time of desolation we must not, in spite of the suggestions of the evil spirit, make any change whatever as to the good resolutions we have previously formed, but we must remain steadfast abiding by our former decisions. 3) Further, we must take advantage of desolation to grow in fervor, giving more time to prayer, examination of conscience and exercises of penance. 4) We must rely on divine help, which, though not felt, is none the less actually given us to aid our faculties in doing good. 5) We must be patient and await the return of consolation. We must say to ourselves that desolation may be a punishment for our *lukewarmness*; a *trial*, God wanting us to realize just what we are able to do when deprived of consolation; a *lesson*, God wanting to show us that of ourselves we are incapable of securing consolations, and thus to cure us of our pride.

956. 4° The *eleventh* rule returns to the subject of *consolations* to warn us that we need muster courage if we are to acquire ourselves well during the time of desolation, and to remind us that we must humble

ourselves at the sight of how little we can do when bereft of sensible comfort, and of how much we can do in spiritual distress if we lean upon God.

957. 5° The *last three rules* (12 th — 14 th) explain and expose the ruses employed by the devil to seduce us: a) He acts like a mischievous woman, weak in the face of resistance, but fiery and cruel to those who yield; hence, the duty of vigorous resistance. b) He acts like a seducer, imposing silence upon the victim he allures to evil; hence, the best means of foiling him is to disclose all to the spiritual director. c) He follows the tactics of a commander, who attacks a garrison at its weakest point; hence, it is important that we watch that weak point in our examinations of conscience.

SUMMARY OF THE FIRST BOOK

The end at which beginners aim is the *purification of the soul*, so that unhampered by the remains and the occasions of sin they may effect their union with God.

958. To attain this end, they have recourse to **prayer**. By offering God their religious homage, they move Him to pardon all their past offences. By invoking Him with confidence in union with the Incarnate Word, they obtain the grace of contrition and firm purpose of amendment which further cleanse their souls and preserve them from future falls. The attainment of these ends is the better ensured through the practice of *meditation*. The solid convictions which we acquire by long and serious reflection, the self-examinations which show us more clearly our miseries and our needs, the ardent prayers that spring then from the recesses of our heart, the good resolutions we form and which we strive to carry out, all this purifies the soul, inspires it with a horror for sin and its occasions, and strengthens it against temptation and makes it more generous in the practice of penance.

959. Having a clearer conception of the offence offered God by sin and of the strict obligation of making atonement for it, the soul enters resolutely into the ways of penance. In union with Jesus, Who deigned to atone for us, the penitent harbors in his heart a sense of shame, of sorrow, of humiliation, and his sin is always a reproach before his face. With such sentiments, he yields himself to the hardships of **penance**, generously accepts the providential crosses which God sends him, undergoes some voluntary privations, practices almsgiving and thus atones for the past.

In order to avoid sin in the future, he practices **mortification**, disciplining his interior and exterior senses, the

mind, the will, in a word, all his faculties to bring them into subjection to God and to do nothing but in accordance with His holy will.

No doubt, evil tendencies, the *seven capital vices*, still lurk deep within the soul; — but aided by divine grace, the soul undertakes to uproot them or at least to weaken them, and a time comes when it gains sufficient control over them.

Temptations, at times terrible, arise from the soul's lower depths stirred by the devil and the world, but the soul, leaning upon Him Who has overcome the world and the flesh, will fight from the outset and as long as necessary against these assaults of the enemy. With God's grace these attacks will in most cases but give occasion to fresh victories. Should an unfortunate fall occur, the soul, humbled but trustful, will forthwith throw itself into the merciful arms of God to beg His forgiveness. A fall thus atoned for will not constitute an obstacle to spiritual progress.

960. We must, however, add that the active purifications we have described in this first book do not suffice to render a soul perfectly pure. Therefore, this work of purification will continue through the illuminative way by means of the *positive exercise of the moral and the theological virtues*. It will not be thoroughly effected until the *passive purifications*, so well described by St. John of the Cross, supervene in the unitive way. These bestow on the soul the *perfect purity of heart* normally necessary to contemplation. Of them we shall treat in the third book.

BOOK II

The Illuminative Way

or

The State of Souls More Advanced in the Spiritual Life

961. Once the soul is purified from past faults by a long and arduous penance, in keeping with the number and gravity of those faults, once it has been grounded in virtue through the practice of meditation, of mortification, and resistance to the disordered inclinations and to temptations, then it enters into the **illuminative way**. This stage of the spiritual life is thus named because the great aim of the soul is now the imitation, the *Following of Christ*, by the *positive exercise of the Christian virtues*; Jesus is the Light of the World, and whosoever follows Him walks not in darkness: "*He that followeth me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*"¹

INTRODUCTION *

Before describing the virtues to be practiced by souls in the illuminative way, there are three questions that must be answered: 1° Which are the souls that belong in the illuminative way? 2° What is the *program* such souls are to follow? 3° What difference is there between *devout* and *ferrent* souls walking along this way?

I. Which are the souls that belong in the illuminative way?

962. St. Theresa thus describes the inhabitants of the *third mansion*,³ that is to say, the souls that are more advanced in the spiritual life: "They have an intense desire of not offending the Divine Majesty: they avoid even venial sins; they love penitence; they have their hours of recol-

lection; they employ their time usefully; they perform works of charity toward the neighbor. Everything about them is in perfect order: their words, their clothes, their homes."

From this description we can draw the following conclusions.

963. 1° Since the illuminative way consists in the imitation of Our Lord, in order to enter therein we must fulfil the three following conditions which enable us to follow the Divine Master through the positive practice of those virtues of which He has given us the example.

A) We must have already acquired *purity of heart* in some measure, in order to aspire without rashness to that habitual union with Our Lord which the imitation of His virtues implies. So long as the soul remains exposed to fall from time to time into *mortal sin*, it must above all else avoid energetically the occasions of sin, combat the evil tendencies of nature and resist temptations. It is only after these obstacles have been overcome that the soul concerns itself with the positive side of virtue. The soul must likewise hold in abhorrence deliberate venial sin and strive to avoid it.

B) In the second place, we must have *mortified our passions*. To follow Our Lord it is necessary to renounce not merely mortal sin but *deliberate venial sin* as well, especially such as we often commit and to which we are attached. It is by a determined fight against the passions and the capital sins that we gain that self-control which enables us to practice the positive side of virtue and thus to gradually come nearer to the Divine Model. Then, indeed we can lead a well-regulated life, have moments in which to recollect ourselves and devote our time to the fulfilment of our duties of state.

964. C) Lastly, it is necessary that through meditation we should have formed *profound convictions* on all the great truths, so that in our meditations we can give more time to devout affections and petitions, for it is by these that we attract to our heart Our Lord's virtues, and that we are able to practice them without too much difficulty.

The souls, then, that are progressing in the life of perfection are recognized by these two principal signs: 1) They experience great difficulty in making their mental prayer in a purely *discursive* fashion; the Holy Ghost inspires them to give less time to considerations and more to affections and petitions. 2) They are habitually possessed

¹ John, VIII, 12.

² PHIL. A. SS. TRINITATE, *Sum. Theol. myst.*, P. II; LE GAUDIER, *De perfect. vite spir.*, P. II, sect. II; SCHRAM, *Misti myst.*, § CIII; A. SAUDREAU, *The Degrees of the Spiritual Life*, Vol. I, *The Illuminative Way*, p. 128-35; *Cursus Asceticus*, Vol. II.

³ *Interior Castle*, Third Mansion, C. I.

with a longing to be united to Our Lord, to know Him, to love Him and imitate Him.

965. ²⁰ From what we have just said, we can see the principal differences between the purgative and the illuminative way.

A) In both we find effort and struggle; but *beginners* struggle against sin and its causes, whilst the *souls in progress* struggle to *adorn* themselves with Christ's virtues. However, there is no opposition between these two ways; rather one leads into the other. By detaching oneself from sin and its causes in the purgative way, one already exercises oneself in the practice of the virtues, although in their lowest degree, which is predominantly negative. On the other hand, the positive virtues one practices in the illuminative way, perfect the detachment from self and from creatures. In the first instance it is the negative, in the second, the positive side that is emphasized. The one completes the other. By entering on the illuminative way one does not cease to practice penance and mortification, but one practices them with the view of becoming more like Our Lord.

B) The *means* used in the two ways remain substantially the same, but vary in the manner in which they are employed: meditation, which in the purgative way is *discursive*, becomes *affective* in the illuminative way; thought which heretofore centered in God, now converges round the Person of Our Lord, to know, love and imitate Him. He becomes the real center of life.

II. Program to be followed in the Illuminative Way

966. This program follows from what has been heretofore said.

¹⁰ The direct object in view is so to assimilate ourselves to Our Lord that He becomes the center of our lives.

A) We make Him the center of our thoughts. We love to study His life and His mysteries. The Gospel presents to us new charms: we read it slowly and affectionately; the least details of Our Savior's life, especially His virtues have a deep interest for us. We find in the Gospel an inexhaustible source of subjects for meditation. We love to ponder over the words of our Lord, to analyze them and to apply them to ourselves. When we wish to practice some virtue, it is *in Jesus* that we study it first of all, recalling His teachings and His examples, and finding there the

great motive for reproducing in ourselves His own dispositions and virtues. It is on Him that we focus our thoughts during Holy Mass and Holy Communion: the liturgical prayers become for us an excellent means of studying Our Saviour. Lastly, by *devout readings* we strive to gain a deeper knowledge of His doctrines, especially of His spiritual teachings. It is *Jesus we seek* in books, "*Jesum querens in libris.*"

967. B) This knowledge leads to love, and Jesus becomes the center of our affections. **a)** How could any one, day after day, contemplate Him Who is the perfection of beauty and goodness itself, and not feel drawn to love Him! "Since I have known Jesus Christ," said Lacordaire, "nothing has seemed to me beautiful enough that I should look upon it with desire."¹ If the Apostles on Mt. Thabor were ravished at the sight of the Lord's transfigured humanity and cried out in wonder and love: "*It is good for us to be here*,"² our rapture must be still greater as we gaze on the resplendent comeliness of the Risen Christ.

b) How can we help loving Him if we often ponder the earnest proofs of love He has given and continues to give us, the Incarnation, the Redemption, the Holy Eucharist? St. Thomas has marvelously grouped within a single strophe the great things the Saviour has done for us:

Se nascens dedit socium,

Convalescens in edulium,

Se moriens in pretium,

*Se regnans dat in premium.*³

His birth made Him our fellow, our friend, our brother, and He never departs from us. By instituting the Holy Eucharist He becomes our food and drink, replenishing our souls with His Body, His Blood, and His Divinity. Dying on the Cross He paid the price of our ransom, set us free from the slavery of sin, restored to us our supernatural life, and gave us the greatest proof of love that friend can give to friend. In heaven, at

¹ CHOCARNE, *Vie du P. Lacordaire*, t. II, 119.

² *Matth.*, XVII, 4.

³ Hymn of Lauds.

"Born man, He makes Himself our kin,
He gives His Body at the board,
He dies and is the price of sin,
He reigns and is our sweet reward."

(Translation from Donohue's "Early Christian Hymns.")

last, He gives Himself as a reward, to be possessed for all eternity; henceforth His glory and our happiness are one. For all this we shall never be able to thank Him nor to love Him enough.

968. C) But love leads to **imitation**. By the very fact that we prize the qualities of a friend, that we are drawn to him by those qualities, we want to reproduce them in ourselves, so as to be but one with him in heart and soul; for we feel that our union will not be strong and deep unless we share in the thoughts and feelings and actions of our friend. We copy instinctively the one whom we love. And thus it is that Jesus becomes **the center of our actions**, of our whole existence. When we *pray*, we draw unto ourselves Our Lord with His spirit of religion to glorify the Father and effectively beg for the graces that we need. When we *labor*, we unite ourselves to the Divine Artisan of Nazareth, to work as He did, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. When we want to *acquire some virtue*, we draw to ourselves the perfect model of that virtue, Jesus, and with Him we strive to practice it. Even our *recreations* are taken in union with Him and in His spirit, with a view to labor later on for the great interests of God and of His Church.

969. 2° To attain this end, however, **means** must be employed; these are, besides vocal prayers and *affective mental prayer*, a sustained effort to practice those Christian virtues which acquaint us better with Christ, increase our love for Him and enable us to follow closer in His footsteps, that is to say, the *theological* and the *moral* virtues. We aim at *solid* virtue, based not on emotions but on *deep-rooted convictions*.

A) We practice these virtues along parallel lines: we cannot exercise ourselves in the practice of the moral virtues without practicing the theological virtues, and vice versa. Thus we cannot cultivate *Christian prudence* without being guided by the light of faith, sustained by hope, and stimulated by the love of God; in like manner, *faith* and *hope* presuppose prudence, fortitude and temperance, and so it is with the other virtues.

However, there are some virtues that harmonize better than others with one or other of the degrees of the illuminative way. Thus, those who have but entered into this way, concentrate their efforts on the exercise of some of the *moral* virtues, the need of which they feel

more keenly in order to triumph over pride or sensuality. Later on, when these vices have been brought under control, such persons devote themselves more especially to the practice of the *theological* virtues, which unite us more directly to God.

970. B) The better to understand this teaching, we must briefly note here the difference between these two kinds of virtues.

a) The *theological* virtues have God Himself as their *direct object* and some divine attribute as their motive. Thus, by Faith I believe in God, relying on His divine authority; by charity, I love Him because of His infinite goodness. On this very account these virtues *unite us directly to God*; faith makes us share in His thought, charity in His love.

b) The *direct object* of moral virtues is some *created good*, and their *motive* some moral good. Thus the object of justice is the rendering unto each one what is due him, and the motive of this virtue is honesty. These virtues *prepare* for our union with God by removing obstacles, and they even initiate that union; for instance, by being just I become one with God, Who is justice itself. However, it is the *theological* virtues that directly constitute and perfect our union with God.

971. C) From this it follows that if we study the virtues in the order of their *excellence*, we must begin with the *theological* virtues; but if we follow, as we do here, the *psychological* order, which proceeds from the less to the more perfect, then we must begin with the study of the *moral* virtues, without however losing sight of the aforesaid remark concerning the parallel development of all Christian virtues.

III. Two Classes of Souls in the Illuminative Way

In the illuminative way there are many classes of souls, two of which are of special interest: *devout* souls and *fervent* souls.

972. 1° Devout souls are those possessed of good-will, of ambition to do good, and who strive by serious efforts to avoid deliberate faults. But as yet, they are vain and presumptuous. Little inured to self-denial, they lack energy, steadiness of purpose, especially in the face of trials. Hence the frequent vacillation in their conduct: ready to suffer

when trials are far of, they lack patience when facing pain and desolation; quick to form generous resolves, they carry them out but imperfectly in practice, especially if unforeseen obstacles arise. Therefore, their advance is slow, and they stand in need of cultivating the virtues of fortitude, of constancy and of humility.

973. ^{2°} *Fervent* souls are more humble and more generous. Distrustful of self and confident in God, and already habituated to the practice of Christian self-denial, they are more energetic and more constant. However, their abnegation is neither absolute nor universal. They long for perfection, but their virtue has not yet been solidified by trial. When consolation and spiritual joy come, they welcome them and rest complacently in them. They have not as yet the love of the cross. The firm resolutions they take in the morning, they carry out but partially during the day, because they lack constancy. They have so far advanced in the love of God that they actually renounce what is dangerous, but they bestow their affections, at times overmuch, upon what God allows them to love: their parents, their friends, the consolations they find in their exercises of piety. They have still to detach themselves more perfectly from whatever hinders their union with God.

We shall not treat separately of these two classes of souls. The spiritual director will choose from among the virtues we describe the ones best suited to each individual.

DIVISION OF THE SECOND BOOK

974. The aim of souls in the illuminative way being that of making *Jesus the very center of their lives*, ^{1°} they must give themselves to the practice of *affective prayer*, in order to draw from it the knowledge, the love, and the imitation of their divine Model. ^{2°} They must practice in a special though not exclusive manner, those moral virtues which, by removing the obstacles to union with God, initiate this union with Him, the Exemplar of all perfection. ^{3°} Then the theological virtues which they practiced in the purgative way side by side with the moral virtues, develop in them and become the great motive power in their life. ^{4°} But, since the warfare is far from being over, they must foresee and make ready for new onslaughts of the enemy. ¹ Hence this second book comprises four chapters.

¹ We shall, therefore, not treat here, in the illuminative way, of the *passive purification of the senses*, nor of the prayer of quiet. These are the beginnings of

- C. I. — AFFECTIVE PRAYER, THE DISTINCTIVE PRAYER OF THE ILLUMINATIVE WAY
- C. II. — MORAL VIRTUES
- C. III. — THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES
- C. IV. — STRUGGLE AGAINST THE NEW OFFENSIVES OF THE ENEMY

CHAPTER I

Affective Prayer ¹

975. Souls in the illuminative way continue in the practice of the same spiritual exercises as beginners (n. 657), but by increasing their number and by prolonging them, they approach the state of *habitual prayer*, already described in n. 522, which finds its perfect realization only in the unitive way. They apply themselves particularly to the practice of *affective prayer*, which little by little takes the place of discursive meditation. We shall explain: ^{1°} the nature of affective prayer; ^{2°} its *advantages*; ^{3°} its *difficulties*; ^{4°} its *method*.

ART. I. NATURE OF AFFECTIVE PRAYER

976. ^{1°} **Definition.** Affective prayer, as the term indicates, is that form of prayer in which *devout affections* predominate, that is, those various *acts of the will* whereby we express to God our love and our desire of glorifying Him. In this kind of prayer the heart is engaged to a greater extent than the mind.

Beginners, as we have said (n. 668), need to acquire convictions; therefore they insist upon reasoning and give but little time to affections. But in proportion as these convictions grow and take root in the soul, less time is

infused contemplation and therefore belong to the unitive way. However, we beg to call the reader's attention to the fact that some writers of note hold that the first passive purification and the prayer of quiet belong to the illuminative way. Cf. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *Perfect. Chri. et contemplation*, t. I, p. VIII.

¹ THOMAS DE VALGORNÈRE, Q. II, disput. VI; RODRIGUEZ, *Christian Perfection*, P. I, Treat. V; CRASSET, *A Key to Meditation*; COURBON, *Familiar Instructions on Mental Prayer*; LALLEMANT, *Spiritual Doctrine, Seventh Principle*; GROU, *How to Pray*; POULAIN, *Graces of Interior Prayer*, C. II; LEHODEY, *The Ways of Mental Prayer*, P. II, C. VIII; SAUDREAU, *The Degrees of the Spiritual Life*, Vol. I, P. 249-274; R. DE MAUMIGNY, *Practice of Mental Prayer*, I, P. III.

required to renew them and greater play is allowed to the affections. Smitten with love for God and charmed by the beauty of virtue, we rise with greater ease in loving aspirations towards the Author of all good in order to worship Him, to praise Him, to thank Him, to love Him; towards Our Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, Exemplar, Master, Friend, and Brother, in order to offer Him the tenderest sentiments of love; towards the Most Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God and our Mother, the dispenser of God's gifts, in order to express to her our filial, trustful and unselfish love (n. 166).

Other sentiments arise spontaneously in the soul: sentiments of shame, of confusion and humiliation at the sight of our miseries; ardent desires to become better, and confident petitions to obtain the necessary grace; zeal for God's glory which makes us pray for the great interests of the Church and the welfare of souls.

977. 2^o Transition from discursive meditation to affective prayer. One does not attain suddenly to this kind of prayer. There is a period of transition when to a greater or lesser extent considerations and affections intermingle. There follows another period in which considerations still take place, but in the form of a colloquy after this fashion: "Help me, O my God, to realize how necessary is this virtue." Some brief moments are then given to reflection, and the colloquy continues: "I thank Thee, O my God, for Thy divine lights. Vouchsafe to burn into my soul these truths, in order that they may affect my life more deeply... Help me, I beseech Thee, to see how short I fall of this virtue... what I must do to practice it better... this very day." At last, a time arrives when reasoning all but ceases, or at least, it is so rapidly done that the greater part of prayer is passed in devout colloquies. Still, at times one feels the need of returning for a few moments to considerations so as to keep the mind sufficiently occupied. In all this one must follow the motions of grace under the guidance of a spiritual director.

978. 3^o Signs that warrant this change. A) It is important that we recognize the signs which tell us when to relinquish discursive for affective prayer. To do so *prematurely* would be imprudent, for if the soul is not yet sufficiently advanced to entertain these affections, it will fall into distractions or aridity. On the other hand, it would be a loss to make the change too late, for according to all spiritual writers, affective prayer is more fruitful than

discursive prayer, since it is chiefly by acts of the will that we give glory to God and attract virtue to ourselves.

B) These signs are as follows: 1) When despite good-will one finds it difficult to pursue considerations or to draw profit from them, and at the same time one is inclined towards affections in prayer. 2) When convictions are so firmly rooted in the soul that it takes but a moment to tend towards God or towards Our Lord. However, since no one is a fair judge in his own case, these signs are to be submitted to the judgment of the spiritual director.

979. 4^o Means of fostering affections in prayer.

A) These devout affections are multiplied and prolonged chiefly through the exercise of the virtue of *charity*, for they spring from a heart where the love of God reigns supreme. It is such a heart that moves us to *admire* the *divine perfections*. Aglow with faith, it makes visible to our eyes the infinite beauty, the goodness, and the loving mercy of God; a sense of awe and of wonder arises spontaneously and in turn gives birth to *gratitude, praise, and delight* in God. The more the soul loves God, the more are these various acts prolonged. The same is true of love towards Our Lord Jesus Christ. When we pass in review His many favors to us (n. 967), the sufferings He has endured for us, the love He shows us now in the Holy Eucharist, we are easily drawn on to sentiments of admiration, adoration, gratefulness, pity, love, and we feel constrained to praise and bless One Who loves us so much.

980. B) To nurture this love, souls in the illuminative way should be advised to meditate frequently on the great truths that recall to us what God has done and ceaselessly does for us: —

a) The indwelling of the Three Divine Persons in our soul and Their paternal action in our regard (n. 92-130).

b) Our incorporation into Christ and the part He plays in the Christian life (n. 132-153). His life, His mysteries and, above all, His cruel Passion, His love in the Eucharist.

c) The share of the Blessed Virgin, the Angels and the Saints in the Christian life (n. 154-189). Herein we find an excellent means of lending variety to the affections by addressing ourselves now to our Mother in Heaven, now to the Holy Angels, especially to our Guardian Angel, now to the Saints, and in particular to those that inspire in us greater devotion.

d) Such vocal prayers as the *Our Father*, the *Hail Mary*, the *Hymns of St. Thomas to the Blessed Sacrament*, etc.... which abound in sentiments of love, gratitude, conformity to God's will.

e) The fundamental virtues: religion towards God, obedience to superiors, humility, fortitude, temperance, and, above all, the three theological virtues. These virtues are to be considered now not in the abstract but as *exemplified by Our Lord*. It is in order to resemble Him and to show Him our love that we strive to practice them.

f) We must nevertheless continue to meditate on penance, mortification, sin, and the last things, but in a manner different from that of beginners. We should consider Our Lord as a perfect model of penance and of mortification, loaded down with the burden of our transgressions and atoning for them through a long martyrdom, and we should strive to draw to ourselves these virtues. Should we meditate on death, heaven, and hell, it will be to detach ourselves from created things in order to unite ourselves to Jesus and thereby secure the grace of a happy death and a bright throne in heaven, close to Jesus.

ART. II. ADVANTAGES OF AFFECTIVE PRAYER

These flow from the very nature of this prayer.

981. 1° The principal advantage is a *closer and more abiding union with God*. Because this prayer multiplies affective acts, it produces an increase of love for God. Thus the affections are at once *effect* and *cause*. They spring from our love of God and at the same time perfect that love, since virtues grow by the repetition of the same acts. For the same reason they give us a better knowledge of the divine perfections. For, as St. Bonaventure¹ points out, "the best way to arrive at a knowledge of God is to taste the sweetness of His love; this is a far better way, worthier, and more gratifying than the way of intellectual research." Just as we form a better appreciation of the fine quality of a tree by tasting the fruit it produces, so we realize all the better the worth of the divine attributes, once we experience the charming tenderness of God's love. This knowledge in turn increases our charity, our earnestness, and urges us on to the perfect exercise of all virtues.

982. 2° Because affective prayer increases our love for God, it perfects all the virtues that flow from charity : a) *conformity to God's will*, for we delight in doing the will of those we love; b) *desire to procure the glory of God* and the salvation of souls, for if we love we cannot but praise and seek praise for the object of our affections; c) *love of silence* and recollection, for we want to be alone with Him Whom we love, in order to think the oftener of Him and to tell Him again of our love; d) *desire of frequent Communion*, for we want to possess as perfectly as we can the object of

our love, to welcome Him joyfully into our hearts and joyfully abide with Him all the day long; e) *the spirit of sacrifice*, for we know that we cannot be one with the Crucified and through Him with God, except inasmuch as we deny ourselves and sacrifice our ease in order to carry our cross without faltering and to accept all the trials that Providence sends us.

983. 3° In affective prayer we often find *spiritual consolation*. There is no purer, no sweeter joy than that found in the companionship of a friend, and Jesus being the tenderest and most generous of friends, we relish in His presence a taste of Heaven's joys: *To be with Jesus is a sweet paradise*. True, side by side with these joys there are at times trials, such as aridity, but we accept these with a sweet resignation and we tell God again and again that in spite of all we wish to love and serve Him. The thought that we suffer for God's sake alleviates our sufferings and becomes a source of consolation.

We may add that affective prayer is not as difficult as discursive prayer. In the latter, fatigue follows quickly upon the effort of reasoning, whilst if we let our heart produce sentiments of love, of gratitude, of praise, the soul experiences a sweet rest, and is thus enabled to conserve its energies for action.

984. 4° Lastly, affective prayer becomes more and more simple as we lessen the number and the variety of affections and intensify a certain few of them, and it thus leads us on gradually to the *prayer of simplicity*. This already constitutes acquired contemplation, and it prepares for infused contemplation the souls that are called to it. Of this we shall speak when treating of the *unitive way*.

ART. III. THE DISADVANTAGES AND THE DANGERS OF AFFECTIVE PRAYER

The best things in this world are not free from disadvantages and dangers. This holds true of affective prayer unless it be practiced with discretion. We shall now point out its dangers and disadvantages together with the proper remedies.

985. 1° The first danger is *mental strain*, leading to fatigue and exhaustion. Some persons, anxious to lend intensity to their affective acts, strain their minds and hearts, and violently bestir themselves to produce acts of

¹ *Sent.* I. III, dist. 35. a. 1, q. 2.

love in which nature plays a greater part than grace. Such efforts wear out their nervous system and cause the blood to rush to the brain; a sort of slow fever consumes their strength and they are soon exhausted. Physiological disorders even may ensue, and sensations more or less sensual may join with devout affections.

986. This is a *serious defect* which must be *corrected* at the very outset by consulting a wise director and following his advice. Now, the remedy consists in the profound conviction that true love of God is centered in the *will* rather than in the feelings; that the generosity of that love does not consist in vehement ¹ emotional transports, but in a calm and determined purpose of refusing nothing to Almighty God. Let us bear in mind that love is an act of the will. No doubt, it does react on the feelings and excite more or less lively emotions, yet these do not constitute the essence of true devotion; they are but accidental manifestations thereof which must remain subject to the will and must be regulated by it. In the absence of this control, the emotions gain the ascendancy, (which means disorder) and instead of fostering solid piety, they make it degenerate into sentimental, at times into sensual love, for all violent emotions are fundamentally of the same kind, and the passage from one to the other is easy. We must therefore strive to spiritualize our affections, to moderate them and press them into the service of the will. Then we shall enjoy a peace that lies above and beyond all feeling, "The peace of God which surpasseth all understanding."²

987. 2^o The second danger of affective prayer is *pride* and *presumption*. Because one is possessed of good and noble sentiments, of holy desires, of fine projects for spiritual progress; because one experiences sensible fervor, and in such moments scorns the pleasures and goods and vanities of this world, one becomes easily persuaded that one is far more advanced in the spiritual life than one really is, and one may even wonder whether one has not all but reached the heights of perfection and contemplation. At times, one may even hold one's breath at prayer awaiting some divine communication. These sentiments show, on

¹ No doubt, there are Saints who have at times experienced transports of love, which manifested themselves by sensible phenomena; these however were not produced by the Saints themselves, but by the grace of God. To wish to stir up violent emotions in oneself by way of imitation of the Saints would amount to presumption. — ² *Phil.*, IV, 7.

the contrary, that one is still far removed from such exalted heights; for, the saints and the truly fervent distrust themselves, ever regard themselves as the worst, and readily believe that others are better than themselves. Therefore, one must return to the practice of humility and self-distrust, taking into consideration what we shall say subsequently regarding this virtue. Besides, when these sentiments of pride develop, God frequently takes it upon Himself to bring back such souls to a right sense of their unworthiness and their insufficiency, by depriving them of consolations and of choice graces. Then they realize that they are as yet far removed from the desired goal.

988. 3^o There are some who make their entire devotion consist in a *quest after spiritual consolations*, whilst they neglect their duties of state and the practice of the ordinary virtues. Provided they are able to make what they consider beautiful meditations, they imagine themselves to be perfect. This is a gross delusion. There is no perfection without conformity to the divine will; and it is God's will that besides keeping the commandments we should faithfully discharge our duties of state, practice the homely virtues of modesty, kindness, graciousness, amiability, as well as the greater ones. To believe that one is a saint because one loves prayer and especially the comforts of prayer, is to forget that he alone is perfect who does the will of God: "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."¹

Once we know how to remove these obstacles and dangers by using the means indicated, affective prayer becomes highly conducive to our spiritual progress as well as to the exercise of apostolic zeal.

ART. IV. METHODS OF AFFECTIVE PRAYER

These methods are reduced to two types: the method of *St. Ignatius* and that of *St. Sulpice*.

I. *The Methods of St. Ignatius* ²

Among the methods of St. Ignatius there are three related to affective prayer: 1^o *Contemplation*. 2^o *The Application of the Senses*. 3^o *Meditated vocal prayer*.

¹ *Matth.*, VII, 21.

² ST. IGNATIUS, *Spiritual Exercises*, 2nd week; R. DE MAUMIGNY, *Practice of Mental Prayer*, I, P. V.

1° ST. IGNATIUS' METHOD OF CONTEMPLATION

989. It is not question here of *infused* contemplation nor even of *acquired* contemplation, but of a *method of affective prayer*. To contemplate any given thing is not merely to glance at it, but to *linger* on it with *pleasure*, to look at it with *wonder* and *love*, much as a mother gazes upon her child. The object of this contemplation may be the mysteries of Our Lord or the divine attributes.

When we meditate upon some mystery: 1) we contemplate the *persons* who take part in it, for instance, the Most Blessed Trinity, Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, the Saints; 2) we *listen to their words*, see to whom they are addressed, and search their meaning; 3) we *consider* the nature and circumstances of *their actions*.

All these lead us to offer our homage to God, to Jesus Christ, to Our Lady and to the Saints, and thus to know and to love better our Blessed Saviour.

990. That this contemplation may be fruitful, we look upon the mystery in question, not as a past event, but as one *actually taking place* before our eyes. Moreover, we do not simply witness the mystery, but *actively share* in it, for example, by making our own the sentiments that animated the Blessed Virgin at the moment of Our Lord's birth. Besides, we seek to attain some *practical result*, for example, a more intimate knowledge of Jesus, a more unselfish love for Him.

We can easily see how a subject thus considered readily admits of all sentiments of admiration, adoration, gratitude, love towards God, as well as of self-reproach, unworthiness, sorrow at the sight of our sins, in a word, of every kind of prayer which we can offer for ourselves and for others.

In order that these manifold affections may not alter our peace of soul, we must not forget the wise remark of St. Ignatius: "If I experience in this or that point of meditation such sentiments as I wanted to excite in my soul, I shall stop and tarry there, without concerning myself with proceeding further, until my soul has had its fill; for it is not an abundance of knowledge that lays hold on the soul and satisfies it, but the inward relish of the truths it meditates."

2° THE APPLICATION OF THE SENSES

991. This is the name given to a very simple and very devout way of meditating. It consists in the *imaginative* or *spiritual* exercise of our senses upon some mystery of Our Lord's life, in order that the soul may attain to a fuller realization of all the circumstances attending the said mystery, and that the heart may be moved to stir up pious sentiments and to make good resolutions.

The following is an example taken from the mystery of the Nativity.

1) *Application of the sense of sight*: I see the tiny Babe laid in the manger, the straw whereon He rests, the swaddling clothes wherewith He is wrapped. I see His little hands trembling with cold, His eyes glistening with tears. This Infant is my God! I adore Him with lively sentiments of faith. I see the Blessed Virgin, a picture of meekness and heavenly beauty! I see her taking the Child Jesus in her arms, covering Him tenderly, pressing Him to her heart and laying Him upon the straw. That Babe is her Son and her God! I wonder and pray. Then I think of Holy Communion, in which I receive the self-same Jesus. Do I have Mary's faith, Mary's love?

2) *Application of the sense of hearing*: I hear the cries of the Divine Infant. I hear the sobs that suffering wrings from Him. He is cold, He suffers, chiefly because of the hard-heartedness of men. I listen to the words His heart speaks to the heart of His Mother. I hearken to the answer She makes, an answer full of faith, of adoration, of humility, of love. I join in her sentiments.

3) *Application of the sense of smell*: I breathe the aroma of the virtues the lowly manger holds, the fragrance of Christ Jesus, and I beg my Saviour to grant me that spiritual sense that will enable me to breathe in the perfume of His humility.

4) *Application of the sense of taste*: I relish the delight of being nigh to Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the delight of loving them, and the better to enjoy this delight I silently rest close to my Saviour.

5) *Application of the sense of touch*: With loving reverence I feel that straw whereon my Saviour lies, I press it to my lips with love; and by the leave of the Divine Child, I kiss His sacred feet.¹

One ends by holding a devout colloquy with Jesus and with His Blessed Mother, asking the grace of loving this Divine Saviour with a more generous love.

992. As to meditation on the *divine attributes*, it is made by considering each of them with sentiments of adoration, of praise, and of love, in order to arrive at the complete surrender of self to God.²

3° VOCAL PRAYER MEDITATED

993. This method of meditating consists in a leisurely consideration of any vocal prayer, such as the *Our Father*, the *Hail Mary*, the *Hail Holy Queen* etc., in order to ponder and relish the meaning of each word.

Thus, with the Lord's Prayer, we consider the first word and say, for instance: O my God, Thou the Eternal, the Almighty Creator of all things, Thou hast adopted me as Thy child, Thou art my *Father*. Thou art so, because at Baptism Thou hast vouchsafed to have me share in that divine life which is Thine, because each day Thou dost foster it in my soul. Thou art so, because Thou lovest me with a love

¹ St. Ignatius dares not go this far. Other Saints have done so, and if grace prompts us we may imitate them.

² See the last contemplation of St. Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, IV Week.

¹ *Spiritual Exercises*, 2nd annot., 4th addit.; R. DE MAUMIGNY, *Practice of Mental Prayer*, I, P. V.

surpassing that of any earthly father or mother for a child, because Thou dost encompass me with a solicitude truly paternal.¹

We dwell upon this one word as long as we find therein new depths of meaning and draw therefrom fresh sentiments that yield some light, strength or consolation. If we find in one word or two sufficient matter for all the time of our prayer, we do not proceed further, but we relish these words, draw from them some practical conclusion, and pray to be enabled to carry it out.

These methods are three simple and easy ways of making affective prayer.

II. *The Method of St. Sulprice*

We have already noted, n. 701, that this method is particularly adapted to affective prayer. Souls in the illuminative way may make profitable use of it if only they bear in mind the following remarks:

994. ^{1°} The first point, *the adoration*, which was rather brief for beginners, is now prolonged more and more, and at times may take up over one-half of the time of meditation. The soul, seized by love for God, admires, adores, praises, blesses, thanks now the Three Divine Persons, now each of Them in particular, now Our Blessed Lord, the perfect model of the virtue we wish to make our own. According to circumstances, the soul likewise offers here its reverent, grateful, and loving homages to the Blessed Virgin and to the Saints, and whilst so doing it feels itself drawn to imitate their virtues.

995. ^{2°} The second point, the *communion*, likewise becomes almost completely affective. The few considerations made are rather brief, and they are made in the form of a colloquy with God or with Our Lord, thus: "Help me, O my God, to establish this truth more firmly in my soul..." These colloquies are accompanied or followed by outpourings of gratitude for the lights received, and by ardent desires of practicing the virtue upon which we meditate. On turning to examine ourselves with regard to this virtue, we do so under the gaze of Jesus and by comparison with this Divine Model. The result is a clearer realization, by far, of our defects and of our misery which are brought out by the *contrast* between *Him* and *us*. Then sentiments of humiliation and shame are more deeply felt, our confidence in God increases because we find ourselves before the Divine Healer of souls, and instinctively the heart utters

the cry: "Lord, behold him whom Thou lovest is sick."¹ Earnest petitions are then made for the grace of practicing some particular virtue, petitions in behalf of others, petitions for the universal Church, petitions full of confidence, because being incorporated into Christ, we know our prayers have His support.

996. ^{3°} The third point, the *co-operation*, assumes a more affective character: the resolution that we form is submitted to Jesus for approval, and the desire which prompts us to carry it out in practice is that of becoming even more thoroughly one with Christ. For the realization of this good purpose we rely on His collaboration, while distrusting ourselves. We associate this resolution with a spiritual bouquet, a loving aspiration which we repeat often during the course of the day, and which helps us not only to put our resolution into practice, but also to remind us of Him Who inspired it.

997. There are times, however, when the soul affected by *aridity*, cannot, save with great difficulty, produce such affections. Then, in sweet abandonment to the will of God, it reaffirms its determination to love Him, to remain loyal to Him, to abide in His presence and in His service, no matter what it may cost; it humbly avows its own unworthiness, its own powerlessness, makes its will one with Christ's, offers with Him the homages He renders to God and joins thereto its own suffering at not being able to do more to honor the Divine Majesty. These acts of the will are even richer in merit than devout affections.

Such are the principal methods of affective prayer. Let each one choose the method best adapted to himself, and, under the influence of divine grace, take from it what actually answers to his needs and supernatural attractions. In this manner the soul will advance in the practice of virtue.



¹ A. DURAND, *op. cit.*, p. 458-459; R. DE MAUIGNY, *l. c.*, C. VI.

¹ John, XI, 3.

CHAPTER II

The Moral Virtues¹

Before proceeding to describe them singly, we must briefly recall the theological notions concerning the *infused virtues*.

PRELIMINARY NOTIONS CONCERNING THE INFUSED VIRTUES

First we shall speak of the *infused virtues in general*, and then of the *moral virtues in particular*.

I. *The Infused Virtues in General*²

998. There are *natural virtues*, that is to say, there are good habits, acquired through the frequent repetition of acts, that render easy the performance of morally good actions. Thus, pagans and unbelievers can with the help of God's natural concurrence acquire and gradually perfect the moral virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. We do not treat here of these natural virtues, but of the *supernatural or infused virtues* as they exist in the Christian soul.

999. Raised to the supernatural state, and having no other destiny than the Beatific Vision, we must tend thereto through acts performed under the influence of supernatural principles and of supernatural motives, for there must be a proportion between the end and the acts that lead to it. And so, the virtues which the world calls natural, must be practiced by us in a supernatural manner. As Father Garrigou-Lagrange³, following St. Thomas, rightly says: "The Christian moral virtues are *infused and because of their formal object*, are essentially distinct from the highest of acquired moral virtues described by the greatest philoso-

¹ ST. THOMAS, Ia IIæ, q. 55-57; IIa IIæ, q. 48-170; SUAREZ, *Disput. metaphy.*, XLIV; *de Passionibus et habitibus, De fide* etc.; JOANNES A. S. THOMA, *Cursor theol.*, Tr. de Passionibus, habitibus et virtutibus, etc.; ALVAREZ DE PAZ, t. II, lib. III, de adeptione virtutum; PHIL. A. SS. TRINIT., P. II, tr. II, dis. I, II; J. J. OLIER, *Introd. à la vie et aux vertus chréti.*; RIBET, *Les vertus et les dons*; P. DE SMEDT, *Notre vie surnaturelle*, t. II; ST. FRANCIS OF SALES, *Devout Life, passim*; GAY, *Christian Life and Virtues*.

² ST. THOMAS, Ia IIæ, q. 62-63; SUAREZ, *De passionibus et habitibus* diss. III; J. A. ST. THOMAS, *op. cit.*, disp. XVI; L. BILLOT, *De virt. infusis*; P. JANVIER, *Carême* 1906; P. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *Perfect. chrét. et contemplation*, p. 62-75.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 64

phers... There is an infinite difference between Aristotelian temperance with reason as its only rule, and Christian temperance with the superadded rule of divine faith and supernatural prudence."

We have already shown in nos. 121-122, how these virtues are communicated to us by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us; now we have but to describe: 1° their *nature*, 2° their *growth*, 3° their *decline*, 4° the bond of union existing among them.

1° THE NATURE OF THE INFUSED VIRTUES

1000. A) The infused virtues are *principles of action which God ingrafts in us, that they may perform in the soul the function of supernatural faculties and may thus enable us to perform meritorious acts*.

There exists an essential difference between the infused and the acquired virtues from the threefold point of view of *origin, mode of operation, and purpose*.

a) As regards *origin*, the natural virtues are acquired by the repetition of the same acts, whilst the supernatural virtues proceed from God, Who implants them in the soul together with habitual grace.

b) From the point of view of *operation*, the natural virtues, because they are acquired through the repetition of the same acts, give us a facility for producing the like acts readily and with a sense of pleasure; the supernatural virtues, placed by God in the soul, simply give us the *power* to produce meritorious acts, together with a certain *tendency* towards the production of these acts; facility will come with frequent repetition.

c) With regard to their *purpose*, the natural virtues seek natural righteousness and direct us towards the Creator, the God of Nature; the infused virtues pursue supernatural good and lead us to the God of Revelation, the Triune God, made known to us by faith. Hence, the motives inspiring the latter must be supernatural; they all refer to our friendship with God. I practice prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude, in order to be one with God.

1001. It follows that acts of supernatural virtue are possessed of a far higher perfection than acts of acquired virtue¹. Christian temperance, for instance, leads us not merely to the moderation needed to maintain man's dignity, but to positive practices of mortification whereby we become more like Our Savior; Christian humility not only makes us avoid the excesses of pride and of anger incompatible with right reason, but it causes us to embrace humiliation, which renders us more like Our Divine Exemplar.

¹ *Sum. theol.*, IIa IIæ, q. 63, a. 4; H. NOBLE, *Vie spirituelle*, Nov. 1921 p. 103-104.

There is therefore an essential difference between acquired and infused virtues; for their *principle* and their *motive* differ.

1002. B) We have said that facility in the exercise of the infused virtues is acquired by the repetition of the same acts and lends readiness, ease and pleasure to action. Three main causes concur in producing this happy result:

a) Habit lessens the *obstacles* or the resistance offered by our lower nature, and thus, with the same amount of effort, better results are obtained. b) Habit likewise renders our faculties, more pliant, makes them quicker to respond to the motives that lead us to good and more skilful in the attainment of the good perceived; we even experience a certain satisfaction in the exercise of faculties so well trained, much as a musician does in playing upon a delicate instrument. c) Lastly, actual grace, bestowed upon us in proportion to our faithful correspondence, likewise gives us a singular facility to perform our task and to love it.

We may note in passing that this facility once acquired is not immediately lost when by mortal sin we lose the infused virtue; but being the result of oft-repeated acts, it still remains for a time, in virtue of the psychological laws governing acquired habits.

2° THE GROWTH OF INFUSED VIRTUES

1003. A) The infused virtues are susceptible of growth in the soul and do, as a matter of fact, grow there with the increase of habitual grace, whence they flow. This growth is God-given, since He alone can give us an increase of divine life and of the elements that constitute it. Now, God causes this increase when we receive the *Sacraments*, perform *good works*, or recite our *prayers*.

a) Because of their very institution, the *Sacraments* cause within us an increase of habitual grace, and thereby of the infused virtues that go with grace, in proportion to our dispositions, nos. 259-261.

b) Our good works, also, merit not only glory, but an increase of habitual grace and thereby an increase of the infused virtues. This increase depends in a large measure upon the fervor of our dispositions, no. 237.

c) Prayer, besides its meritorious value, has an *impetratory* power; it obtains an increase of grace and of virtue in proportion to the fervor with which we pray. It is important, then, that we unite our prayers to those of the Church and that with her we ask for an increase of faith, hope, and charity.

B) According to St. Thomas, this increase is effected not by an accession of degree or of quantity, but by a *more perfect and more effective possession* of the virtue. It is in this manner that virtues take deeper root in the soul and become more solid and more active.

3° THE DECLINE AND LOSS OF THE VIRTUES

Any activity that is given up or is brought into play but seldom, tends to decline or even to be lost entirely.

1004. A) The Weakening of the Virtues. In reality, the infused virtues cannot be decreased, any more than can sanctifying grace, on which they depend. Venial sin cannot diminish them, just as it cannot decrease habitual grace itself. But venial sin, especially when frequent and fully deliberate, does *hinder* considerably the *exercise* of these virtues, by lessening the *facility* acquired through previous acts. This facility is the result of earnestness and perseverance in effort; but deliberate venial faults chill our ardor, and partly paralyze our activity, no. 730. Thus, venial sins against the virtue of temperance, though they do not detract from that infused virtue *itself*, gradually lessen the facility once acquired for mortifying sensuality. Besides, abuse of grace causes a reduction of the number of actual graces which help in the exercise of the virtues, and on this account the practice of virtue lacks vigor. Lastly, as we have stated, (no. 731) deliberate venial faults pave the way for grave ones and thereby for the loss of the virtues.

1005. B) The Loss of the Virtues. We can state as a principle that the infused virtues are lost by any act that destroys their *formal object*, their *motive*. In fact, virtue is thereby torn out by the roots.

a) Thus, *charity* is forfeited by *any* mortal sin, for such sin destroys the formal object or basis of that virtue, since mortal sin is directly opposed to God's infinite goodness.

b) The *infused moral virtues* also are lost through any mortal sin. However, the facility that had been acquired to perform acts of prudence, of justice etc., remains for a time after the infused virtues have been lost, due to the persevering character of acquired habits.

c) As to the virtues of faith and hope, these abide in the soul, even when grace has been lost by mortal sin, unless it be a sin directly opposed to either of these virtues. This is so because other sins do not destroy in the soul the foundations of faith or of hope; besides God in His infinite mercy wills that these two virtues stay with us as a last anchor of salvation. As long as we believe and as long as we hope conversion remains relatively easy.

4° THE BOND OF UNION EXISTING AMONG THE VIRTUES

1006. It is often said that all virtues are *correlated*. This demands explanation.

A) First of all, *charity* rightly conceived and rightly practiced comprises all the virtues; not only faith and hope

(which is evident), but even the moral virtues, as we have explained, following St. Paul, in no. 318: "*Charity is patient, is kind, etc.*" This is true in the sense that he who loves God and the neighbor for God's sake, is ready to practice one and all the virtues the moment conscience makes him aware of his obligation. As a matter of fact one cannot truly love God above all things, and not want to observe His commandments and even some of the counsels. Besides, the proper function of charity is that of directing all our acts towards God, our last end, and hence of controlling the acts of all the Christian virtues. One may say that a growth in charity is attended by a positive growth in the other virtues as well.

However, whilst the love of God inclines the will towards acts of the moral virtues and facilitates their practice, it does not immediately and necessarily bestow the perfection of all these virtues, for instance, of prudence, of humility, of obedience, of chastity. A sincerely converted sinner, for example, who had previously contracted evil habits, will not, though practicing charity in all earnestness, become at once perfectly prudent, perfectly chaste, or temperate. Time and effort will be required before he can discard old habits and form new ones.

1007. B) Since charity constitutes the form, the fulness of perfection of all the virtues, the latter are never perfect without it. Thus faith and hope which abide in the sinner's soul are indeed real virtues, but remain *incomplete*, that is to say, they lack that quality that directs them towards God as last end; and so the acts of faith and of hope performed in the state of sin cannot merit heaven, even though they are supernatural and form a preparation for conversion.

1008. C) With regard to the *moral* virtues, if one possesses them in their perfection, that is to say, *animated by charity* and in a somewhat high degree, they are truly correlated in this sense that we cannot be in possession of one without possessing the others. Thus, all virtues in order to be perfect, require the virtue of prudence. Prudence itself cannot be practiced perfectly without the concurrence of fortitude, of justice, and of temperance. A weak character prone to injustice and to intemperance will in many circumstances fail in prudence. Justice, likewise, cannot be practiced in all its perfection without strength of soul and temperance. Fortitude in turn must be tempered by prudence and justice, and it would not long survive without the virtue of temperance.¹

¹ Cf. ST. AUGUSTINE, Letter 167 to Jerome P. L. XXXIII, 735.

When however the moral virtues exist but in a low degree, the presence of one does not necessarily entail the practice of the others. Thus there are persons who are modest without being humble and others who are humble without being merciful, or merciful without being just.¹

II. The Moral Virtues

We shall give a brief account of their *nature*, their *number*, and of the *character common* to all.

1009. 1^o Their Nature. These virtues are called moral for a twofold reason: **a)** to distinguish them from the *purely intellectual* virtues, which perfect the intellect with no reference to the moral life, such as science, art, etc.; **b)** to differentiate them also from the theological virtues, which do indeed regulate our *moral life*, but which, as we have already said, have God *directly for their object*, while the moral virtues pursue directly a supernatural, created good, for example, the mastery of our passions. Withal, we must bear in mind that the supernatural, moral virtues themselves constitute a participation in the life of God and fit us for the Beatific Vision. Furthermore, according as these virtues become more and more perfect, and especially when they are complemented by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, they merge with the theological virtues in such wise as to become, as it were, permeated by these, until they are but the various manifestations of the charity that animates them.

1010. 2^o Their Number. The moral virtues considered in their divers ramifications are very numerous, but all can be reduced to the four *cardinal* virtues (so called from the word *cardines*, hinges) since they are, so to speak, four hinges upon which all the other virtues depend.

These four virtues, in fact, meet all the soul's needs and perfect all its moral faculties.

1011. A) They *meet all the needs of the soul*.

a) First of all, we must make a choice of all the means necessary or useful to the attainment of our supernatural end: this falls within the scope of the virtue of *prudence*.

b) We must likewise *respect the rights of others*: this comes within the sphere of *justice*.

c) In order to defend, without fear or violence, both *ourselves and our possessions* from the dangers that threaten us, we stand in need of the virtue of *fortitude*.

¹ ST. GREGORY, *Moral*. I. XXII, c. I.

d) If we would use the goods of this world and its pleasures without exceeding the proper *measure*, we need the virtue of *temperance*. Thus, *justice* regulates our relations with the neighbor, *fortitude* and *temperance* determine our duties to ourselves and *prudence* directs the other three virtues.

1012. B) They *perfect all the moral faculties*. The intellect is controlled by prudence, the will by justice, the irascible appetite by fortitude, and the concupiscible appetite by temperance. We must however call attention to the fact that inasmuch as both the irascible and concupiscible appetites receive their morality solely through the *will*, the virtues of fortitude and temperance reside in this superior faculty as well as in the lower faculties that are directed in their function by the will.

1013. C) Lastly, we may add that each of these virtues can be considered as a genus containing *integral, subjective* and *potential* parts.

a) The *integral* parts are complements so useful or necessary to the practice of virtue, that the virtue would not be perfect were these elements lacking. Thus, patience and constancy are integral parts of fortitude.

b) The *subjective* (or inherent) parts are, so to speak, different species subordinated to the principal virtue. Thus, sobriety and chastity are subjective parts of temperance.

e) The *potential* (or accessory) parts have a certain similarity to the principal virtue, but do not in every respect fulfil all the conditions found in it. Thus, the virtue of *religion* is an accessory part of the virtue of justice, because it tends to render to God the worship *due* to Him, but it can do so only inadequately, both as regards the perfection of the manner in which that worship should be rendered, and the extent in which it should be offered. *Obedience* likewise renders to superiors the submission due to them, but here again there exists no strict right, absolutely speaking, nor the relation of equal to equal.

Our task will be easier, and that of our readers also, if we do not enter into an enumeration of all these divisions and subdivisions. We shall select the principal virtues and we shall lay stress only upon their most essential elements from the twofold point of view of theory and practice.

1014. 3^o The Character Common to All Moral Virtues.
a) All the moral virtues strive to keep the *golden mean*: *in medio stat virtus*. They must follow the *rule* of right reason enlightened by faith. This rule may be broken either by excess or defect, and so, moral virtue consists in avoiding these two extremes.

b) The theological virtues as such do not consist in holding this middle course, since, as St. Bernard says, the measure wherewith to

love God is to love Him without measure. However, considered in their relation to us, the theological virtues must likewise take cognizance of the golden mean, in other words, they must be controlled by prudence, which tells us what are the circumstances in which we can and must practice these virtues. It is prudence, for instance, which shows us what we must believe and what we must not believe, as well as how to avoid both presumption and despair.

DIVISION OF THE SECOND CHAPTER

1015. In this second chapter we shall treat of the four *cardinal* virtues and of the *principal* virtues related to them.

- I. Prudence
- II. Justice { Religion
- { Obedience
- III. Fortitude
- IV. Temperance { Chastity
- { Humility
- { Meekness

ART. I. THE VIRTUE OF PRUDENCE ¹

We shall explain: 1^o its *nature*; 2^o its *necessity*; 3^o the *means* of progressing in this virtue.

I. The Nature of Prudence

The better to understand prudence, we shall give its *definition*, its *constituents elements* and its different *species*.

1016. 1^o Definition. Prudence is a supernatural, moral virtue which inclines our intellect to choose in every instance the best means for attaining our aims, by subordinating them to our ultimate end.

Hence, it is not the *prudence of the flesh*, nor *merely human* prudence, but *Christian* prudence.

A) It is not the **prudence of the flesh**, such as makes one skilful in discovering the means whereby a bad end is to be attained, in satisfying one's passions, in obtaining wealth, in gaining honors. This kind of prudence has been condemned by St. Paul, because it is inimical to God, at odds with His law, and because it militates against man, whom it leads to eternal destruction.²

It is not **merely human** prudence, such as seeks out the means best adapted to attain a natural end, without referring them to the last end. Such is the prudence of the masters of industry, of merchants, artists, laborers, who seek gain or fame, unconcerned about God and eternity.

¹ CASSIAN, *Conferences*, II: St. JOHN CLIMACUS, *Scala*, XXVI; St. THOMAS, II^a II^e, q. 47-56; CH. DE SMEDT, *Notre vie surnaturelle*, t. II, p. 1-33; P. JAVIER, *Careme 1917*. — ² *Röm.*, VIII, 6-8.

These persons must be reminded that it profits us nothing to gain the whole world if one suffers the loss of one's soul.¹

1017. B) It is **christian** prudence which, based upon the principles of Christian faith, refers all things to the supernatural end, that is to say, to God known and loved upon earth and possessed in heaven. Of course, prudence is not directly concerned with this end, which is proposed to it by faith, but it keeps it ever in view in order to discover by its light the means best adapted to direct all our actions. Prudence therefore concerns itself with all the details of our life. It regulates our *thoughts* to prevent them from straying away from God. It regulates our *motives* to keep them aloof from whatever may affect their *singleness of purpose*. It regulates our *affections*, our *sentiments* and our *choices*, so as to center them on God. It regulates even our exterior actions and the execution of our good resolves so as to refer them to our ultimate end.²

1018. C) This virtue **resides**, strictly speaking, in the **intellect**, since it judges and determines what in each particular circumstance is most suitable to the attainment of our end. It is an *applied science* which joins to the knowledge of principles the knowledge of the actual realities in the midst of which we are to live our lives.³ The *will* however intervenes to command the intellect to engage in the consideration of the motives and of the reasons that will enable it to make an enlightened choice, and again to command the employment of the means thus chosen.

1019. D) The **rule** of Christian prudence is not reason alone, but reason enlightened by faith. Its noblest expression is found in the *Sermon on the Mount*, in which Our Lord completes and perfects the Old Law, by ridding it of the false interpretations of the Jewish doctors. Supernatural prudence, then, draws its light and inspiration from the Gospel maxims, which are directly opposed to those of the world. In the application of these maxims to the actions of every-day life, it draws inspiration from the examples of the Saints, who lived according to the Gospel, and from the teachings of the Church, our infallible guide. Thus, we are sure of not going astray.

Besides, the means employed by Christian prudence are not merely *right* means; they are *supernatural* means :

¹ *Math.*, XVI, 26.

² "That prudence is at once true and perfect, which rightly counsels, judges, and commands in view of the end and aim of all human life." (ST. THOMAS, II^a II^e,

q. 47, a. 73).

³ "Hence the prudent man must know both the universal rational principles and the particular objects of action." (ST. THOMAS, II^a II^e, q. 47, a. 3).

prayer and the sacraments, which by multiplying our power for good cause us to attain far better results.

This will become still more apparent when we consider the *constituent elements* of this virtue.

1020. 2° Its Constituent Elements. To act prudently three conditions are particularly necessary : mature *deliberation*, a wise *choice*, and right *execution*.

A) First of all, a *mature deliberation* is required in order to discover the means most apt to the attainment of the end in view, a deliberation which must be in keeping with the import of the decision to be taken. This requires *personal reflection* and *wise consultation*.

1021. a) We must consider the past, the present, and the future.

1) The *remembrance of the past* will prove to be of great advantage : human nature remains essentially the same throughout the ages. We must therefore consult history to see how others have solved the problems that now confront us. The experiments whereby they attempted a solution will throw light upon our inexperience and will save us many a blunder. By observing what succeeded and what failed, we shall know better the dangers to be avoided and the means to be taken. We must likewise probe into our *personal experience*. From our early youth we have encountered at one time or another similar difficulties. We must examine what brought them to a happy issue and what proved a cause of failure and then determine resolutely not to expose ourselves to the same dangers and not to fall before the same temptations.

2) We must furthermore take account of the present, of the different conditions in which we live. Times differ and so do men. Youthful tastes are not those of maturer years. We must therefore know how to interpret *intelligently* past experiences in applying them to present issues.

3) Lastly, it is no less the part of prudence to look into the *future*. Before taking a decision, it is useful to foresee as far as can be done the consequences of our acts both to ourselves and to others. By recalling the past and foreseeing the future we can best plan our present course of action.

We may illustrate all that has been said by applying it to a particular virtue, chastity. History will tell us what the Saints did in order to remain pure in the midst of the world's dangers ; our own experience will recall our past temptations, the means used to resist them and our success or failure. From this we can conclude with a high degree of probability what will be the future result of such or such proceeding, of this or that reading, of such or such association.

1022. b) Reflection does not suffice ; we must know how to *take counsel* with wise and competent men. A word, the remark of a friend, of a relative, even of an inferior, at times opens our eyes and reveals to us a side of things we

had forgotten or overlooked. Two heads are better than one, and enlightenment results from discussion. This is especially true of consultation with our spiritual director; for knowing us and being a disinterested party, he sees better than we do what is good for our soul's welfare. We should, then, seek with *docility* and care the advice of some judicious and experienced person. This will in no way hinder us from exercising our own *powers of discernment*, by which we are to judge what is well-founded, both in the advice given and in our personal observations.

We must not forget to have recourse to the best of counsellors, the Father of Lights. The confident invocation of the Holy Spirit will often prove more profitable to us than repeated deliberations.

1023. B) Once we have deliberated, we must judge wisely, that is to say, we must *determine* which among the suggested means are really the most effectual. In order to succeed in this: **a)** we must carefully rid ourselves of prejudice, passion and impressions, which would bias the judgment, and we must resolutely set our face towards eternity, so as to form an estimate of all things from the point of view of faith. **b)** We must not rest content with a superficial examination of the reasons which incline us to this or that course, but we must probe into them carefully weighing the reasons for and against. **c)** Lastly, we must decide *resolutely*, without allowing ourselves to be drawn hither or thither by excessive hesitation. Once we have deliberated according to the relative importance of the question at hand, and have taken the course that seems best, Almighty God will not reproach us for the line of conduct adopted, since we did all in our power to know His holy will. We can then count on His grace to carry out our resolutions.

1024. C) We must not *delay* the execution of the plan we have adopted. This makes foresight, discretion and caution necessary.

a) It requires *foresight*. To foresee means to count in advance the effort necessary to attain our aims, the obstacles to be encountered and the means of overcoming them, in order to measure our efforts by the end in view.

b) It requires *discretion*. We must open our eyes and view persons and things from every angle in order to derive therefrom the greatest possible advantage. We must consider all the circumstances in order to adapt ourselves to them. We must study events in order to profit by them if they be favorable, to prevent their consequences if they be adverse.

e) It requires *caution*: "See, therefore, how you walk circumspectly."¹ Even when we have tried to foresee all, things do not always happen as we foresaw them, for ours is a limited wisdom and liable to err. Therefore, we must do in our moral life as we do in business, store up reserves and surround ourselves with safeguards. Our spiritual foes renew the offensive, as we have already explained in no. 900. Then we need to have recourse to our reserve force, to prayer, to the sacraments, to the advice of a spiritual director. Thus, we shall not be the victims of unforeseen circumstances, we shall not lose heart, and, with the help of God's grace, we shall bring to a successful issue the plans we had wisely laid.

1025. 3° The different species of prudence. Prudence varies in accordance with the diversity of the objects upon which it is exercised. It is *individual* when it regulates personal conduct; this is the prudence of which we have spoken. It is *social* when its object is the welfare of society; and since we distinguish three different kinds of societies, the family, the state, and the army, we distinguish likewise three kinds of prudence: *domestic* prudence, which regulates the relations of man and wife and of parents and children; *civic* prudence, which pursues the common weal and good government; *military* prudence, which is concerned with the direction of armies. Here we shall not go into details. The general principles we have explained suffice for our purpose. It is for Christian parents, for statesmen and military leaders, to look more deeply into the application of these principles to their respective situations.

II. Necessity of Prudence

Prudence is no less necessary for the control of our own *personal* conduct than it is for that of *others*.

1026. 1° For our own *personal* conduct. It is prudence that enables us to *avoid sin* and to practice *virtue*. **A)** In order to avoid sin, we repeat, we must know its *causes* and *occasions*, seek the *remedies* and apply the treatment. This is what prudence effects, as we can gather from the study of its constituent elements. From the consideration of past experience and the actual condition of the soul, prudence sees what is or will prove to be in the future a cause or an occasion of sin. And so, it suggests the best means to remove or moderate these causes, and the tactics that will best help us to overcome temptations and even to profit by them. Without such prudence how many sins would be committed! How many are actually committed because of the lack of prudence!

1027. B) Prudence is likewise necessary in order to *practice virtue* and to facilitate our union with God. The virtues are rightly compared to a chariot that conducts us to God and prudence to the driver who chooses the way.

¹ Ephes., V, 15.

It is, so to speak, the soul's eye, which sees the road and the obstacles to be avoided.

1) Prudence is necessary for the exercise of all the virtues: of the *moral* virtues, which must keep to the golden mean and avoid extremes; of the *theological* virtues, which must be practiced in season and by such means as are in keeping with the various circumstances of our life. Thus, it is the part of prudence to scan the *dangers* that imperil faith and discover the means to remove them; to seek how faith can be strengthened and made more practical; to see how *trust in God and fear* of His judgments must go hand in hand, how both presumption and despair must be avoided, how all our actions can be animated by charity without hindering the discharge of our duties of state. What prudence is required in the practice of fraternal charity!

2) Prudence is even more necessary for the practice of certain *seemingly contradictory* virtues: justice and goodness, meekness and fortitude, a holy austerity of life and the right care of health, devotedness to our neighbor and charity, the practice of an interior life and compliance with social duties.

1028. 2° When it is question of **works of zeal** in the ministry prudence is likewise necessary.

a) In the *pulpit*, prudence suggests what must be said and what must be left unsaid; it suggests the manner in which the thought must be expressed in order not to antagonize the hearers, in order to adapt the Word of God to their intelligence, to persuade, move and convert them. It is still more needful, perhaps, in teaching catechism, for it is question then of forming the minds and hearts of children, of making an impression for life on their souls.

b) In the *confessional* it is prudence that makes the confessor a keen and upright judge in discerning guilt, in putting clear and precise questions to penitents, according to their respective age, condition and circumstances. Prudence makes the confessor a *teacher* who knows how to instruct without giving scandal, when to leave souls in good faith and when to enlighten them. Prudence again makes of him a *physician* who can tactfully probe into the causes of the soul's ailments and prescribe the needed remedies. And it is prudence that invests him with the character of a *father*, so devoted as to inspire confidence, yet so reserved as to secure reverence.

e) Much tact is also needed to reconcile the wishes of parishioners with divine and liturgical ordinances in what relates to Baptisms, First Communions, Marriages, Last Rites, Funerals, etc., just as great discretion is demanded upon the occasion of sick-calls and other professional visits.

d) Great prudence is likewise required in the *administration of temporalities*, with reference to stole fees, church dues and church funds, so

as not to give offence or scandal to the faithful, or to compromise the reputation for perfect detachment which a priest must enjoy.

III. Means of Progressing in this Virtue

1029. One *means* is *general* and applicable to all the virtues, moral or theological: prayer, through which we draw unto ourselves Jesus Christ and His virtues. We mention this once and for all. We shall speak only of the means that are proper to each particular virtue.

1030. 1° A **general means**, one that governs all the others and which applies to all souls, is that of *referring all our judgments* and all our decisions to the *ultimate, supernatural end*. This is the advice offered by St. Ignatius at the outset of the *Spiritual Exercises* in his fundamental meditation.

a) We must note however that this principle will not be understood in the same manner by all. Beginners considering man's final end will emphasize *salvation*; perfect souls, *God's glory*. The latter mode of understanding this general principle is in itself the better way, but not all will be able thus to understand and relish it.

b) To give this principle a concrete form, it may be embodied in some maxim or other that presents it vividly to our minds, for instance: "*What does this matter for eternity?—Whatever is not eternal is of no account.—What does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?*"

In *practice*, the way to lay in our souls the foundation of Christian prudence, is to realize the full meaning of these maxims, to reflect upon them over and over again until we become familiar with them and habitually live by them.

1031. 2° Provided with this principle, **beginners** strive to *rid themselves of the faults* opposed to Christian prudence. 1

a) They combat vigorously the *prudence of the flesh*, which seeks with avidity the means of satisfying the three-fold concupiscence; this they do by mortifying their love for pleasure, by remembering that the false joys of this world are often followed by bitter regrets and are as nothing compared to eternal happiness.

b) They carefully avoid *trickery, deceit, fraud*, even in the pursuance of honorable ends, well realizing that honesty is the best policy, that the end does not justify the means, and that according to the Gospel, the simplicity of the dove must be joined to the wisdom of the serpent. This is all the more necessary, since devout lay people, priests and

¹ Not to return repeatedly to the same virtues, we shall indicate here the degree of each corresponding to the different stages of Christian perfection.

religious are at times reproached with these defects, though unjustly in most instances. Perfect integrity and evangelical candor are therefore to be assiduously cultivated.

1032. c) They strive to hold in check those two disturbing elements of judgment, *prejudice* and *passion*: *prejudices* that cause us to make decisions under the influence of flimsy and preconceived notions which are liable to prove groundless or unreasonable; *passions* of pride, sensuality, over-anxiety for the goods of this world, which unbalance men and cause them to choose not the best, but what is more agreeable or useful from the point of view of earthly interests. To free themselves from these perturbing influences, they call to mind the Gospel maxim: "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice.*"¹ They therefore avoid making decisions under the pressure of strong passion, delaying a choice until calm reigns in the soul. Should action be urgent, they place themselves, at least for a moment, in the presence of God, to beg His light and to follow it faithfully.

d) In order to resist *flightiness of mind*, hastiness of judgment or listlessness, they accustom themselves *never to act without previous reflection*, without accounting to themselves for the *motives* that prompt them to act, without looking into the consequences, good or bad, of their actions; all this, from the point of view of eternity. This reflection should be measured by the importance of the decision to be made, and in things of graver moment a judicious and experienced person should be consulted. Thus, the habit of deciding nothing, of doing nothing that is not referred to God is gradually acquired.

e) Lastly, to escape the bane of *indecision*, that is, extreme hesitation in making a choice, beginners take good care to remove the causes of this spiritual malady (a complicated and confused mind, a lack of initiative, etc.) by having a clear-sighted spiritual director devise fixed rules of action, whereby they will decide promptly and firmly in ordinary cases, and in greater difficulties have recourse to the director himself.

1033. 3° Souls advancing in the way of perfection grow in this virtue of prudence in three different ways:

a) By the study of Our Lord's *actions* and *words* as set forth in the Gospel, in order to find in them a rule of con-

duct and to attract to themselves through prayer and imitation the dispositions of that Divine Model. **1)** Thus, they will contemplate His prudence, as manifested in His *hidden* life. For thirty years He practiced those virtues, the exercise of which is so hard for us, humility, obedience, poverty, knowing full well that without such an object lesson we should never learn to practice these necessary virtues. No less an object of admiration is His prudence as exemplified in His *public* life. He withstands Satan, so as to baffle his designs and confound him with replies that admit of no retort. He unfolds His teaching gradually according to circumstances, disclosing only by degrees His dignity as Messiah and as Son of God. He makes use of familiar comparisons the better to make His thought understood; He employs parables to veil or reveal the same, as the occasion demands. He skillfully unmasks His adversaries and meets their cunning with disconcerting questions. He trains His Apostles step by step, suffering their defects and adapting His teachings to what they can actually bear: "*But you cannot bear them now.*"¹ He knows, withal, how to tell them unpleasant, but plain truths, as when He announces to them His Passion, in order to prepare them for the scandal of the Cross. In the very midst of that painful ordeal, He answers judges and underlings alike with the same unruffled calm, and He knows when to remain silent. In a word, He knows in all things, how to harmonize the highest form of prudence with firmness and devotedness to duty.

2) As regards His teachings, these are summed up in the following words: "*Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice.*"² "*Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves.*"³ "*Watch and pray.*"⁴

The chief means of growing in this virtue is the prayerful consideration of these examples and the ardent petition to Our Savior to make us share in His prudence.

1034. b) The constituent elements of this virtue must then be fostered, namely, common-sense, a habit of reflection, readiness to consult others, determination, foresight and caution.

1035. c) Lastly, efforts must be made to adorn prudence with those qualities of which St. James speaks. After distinguishing true from false wisdom he adds: "But

¹ *Matth.*, VI, 33.

² *John*, XVI, 12. — ³ *Matth.*, VI, 33. — ⁴ *Matth.*, X, 16. — ⁵ *Mark*, XIII, 33.

the wisdom that is from above, first indeed is *chaste*, then *peaceable*, *modest*, *easy to be persuaded*, consenting to the good, *full of mercy* and good fruits, *without judging*, *without dissimulation*.¹

Chaste: on its guard to keep that purity of body and soul that unites us to God, and, which therefore unites us to the Eternal Wisdom Itself.

Peaceable: maintaining the soul's peace, the calm, the sense of proportion, the poise that enables one to make a judicious choice.

Modest: meek towards others, and by that very fact, *easy to be persuaded*, open to conviction, amenable to reason, thus precluding exasperation, which terminates in strife.

Full of mercy and good fruits: abounding in mercy towards the unfortunate, eager to do them good, since one of the characteristics of Christian wisdom is to lay up treasures in heaven.

Without judging, *without dissimulation*: that is, without partiality, duplicity or hypocrisy, which trouble the soul and the faculty of judgment.

1036. 4° In what concerns the exercise of this virtue by the *perfect*, suffice it to say that they practice it to a high degree, under the action of the gift of Counsel, as we shall explain when treating of the *unitive way*.

ART. II. THE VIRTUE OF JUSTICE 2

After briefly recalling the theological doctrine on *justice*, we shall treat of the virtues of *religion* and *obedience*, which form parts of this virtue.

§ I. Justice Properly so Called

We shall explain: 1° its *nature*, and 2° the principal rules to be followed in its *exercise*.

I. Nature of Justice

1037. 1° **Definition.** The word *justice* often stands in Holy Writ for the sum-total of Christian virtues. Thus, Our Lord proclaims blessed those *who hunger and thirst after justice*,³ that is, after holiness. However, in the strict sense in which we employ the term here, it designates that *moral, supernatural virtue, which inclines the will to render unto others at all times what is strictly their due*.

This virtue resides in the will and regulates those *duties which we are strictly bound to discharge towards the neighbor*. It is distinguished from the theological virtue of charity which bids us regard others as brothers in Christ and inclines us to render them services not otherwise enjoined by strict justice.

1038. 2° **Excellence** of this virtue. Through justice, order and peace reign in the lives of individuals as well as in society at large. In that it respects each one's rights, it makes for honesty in the affairs of men, it restrains deceit, it protects the rights of the helpless and the lowly, it checks the rapacity and injustice of the powerful, and thus it establishes social order.¹ Without justice we should have anarchy, warfare between rival interests, oppression of the weak by the strong, the triumph of evil.

If such is the preëminence of *natural justice*, how much more excellent must Christian justice be, which is a participation in the very Justice of God. The Holy Ghost in communicating it to us, makes it enter into the inmost recesses of the soul and renders it resolute and inaccessible to corruption, inspiring us at the same time with such regard for the rights of others, that we not only loathe injustice, properly so called, but stand in horror of the least unfairness.

1039. 3° The **principal kinds** of justice. They are chiefly two: *social justice*, which bids us render to society what we owe to it, and *individual justice* whereby we render to individuals what is their due.

a) The first is called *legal justice*, because it is based on the exact observance of laws; it obliges us to acknowledge the great benefits which we derive from *society*, by accepting our share of the lawful burdens it imposes upon us, and by rendering to it the services it expects of us. Since the commonweal takes precedence over individual welfare, there are instances when citizens must sacrifice part of their goods, of their freedom, and even risk their lives in defence of the country. But *society* likewise has *duties* to discharge towards its members. It must effect the distribution of social advantages and social burdens, not according to the moods and whims of favor, but according to the capacity of each citizen and in keeping with the rules of equity. To all, society owes the full protection and aid needed for safeguarding the essential rights and interests of every citizen. Favoritism towards some and persecution of others are abuses opposed to *distributive justice*, which society must observe towards its subjects.

¹ "When I speak of justice, I speak of the sacred bond that preserves human society, the indispensable curb to license... If justice prevails, good faith is found in treaties, truth in transactions, order in government, the earth is at peace, and heaven itself sheds over us its beneficent light and radiates down to us its blessed influence." BOSSUET, *Sermon on Justice*.

¹ James, III, 13-18.

² ST. THOM. IIa IIæ, q. 56-122; DOM. SORO, *De justitiâ et jure*; LESSIUS, *De justitiâ*; AD. TANQUERAY, *Synopsis theol. moralis*, t. III, *De virtute justitiæ*; P. JANVIER, *Carême*, 1918. — 3 *Matth.*, V, 6.

1040. b) The second kind of justice, called individual justice, regulates the rights and duties of individuals towards one another. It respects all rights, not only the right of *ownership*, but the right to *bodily or spiritual goods*, to life, liberty, honor and *reputation*.

We cannot in this place enter into all the details which we have explained in our course of Moral Theology. It will suffice for our present purpose to recall the principal rules by which we must be guided in the practice of this virtue.

II. Principal Rules Governing the Practice of Justice

1041. 1° **Principle.** It is evident that devout laymen, religious and priests are obliged to practice the virtue of justice more perfectly and more scrupulously than the rank and file of persons in the world. Their duty is to set the good example in matters of honesty as well as in all other virtues. To act otherwise would be to set a *stumbling-block* for the neighbor, and furnish our enemies with a pretext to denounce religion. It would constitute an *obstacle to spiritual progress*, for an All-just God cannot have for intimate friends those who glaringly violate His formal commands regarding justice.

1042. 2° **Applications of the Principle.** A) One must, first of all, respect the right of *ownership* in what relates to *temporal goods*.

a) Hence, one must scrupulously shun petty thefts, which often and easily lead to graver forms of injustice. This principle should be instilled into children so that they will instinctively recoil with horror from the slightest infraction of justice. All the more must one avoid such thefts as are committed by dealers and manufacturers, who habitually defraud both as to the *quality* and the *quantity* of their goods, under the pretext that their competitors do likewise; who sell at too high a price, or buy at a ridiculously low one, taking advantage of the simplicity of those with whom they deal. One must keep clear of *wild speculations*, of those questionable transactions in which one's fortune is risked along with that of others with the hope of making huge profits.

b) One must carefully avoid contracting *debts*, when one is not sure of being able to pay them, and one must make it a point of honor to pay at the earliest possible moment those that have already been contracted.

c) We should treat a borrowed object with still greater care than if it were our own property, without ever forgetting to return it in due time. Much unconscious injustice is committed by those who neglect these precautions.

d) Any damage *voluntarily* caused must be repaired. If *involuntary*, one is not strictly bound to make restitution, yet those who aim at perfection will do so according to their means.

e) Should one be the recipient of *trust-funds* to be devoted to good works, one must take all the legal safeguards required, so that in case of death these funds may be applied according to the intentions of the donors. This holds especially in the case of priests who receive Mass stipends or alms. They must not only keep their accounts up to date, but must also provide a legatee or executor in the person of a priest who will attend to such Mass intentions and other obligations.

1043. B) Respect for the *good-name* and the *honor* of the neighbor is no less essential.

a) *Rash judgments* must be avoided. To censure others on mere appearances or for reasons more or less trivial, without knowing fully their motives, is nothing less than to arrogate to oneself divine rights, the rights of Him Who alone is the Supreme Judge of the living and the dead; it is an act of injustice against the neighbor, who is thus condemned without a hearing, without the knowledge of the unseen determining motives of his actions, and oftener than not, under the influence of prejudice or passion. Both justice and charity demand not only that we abstain from judging the actions of others, but that we interpret them in the best possible light.

b) Graver reasons bid one refrain from *slander*, which makes known to others the faults or the *secret* defects of the neighbor. These defects are real, but as long as they are not generally known, one has no right to reveal them. By speaking of them, one grieves the neighbor; and the dearer he holds his reputation, the more he is grieved. One lowers him in the estimation of his fellows, and one undermines his prestige, the good standing he needs in order to conduct his affairs and exercise his rightful influence. Thus, one may cause at times a damage that is well-nigh irreparable.

It is of no avail to argue that the person whose faults are thus made known has no right to his good name. This right remains as long as his faults are not public; and after all, one must not forget the Savior's word: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone."¹ The Saints are extremely merciful; they seek in every possible way to safeguard the reputation of their fellow-men. We cannot do better than follow in their footsteps.

e) Thereby we shall more safely avoid indulging in *calumny*, which by false imputations charges to our neighbor faults he has never committed. This kind of injustice is all the more serious since it is often born of malice or of jealousy. The evils that follow in its wake are numberless. Such talk is, alas, all too welcome, and making the rounds from mouth to mouth, ruins the reputation and the prestige of its victims, and at times causes them considerable harm even in temporal matters.

1044. There exists, therefore, a strict *obligation of repairing slanders and calumnies*. No doubt, this is difficult, for it is painful to recant, and besides, the retraction, no matter how sincere, but covers up the injustice committed.

¹ *Synopsis Theologiae Moralis*, t. III, De Virtute Justitiae.

² *John*, VIII, 7.

A lie, even when retracted, often leaves ineffaceable traces. This, of course, is no reason for not repairing the injustice committed; on the contrary, the greater the harm done, the more earnestly and persistently must one work at undoing it. The difficulty of such reparation ought to restrain us from whatever could, either proximally or remotely, expose us to a fall so grave.

This is the reason why those who tend to perfection cultivate not only the virtue of justice, but also that of charity, which by causing us to see God in our neighbor, makes us avoid whatever may sadden him. We shall return to this later on.

§ II. The Virtue of Religion :

1045. This virtue is related to *justice*, because it makes us render to God the worship that is *due* Him; but, since we are unable to offer to God the *infinite* homage to which He is entitled, our religion does not comply with all the requisite conditions of the virtue of justice, and thus it does not, properly speaking, constitute an act of this virtue, though it is closely related to it. We shall explain 1° the *nature*, 2° the *necessity* and 3° the *practice* of religion.

I. Nature of the Virtue of Religion

1046. Religion is a *moral, supernatural virtue that inclines the will to render to God the worship due Him by reason of His infinite excellence and of His sovereign dominion over us.*

a) This is a special virtue, distinct from the three theological virtues, which have God Himself for their immediate object; the object proper to the virtue of religion is the *worship* of God, whether interior or exterior. However, it presupposes the virtue of *faith*, which enlightens us as to God's rights. When religion has attained its perfection, it is *animated* by charity and becomes but the expression and the manifestation of the three theological virtues.

b) Its *formal object* or motive is the acknowledgment of the infinite excellence of God, the first beginning and last end, the perfect Being, on Whom all things depend and towards Whom all things must gravitate.

¹ ST. THOMAS, IIa II^æ, q. 84; SUAREZ, *De virtute et statu religionis*, t. I, l. II; BOUQUILLON, *De virtute religionis*; J. J. OLIER, *Introd. à la vie et aux vertus*, ch. I; MGR D'HULST, *Carême 1893*, Conf. I; CH. DE SMEDT, *op. cit.*, p. 35-104; RIBET, *Les vertus*, ch. XXI.

e) The acts to which religion inclines us are *interior* and *exterior*.

1047. By the *interior* acts we subject to God our soul, with its faculties, chiefly the intellect and the will. 1) The first and the most important of these acts is that of *adoration*, in which we *abase* our whole being before Him Who is the fulness of being and the source of all the good that is found in creatures. It is accompanied or followed by the reverent admiration experienced at the sight of His infinite perfections. 2) Since He is the author of all the good we possess, we offer Him our *gratitude*. 3) Remembering that we are sinners, we enter into sentiments of *penitence*, to atone for the offences committed against His infinite majesty. 4) Because we stand in continual need of His help to do good and attain our end, we address to Him our *prayers* or requests, thus acknowledging Him as the source of all good.

1048. These interior sentiments are manifested by *exterior* acts, which have all the more worth as the interior acts they express are more perfect. 1) The *foremost* among these acts is, without question, that of *sacrifice*, which is an exterior and *social act*, whereby the priest offers God, in the name of the Church, an *immolated victim in order to acknowledge His supreme dominion, to repair the offence offered to His majesty, and to enter into communion with Him.* In the New Law there is but one sacrifice, that of the Mass, which, renewing the sacrifice of Calvary, offers to God an infinite homage and obtains for men all the graces they need. We have already pointed out, in nos. 271-276, the effects of the Mass and the requisite dispositions to profit by it. 2) To this principal act are added the *public* prayers offered in the name of the Church by her representatives: the Divine Office, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, *private* vocal prayers; oaths and vows prudently taken in God's honor and accompanied by all the conditions explained in the treatises of Moral Theology, supernatural exterior acts, done for the glory of God, which, according to the expression of St. Peter, are "*spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God.*"¹

We can conclude from this that religion is the most excellent among the moral virtues; for, by causing us to offer up divine worship, it brings us closer to God than do the other moral virtues.

¹ I. Peter, II, 5.

II. Necessity of the Virtue of Religion

To proceed methodically we shall show : 1° that *all creatures* must give glory to God; 2° that *for man*, this is a special duty; 3° that it is so, above all, for the *priest*.

1049. 1° *All creatures must glorify God.* If every work must reflect credit on the doer, far higher must be the way in which the creature must proclaim the glory of its Maker! Man does not create things; he can but fashion them. This over, he has done with them. Now, God has not only formed his creatures, but He has drawn them *out of nothing*; He has not merely left the mark of His genius upon them, but also the reflection of His own perfections. Moreover, He *preserves* them, lending them His *concurrence* and His *grace*, so that they are utterly dependent upon Him. They must, therefore, more than the works of man's creation, declare the greatness of their Author. Inanimate creatures do this after their own fashion; by revealing their beauty and harmony, they invite us to glorify God: "The heavens shew forth the glory of God."¹ He made us, and not we ourselves."² This homage, however honors God but very imperfectly, since it is not free.

1050. 2° It is to man, then, that the duty falls of *consciously* giving glory to God, of lending his heart and his voice to inanimate creation to render Him a free and rational homage. To man, therefore, the king of creation, it belongs to contemplate these wonders, to refer them to God, and thus to become creation's own *high-priest*. Man must praise God, above all, in his own name; for endowed with a higher perfection than irrational beings, created to the image and likeness of God, sharing in His life, man's life should be one of perpetual admiration, perpetual praise, worship, thanksgiving, and love towards His Creator and Sanctifier. This St. Paul declares to us: "For of Him and by Him, and in Him, are all things: to Him be glory forever!"³ For whether we live, we live unto the Lord: or whether we die, we die unto the Lord."⁴ Reminding his disciples that our body as well as our soul is the temple of the Holy Ghost, he adds: "*Glorify and bear God in your body.*"⁵

1051. 3° This duty is particularly laid upon *priests*. Unfortunately the majority of men, absorbed in business or

pleasure, devote but little time to the worship of God. It was necessary, therefore, that from among them some special representatives acceptable to God be chosen, that they might, not only in their own name, but in the name of society, render God the religious duties to which He has a right. This is the rôle of the *priest*. He is chosen by God from among his fellows to be a mediator between earth and heaven, charged with glorifying God, with offering Him the homages of all creatures and with drawing down upon the earth God's graces and blessings. This is his duty of state, his profession, a real duty of justice, as St. Paul explains: "*For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for gifts and sacrifices for sins.*" For this reason, the Church has confided to him two great means of exercising the virtue of religion, the Divine Office and Holy Mass. This twofold duty he must discharge with great fervor, for by glorifying God, he at the same time renders this Divine Majesty propitious to our supplications. In this way, the priest procures his own personal sanctification and that of the souls entrusted to his care (nos. 393-401). His prayers are all the more effective, since it is the Church, since it is Jesus Who prays with him and in him, and the prayer of Christ is always heard: "*He was heard for his reverence.*"²

III. The Practice of the Virtue of Religion

1052. For the right practice of this virtue, we must cultivate true *devotion*, that is to say, an *habitual attitude of the will, which causes us to lend ourselves readily and generously to whatever appertains to the service of God.* This disposition is in reality but a manifestation of love for God, and it is in this way that religion is related to charity.

1053. 1° **Beginners** practice this virtue : **a)** by the observance of the laws of God and of the Church regarding prayer, the sanctification of the Lord's Day and holydays of obligation; **b)** by avoiding dissipation, interior or exterior, which is a source of many distractions during prayer. This is effected by being on guard against the pressing host of worldly amusements and empty day-dreams; **c)** by inward recollection before prayer in order to make it with greater attention, and by practicing the holy exercise of the presence of God (n. 446).

¹ *Ps.* XVIII, 2. — ² *Ps.* XCIX, 3. — ³ *Rom.*, XI, 36.
⁴ *Id.* XIV, 8. — ⁵ *I. Cor.*, VII, 20.

1054. ^{2o} Those **advancing** in the way of perfection strive to enter into *the spirit of religion* in union with Jesus, the supreme Worshipper of the Father, Who, in His life, as well as in His death, glorified God in an infinite manner (n. 151).

a) This spirit of religion comprises two main dispositions, *reverence and love*. The former is a profound sentiment of respect mingled with awe whereby we acknowledge God as our Creator and Sovereign Master and rejoice in proclaiming our utter dependence upon Him. The latter is directed towards God, to the most lovable and loving Father, Who has deigned to adopt us as His children and forever surrounds us with His paternal tenderness. From these two sentiments all the others proceed; namely, admiration, gratitude, praise.

1055. b) It is from the *Sacred Heart of Jesus* that we seek to draw these sentiments of religion. This Divine Mediator lived only to glorify His Father: "*I have glorified thee on the earth.*"¹ He died to carry out His Father's will, proclaiming by His death that nothing is worthy of life and being before the face of God. After His death He continues to glorify His Father, not only in the Eucharist where He unceasingly adores the Holy Trinity, but also in our hearts where, through His Divine Spirit, He produces religious dispositions like unto His own. He lives in the soul of every Christian, but especially in the soul of every priest, and through His priests He procures glory to Him, to Whom alone is due adoration and reverence. Through ardent desire, then, we must draw Him unto us and give ourselves to Him, that He may carry out the practice of the virtue of religion in us, with us, and through us.

"He comes to us then," says Father Olier² "and abides upon the earth as a sacrifice of praise in the hands of His priests, that He may impart to us His spirit of victim, have us join in the praise He offers, and make us inwardly share in His sentiments of worship. He diffuses Himself within us, He infuses Himself into us, He envelops our soul and replenishes it with the intimate dispositions of His spirit of religion, so that His soul and ours form but one, animated by the same spirit of reverence, of love, of praise, of interior and exterior sacrifice of all things unto the glory of His Father."

1056. c) We must not forget, however, that Jesus requires *our co-operation*. Since He comes in order to make us share with Him in His condition and in His sentiments of victim, we must needs live with Him and in Him in the

spirit of sacrifice, crucifying the ill-regulated tendencies of disordered nature, and yielding a ready obedience to the inspirations of grace. Then will all our actions be pleasing to God, then will they be so many sacrificial offerings, so many acts of religion, praising and glorifying God, our Creator and Father. We thereby proclaim the supremacy of God and the nothingness of the creature, since we sacrifice every part of our being, offer every one of our actions to the honor and glory of our Sovereign Master.

d) This we do more particularly in those acts of religion properly so called, like assistance at Holy Mass, the recitation of liturgical prayers or other prayers, as explained in numbers 274, 284, 523.

N. B.—*Perfect souls* practice this virtue under the influence of the *gift of piety*, of which we shall treat further on.

§ III. The Virtue of Obedience¹

This virtue is allied to justice, since obedience is a homage, an act of submission due to Superiors; but it differs from justice inasmuch as it implies an inequality between superiors and subjects. We shall explain: 1^o the nature and foundation of obedience; 2^o its degrees; 3^o its qualities; 4^o its excellence.

I. Nature and Foundation of Obedience

1057. 1^o **Definition.** Obedience is a *supernatural, moral virtue which inclines us to submit our will to that of our lawful superiors, in so far as they are the representatives of God*. These last words are the ones that need to be explained first, since they are the foundation of Christian obedience.

1058. 2^o **The foundation of this virtue.** Obedience rests upon God's sovereign domain and upon the absolute submission creatures owe Him.

A) First of all, it is evident that we must obey God (n. 481).

1) We must be entirely dependent upon the holy will of God since we were created by Him: "All things serve Thee."² As rational creatures, we are all the more obliged to this submission because we have

¹ ST. JOHN CLIMACUS, *The Ladder of Paradise*, IV; ST. THOMAS, IIa IIæ, q. 104-105; ST. FRANCIS OF SALES, *Devout Life*, P. III, C. XI; *Spiritual Conference*, X-XI; RODRIGUEZ, *Christian Perfection*, P. III, Treat. V; GAY, *Christian Life and Virtues*, Vol. II, Treat. XI.
² Ps. CXVIII, 91.

received more from Him; we have received in particular the gift of a free will, which we can best acknowledge by freely submitting it to the will of our Maker. 2) Being *children of God*, we must obey Our Heavenly Father as Jesus Himself did, Who having come into the world through obedience, through obedience went out from it: "He was made obedient unto death."¹ 3) *Redeemed* from the bondage of sin, we no longer belong to ourselves, but to Jesus Christ, Who gave His blood to make us His own: "And you are not your own, for you are bought with a great price."² We must, therefore, obey His laws.

1059. B) For the same reason we must yield obedience to **God's lawful representatives**. This point must be thoroughly understood. a) Because man is not self-sufficient for his physical, intellectual, and moral well-being, God willed that he live in society. Society, however, cannot endure without an *authority* which coördinates the efforts of its members towards the common good. Hence, it is God's will that in society there should be superiors commissioned to command, and subjects whose duty it is to obey. In order that this obedience might be more readily practiced, God has delegated His authority to legitimate superiors: "*For there is no power but from God.*"³ This is so true that to render obedience to lawful superiors is to render obedience to God, and to disobey them is to provoke condemnation: "*Therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation.*"⁴ The duty of Superiors lies in exercising their authority solely in the capacity of God's representatives in order to procure glory to God and to promote the general welfare of the community. Should they fail in this, they are responsible before God and their own superiors for such abuse of their authority. The duty of subjects is to obey God's representatives, to obey them as they obey God Himself: "*He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me.*"⁵ The reason for this is evident. Without such submission, there would be but chaos and disorder in each of the different parts of society to the detriment of all.

1060. b) But, *who are the lawful superiors?* The answer is, those who are placed by God at the head of the different kinds of societies.

1) In the *natural* order three different sorts of society may be discerned: *domestic* society or *the family*, at the head of which are parents, and especially the father; *civil* society, ruled by those who are the lawful holders of authority according to the different systems of

government accepted in the different nations of the world; *professional* society, where we find employers and employees, whose respective rights and duties are determined by special, particular contracts.¹

2) In the *supernatural* order, the hierarchical superiors are: the *Sovereign Pontiff*, whose authority is both supreme and immediate over the whole Church; *Bishops*, who have jurisdiction over their respective dioceses, and, under their authority, *pastors* and *curates*, each within the limits determined by the Code of Canon Law. Moreover, there are in the Church particular communities with constitutions and rules approved by the Sovereign Pontiff or by the Bishops, and having superiors appointed in accordance with their Constitutions or rules. Here, again, we find legitimate authority. Therefore, whoever joins a community binds himself to keep the rules and obey the Superiors who command within the limits defined by the rule.

1061. C) There are, then, limits set to the exercise of authority.

1) It is evident that it is neither obligatory nor permissible to obey a superior who would give a command manifestly opposed to divine or ecclesiastical laws. In this case we should have to repeat the words of St. Peter:² "*We ought to obey God, rather than men,*" words that proclaim and vindicate Christian liberty against all tyranny.³ The same would hold true, if what is commanded is clearly beyond our powers, for *no one is held to do the impossible*. In case of *doubt*, however, since we are prone to illusions, we must act on the principle: in doubt *the presumption is in favor of the superior*.

2) If a superior should in commanding go beyond the limits of his authority, for instance, if a parent should oppose the duly considered vocation of his child, he would be exceeding his rights and the child would not be bound to obey. A similar case would be that of the Superior of a community who would give commands over and above

¹ See the Encyclical Letter of Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum novarum*, (Engl. transl. in The Great Encyclicals of Leo XIII, p. 209; AD. TANQUERREY, *De justitia*, wherein the Encyclical is commented upon).

² *Act.*, V, 29.
³ This is the doctrine of ST. FRANCIS DE SALES: "Many have been greatly mistaken as to this condition of obedience, believing that it consisted in doing at random whatever should be commanded, even were it contrary to the Commandments of God and of Holy Church. In this they have been greatly mistaken, imagining a folly to lurk in this quality of blindness which is not there at all. In all that relates to the Commandments of God, just as Superiors have no power whatever to give any contrary command, so in such a case inferiors have no obligation to obey—indeed, if they did so they would sin." Cf. *Spiritual Conferences* of ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, Conf. XI, p. 179. (Translation by Canon Mackey).

¹ *Phil.*, II, 8. — ² *I Cor.*, VI, 20. — ³ *Rom.*, XIII, 1.
⁴ *Rom.*, XIII, 2. — ⁵ *Luke*, X, 16.

what the rules and constitutions permit, for these determine the limits of the authority of Superiors.

II. *The Degrees of Obedience*

1062. 1° **Beginners** apply themselves, first of all, to observe faithfully the Commandments of God and of the Church, and to conform to the orders of lawful superiors with diligence, punctuality, and in a supernatural spirit.

1063. 2° More **advanced** souls : a) carefully ponder the examples given by Jesus from the very first moment of His existence, when He pledged Himself to fulfil in all things the will of His Father, until the last instant of His life when He died a victim of obedience. They pray Him to come and live within them in that same spirit of obedience, and they strive to unite themselves to Him in submitting to their superiors, just as He was subject to Mary and to Joseph : "*He was subject to them.*"¹

b) They submit their *wills* even in things that entail hardship and go against their preferences. They do so whole-heartedly, without complaint, even with joy at being able to imitate more perfectly their Divine Model. They avoid especially taking any steps that would lead the superior to conform to their desires, for, as St. Bernard remarks : "You need not flatter yourself with the idea that you are truly obedient; if, when you desire something, you strive either openly or covertly to have your spiritual father command it to you. In this you only deceive yourself, for it is not you that obey the superior, but the superior that obeys you."²

1064. 3° **Perfect** souls go even further. They submit their *judgment* to that of their superior, without even considering the reasons for his command.

St. Ignatius gives an excellent explanation of this degree of obedience.³ "If, however, one wishes to make the perfect sacrifice of self, one must, after having submitted one's will to God, consecrate to Him one's *understanding* in such a way as not only to will what the superior wills, but to be of the same mind also, and to submit one's judgment to that of the superior to the extent that an already obedient will can sway the mind." Our judgment as well as our will can go astray in the things that touch us closely, and therefore, just as we conform our wills to that of the superior to prevent it, as it were, from losing its bearings : "so, lest our judgment go astray, we must likewise make it conform to that of the superior." The Saint adds, however, that "should another view come to our mind differing from that of the superior, and, if after having consulted the Lord in prayer, it seems to us that the same should be made known to Him, we may well tell him. Still, lest our self-love and our own opinions deceive us, it is proper to take the precaution of maintaining a perfect evenness of mind both before and after disclosing our opinions, ever ready not only to under-

take or to relinquish the purpose in question, but even to approve and acknowledge as the best course the one to be determined by the superior." This is what is termed *blind* obedience which places us in the hands of superiors "after the manner of a *staff*... after the manner of a *corpse*."¹ This obedience, however, if explained with the reservations of St. Ignatius and those we have noted above, is not unreasonable, since it is to God that we subordinate our will and our intellect.

III. *The Qualities of Obedience*

In order to be *perfect*, obedience must be *supernatural* in its motive, *universal* in its extent, and *entire* in its execution.

1065. 1° **Supernatural** in its motive, which means that we are to see God Himself, or Jesus Christ in the persons of our superiors, since they have no authority except from Him. Nothing can render obedience more easy, for who would refuse to obey God? This is what St. Paul recommends to servants : "Be obedient to them that are your lords according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the simplicity of your heart, as to Christ : *not serving to the eye, as it were pleasing men, but, as the servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart with a good will serving, as to the Lord, and not to men.*"²

In the same tenor St. Ignatius wrote to his Religious of Portugal : "It is my ardent desire that you should carefully strive in all earnestness to see Our Lord Jesus Christ in your superiors, whosever they may be, and, in their persons, reverently offer the Divine Majesty the honor due to Him... Let them not consider the person whom they obey but let them see in that person Jesus Christ, for Whose sake obedience is given. As a matter of fact, we are bound to obey a Superior not on account of his prudence, of his goodness or of any other personal qualities wherewith God may have endowed him, but because he is God's representative... Even if he should seem to lack in prudence and wisdom, this is no reason for failing in exact obedience, since in his capacity of superior, he represents a Person, Whose wisdom is infallible and Who will Himself provide for all those things in which His minister falls short, be it virtue or any other quality."³

Nothing could contain greater wisdom than this principle; for, if to-day we obey our superior because his qualities please us, what shall we do to-morrow if we have another superior who seems to us to be devoid of such qualities? Besides, do we not forfeit the merit that should be ours, by subjecting ourselves to a man whom we esteem instead of submitting to God Himself? We must not, therefore, dwell upon the defects of our superiors, a thing that would render our obedience more difficult, nor yet

¹ St. IGNATIUS, *Constit.*, VI, § I, rule 36.
² *Ephes.*, VI, 5-9. — ³ Letter CXX.

¹ St. Luke, II, 51. — ² *Serm. de diversis*, XXXV, 4. — ³ Letter CXX.

upon their personal qualities, a thing that would render it less meritorious, but we must consider God living and commanding in their persons.

1066. ²⁰ **Universal** in its extent, in the sense that we are to comply with all the commands of a superior as long as he commands lawfully. St. Francis de Sales ¹ says: "Obedience lovingly undertakes to do all that is commanded it with simplicity and without ever considering whether the command is good or bad, provided that the person who orders has authority to order, and that the command serves to unite our mind to God." He adds, however, that if a superior orders what is evidently against the law of God, it is one's duty not to submit. Such obedience, St. Thomas ² says, would be injudicious: "Obedience in unlawful matters is injudicious."

Aside from this case, the truly obedient person does not go astray even when the superior is wrong and commands what is less good than what we ourselves would choose. Then as a matter of fact God, to Whom the submission is given and Who sees the heart, rewards this obedience by assuring success. St. Francis de Sales, ³ commenting upon the words, "*the obedient man shall speak of victory*", says: "The truly obedient man will come out the conqueror in all the difficulties into which he may be led by obedience, and with honor from all the roads he has traversed, however dangerous." In other words, a superior may err in commanding, but we make no mistake in obeying.

1067. ³⁰ **Entire** in the execution, hence *prompt, without reservations, persevering* and even *cheerful*.

a) *Prompt*; for love, which is the prime mover of perfect obedience, makes us obey with readiness: "The obedient man loves the command, and as soon as he is aware of it, whether it be to his taste or not, embraces it, caresses it, and cherishes it tenderly." ⁴

This is just what St. Bernard says: "The truly obedient man knows of no hesitation; he has a horror of procrastination; he ignores delays; he anticipates orders; his eyes are on the lookout, his ears on the alert, his tongue ready to speak the word, his hands ready to act, his feet ready to start; he is all intent on knowing the will of him who commands." ⁵

b) Without *reservations*; for to make a choice, to obey in some things and disobey in others is to forfeit the merit of obedience; it is to show that we submit in what pleases us and, therefore, that our submission is not supernatural.

¹ *Spiritual Conferences*, XI, p. 179.

² St. THOM., II^a II^a, q. 104, a. 3, ad 3.

³ *Spirit. Conferences*, XI, p. 199. — ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

⁵ *Sermo de diversis*, XLI, 7. — This should be read in its entirety.

Let us, then, remember what Our Lord says: "*One jot, or one tittle shall not pass of the law, till all be fulfilled.*" ¹

Perseverance is likewise required of us. This is one of the great merits of the virtue of obedience, "for to do a thing cheerfully which we are only commanded to do once, costs nothing; but when our superior says to us: You will do that always, and all through your life, there lies the virtue and there also the difficulty." ²

c) *Cheerful*, "*for God loveth a cheerful giver.*" ³ In those things that entail hardship, obedience cannot be cheerful, unless it be animated by love. In fact, nothing is painful to him who loves, because he thinks not of the suffering undergone, but of the person for whose sake he suffers. Now, if we see Our Lord in the person of him who commands, how can we fail to love Him, how can we fail to offer with our whole heart the trifling sacrifice that He demands, Who died a victim of obedience for our sake! This is why we must always return to the general principle we have established, that is, to see God Himself in the person of our Superior.

IV. The Excellence of Obedience

1068. The excellence of obedience flows from all that we have said of this virtue. St. Thomas does not hesitate to say that, after the virtue of religion, it is the most perfect of all the moral virtues, for the reason that it unites us closer to God than any other virtue, inasmuch as obedience detaches us from our own will, which is the main obstacle to union with God. ⁴ Obedience is, besides, the mother and guardian of the other virtues, and transforms our ordinary actions into so many virtuous acts.

1069. ¹⁰ Obedience *unites* us to God and makes us habitually *share* in His life.

a) It subordinates our will directly to that of God and thereby all our other faculties, inasmuch as they are in turn subordinated to the will. This submission is all the more *meritorious* because it is *freely* made. Inanimate creatures obey God by an innate necessity of their nature, but man obeys by the free choice of his will. In so doing, man tenders His Sovereign Master the homage of what he holds most dear; he offers Him a pleasing sacrifice: "*Through obedience our wills are sacrificed.*" ⁵ Thus man enters *into communion with God*, since he has no longer any other will but God's will. He can make his own the words of Christ in His agony: "*Not my will, but thine be done.*" ⁶ This is a most meritorious and a most sanctifying union since it unites the best that is in us, our will, to that of God, ever good and ever holy.

¹ *Math.*, V, 18. — ² St. FR. DE SALES, *Spiritual Conferences*, XI, p. 191.

³ I Cor., IX, 7. — ⁴ *Sum. Theol.*, II^a II^a, q. 104, a. 3.

⁵ St. GREGORY, *Moral.*, I, XXV, c. 10. — ⁶ *Luke*, XXII, 42.

b) Since the will is the master-faculty in man, by uniting it to God, we unite to Him all the powers of our soul. Such a sacrifice is greater than the sacrifice of external goods made by the virtue of poverty, greater than the sacrifice of bodily pleasures entailed by the practice of chastity and of mortification. Obedience is, in all truth, the highest sacrifice we can make: "For obedience is better than sacrifices."¹

e) Obedience likewise constitutes the most abiding and lasting union. Through Sacramental Communion we effect a temporary union with God, but through habitual obedience we establish in our soul a species of spiritual communion which is permanent, which causes us to abide in God as He abides in us, since we will what He wills and nothing but what He wills. This is, as a matter of fact, the most real, the most intimate, and the most effective of all unions—*unum velle unum nolle*.

1070. 2° Obedience is logically the *mother* and the *guardian* of all the virtues, as St. Augustine beautifully expresses it: "In a rational creature, obedience is, as it were, the mother and guardian of all virtues."²

a) Obedience really becomes one with *charity*, for, as St. Thomas teaches, love effects primarily a union of wills.³ And is not this the doctrine of St. John? After declaring that he who pretends to love God and keeps not His Commandments is a liar, the Apostle adds: "But he that keepeth His word, in him in very deed the charity of God is perfected; and by this we know that we are in Him."⁴ And this is the teaching of the Divine Master Himself. He tells us that to keep His commandments is to love Him: "If you love me, keep my commandments."⁵ True obedience, therefore, is in reality a genuine act of love.

1071. b) Obedience makes us practice the other virtues, inasmuch as they all fall under a precept or a counsel: "All acts of virtue come under obedience, inasmuch as they are contained in a precept."⁶

Thus, obedience makes us practice penance and mortification, so frequently prescribed in the Gospels, as well as justice, religion, charity, and all the virtues embodied in the Decalogue. More, obedience likens us to the *martyrs*, who sacrificed their lives for God, as St. Ignatius⁷ explains: "Through it, self-will and self-sufficiency are ever being immolated and laid as victims upon an altar, in such wise that instead of man's free-will there remains but the will of Jesus Christ Our Lord, made known to us by him who commands us. Nor is it merely the desire to live that is sacrificed by obedience, as happens in the case of martyrdom, but here all our desires are sacrificed at one and the same time." The same thought was expressed by St. Pacomius to a young monk longing for martyrdom: "It is far better to live in obedience and

to die daily to self by mortifying our own desires, than to suffer martyrdom in imagination. He who mortifies himself, dies a martyr's death as far as need be; it is a far greater martyrdom to persevere in obedience all through life, than to die in a moment by a stroke of the sword."¹

1072. c) Obedience offers us perfect *safety*. Left to ourselves, we would be wondering which would be the more perfect course to take, whereas obedience by determining what is our duty in every instance, points out to us the surest way of working out our sanctification. By doing what obedience prescribes, we realize to the fullest possible extent the one essential condition of perfection, that is, compliance with God's good pleasure: "I do always the things that are pleasing to him."²

From this arises a sense of profound and abiding peace: "There is great peace for them that love thy law, O Lord."³ When we are desirous of doing only the will of God as manifested through superiors, we are not preoccupied about what is to be done nor about the means to be employed. All that we must do is to receive orders from him who holds God's place in our regard and to carry them out as best we can. Providence takes care of the rest, demanding of us, not success, but simply the effort to fulfil the orders given. Besides, we may rest assured of the final result. It is clear that if we do God's will, He will take care of doing ours, that is to say, of granting our requests and fostering our designs. Obedience, then, means peace on earth, and at the end of life's journey, it is obedience that opens for us the gates of Heaven. Lost through the disobedience of our First Parents and regained through the obedience of Jesus Christ, Heaven is reserved for those who allow themselves to be led by the human representatives of our Divine Savior. There is no Hell for the truly obedient: "What else does God loathe or punish except self-will? Let self-will cease, and Hell shall be no more."⁴

1073. 3° Lastly, obedience transforms into virtues and merits the most commonplace occupations of life: meals, recreations, work. Whatever is done in the spirit of obedience shares in the merit of that virtue, is acceptable to God, and will be rewarded by Him. On the other hand, whatever is done in opposition to the will of superiors, no matter how praiseworthy in itself, is in reality an act of disobedience. The obedient man is therefore often likened to the traveller who goes aboard a ship that is in charge of an expert pilot. Each single day, even though he sleeps, he is steadily making for port, and, thus, without fatigue or preoccupation he reaches the desired goal, the haven of a blissful eternity.

¹ Quoted by St. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Spiritual Conferences*, p. 192.

² *John*, VIII, 29. — 3 Ps., CXVIII, 165.

⁴ St. BERNARD, *Sermon III* for Eastertide, 3.

¹ *I Kings*, XV, 22. — 2 *De Civitate Dei*, I, XIV, c. 12.

³ *Sum. Theol.*, IIa IIæ, q. 104, a. 3. — 4 *John*, II, 5. — 5 *John*, XIV, 15.

⁶ St. THOMAS, IIa IIæ, q. 104, a. 3, ad 2. — 7 Letter quoted above.

1074. We end with the following words addressed by God to St. Catherine of Siena: "How sweet and glorious is this virtue which in itself embodies all the others! It has been conceived and begotten by charity. Upon it rests the foundation of divine faith... It is the very center of the soul, which no tempter can reach... Privation causes it no affliction, for obedience has taught it to desire nothing outside of Myself, Who am able, if I will it, to fulfil all its desires... O, Obedience! thou dost accomplish the journey without fatigue, and reachest the haven of salvation without mishap! Thou identifiest thyself with the Word, my Only-begotten Son. Thou sailest on the bark of the most hallowed Cross, ready to suffer all things rather than depart from obedience to the Word and infringe upon His teaching! How great does thy long perseverance make thee! So great that thou reachest from earth to heaven, since it is by thee and by thee alone that it can be laid open."

ART. III. THE VIRTUE OF FORTITUDE²

1075. Justice, complemented by religion and obedience, regulates our relations with others. Fortitude and temperance regulate our duties towards ourselves. We shall treat of fortitude by describing: 1° its nature, 2° the virtues related to it, 3° the means of practicing it.

§ I. Nature of the Virtue of Fortitude

We shall explain: 1° its definition; 2° its degrees.

I. Definition

1076. This virtue, called also strength of soul, strength of character, spiritual vigor, is a *supernatural, moral virtue that strengthens the soul in the pursuit of arduous moral good, without allowing it to be deterred by fear, even the fear of death.*

A) Its object is twofold, the repression of the feelings of fear which tend to paralyze our efforts towards good, and the control of the spirit of daring which, without such a check, would easily turn into temerity: "And, therefore, the relations of fortitude to fear and to audacity consist in repressing the former and controlling the latter."³

1077. B) Its action is chiefly twofold: to undertake and to endure difficult things: "Arduous tasks both to pursue and to sustain."

¹ Dialogue.

² St. THOMAS, II^a II^æ, q. 123-140; his commentators, particularly Cajetan and John of St. Thomas; JANVIER, *Lenten Conferences* of 1920; RIBET, *Virtus*, ch. XXXVII-XLII; CH. DE SMEDT, *Notre vie surnat.*, t. II, p. 210-267.

³ St. THOM., II^a II^æ, q. 123, a. 3.

a) First of all, fortitude consists in *undertaking* and *carrying into execution difficult enterprises*. On the road to virtue and to perfection there lie innumerable obstacles, difficult to overcome and forever recurring. They must not only not be feared, but they must be faced with the courageous effort necessary to overcome them. This is the first act of this virtue.

This act implies: 1) *determination* to arrive quickly at the decision of doing one's duty no matter what the cost may be; 2) *courage* and generosity in putting forth all the effort that the peculiar difficulties of the case may require; 3) *steadfastness*, to prolong the effort to the end, in spite of the stubbornness and the repeated attacks of the enemy.

b) Furthermore, we must needs learn *to suffer* for God's sake the manifold and difficult trials which He sends us, to bear the sufferings, the illnesses, the mockeries, the calumnies of which we may be the victims.

This often proves even more wearisome than action. "To bear is more difficult than to attack,"¹ says St. Thomas, and for this he gives a threefold reason. First, because one who is on the defensive generally feels that his adversary is more powerful than himself, while he who takes the offensive comes on with a sense of superiority. Secondly, because the one who holds out in the face of attack actually feels the difficulties, whereas he who takes the offensive can only foresee them. Now, an evil that is actually present inspires more fear than one we merely foresee. Thirdly, because to hold out under trials means unflinching perseverance for a notable time, for instance, in the case of a long and painful illness, or of violent and prolonged temptation; whereas to undertake a difficult task often requires but a momentary effort.

II. Degrees of the Virtue of Fortitude

1078. 1° **Beginners** fight valiantly against the many fears that deter them from the fulfilment of duty:—

1) Fear of effort and fear of risks. They recall that man has even more priceless possessions than goods of fortune, health, good name and life itself. Such are the gifts of grace which are in themselves but the prelude of eternal bliss. They come therefore to the practical conclusion that one must unhesitatingly sacrifice the former to lay hold of the latter, which endure forever. They convince themselves of the fact that the only real evil is *sin*, and that, therefore, that evil must be avoided at all costs, even at the risk of suffering all the temporal ills that may befall them.

1079. 2) The fear of *criticism* or of ridicule, in other words, human respect, which leads them to neglect their

¹ *Sum. Theol.*, II^a II^æ, q. 123, a. 6, ad. 1.

duty through fear of unfavorable comment, of the ridicule of which they may be the target, of the threats that may be hurled against them, of the injuries and injustices of which they may be the victims. Many a man dauntless on the battlefield cowers in the face of such sarcasm or such threats. Of what paramount importance it is to school the young in the contempt of human respect, to school them in that manliness that knows how to brave public opinion and follow convictions, without fear, without blush!

3) The fear of *displeasing friends*. This fear is at times more potent than that of incurring the vengeance of enemies. And yet, we must remember that it is better to please God than men; that those who would hinder us from doing our full duty are but false friends, and that if we were to please them we should forfeit the esteem and the friendship of Jesus Christ, Our Lord: "*If I get pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.*"¹ With far greater reason must we avoid sacrificing duty to the craving for *vain popularity*. The plaudits of men die away. There is no approbation that is lasting, none that is truly worthy of us, save that of God, the infallible Judge. Let us then conclude with St. Paul that the only glory to be sought after is that which proceeds from loyalty to God and fidelity to duty: "*But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he who commendeth himself is approved: but he, whom God commendeth.*"²

1080. 2° Souls in the **illuminative way** exercise themselves in the practice of the positive side of the virtue of fortitude, by striving to imitate that strength of soul that Jesus Christ exemplified for us during His life.

1) This virtue appears in His *hidden life*. From the very first moment of His Incarnation, Our Lord offers Himself to His Father in the place of all the victims of the Old Law, by giving Himself for all mankind. He is aware that, in consequence, His life will be a protracted martyrdom, yet He freely chooses that martyrdom. That is why from His birth He eagerly seeks poverty, mortification and obedience; why He submits to persecution and exile: why during thirty years He hides Himself in the most complete obscurity, in order to merit for us the grace that would enable us to sanctify our most commonplace actions and to inspire us with a love of humility. Thus He teaches us the practice of the virtue of fortitude and courage amidst the thousand details of daily life.

2) This fortitude is likewise evident during the course of His *public life*: in the long fast which He undertakes before beginning His ministry; in His victorious struggle against Satan; in His preaching,

where contrary to the preconceptions of the Jews, He announces the advent of a kingdom altogether spiritual, founded on humility, sacrifice, self-denial, as well as on the love of God. It is shown forth in the vigor wherewith He stigmatizes scandal and condemns the casuistry of the Doctors of the Law; in the jealous care wherewith He avoids popularity of a questionable character and eschews the royalty offered to Him; in the manner, at once sweet and forceful, with which he trains His Apostles, correcting their prejudices, their defects, and rebuking him whom he had chosen as the leader of the Twelve. It is shown again in the determination to return to Jerusalem, well knowing that He is to encounter sufferings, humiliation and death. Thus He sets us the example of the calm and steady courage which we must have in all our relations with others.

3) Fortitude is manifested in His *Passion*: in the midst of that torturing agony, where, in spite of the absence of consolation and in spite of weariness of soul, He perseveres long in prayer: "*And being in agony, He prayed the longer;*"¹ in the unruffled serenity He shows at the moment of His arrest; in the silence He maintains in the face of calumnies and the curiosity of Herod; in His dignified attitude before His judges; in the heroic patience which He exemplifies while in the midst of undeserved torments and the mockeries offered His sacred Person; in the calm resignation wherewith He commends His spirit into the hands of God, His Father, and gives up the ghost.² He thereby teaches us *patience* amidst the severest trials.

As can be easily seen, there is here an ample field for imitation. The better to succeed in this we must beg Our Lord to deign come to dwell within us *in all the fulness of His power*. Besides, we must cooperate with Him in the actual exercise of this virtue, by practicing it, not only when some great issue demands it, but also in the thousand and one actions that make up the ordinary run of our life, remembering that the constant practice of these little virtues demands a higher degree of heroism than do brilliant deeds.

1081. 3° Perfect souls cultivate not only the virtue, but likewise the gift of fortitude, as we shall explain in the unitive way. They maintain themselves in that generous attitude of immolating themselves for God, and of undergoing that slow, unbloody martyrdom, which consists in an ever-renewed effort to do all things for God and to suffer everything for His greater glory.

§ II. Virtues Allied to Fortitude

1082. There are four virtues connected with the virtue of fortitude. Two of them aid us in the accomplishment of things arduous: *magnanimity* and *munificence*. The other two help us to suffer in the right manner: *patience* and

¹ *Galat.*, I, 10. — ² *II Cor.*, X, 17-18.

³ *Luke*, XXII, 43. — ⁴ *Luke*, XXIII, 46.

constancy. St. Thomas holds these four to be *integral* and *potential* parts of the virtue of fortitude.

I. Magnanimity

1083. 1° Its **Nature.** Magnanimity, which is also called greatness of soul or nobility of character, is the noble and generous *disposition to undertake great things for God and for the neighbor.* It is not the same as ambition, which is essentially egotistical and goads us on to surpass others by wielding authority or receiving honors. The characteristic of magnanimity is disinterested service.

a) This virtue therefore presupposes a *noble soul*, possessed of high ideals and unselfish thoughts, a valiant spirit that does not hesitate to make its life accord with its convictions.

b) It is brought out not only by noble sentiments, but also by noble acts, and this in every sphere of action: in the army by brilliant exploits, in civil life by great reform movements, or great industrial, commercial, economic enterprises etc.; in the realm of the supernatural, by the pursuit of a high ideal of perfection, by generous efforts to conquer self and to rise ever higher, by striving to acquire solid virtue and to exercise zeal in its various forms. All this is done without fear of risking fortune, health, reputation and life itself.

1084. 2° The **contrary defect** is called *pusillanimity*, which, through an excessive fear of failure, makes one hesitate and remain inactive. Seeking to avoid blunders the pusillanimous fall into the greatest mistakes; they do nothing or almost nothing, and thus waste their lives. Evidently, it is better to risk making mistakes than to do nothing.

II. Munificence or Magnificence

1085. 1° Its **Nature.** Persons with a great soul and a big heart practice magnificence or munificence, *which inclines us to do great works*, and at the same time to undergo the *great expenses* that such works entail.

a) At times it is pride or ambition rather than virtue that inspires these undertakings. But when it is *the glory of God or the welfare of our fellow-men* which one has in view, one supernaturalizes that natural desire for grandeur, and, instead of forever saving and investing, one generously employs wealth for the furtherance of great undertakings

such as works of art, public monuments, erection of churches, hospitals, schools, universities, in a word of all that promotes the common good. This virtue, then, makes one overcome the natural attachment one has for money and the thirst for further riches.

1086. **b)** This is an excellent virtue which must be urged upon the well-to-do by showing them that the best use they can make of the wealth Providence has entrusted to them is to imitate God's own liberality and His magnificence in all His works. There are Catholic institutions that languish because of lack of means. They offer an open field for the worthy employment of accumulated funds, and the best way of preparing for ourselves a glorious dwelling in Heaven. Then, there are numberless undertakings to initiate. Each new generation brings a host of new needs: churches to build, schools to found, a larger ministry to support; at times there are public calamities to relieve, at others new agencies of welfare to inaugurate for youth, for old age, etc. There is here a vast field, open to every activity and to every purse.

e) And there is no need of being rich in order to practice this virtue. St. Vincent de Paul was by no means rich, and yet, was there any other man who provided with such royal munificence for every misery of his day? Was there any who initiated such lasting and successful charitable enterprises? A noble soul always finds resources in public charity, and it seems as if Providence makes common cause with devoted service if one knows how to trust in God and to follow the dictates of prudence or the inspirations of the Holy Ghost.

1087. 2° The **contrary defects** are *miserliness* and *extravagance*.

a) *Miserliness* or stinginess paralyzes the impulses of the heart, knows not how to make adequate provision for important enterprises, and does nothing but what is cheap or small. **b)** Extravagance, on the contrary, impels one to make unnecessary expenditures, to be prodigal of money and at times to spend beyond one's means. This defect is also called *prodigality*. It is the part of prudence to hold a middle course between both extremes.

III. Patience¹

1088. 1° Its **nature.** Patience is a *Christian virtue that makes us withstand with equanimity of soul, for the*

¹ ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Devout Life*, Part III, C. III; OLIER, *Introd.*, C. IX; FABER, *Growth in Holiness*, C. IX; D. V. LEHOUEX, *Le Saint Abandon*, Part III, C. III-V.

love of God, and in union with Jesus Christ, all physical and moral sufferings. We all have an ample share of suffering sufficient to make us saints, if we would only suffer courageously and from supernatural motives. Many, however, suffer complainingly, in bitterness of heart, at times even in a spirit of rebellion against Providence. Others, again, withstand suffering out of pride or ambition and thus forfeit the fruits of their endurance. The true motive that should inspire us is submission to the will of God (n. 487), and the hope of the eternal reward that will crown our patience (n. 491). Still, the most potent stimulus, is the thought of *Christ suffering and dying* for us. If He, innocence itself, bore so heroically so many tortures, physical and moral, in order to redeem us and sanctify us, is it not meet that we, who are guilty and who by our sins are the cause of His sufferings, should consent to suffer with Him and with His intentions, in order to cooperate with Him in the work of our purification and sanctification, and to partake in His glory by having shared in His sufferings? Noble and generous souls add to these motives the motive of zeal. They suffer to fulfil what is wanting of the sufferings of Christ and thus work for the redemption of souls (n. 149). Herein lies the secret source of that heroic patience of the Saints and of their love of the Cross.

1089. 2° The degrees of patience correspond to the three stages of the spiritual life.

a) At the *beginning*, suffering is accepted as coming from God; without murmur, without resentment, in hope of heavenly rewards. It is accepted in order to atone for faults and to purify the heart; in order to control ill-regulated tendencies, especially sadness and dejection. It is accepted in spite of our natural repugnance, and, if a prayer goes up that the chalice pass away, it is followed by an act of submission to the holy Will of God.¹

1090. b) Patience, in its second degree, makes us eager to embrace suffering, in union with Jesus Christ, and in order to make us more like that Divine Model. Hence the soul is fond of following Him along the sorrowful road that He took from the Crib to the Cross; it contemplates Him, praises Him, and pours forth its love upon Him in all His sorrowful mysteries: at His entrance into this world when He "emptied Himself"; in His resignation

within the lowly crib that was His cradle and wherein He suffered even more from the insensibility of men than from the cold and the elements; amidst the sufferings of His exile, the menial labors of His hidden life, the work, the fatigue, and the humiliations of His public life; but, above all, in the physical and moral tortures of His painful passion. Strengthened by the words of St. Peter,¹ "Christ, therefore, having suffered in the flesh, be you also armed with the same thought," the soul takes new courage in the face of pain and sadness; side by side with Jesus, it tenderly stretches itself forth on the Cross, for love of Him: "With Christ I am nailed to the cross."² When suffering increases, a loving, compassionate glance upon the Crucified Christ brings the response from His lips: "Blessed are they that mourn... blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice's sake."³ Then, the hope of sharing in His glory in the heavenly places renders more bearable the crucifixion undergone in union with Him: "If we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him."⁴ Nay, the soul at times comes, like St. Paul, to the point where it rejoices in its miseries and tribulations, well knowing that to suffer with Christ means to comfort Him, that it means the completion of His passion, a more perfect love for Him here on earth, and a preparation for the further enjoyment of His love through all eternity: "Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me... 5 I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation."⁶

1091. c) This leads to the third degree of patience, the *desire* and the *love of suffering* for the sake of God Whom one wishes to glorify, and for the sake of souls, for whose sanctification one wants to labor. This is the degree proper to *perfect* souls and especially to apostolic souls, to religious, priests and devout men and women. Such was the disposition that animated Our Blessed Lord when He offered Himself as victim at His entrance into this world, and which He expressed in proclaiming His desire to suffer the baptism of His Passion: "And I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized. And how am I straitened until it be accomplished."⁷

Out of love for Him and in order to become more like unto Him, perfect souls enter into the same sentiments: "For," in the words of St. Ignatius, "just as men of the world who are attached to the things of earth, love and seek with great eagerness honors, good name, and

¹ *Math.*, XXVI, 39.

² *I Peter*, IV, 1. — ³ *Galat.*, II, 19. — ⁴ *Math.*, V, 10-12. — ⁵ *Rom.*, VIII, 17. — ⁶ *I Cor.*, XII, 9. — ⁷ *I Luke* XII, 50.

display among men... so those who march ahead in the ways of the spirit and who earnestly follow Jesus Christ love and ardently desire whatever is opposed to the spirit of the world... so that were it possible with no offence to God and scandal to the neighbor, they would want to suffer insults, slanders, and injuries, be reckoned as fools, though having given no occasion therefor, such is their intense desire to be likened in some way to Our Lord Jesus Christ... so that with the help of His grace we strive to imitate Him as far as we can, and to follow Him in all things, since He is the true way which leads men to life."¹ Evidently, it is only love for God and for the Crucified Christ that can inspire a like love for the Cross and humiliations.

1092. Must a soul go further, and offer itself to God as a victim and formally ask God for extraordinary sufferings, in order either to offer reparation to God, or to obtain some signal favor? No doubt some of the Saints have done so and in our day there are still generous souls who are moved to do likewise. However, generally speaking, such requests cannot be prudently counselled. They may easily lead to illusions and are often the outcome of some ill-considered impulse of generosity which has its origin in presumption. "Such requests are made," says Father de Smedt, "in moments of emotional fervor, and once this is gone... one realizes one's weakness to accomplish the heroic acts of submission and resignation so energetically made in the imagination. Therefrom issue violent temptations to discouragement and even to complaints against God's Providence... It is a source of great annoyance and perplexity to the spiritual directors of such souls."² Hence, we must not take it upon ourselves to ask for extraordinary sufferings or trials. If one feels oneself drawn thereto, one must take counsel with a judicious director of souls and do nothing without his approval.

IV. Constancy

1093. Constancy in effort consists in struggling and suffering to the end, without yielding to weariness, discouragement, or indolence.

1^o Experience shows that after reiterated efforts one wears of well-doing, one finds it irksome to be forever obliged to strain the will. St. Thomas remarks: "*A special difficulty is attached to long persistence in a difficult task.*"³

¹ *Constitut. Soc. Jesu*, Exam. generale, cap. IV, n. 44.

² *Notre vie surnaturelle*, t. II, p. 260. — Father Capelle, who has made a special study of this particular matter (*Les Ames Généreuses*, 1920, 3^e P., Ch. IV-VII) sums up his teaching in three propositions: 1) It is Our Lord Himself who selects such victims. 2) He warns them in advance of what they will have to undergo. 3) He asks their free consent.

³ *Sum. Theol.*, IIa IIæ, q. 137, a. 1.

Yet, no virtue is solid that has not stood the test of time, that has not been strengthened by deeply rooted habits.

A sense of weariness often results in *discouragement* and *indolence*. The annoyance experienced at repeating efforts relaxes the energy of the will and produces a species of moral depression or discouragement; at this juncture, the love of pleasure and a sense of regret at being deprived of it gain the upper hand and one lets oneself be carried by the current of evil tendencies.

1094. 2^o In order to react against this weakness, we must remember: 1) that perseverance is a gift of God (n. 127) obtained by prayer. Hence, we must ask insistently for it in union with Him Who persevered unto death, and through the intercession of Her Whom we rightly call *Virgin most faithful*.

2) We must, after that, renew our convictions as regards the shortness of life and the everlastingness of the reward that crowns our efforts. Having an eternal rest awaiting us we can well afford a measure of annoyance here on earth. If in spite of these considerations we still remain weak and hesitant, then we must beg insistently for that grace of perseverance the need of which we feel so keenly, by repeating the words of St. Augustine: "*Grant me O Lord what Thou commandest and then command whatever Thou wilt.*"

3) Finally, we must go back courageously to our task, supported by the all-powerful grace of God, and work on despite the apparently small measure of success that attends our efforts, remembering that it is effort and not success that God demands. Besides, we must not forget that we need a certain amount of relaxation, of rest, and of diversion: *Man cannot live long without some consolation*. Constancy does not therefore exclude due rest: "*Enjoy thy leisure that thou mayest the better perform thy labor.*" The important thing is that we take our rest in submission to God's will, according to rule and the advice of our spiritual director.

§ III. Means of Acquiring and Perfecting the Virtue of Fortitude

We refer the reader to what we have said in number 811 regarding the education of the will, adding here some few remarks more pertinent to the special subject now under discussion.

1095. ¹⁰ The secret of our strength lies in *distrust of self and absolute confidence in God*. Incapable as we are of any good in the supernatural order without the help of grace, we share in the very power of God and become invincible if we seek support in Jesus Christ: "*He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit*... *I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me.*"² This is why it is the *humble* who are strong, when the consciousness of their weakness is accompanied by trust in God. These two dispositions, then, must be cultivated in souls. If it is question of the proud and presumptuous, insistence must be laid upon distrust of self; when we have to deal with the timid and the pessimistic, confidence in God is to be emphasized, by explaining to them the consoling words of the Apostle: "*The weak things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the strong... and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are.*"³

1096. ²⁰ To this twofold disposition of soul *deep convictions* must be joined, as well as the habit of *acting in accordance with such convictions*.

A) These convictions are those based upon the great truths, particularly, the end of man, the necessity of sacrificing all in order to attain this end, the horror that sin, the only obstacle to our end, must inspire in us, the necessity of submitting our will to the will of God in order to avoid sin and attain our end, etc. These convictions constitute the directing forces of our conduct and the motive-powers that infuse into us the courage required to triumph over obstacles.

B) This is the reason why it is so important to acquire the habit of acting from conviction. We are not so apt then to allow ourselves to be carried away by passing impulses, by the violent urge of passion, by routine, or personal interest; on the contrary, before acting, such questions as these will arise in the mind: "*What bearing has this on eternity?*" Does this action which I am about to perform bring me closer to God, nearer to the attainment of a blissful eternity? If we can answer in the affirmative we act; if not, we refrain. Thus directing all things to the final end, we live up to our convictions and we become strong.

1097. ³⁰ The better to surmount obstacles it is well to *foresee* them, to look them squarely in the face, and to

¹ *John*, XV, 5. — ² *Phil.*, IV, 13. — ³ *I Cor.*, I, 27-28.

muster courage to fight them. This, however, we do without magnifying the difficulties, counting upon the aid which God will not fail to grant us at the opportune moment. A difficulty foreseen is a difficulty half overcome.

1098. ⁴⁰ Finally, we should bear in mind that nothing renders us so fearless as the love of God: "*For love is strong as death.*" If mother-love inspires a woman with courage and daring when it is question of defending her children, what cannot the love of God do if it be deep-rooted in the soul? Is it not love that has made martyrs, virgins, apostles and all the saints? When St. Paul describes the ordeals he underwent, the persecutions he suffered, the pains he endured, one cannot but wonder at the power that sustained his courage in the midst of so many adversities. He tells us himself it was love for Christ: "For the charity of Christ presseth us."¹ This is why the Apostle is without apprehension for the future. "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ?"² He enumerates the various tribulations that might befall him, and says: "Neither death, nor life, nor angels... nor things present, nor things to come, nor might... nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus Our Lord."³ What St. Paul said, every Christian also can say, provided he bears his God a loyal love; and then He will share in the very power of the Almighty: "For Thou, O Lord, art my strength."⁴

ART. IV. THE VIRTUE OF TEMPERANCE 5

If fortitude is needed to restrain fear, temperance is no less necessary to control that allurements to pleasure which so easily turns us away from God.

1099. Temperance is a supernatural, moral virtue that *moderates the attraction towards sense-pleasure, especially the pleasures of the palate and the flesh, and keeps them within the proper limits of propriety.*

Its object is the moderation of all sense-pleasure, but particularly of that connected with the two great functions of organic life; namely, the preservation of the individual by nourishment, and the preservation of the race by sexual

¹ *I Cor.*, V, 14. — ² *Rom.*, VIII, 38-39. — ³ *Rom.*, VIII, 35. — ⁴ *Ps.*, XLII, 2.
⁵ ST. THOMAS, Ia II^æ, q. 141-170; SCARAMELLI, *Guide ascétique*, III^e Traité, art. 4; RIBET, *Veritas*, ch. XLIII-XLVIII; CH. DE SMEDT, t. II, p. 268-342; P. JANVIER, *Coréne*, 1921 et 1922. See references, Nos 751 and 864, under Mortification and Gluttony.

relations. Temperance causes us to make use of pleasure for an end which is worthy and at the same time supernatural. By that very fact it regulates the use of the said pleasures according to the dictates of reason and of faith. Precisely because pleasure is enticing and easily lures us beyond the proper limits, temperance leads us to mortify ourselves, even in some of the things that are permissible, in order to ensure the preponderance of reason over passion. It is by the aid of these principles that we shall solve particular questions.

We have already dealt sufficiently with the rules to be followed in the regulation of the pleasure that accompanies the function of nutrition (n. 864). Now we shall treat of *chastity*, which moderates the pleasures attached to the propagation of the race. Then we shall speak of the two virtues allied to temperance; namely, *humility* and *meekness*.

§ I. Chastity¹

1100. 1^o Notion. The aim of chastity is to *check whatever is inordinate in voluptuous pleasures*. These pleasures have for their principal end the perpetuation of the race through the right use of marriage. They are lawful only between married persons, and then only when they further, or at least do not interfere with the primary end of marriage which is the procreation of children.

Chastity is rightly called the *angelic* virtue, because it likens us to the angels, who are pure by nature. It is an *austere* virtue, because we do not succeed in practicing it unless we subdue the body and the senses by mortification. It is a *frail* virtue, tarnished by the least wilful failing. On this account it is a *difficult* virtue, since it cannot be observed except by a generous and constant struggle against the most tyrannical of passions.

1101. 2^o Degrees. 1) There are several degrees of chastity. The first one consists in carefully refraining from consent to any thought, fancy, feeling or action contrary to this virtue.

2) The second aims at ridding oneself *immediately* and *energetically* of every thought, image or impression that could soil the luster of chastity.

3) The third, which is seldom attained save after long efforts in the practice of the love of God, consists in acquir-

ing such a mastery over our senses and our thoughts that, when duty requires us to deal with questions relating to chastity, we do so with all the calm and composure that would attend the treatment of any other subject.

4) Finally, there are some who, by a special privilege, attain such a degree of chastity that they experience no inordinate feelings whatever, as is related of St. Thomas after his victorious issue from an extraordinary temptation.

1102. 3^o Kinds. There are two kinds of chastity: *conjugal* chastity proper to persons living in lawful wedlock, and *continentia* proper to the unmarried. After briefly treating of the first, we shall lay emphasis on the second, chiefly in so far as it applies to persons who lead a life of celibacy either in the religious or in the ecclesiastical state.

I. *Conjugal Chastity*

1103. 1^o Principle. Married persons should never forget that, according to the teaching of St. Paul, Christian marriage is symbolical of the holy bond that exists between Christ and His Church: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church and delivered himself for it, that He might sanctify it."¹ They must then love respect and sanctify each other (n. 591). The first effect of this love is an indissoluble union of hearts, and therefore an inviolable mutual fidelity.

1104. 2^o Mutual Fidelity. a) Here we shall borrow the language of St. Francis de Sales² or give a summary of his thought.

"Preserve, then, O husbands! a tender, constant, and cordial love for your wives... If you desire that your wives should be faithful to you, give them a lesson by your example. How, says St. Gregory Nazianzen³, can you exact purity of your wives, when you yourselves live in impurity?"—"But you, O wives, whose honor is inseparably joined with purity and modesty, be zealous to preserve this your glory, and suffer no kind of loose behavior to tarnish the whiteness of your reputation. Fear all kinds of assaults, how small soever they may be; never suffer any wanton address to approach you; for he that praises the ware which he cannot buy is strongly tempted to steal it, but if to your praise he adds the dispraise of your husband, he offers you a heinous injury; for it is evident that he not only desires to ruin you, but accounts you already half lost, since the bargain is half made with a second merchant when one is disgusted with the first."

¹ *Ephes.*, V. 25-26.

² *Devout Life*, Part. III, C. XXXVIII.

³ *Orat.*, XXXVII, 7.

¹ CASSIAN, *Conferences*, XII; ST. JOHN CLIMACUS, *The Ladder of Paradise*, XV; ST. THOMAS, II^a II^e, Q. 151-156; RODRIGUEZ, *Christian Perfection*, P. III, Treat. IV; ST. FRANCIS OF SALES, *Devout Life*, P. III, C. XII-XIII; GAY, *Christian Life and Virtues*, Treat. X.—See references No. 873.

b) Nothing so well secures this mutual fidelity as the practice of *true devotion*, particularly of prayer in common.

"Thus, wives ought to wish that their husbands should be preserved with the sugar of devotion; for a man without devotion is severe, harsh, and rough. And husbands ought to wish that their wives should be devout, because without devotion, a woman is very frail, and liable to obscure, and perhaps to lose, her virtue."

e) "As to the rest, their mutual bearing with each other ought to be so great that they should never be both angry with each other at the same time, so that dissension or debate be never seen between them." Therefore, if one be angry, let the other hold his peace, in order that peace may be restored the sooner."

1105. 3^o Conjugal Duty. They should reverence the holiness of the marriage-bed by the *purity of their intention* and the *seemliness* of their relations.

A) Their *intention* must be the same as that of the young Tobias when he took Sarah for wife; "And now, Lord, thou knowest that not for fleshly lust do I take my sister to wife, but only for the love of posterity in which thy name may be blessed for ever and ever."¹ This is in fact the primary end of Christian marriage, to procreate children who are to be reared in the fear and love of God, to be trained to a pious and Christian life so as to become one day citizens of Heaven. The secondary end of marriage is mutual help to bear the sufferings of life, and to overcome passion by subordinating pleasure to duty.

1106. B) They must, then, *faithfully* and *candidly* fulfil their marriage obligations. Whatever favors the transmission of life is not only licit, but praiseworthy. On the contrary, any act whatever whereby this primary end would be hindered constitutes a grave sin, since it is against the essential purpose of marriage. They should bear in mind the following observation of St. Paul: ² "Defraud not one another, except, perhaps, by consent, for a time, that you may give yourselves to prayer: and return together again, lest Satan tempt you for your incontinency."

C) Moderation is necessary in the use of the marriage right as it is in the taking of meals. It is even a hygienic measure, and propriety requires that continence be practiced at times. One does not succeed in this unless one has formed the habit of subordinating pleasure to reason, and unless one seeks in the frequent reception of the Sacraments a remedy for the too violent motions of concupiscence.

However, let no one forget, that it is by no means impossible, and that through prayer one always obtains the grace of practicing virtue, even the most austere.

II. *Continence or Celibacy*

1107. Absolute continence is a duty of those who are not united in the bonds of lawful wedlock. Therefore, it must be practiced by all before marriage as well as by those who are widowed.¹ There is yet another class of chosen souls called to practice a life-long continence either in the religious state, or in the priesthood, or even in the world. It is well to give them special rules for the perfect preservation of purity.

Chastity is a frail and delicate virtue that cannot be preserved unless it be protected by other virtues. It is, as it were, a citadel that requires for its defence the raising of outward ramparts. These are four in number: 1^o humility, which produces self-distrust and prompts to flight from dangerous occasions; 2^o mortification, which by waging war against the love of pleasure, reaches the evil at its roots; 3^o *devotion to the duties of state*, which protects one from the perils created by idleness; 4^o *love for God*, which by filling the heart, prevents it from giving itself over to dangerous affections. Within these four ramparts the soul is not only able to repulse the onslaughts of the enemy, but also to grow in purity.

1^o HUMILITY THE GUARDIAN OF CHASTITY

1108. This virtue produces in us principally three dispositions, which shelter us from many a danger: distrust of self and confidence in God, flight from dangerous occasions, sincerity in the Sacrament of Penance.

A) **Distrust of self** accompanied by *confidence in God*. Many a soul falls into impurity through pride and presumption. St. Paul calls attention to this fact with regard to the Pagan philosophers, who whilst glorying in their wisdom yielded to all manner of turpitude: "*For this cause, God delivered them up to shameful affections.*"²

Father Olier thus explains this fact: "God, Who cannot suffer pride in the soul, humbles it to the very depths; and, desiring to show the soul its weakness, and that it has no power of itself to resist evil and persevere in well doing... allows it to be tormented by those terrible

¹ Tobias, 9, VIII. — ² I Cor., VII, 5.

¹ See the excellent advice of St. Francis de Sales to widows, *Devout Life*, Part III, C. XL. — ² Rom., I, 26.

temptations, and at times even to fall, because such temptations are the most shameful and leave behind them the greater confusion. When, on the contrary one is firmly convinced that of oneself one cannot be chaste, one repeats the humble prayer which St. Philip Neri used to address to God: "My God, beware of Philip; otherwise he will betray Thee."

1109. a) This distrust must be *universal*. 1) It is necessary to those who have *sinned grievously*, for the temptation will return, and without the help of grace they will be exposed to a fresh fall. It is no less necessary to those who have *preserved their innocence*, for one day or another temptation will assail them, and will be all the more dangerous for them because of their inexperience. 2) This distrust must last to the very *end of life*. Solomon was no longer a youth when he let himself be caught by the love of women. It was old men that tempted the chaste Susanna. The evil spirit that assails us in mature life is all the more dangerous, because we thought him conquered. Experience shows that so long as there remains in us a spark of life, the smouldering fires of concupiscence may burst forth once more. 3) This diffidence is necessary for even the *holiest* souls. The evil one is more anxious to cause their fall than that of coarser souls, and he lays for them more treacherous snares. This is the warning of St. Jerome¹ in his letter to Eustochium, and elsewhere² he adds that it is vain to seek reassurance in the long years already lived in chastity, in holiness and in the pursuit of wisdom.

1110. b) Withal, this diffidence of self must be ever attended by a perfect *trust in God*. For God will never allow us to be tempted beyond our strength. He does not ask of us the impossible. He either gives us immediately the grace of resisting temptations or the grace of praying for the help necessary to overcome them.³

"One must, then," says Father Olier⁴ "withdraw interiorly into Jesus Christ to find in Him the power of resistance to temptation... He wills that we be tried, so that, warned thereby of our weakness and of the need we have of His help, we may withdraw into Him to find in Him the strength which we lack." If the temptation becomes more

¹ *Epist.* XXII, ad Eustochium, P. L., XXII, 396.

² *Epist.* LII, ad Nepotian. P. L., XXII, 531-532: "Trust not in your former chastity: you are not holier than David, nor can you be holier than Solomon. Always remember that a woman evicted the tenant of paradise from his possession."

³ "For God does not enjoin the impossible; but when He commands, He bids us do what in our power lies and to pray for what lies beyond, the while He lends us the power to accomplish His command." (*Council of Trent*, Sess. VI, C. II, DENZ. 804)

⁴ *Introd.*, C. XII.

violent we must fall on our knees and lift our hands to Heaven to invoke the assistance of God.

When all these precautions have been taken one may infallibly count on God's help: "*And 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.*"¹ We must not, then, have too much dread of temptation before it comes. That would be a way of bringing it on. Nor must we stand in dread of it when it actually assails us, since with reliance on God we are invincible.

1111. B) The Flight from Dangerous Occasions.
a) The mutual *attraction* that exists between the sexes creates dangers for those vowed to celibacy. Hence, useless meetings must be dispensed with, and when meetings are necessary, the danger must be made remote.² This is why the spiritual direction of women must be conducted exclusively in the confessional, as we have noted in n. 546. Two things we have to protect: our *virtue* and our *good name*. The one and the other make extreme reserve imperative.

b) Children of graceful appearance, of a joyful and affectionate nature, may likewise be a source of danger. One loves to look at them, to caress them, and, if one be not on guard one may be led to familiarities that perturb the senses. This disturbance is a warning given us by God, to make us understand that we must desist and that we have even proceeded too far. Let us recall to mind that those children have Guardian Angels who look upon the face of God; that they are the living temples of the Holy Trinity and members of Christ. Then we shall more easily treat them with a holy reverence while we show them real affection.

1112. c) In a general way, humility causes us to repress the *desire to please*, which prepares the way for many a fall. This desire, which proceeds both from vanity and from a natural longing for affection, is manifested by an exaggerated concern for our personal appearance, over-carefulness

¹ *I Cor.* VIII, 14.

² This was St. Jerome's advice to Nepotian: "A woman's foot should seldom if ever cross the threshold of your home... If in the course of your clerical duty you have to visit a widow or a virgin, never enter the house alone. Let your companions be persons; associates who will not disgrace you... You must not sit alone with a woman or see one without witnesses... Beware of all that gives occasion for suspicion; and to avoid scandal shun every act that may give colour to it." *Letter* LII, 5. P. L., XXII, 531-532.

in dress, an affected pose, tender language, caressing glances, the habit of complimenting others upon their exterior accomplishments.¹ This manner of acting soon attracts notice, especially in a young ecclesiastic, in a priest, or a religious. He soon jeopardizes his good name; and would that he stop before he likewise imperils his virtue!

1113. C) Humility, finally, inspires us with that *candid frankness* toward our spiritual director which is so necessary to avoid the snares of the enemy.

St. Ignatius rightly says that "when the enemy of man wishes to lead a just soul into error by his tricks and ruses, he wants above all that such a soul listen to him and keep his words secret. But should that soul confide all to an enlightened confessor, Satan is chagrined, because he knows that all his malice will become impotent the moment his attempts are detected and brought out into the light."² It is especially in matters of chastity that this wise advice applies. If we are faithful to disclose humbly and candidly our temptations to our spiritual director, we are warned in time of the dangers to which we are exposed, and we take the means suggested by him. A temptation laid bare is a temptation already overcome. If, on the contrary, trusting to our own lights we fail to seek advice, under the pretext that a temptation is not a sin, we fall easily into the snares of the great seducer of souls.

2° MORTIFICATION THE GUARDIAN OF CHASTITY

We have already explained the necessity and the principal forms of mortification (n. 755-790). We shall recall here the points that bear more directly upon the present subject. Because the poison of impurity seeps through every opening, we must know how to mortify both our *exterior* and our *interior* senses, as well as the *affections of the heart*.

1114. A) The body, we have said (n. 771 and foll.), must be disciplined, and if need be, chastised that it may remain subject to the soul: "*But I chastise my body and bring it into subjection: lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway.*"³

From this principle arises the necessity of sobriety, at times of fasting, or of some other exterior forms of penance; also the need, at certain periods and especially in the spring of the year, of a less rich diet to abate the mounting surge of the blood and soothe the ardors

of concupiscence. Nothing is to be neglected that may ensure the dominion of the soul over the body. There should be no protracted hours of sleep, and as a general principle we must not remain in bed of mornings, once we are awake and are unable to fall asleep again.

Each of our bodily senses needs to be mortified.

1115. a) The just Job had made a pact with his eyes that they should not look upon such persons as could prove a source of temptation to him: "*I made a covenant with my eyes, that I would not so much as think upon a virgin.*"¹ The Book of Ecclesiasticus carefully recommends not to fasten our glances upon a maiden and to turn our eyes from a beautiful woman: "For many have perished by the beauty of a woman, and thereby lust is enkindled as a fire."² All these counsels have a good psychological foundation. The eye acts as stimulus to the imagination, this enkindles the desire, and the latter solicits the will. If the will yields consent, sin enters into the soul.

1116. b) *Speech* and *hearing* are mortified by *reserve* in *conversation*. This reserve is not common even among Christian men and women. The reading of novels and the frequenting of theatres cause them to speak freely of many a subject that should be passed over in silence. Likewise, they want to keep informed about the scandals that occur in the world. At other times they chat pleasantly about things of a more or less risky nature. A sort of unwholesome-curiosity finds delight in such pleasantries and reports, the imagination is fed on them and visualizes in detail the descriptions given, the senses react and often the will ends by taking culpable pleasure. And so it is that St. Paul rightly denounces evil associations as a source of corruption: "*Evil communications corrupt good manners.*"³ The same Apostle says elsewhere: "Obscenity, or foolish talking, or scurrility, which is to no purpose... let it not so much as be named among you."⁴ Experience shows that sterling souls have been perverted through the unwholesome curiosity aroused by imprudent conversations.

1117. c) In the sense of *touch* there lurks a special danger (n. 879).

Father Perreyve understood this well when he wrote the following:⁵ "More than ever, O Lord, I consecrate my hands to Thee. These

¹ Job, XXXI, 1.

² "Gaze not upon a maiden: lest her beauty be a stumbling block to thee... Turn away thy face from a woman dressed up; and gaze not about upon another's beauty." Eccles. IX, 5, 8, 9. — 3 1 Cor., XV, 33. — 4 Ephes., V, 3 & 4.

⁵ *Méditations sur les SS. Ordres*, p. 105.

¹ St. Jerome well describes these oddities: "Such men think of nothing but their dress; they use perfumes freely, and see that there are no creases in their leather shoes. Their curling hair shows the traces of tongs; their fingers glisten with rings; they walk on tiptoe across a wet road, not to splash their feet. When you see men acting in this way, think of them rather as bridegrooms than as clergymen." Letter XXXII, 28.

² *Spiritual Exercises, Rules for the Discernment of Spirits*, XIII.

³ 1 Cor., IX, 27.

hands are to receive priestly consecration within three days. On the morrow of the third day they will touch, hold, handle Thy Body and Thy Blood. I want to reverence these hands, honor them as hallowed instruments dedicated to Thy service and that of Thy altars..." When we recollect that in the morning we have held within our hands an All-holy God, we are more ready to abstain from whatever could soil their purity. Hence, deep reverence for our own person; hence reverence for others, treating all with the accepted marks of courtesy, but abstaining from any sentimental feeling or ill-ordered affection. To a priest who asked St. Vincent de Paul if it were expedient to feel the pulse of a dying woman, the Saint replied: "That practice must be carefully avoided, for the evil spirit might easily make use of it to tempt the living and even the dying. The devil, in this last moment uses any and every device to ensnare a soul... You should never touch either girl or woman under any pretence whatever."¹

1118. B) The *interior* senses are no less exposed to danger than are the exterior. Even when we modestly lower our eyes, importunate memories and obsessing images still pursue us. St. Jerome complained of this even in the solitude of the desert where, though parched by the burning sun and living in a bare cell, he would feel himself carried in fancy mid the pleasures of Rome.² He therefore urges instant riddance of such fancies: "*You must never let the suggestion of evil grow on you... Slay the enemy while he is small; and that you may not have a crop of tares, nip the evil in the bud.*"³ The enemy must be strangled before his strength grows and the tares pulled up by the root before they sprout, otherwise the soul is invaded, obsessed by temptation, and the temple of God becomes the haunt of demons: "*Let not the temple of the Blessed Trinity become a place where demons shall dance and sirens make their dens.*"⁴

1119. In order to escape these dangerous fancies it is important not to indulge in the reading of such novels or attend such theatrical representations, where inhuman passions and chiefly that of love are presented in a vivid and realistic fashion. Such descriptions cannot but trouble the imagination and the senses. They persistently recur in our leisure moments, impart to temptation a more vivid and more alluring form, and at times extort consent. Now, St. Jerome remarks that virginity is forfeited not merely through exterior but also by interior acts: "*And so, virginity is lost even by thought.*"⁵

Furthermore, the Saints exhort us to mortify the imagination and useless *day-dreaming*. For, experience shows that these are frequently followed by dangerous sensual images, and that, therefore, if we wish to prevent the latter,

¹ MEYnard, *Virtues and Spiritual Doctrine of St. Vincent de Paul*, C. XIX.

² "How often, when I was living in the desert, in the vast solitude which gives to hermits a wild dwelling-place, parched by a burning sun, how often did I fancy myself among the pleasures of Rome!" Letter, XXII, n. 7. — ³ *Ibid.*

⁴ St. JEROME, Letter, XXII, n. 6. — ⁵ Letter quoted, n. 5.

we must quickly banish the former. It is only by so doing that we gradually succeed in subjecting the imagination to the service of the will.

This is particularly necessary to the priest, who by the very reason of his ministry, is the recipient of confidences of a delicate nature. No doubt, he has the grace of state not to take any pleasure therein, but this on condition that upon leaving the confessional he does not voluntarily dwell upon what he has heard. Otherwise, his virtue would be put to a severe test, and God has not bound Himself to vouchsafe His help to imprudent souls that rush headlong into danger: "*He that loveth danger shall perish in it.*"¹

1120. C) The *heart* needs to be mortified just as much as the imagination. It is one of the highest and noblest of faculties, but it is also a source of danger. By religious vow or by priestly ordination, we consecrate our heart to God and renounce the joys of family life. Still, the heart remains open to affection; and if it be true that we have special graces, they are graces for *the struggle*, and they demand of us great vigilance and great effort.

Besides the dangers common to all, the priest encounters in his ministry some peculiar to himself. He may become unconsciously attached to the persons to whom he does good, and they in turn may feel naturally moved to manifest their gratitude. Therefrom arise mutual affections; these are supernatural at first, but unless carefully controlled, they easily descend to the plane of natural, sentimental and absorbing attachments. Indeed, it is easy to deceive ourselves. "Oftentimes," says St. Francis de Sales, "we imagine we love persons for God's sake, whilst in reality we love them for the sake of the pleasure we experience in their company." A famous text, attributed to St. Augustine, shows us the successive degrees through which we pass from spiritual to carnal love: "*Spiritual love engenders affectionate love, affectionate love devoted love, devoted love tender love, and tender love carnal love.*"

1121. In order to escape such a misfortune, we must ask ourselves from time to time whether or not we see in ourselves any signs of friendship that is too natural and sentimental.² Father de Valuy³ says that such a friendship exists: "If the presence of a person begins to captivate our eyes, or his agreeable disposition to thrill our heart; if we offer tender greetings, speak tender words, cast tender glances, make small gifts, exchange smiles more eloquent than words and permit liberties that little by little lead to familiarity; if we seek opportunities to meet alone, to prolong these meetings interminably and to renew them for no apparent reason; if we speak little of divine things but a great deal of self and of mutual esteem; if we praise, flatter or excuse each other; if we complain bitterly of the warnings of superiors, of the obstacles they place in the way of our meetings and of the suspicions in which they seem to indulge;... if we experience uneasiness and sadness at the absence of our friend; if we are distracted in prayer at the thought of him, and recommend him to God with extra-

¹ *Ecclesiasticus*, III, 27. — ² cf. above, nos 595-606—friendships, true and false.

³ *Virtus religieuse*, pp. 73-74.

ordinary fervor; if we have his image deeply engraved on our mind, and are preoccupied with the thought of him day and night, anxiously wondering as to his whereabouts, as to the time of his return, and as to his affection for others; if we experience unwonted joy at his reappearance, undergo a species of martyrdom when again he must depart, and strive in a thousand and one ways to bring about a reunion.^b

Let no one try to reassure himself by citing the piety of the persons to whom he thus attaches himself, for *the holier they are, the more they attract us*. Besides, such persons imagine that the affection they bear a priest holds no dangers whatever, and may, therefore, allow their affection to grow without fear. It is imperative, then, that the priest keep them at a distance by his own reserve.

3° APPLICATION TO STUDY AND TO DUTIES OF STATE

1122. One of the most profitable forms of mortification is the avoidance of idleness by an earnest application to ecclesiastical studies and to the faithful fulfilment of the duties of state. Thereby the dangers of idleness are removed: "*For idleness hath taught much evil.*"¹ For one demon that tempts a busy man there are a thousand evil spirits that tempt an idle one. What do we do, as a matter of fact, when we are not engaged in any useful task? We muse, day-dream, read light literature, indulge in protracted visits, hold conversations of a more or less dangerous nature, while our imagination teems with vain fancies, our heart drifts on towards sentimental affections and our soul, laid open to all sorts of temptations, finally yields to sin. On the contrary, when we become absorbed in study or the work of the ministry, our mind is filled with wholesome thoughts,² and our heart soars to worthy and pure affections. Our one absorbing thought is of souls, whilst the very multiplicity of occupations leaves no opportunity whatever for any inordinate friendships. If at any time temptation makes its appearance, the self-mastery acquired through assiduous work enables us to head it off far more quickly, for study and work make their wonted demands upon our attention, and we soon tear ourselves away from reveries to busy ourselves with the concrete realities that take up the greater part of our life.

1123. Hence, it is a great service to seminarians and priests to inspire them with a taste for study; to teach them how to avoid

¹ *Ecclesiasticus*, XXXIII, 20.

² "Love the knowledge of Scripture, and you will no longer love the sins of the flesh... Always have some work on hand, that the devil may find you busy." ST. JEROME, Letter CXXXV, n. 11.

idleness, even in holiday time, and how to turn to profit every moment of their life. When one can help them sketch a plan of study that course of instructions, or interest them in the preparation of some does them a signal service; for if they have no such program, they are liable to waste precious time, whilst with it, they bring to their task a greater enthusiasm and more perseverance.

4° ARDENT LOVE FOR JESUS AND HIS BLESSED MOTHER

1124. If work preserves the mind from dangerous thoughts, love for God shields the heart from sentimental affections, and thus spares us many a temptation. Man's heart is made for love. Priestly ordination or religious profession do not change this affective part of our nature, but they help us raise our affections to a supernatural plane. If we love God with our whole soul, if we love Jesus Christ above all things, we shall be less inclined to give our affections to creatures. St. John Climacus remarks: "He is truly virtuous upon whose spirit heavenly beauty is so engraved, that he deigns not to cast a look upon earthly beauty, and thus feels not the burning of that fire which consumes the hearts of other men."¹

1125. But in order that love for Jesus may produce these effects, it must be intense, generous, and absorbing. Then it will bring us a threefold blessing: 1) It will so fill the mind and the heart that we no longer give a thought to human affections. If at times they make their way to our heart, we turn them aside, repeating these words of St. Agnes: "*I am espoused to Him Whom the Angels serve, at Whose beauty the very sun and moon stand in awe.*" It is easy to understand how all creatures vanish and lose their charm in the presence of Him Who is the fulness of beauty, of goodness and of power. 2) Should we unfortunately become entangled in any ill-ordered affections, Jesus Who cannot suffer strange gods in our heart, will reproach us severely and thus make us all the stronger for the fight against them. 3) Lastly, He will Himself protect with jealous care the hearts of those who give themselves to Him. He will come to our aid at the time of temptation and will strengthen us against the seductions of creatures.

This generous love for Jesus we draw from prayer, from the reception of Holy Communion, from silent adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and we render it habitual and permanent through that intimate union with Our Lord which we described above, in number 153.

1126. To this we add a great devotion to Mary, the Virgin Undeified. Her name breathes forth purity, and, it seems, no sooner do we confidently invoke Her, than temptation is put to flight. If we consecrate ourselves

¹ *Ladder of Paradise*, Degree XV, 7.

entirely to this Good Mother (n. 170-176). She will watch over us as Her very own, and help us to repel successfully the most harassing temptations. Let us, then, delight in the recitation of the prayer, *O Domina mea*, so powerful against impure suggestions, and the *Ave Maris Stella*, especially the following strophe:

*Virgin of all virgins,
Thee our queen we seek;
Fire with love our bosoms,
Make us chaste and meek.*

And if we are ever worsted in the struggle, we must not forget that the Immaculate Heart of Mary is also the sure refuge of sinners, that through the invocation of Her Name we shall find the grace of repentance, followed by the grace of absolution. Who could better ensure our perseverance than the Virgin most Faithful?

§ II. Humility¹

This virtue could in some respects be connected with the virtue of justice, since it inclines us to mete out to ourselves what are our just deserts. However, it is generally related to the virtue of temperance, because it *moderates* the sense we have of our own worth. We shall explain: 1° its *nature*; 2° its various *degrees*; 3° its *excellence*; 4° the means to *practice* it.

I. Nature of Humility

1127. 1° Humility is a virtue that was unknown to the Pagans. For them humility connoted something vile, abject, servile or ignoble. It was not so with the Jews. Enlightened by faith, the best among them, conscious of their own nothingness and of their wretchedness, patiently accepted trials as a means of expiation. God, on His part stooped down to help them; He delighted in the prayer of the humble, and pardoned the contrite and humbled sinner. Therefore, when Our Lord came to preach humility and meekness, the Jews were able to understand Him. As for us, we understand Him even better, after reflecting on the examples of humility He has given us in His hidden life, during His public ministry, and in His passion, nay, gives us still in His Eucharistic life.

Humility may be defined as a *supernatural virtue, which, through the self-knowledge it imparts, inclines us to reckon*

ourselves at our true worth and to seek self-effacement and contempt. More succinctly, St. Bernard¹ defines it as "a virtue whereby man, through a true knowledge of himself, becomes despicable in his own eyes." This definition will be better understood after we have explained the basis of humility.

1128. The Basis of this virtue. Humility has a twofold basis: truth and justice. *Truth* causes us to know ourselves just as we are; justice inclines us to act upon that knowledge.

A) To attain self-knowledge, says St. Thomas, we must see what in us belongs to God, and what to ourselves. Now, whatever there is in us of good, comes from God and belongs to Him; whatever there is of evil, proceeds from ourselves: "*In man two things may be considered: what there is of God, and what there is of man. Of man there is whatever points to defect; but of God, all that makes for salvation and perfection.*"²

Justice, then, absolutely demands that we render to God, and to Him alone, all the honor and all the glory: "*To the king of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory... 3* *Benediction and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, honor and power and strength, to our God.*"⁴

Undoubtedly, there is some good in us—our natural being and especially our supernatural privileges. Humility allows us to see and admire this good, but in such wise only that when we contemplate the gifts and graces of God in us, it is Him, and not ourselves that we admire, just as when we admire a work of art we give credit to the artist, not to the canvas.

1129. B) Besides, the fact of being sinners condemns us to humiliation. In a certain sense, of ourselves we are but *sin*, since born in sin, we keep within us concupiscence, which leads to sin.

a) Upon our entrance into the world, we are already tainted by *original sin*, from which only the mercy of God can cleanse us. **b)** How many *actual* sins have we not committed from the dawn of reason! If we have committed even one mortal sin, then on that score we deserve eternal humiliations. Even if we have fallen into but *venial* sins, we must remember that the least sin constitutes

¹ *De Gradibus humil.*, C. I, n. 2.

² II^a II^e, q. 161, a. 3. — ³ I *Tim.*, I, 17. — ⁴ *Apoç.*, VII, 12.

¹ See references, No 818, under Pride.

an offence against God, a wilful violation of His law, an act of rebellion whereby we prefer our will to His. A whole lifetime of penance and humiliation would not suffice to atone for this. e) Furthermore, even after our regeneration, we still keep within ourselves strong tendencies to all kinds of sin, so much so that, according to St. Augustine, it is due to God's grace that we have not committed every sin in the world. ¹

In justice, then, we must love humiliations and accept all reproaches. If we are told that we are miserly, dishonest, proud, we must acknowledge it, since we have within us the inclination to each of these defects. Father Olier rightly comes to the conclusion that "in sickness, in persecution, in contempt, and any other affliction we must take God's part against ourselves and acknowledge that we justly deserve all that and more; that He has a perfect right to use every creature for our punishment, and that we must adore the great mercy He uses towards us, knowing full well that according to His justice we would fare far worse." ²

Such is the twofold basis of humility. Being *nothing* of ourselves, we must love oblivion and self-effacement: *to be unknown, to be reckoned as nothing*. As sinners we deserve every kind of humiliation.

II. The Various Degrees of Humility

There are different classifications of the degrees of this virtue according to the various points of view taken. We shall note the principal ones, which can be reduced to three: that of *St. Benedict*, that of *St. Ignatius* and that of *Father Olier*.

1130. 1° **The Twelve Degrees of St. Benedict.** ³ Cas-sian discerned ten different degrees in the practice of humility. St. Benedict completed this division, adding two others. To understand this arrangement, we must know that St. Benedict conceived humility as "an habitual attitude of soul which regulates the entire range of a monk's relations with God, as a sinful creature and as an adopted son." This concept is founded upon reverence towards the Almighty and comprises besides humility properly so-called, obedience, patience and modesty. Of these twelve degrees, seven refer to *interior* and five to *exterior* actions.

¹ "I realize that it is Thy grace that has prevented me from doing whatever evil I have not done; for what evil is there that I could not have done, being given that I could take pleasure in doing wrong just for the pleasure of doing it? And I confess to Thee, my God, that Thou hast pardoned all my sins, those which I freely committed, and those which because of Thy guidance I did not commit." (*Confess.* II, C. 3, P. L. XXXII, 681).

² *Catech. for an Int. Life*, P. I, Lesson XVIII.
³ BUTLER, *Benedictine Monachism*, p. 51.

1131. Among the *interior* acts he places:

1) *The fear of God* ever present to the mind and causing us to *keep the commandments*. This fear is, in the first place, fear of punishment, then reverential fear, which terminates in adoration: "*The fear of the Lord is holy, enduring forever and ever.*" ¹

2) *Obedience*, or the submission of our will to God's. For if we fear and reverence God, we shall do His will in all things. This obedience is, indeed, an act of humility, since it is the expression of our dependence upon God.

3) *Obedience to Superiors* out of love for God. It is more difficult to submit to Superiors than to God Himself. More faith is needed to see God in the person of one's Superiors; likewise a more perfect self-denial is needed because this obedience extends to many more things.

4) *Patient obedience* even in the most difficult things, bearing injuries without murmur, even and above all, when humiliation comes from Superiors. To succeed in this, one must consider the heavenly recompense awaiting us and the sufferings and humiliations of Jesus.

5) *The avowal of secret faults*, thoughts included, to the Superior, ² apart from sacramental confession. This act of humility is a powerful check. The prospect of having to lay bare the most secret faults halts one on the brink of the abyss.

6) *The willing acceptance* of all *privations*, of *menial offices*, considering oneself unworthy of even such tasks.

7) To consider oneself in all sincerity as the lowest of men. This is a degree of humility rarely found. The Saints attain it by saying to themselves that if others had received as many graces as they, they would have made much better use of these divine gifts.

1132. These interior acts manifest themselves in *exterior* actions, the principal ones being:

8) *Avoidance of singularity*: to do nothing out of the ordinary, but to be satisfied with what is sanctioned by the common rule, the examples

¹ Ps. XVIII, 10.

² According to the Code of Canon Law (can. 530) religious Superiors can no longer in any way seek to induce their subjects to disclose to them their conscience; but the Code adds: "it is profitable for religious to approach their Superiors with filial confidence and manifest to them, if the Superiors be priests, their doubts and troubles of conscience."

of our seniors, and accepted customs. To wish to be singular is a sign of pride.

9) *Silence*: to know how to remain silent as long as conversation is not addressed to us, or as long as there is no good reason to speak. There is a great deal of vanity behind our readiness to talk.

10) *Moderation of laughter*: St. Benedict does not condemn laughter in so far as it is an expression of spiritual joy, but only laughter of a vulgar kind, uncouth laughter, sneering laughter, or the habitual disposition to laugh boisterously, and upon the least provocation, all of which shows little regard for God's presence and little humility.

11) *Reserve in speech*: when one speaks, it must be done quietly and humbly, with all the gravity and propriety of the wise man.

12) *Modesty of behavior*: to walk, sit, and hold oneself erect; to practice modesty of the eyes without affectation, to keep one's thoughts fixed on God, reflecting that one is not worthy of raising one's eyes to heaven: *Lord, I am not worthy, a sinful man, to raise my eyes to heaven.*

After explaining the various degrees of humility, St. Benedict adds that they lead to the love of God, that perfect love that excludes fear: "*Therefore, after having ascended all these degrees of humility, the monk soon reaches the love of God, that perfect love that casteth out fear.*" This, then, is the goal whither humility leads. The way is rough, but the heights to which it leads us are those of Divine Love.

1183. 20 The Three Degrees of St. Ignatius. Towards the end of the Second Week of the Exercises, before the Rules for Election, St. Ignatius proposes three degrees of humility, which are at bottom three degrees of self-abnegation.

1) The first degree consists "in perfect submission to the law of God, so that we should be ready to refuse the empire of the whole world, or even to sacrifice our lives, rather than transgress any precept which obliges us under pain of mortal sin." This degree is essential for every Christian who wants to remain in the state of grace.

2) The second is more perfect. "It consists in the indifference of the soul towards riches or poverty, honor or shame, health or sickness, provided the glory of God and the salvation of souls are equally secured; further, that no consideration of interest or temporal disgrace, not even the consideration of immediate death, should be capable of drawing us into deliberate venial sin." This is a disposition already implying great perfection, and few souls attain it.

3) "The third is most perfect. It embodies the first two, and it goes further, preferring, for the sole love of Jesus Christ and from the wish to resemble Him the more,

poverty to riches, shame to honors, etc...., even though our salvation and the glory of God would be assured by either." This is the degree of perfect souls; it is the love of the Cross and the love of humiliation, in union with Christ and out of love for Him. When a soul has arrived thus far, it is already on the highroad to sanctity.

1184. 30 The Three Degrees of Humility according to Father Olier. After having explained in his "Catechism for an Interior Life" the necessity of humility and the way to combat pride, Father Olier in his Introduction to Christian Life and Virtues, goes on to explain the three degrees of interior humility proper to *fervent souls*.

a) The first degree is to *rejoice* in the knowledge of self, the knowledge of one's villainess, of one's nothingness, of one's defects, of one's sins. The mere knowledge of these miseries does not constitute humility; there are some who discover their faults, but who are saddened at the sight of them, and strive to find in themselves something good that will spare them the confusion they experience. This is an effect of pride. However, when one is pleased at the knowledge of one's wretchedness, when one loves one's own vile and abject condition one is truly humble.

If one has the misfortune of falling into sin, one must, of course, detest it, but at the same time be pleased at the humiliation. To rejoice in one's infirmities, one must remember that such a sentiment redounds to God's glory, by the very fact that one's littleness makes manifest God's greatness, and one's sins His holiness. In this way the soul acknowledges that it has no worth whatever, that of itself it is incapable of any good, and that all has its origin in God, that all depends on Him, and that all must be done through Him.

b) The second degree is that of *wanting to be known as vile*, as base, as being nothing but sin, and to be considered as such by all men. In fact, if knowing our misery and being pleased at it we should still wish to be esteemed by men, we should be *hypocrites*, wanting to seem better than we really are.

Alas! such is our tendency! Hence the chagrin we experience when our imperfections are discovered, the concern we have for the success of our undertakings, for gaining the esteem of men. To covet this esteem is to be a thief wishing to make his what belongs to the Sovereign Being. The humble soul, on the contrary, is unconcerned about the regard in which it is held. It is pained when praised, and would prefer a thousand injuries to a word of praise, since the former is based on truth, the latter on falsehood.

c) The third degree is to want not merely to be known as a vile thing, but *to be treated* as such, as a base and contemptible being; it is to accept joyfully all the scorn

and all the humiliation possible; in a word, it is to want to be treated according to our deserts. And what contempt is not due to nothingness, and above all, to sin, which removes us from the One Who is our true good, God?

Thus, when God deigns to send us aridity of soul, interior desolations and reversals, we must take God's part against ourselves, and acknowledge that He is right in rebuking us and our works. Likewise, if we are ill-treated by our superiors, our equals, and even our inferiors, we must rejoice at this as being most just, most profitable to us and most in accord with the desires of Jesus Christ. We must not even aspire to a high place in Heaven from a *motive of pride*. Indeed, we must love God as much as He wishes to be loved, and be faithful so that we may attain to the degree of glory and bliss that He prepares for us; but with regard to our place in Heaven we must leave that entirely in God's hands.

"Then we attain complete self-effacement, and God alone lives and reigns within us."

1135. Conclusion. Each of these points of view concerning the degrees of humility as explained by St. Benedict, St. Ignatius, and Father Olier, has its foundation in fact. It is the duty of a spiritual director to advise the one which best harmonizes with his penitents state of soul.

III. The Excellence of Humility

To be able to understand the language of the Saints on this subject we must differentiate between *humility in itself*, and *humility as the foundation* of the other virtues.

1136. ¹ Considered *in itself*, says St. Thomas, ¹ humility is *inferior to the theological virtues*, which have God Himself as their direct object; it is even inferior to certain moral virtues; for instance, prudence, religion, and legal justice which refers to the common good; however, (with the possible exception of obedience) humility is superior to all the other moral virtues, because of its universal character, and because it subordinates us to the divine order in all things.

1137. ² But, if we consider humility as being the *key* that *opens the treasures of grace* and as the *foundation* of all virtues, it is, as the Saints say, one of the most excellent of virtues.

A) It is the key that lays open the riches of grace: "But to the humble He giveth grace."² a) God knows that the humble soul does not take complacency in the graces He

bestows, that it is not puffed up with vanity because of them, but rather that it refers all the glory to Him. Almighty God can therefore pour upon that soul the abundance of His favors, since His own glory will be thereby increased. On the other hand, He sees Himself obliged to withdraw His grace from the proud—"God resisteth the proud."¹ —since they would appropriate it to their own ends and would glory therein. This God cannot suffer: "I will not give my glory to another."²

b) Besides, humility empties the soul of self-love and vain-glory, and thus creates there a vast capacity for grace, which God is ready to fill; for as St. Bernard says there is a close affinity between grace and humility: "*The virtue of humility is always found closely associated with Divine grace.*"³

1138. B) Humility is likewise the *foundation* of all the virtues. If not the mother of all, it is at least their foster-mother, and this from a twofold point of view: first in the sense that *without it* there is no solid virtue, and then that *with it* all other virtues grow in depth and perfection.

1) As pride is the great stumbling-block to *faith*, humility renders our faith more active, more ready, more firm, and even more enlightened: "*Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them to little ones.*"⁴ How much easier it is to subject the intellect to the authority of faith, if we are conscious of our dependence upon God! "*Bringing into captivity every understanding, unto the obedience of Christ.*"⁵ Faith in turn, revealing to us the infinite perfection of God and our own nothingness, grounds us in humility.

2) The same occurs in the case of *hope*. The proud man trusts in himself and presumes overmuch in his own strength. He hardly thinks of imploring divine aid. The humble man, on the contrary, places all his hope in God, because he distrusts himself. Hope, in its turn, makes us more humble, because it shows us that the joys of heaven are so utterly beyond our powers that without the help of grace we could never attain them.

3) The enemy of the love of God, of *charity*, is the love of self. It is, then, by the "emptying of self" that the love of God grows, which in turn deepens humility, for we delight in effacing ourselves before Him Whom we love. Therefore, St. Augustine rightly said that there is nothing more sublime than charity, and that only the humble practice it: "*There is no higher road than that of charity, and none but the humble walk therein.*"⁶ There is likewise no surer way to practice charity towards the neighbor than that of humility, which throws a veil over his defects and makes us sympathize with his infirmities, instead of becoming impatient with him.

¹ *1 Peter*, V, 5. — ² *Isaias*, XLII, 8. — ³ *Super Missus est*, Homil. IV, 9.
⁴ *Matth.*, XI, 25. — ⁵ *11 Cor.*, X, 5. — ⁶ Enarrat. in Ps. CXXI, c. 7.

¹ *Ila* II^a, q. 165, a. 4. — ² *1 Peter*, V, 5.

1139. 4) *Religion* is all the better practiced the clearer we perceive that all must be offered in holocaust and sacrificed to God.

5) *Prudence* demands humility. The humble are fond of reflecting and taking counsel before acting.

6) *Justice* cannot be practiced without humility, for the proud man exaggerates his own rights to the detriment of those of the neighbor.

7) *Christian fortitude*, proceeding as it does, not from self but from God, is not found except in those who, conscious of their weakness, find support in Him Who alone can strengthen them.

8) *Temperance* and *chastity*, as we have seen, presuppose humility.

9) *Meekness* and *patience* are never well practiced until we learn to accept humiliation.

And so, it can be said that without humility there is no solid and lasting virtue, and that, on the other hand, through humility, all virtues grow and take deeper root in the soul. We may well conclude with the words of St. Augustine: "*Dost thou wish to rise? Begin by descending. You plan a tower that shall pierce the clouds? Lay first the foundations on humility.*"¹ The loftier the building, the deeper must be its foundations.

IV. The Practice of Humility

1140. *Beginners*, as we have said (n. 838-844), wage war against pride; souls advanced in the spiritual life direct their efforts to the imitation of Our Lord's humility.

1141. ¹ They strive to draw to themselves the humble dispositions of the soul of Christ. This is what St. Paul urges us to do: "*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself...*"² We must, then, meditate frequently upon and strive to imitate the examples of humility given us by Our Lord in His *hidden* and *public* life, in His *Passion*, and in His *Eucharistic* life.

A) During His *hidden* life He practices humility chiefly under the form of self-effacement. a) He practices this self-effacement *before His birth* by hiding Himself for nine months in the virginal womb of Mary, where He conceals completely His Divine Attributes: "*He emptied himself,*"³ by submitting Himself to Cæsar's edict: "*There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus,*"⁴ by suffering uncomplainingly the rude refusals His Mother had to face: "*There was no room for them in the inn,*"⁵ above all, by being the object

of the ingratitude of men, who thought not of making ready a place for Him in their hearts: "*He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*"¹ b) He likewise practices self-effacement *at His birth*: He appears as a poor infant, bound in swaddling clothes, placed in a manger, and laid upon a bit of straw: "*You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.*"² And this little Child is the Son of God, coequal with the Father, Uncreated Wisdom!

e) He practices humility also in all the circumstances that *follow His birth*: like any ordinary child he is circumcised; He is obliged to flee into Egypt to escape the persecuting hand of Herod, whom with but one word He could reduce to dust. d) His life at Nazareth is but continued self-effacement. Hidden away in a small Galilean village, He at first helps His Mother in her household duties, then becomes an apprentice, a workman, and spends thirty years in obedience to two human beings. He, the Lord of the world, "*was subject to them.*"³ We can well understand the words of Bossuet: "*My God! I stand aghast once more! Come, ye proud ones, behold this spectacle! Jesus, a carpenter's son! Jesus, Himself a carpenter! Jesus, known only as a carpenter and as the son of a carpenter, and nothing more!*"

1142. B) During the course of His public life Jesus does not cease to practice this forgetfulness of self to the extent compatible with His mission. He is, no doubt, obliged to proclaim both by word and deed that He is the Son of God; yet, He does so in a discreet, measured way, sufficiently clear to reach the minds of men of good will, but not with such evidence as to force assent. His humility appears in everything He does.

a) He surrounds Himself with Apostles, ignorant and uncouth, and therefore little esteemed, eleven fishermen and a publican. He shows a marked preference for those whom the world despises: the poor, sinners, the afflicted, little children, those disowned by the world. He lives by alms and has no place that He can call His home. b) His *teaching* is plain and simple, within the reach of all, and His similitudes like His parables are taken from ordinary, every-day life. He does not seek to excite the admiration of men, but to instruct them and to touch their hearts. e) His *miracles* are of *rare* occurrence, and when He does perform them He often charges His beneficiaries to speak of them to no man. There is no studied austerity in His life: He eats like every one else, He attends a wedding-feast at Cana, and some banquets to which He is invited. He shuns popularity; He does not hesitate when necessary to displease His disciples: "*This is a hard saying,*"⁵ and He takes to flight when the people would make Him king. d) If we look into the *innermost sentiments* of His soul, we see how He wishes to live in dependence upon God.⁶ He speaks only to give expression to the doctrine of Him Who sent Him: "*I speak not*

¹ *Sermon 10 on the Words of the Lord.* — ² *Phil.*, II, 5. — ³ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴ *Luke*, II, 1. — ⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹ *John*, I, 11. — ² *Luke*, II, 12. — ³ *Luke*, II, 5.

⁴ *John*, VI, 61. — ⁵ *Elevations*, XX^e Semaine, 8^e Elev. — ⁶ *John*, VIII, 15-16.

of myself..."² "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me."³ He does nothing of Himself but only in deference to His Father: "I cannot do myself do anything... But the Father who abideth in me, he doth the works."³ Thus it is not His own glory that He seeks, but that of the Father, and for this cause only He lives on earth: "I seek not my own glory..."⁴ "I have glorified thee on the earth."⁵ Nay more, He, the Lord of Creation, becomes the servant of men: "The Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister."⁶ In a word, oblivious of self, He continually immolates Himself for God and men.

1143. C) This is all even more apparent in His *Passion* where He practices *abject* humility.

He, Holiness itself, wills to bear the weight of our iniquities and suffer the penalty, as if He were guilty: "Him, who knew no sin, he hath made sin for us."⁷ **a)** Hence proceed that sorrow, that dejection, that weariness, which He feels at Gethsemane at seeing Himself loaded with our sins: "And he began to fear and to be heavy... My soul is sorrowful even unto death."⁸

b) He bears the outrages heaped upon Him: betrayed by Judas, He has for him only friendly words: "Friend, whereto art thou come?"⁹ Deserted by His Apostles, He does not cease to love them. Arrested, bound like a common criminal, He heals Malchus wounded by the hand of Peter. Delivered to the rabble, He suffers their affronts in silence. Calumniated, He does not justify Himself, and utters not a word except to make answer to the abjuration of the high-priest in whom He respects the authority of God. He knows full well that His answer will bring upon Him the penalty of death, still He speaks the truth. Treated like a fool by Herod, He holds His peace: He speaks not a single word nor works a single miracle to vindicate His honor. The people to whom He had done so much good choose Barabbas instead of Him, and still Jesus ceases not to suffer for their conversion. Unjustly condemned by Pilate, He keeps silence, He lets Himself be scourged, crowned with thorns, vilified like a mock-king on the stage; He accepts without murmur the heavy cross that is laid upon His shoulders and allows Himself to be crucified without a word of complaint. Insulted and sneered at by His enemies, He prays for them and excuses them before His Father. Deprived of all heavenly comfort, deserted by His disciples, His dignity as man, His reputation, His honor, all set at naught, He suffers it seems every species of humiliation that the mind of man can conceive, and He can say with far greater truth than the Psalmist: "I am a worm and no man: the reproach of men and the outcast of the people."¹⁰ It is for us sinners, it is in our stead, that He endures so heroically all those outrages without a murmur: "Who, when He was reviled, did not revile: when he suffered, he threatened not, but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly."¹¹ How then can we, who are so full of guilt, ever complain, even should we be at times unjustly accused?

1144. D) His Eucharistic life in the tabernacle reproduces these different examples of humility.

a) Therein the Divinity of Jesus Christ is veiled to a greater extent than in the Crib and on Calvary: "On the Cross was veiled Thy Godhead's splendor. Here Thy Manhood lieth hidden too."¹ And yet, from the recesses of the tabernacle, it is He Who is the first and principal cause of all the good done in the world, He the One that inspires, strengthens and comforts all apostles, martyrs and virgins. And He chooses to be hidden, to be unknown, to be accounted as nothing.

b) How many insults, how many affronts does He not receive in the Sacrament of His love, not only from unbelievers who refuse to acknowledge His Presence, from the impious who profane His Sacred Body, but also from Christians, who either out of weakness or shame make sacriligious communions, even from souls consecrated to His service who at times forget Him and leave Him alone in His tabernacle: "Could you not watch one hour with me?"² Instead of complaining He says to us incessantly: "Come to me, all you that labor and are heavy burdened, and I will refresh you."³

Truly, we have here all the examples that we need to sustain and strengthen us in the practice of every form of the virtue of humility. And when we reflect further that at the same time Christ has also merited for us the grace of imitating these examples, how can we hesitate to follow Him?

1145. ²⁰ We shall now examine the manner in which we can, after Our Lord's example, *practice humility* towards God, towards our neighbor and with regard to ourselves.

A) Towards God, humility is manifested chiefly in three ways: **a)** By the spirit of *religion*, whereby we honor God as the plenitude of being and perfection. This we do by lovingly and joyfully acknowledging our nothingness and our sinfulness, glad to proclaim in this way the self-sufficiency that is God's and the perfection of His holiness. Thence spring those sentiments of adoration, of praise, of filial fear and filial love; thence comes the heart's cry: *Thou alone art holy, Thou alone art Lord, Thou alone art most high*. These sentiments issue forth from our hearts not only when we pray, but also when we contemplate God's work: His *natural* works wherein are mirrored the perfections of the Maker, His supernatural works wherein the eyes of faith perceive a real likeness, a participation in the Divine life.

1146. b) By a spirit of *thankfulness*, which sees in God the *source* of all the natural and supernatural gifts we contemplate in ourselves and in others. Then, like the Blessed Virgin, and in union with her, we glorify God for all the

¹ John, XIV, 10. — ² John, VII, 16. — ³ John, V, 30; XIV, 10.

⁴ John, VIII, 50. — ⁵ John, XVII, 4. — ⁶ Matth., XX, 28.

⁷ I Cor., V, 21. — ⁸ Mark, XIV, 33. 34. — ⁹ Matth., XXVI, 50.

¹⁰ Ps., XXXI, 7. — ¹¹ I Peter, II, 23.

¹ Hymn "Adoro te" of St. Thomas. — ² Matth., XXVI, 40. — ³ Matth., XI, 28.

good He has bestowed upon us: "My soul doth magnify the Lord... He that is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is His name."¹ Thus, instead of priding ourselves upon such gifts, we refer to God all the honor that comes from them and acknowledge that we have often misused them.

1147. c) By a spirit of *dependence*, which makes us confess our inability to do any good of ourselves. Convinced of this fact, we never begin any action without first placing ourselves under the influence of the Holy Ghost, without imploring His grace, which alone can supply for our deficiency. This should be practiced especially by spiritual directors, who in the exercise of their ministry must not glory in the confidence which their penitents show them, but candidly avow their insufficiency, and consult the Almighty before dispensing any advice.

1148. B) As to the manner of practicing humility with regard to the *neighbor*, the principle that must guide us is the following: we must see in him all the good, natural and supernatural, which God has placed in him, and admire it without either envy or jealousy. On the other hand, we must throw a veil over his defects and overlook them, at least as long as it is not our duty to correct them.

In accordance with this principle: a) we rejoice at the virtues and successes of others, for all these redound to God's glory: "So that by all means... Christ be preached."² Of course, we may wish to possess their virtues, but then we invoke the Holy Ghost that He may deign to give us a share therein, and thus a worthy emulation ensues: "And let us consider one another, to provoke unto charity and to good works."³

b) If we see our neighbor commit some fault, instead of becoming indignant, we pray for his conversion, and frankly acknowledge that, were it not for God's grace, we should ourselves be guilty of greater sins (n. 1129).

1149. c) This is the attitude of mind that really enables us to consider ourselves *inferior to others*: "In humility, let each esteem others better than themselves."⁴ We may well reflect especially, if not exclusively, upon the good there is in others and the evil there is in ourselves.

The following is the advice of St. Vincent de Paul to his disciples:⁵ "If, then, we study to know ourselves thoroughly, we shall find in all

we think, in all we say, in all we do regarding either the substance or the circumstances, that we are fully and completely surrounded with cause for shame and confusion; and if we do not flatter ourselves, we shall perceive that we are not only worse than other men, but even, in a certain sense, more wicked than the demons in hell. For, if these unfortunate spirits had had the graces that have been given to us, they would have made a thousand times better use of them."

One may ask how one can arrive at such a conclusion, since it does not always correspond objectively to the truth. Let us note, first of all, that this conviction is found in all the Saints, and, therefore, it must rest upon some solid foundation. The foundation is this: every man can and should *judge himself*; and when he knows himself intimately, he sees clearly that he is indeed guilty, and further, that there exist in him evil tendencies. From this he concludes that he must hold himself in contempt. Others, however, he should not and *cannot judge*, since he does not know their motives, which are essential elements for the appraisal of conduct. Neither does he know the measure of grace God has given to others, which grace, however, he must take into account in order to form a just appreciation of their actions. By judging self severely and not judging others, except leniently, one comes to the practical conclusion that one must assign to oneself a place below all others.

1150. C) In the practice of humility with regard to *ourselves*, the following principle will guide us: while recognizing all the good that is in us in order to give thanks to God for it, we must consider above all what is defective: our nothingness, our helplessness, our sinfulness, so as ever to keep alive within us a sense of humiliation and shame. With the help of this principle it becomes easier to practice humility, which must extend to the whole man, to *mind, heart and outward conduct*.

a) Humility of *mind* comprises chiefly four things:

1) A proper *distrust of self*, that prevents us from overrating our ability, and disposes us to feel humiliated at the ill-use we have made of the gifts of God. Such is the counsel of the Wise Man: "Seek not the things that are too high for thee, and search not into things above thy ability."¹ This is what St. Paul recommended to the Christians of Rome: "By the grace that is given me, to all that are among you, not to be more wise than it becometh to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety and according as God hath divided to every one the measure of faith."²

2) In the use we make of our talents, we must not seek to make a display or to be praised, but to be useful and to do good.

St. Vincent de Paul recommended this to his missionaries:³ "To do otherwise would be to preach self, not Jesus Christ. And he, who preaches for applause, for praise, for esteem, to have his name on everybody's tongue, what does he do? What does such a preacher do? He commits a sacrilege. Yes, a sacrilege! To make the word of God

¹ Ecclesiasticus, III, 22. — ² Romans, XII, 3.
³ MAYNARD, *Virtues and Doctrine*, p. 209.

¹ Luke I, 46, 49. — ² Phil., I, 18. — ³ Hébreux, X, 24. — ⁴ Phil. II, 3.
⁵ MAYNARD, *Virtues and Spiritual Doctrine of St. Vincent de Paul*, p. 202, 203.

and things divine the means of acquiring a reputation! Yes, it is a sacrifice!"

1151. 3) We must practice *intellectual docility*, not only by submitting to the official decisions of the Church, but by heartily accepting pontifical directions even when they have not the character of infallibility, reflecting that there is in them greater wisdom than in our own judgments.

4) This docility will prevent *obstinacy* in controverted questions. No doubt, it is our right to adopt whatever system appears to us as best founded, in questions where free discussion is in order, but is it not just and fair to allow the same freedom to others?

1152. b) *Humility of heart* requires that instead of wishing for and seeking glory or honors, we be satisfied with our situation and prefer a hidden life to an exalted position: *Love to be unknown and to be reputed as nothing*. This humbleness of heart goes even further; it hides whatever could cause us to be loved and esteemed and it wishes for the last place not only in rank but also in the esteem of men: "*Sit down in the lowest place.*"¹ Indeed, at times it goes so far as to make us wish that our memory perish from the earth.

Let us listen to St. Vincent de Paul: "We should never turn or fix our eyes on what is good in us, but rather strive to know what is bad and defective; this is a great means of preserving humility. We ought not to dwell on the gift of converting souls nor on whatever other exterior talents we may have, for they are not ours; we are only the bearers of them, and even with these gifts we can lose our souls. For this reason, no one should flatter himself, nor take any complacency in himself, nor conceive any self-esteem because God works great things through him; he should rather humble himself and acknowledge that he is but a poor instrument which God deigns to employ."

1153. c) *External humility* should simply be the outward manifestation of our interior sentiments, still it may be said that exterior acts of humility react upon our interior dispositions to solidify and intensify them. Therefore, they must not be neglected. However, to them we must join real sentiments of humility, that is to say, the soul must be humbled together with the body.

1) Poor lodgings, plain clothes, even worn and patched, as long as they be clean, foster humility. Fine lodgings and expensive attire easily inspire sentiments contrary to this virtue.

2) A humble and unassuming posture, gait and behavior, devoid of affectation, help in the practice of humility;² humble occupations

¹ Luke, XIV, 10. — ² MAYNARD, *Virtues and Doctrine*, p. 213.

³ This is well explained by MGR. GAY in *Christian Life and Virtues*, Vol. I. On Humility, p. 370. "There is a habit of exterior humility in which the soul that

such as manual labor, mending one's clothes, etc., produce the same result.

3) The same may be said of the condescension, the marks of deference, the acts of courtesy shown to others.

4) In our *conversations*, humility prompts us to let others talk about what is of interest to them and to speak little ourselves. Above all, it prevents us from speaking of ourselves and of whatever concerns us. It takes a saint to speak ill of self and mean it; ¹ and to speak well of self is boasting. We must not, under the pretext of humility go to any extremes. St. Francis de Sales² says that "if some great servants of God have pretended to be fools, to render themselves more abject in the eyes of the world, we must admire, but not imitate them; for having had peculiar and extraordinary motives that induced them to this excess, no one ought thence to draw any consequence for himself."

Humility is, then, a most practical and sanctifying virtue; it extends to the whole man, and aids us in the practice of all the other virtues.

§ III. Meekness³

1154. Our Lord rightly associates meekness with humility, since the former cannot be practiced without the latter. We shall treat: 1° of its *nature*, 2° of its *excellence*, 3° of its *practice*.

I. Nature of the Virtue of Meekness

1155. 1° Its *Constituent Elements*. Meekness is a complex virtue which comprises three principal elements: a) a certain *self-mastery*, which forestalls and checks impulses of anger; from this point of view it is related to temperance; b) tolerance of the *failings of others*, which demands patience and, therefore, the virtue of fortitude; c) *forgiveness*

is truly humble always maintains the body. There is, exteriorly, a self-restraint, a reserve, a calm which gives to the whole physiognomy that charm which we express by the word "modesty". The look is modest, the voice is modest, the laugh is modest, and every movement is modest... Nothing is further from affectation than true modesty. St. Paul says: Let your modesty be known to all men, the Lord is nigh! There, in fact, is the secret of this ravishing and holy attitude. God is nigh to this soul, and this soul never forgets it: it lives in His Presence, and acts under His Eye, in the company of the good Angels.

¹ "We often confess ourselves to be nothing, nay, misery itself, and the refuse of the world; but we would be very sorry that any one should believe us, or tell others that we are really such miserable wretches. On the contrary, we pretend to retire, and hide ourselves, so that the world may run after us, and seek us out. We feign to wish ourselves considered as the last in the company, and sit down at the lowest end of the table; but it is with a view that we may be desired to pass to the upper end. True humility never makes a show of herself, nor uses many humble words." (ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Devout Life*, III Part, C. V).

² *Ibid.*
³ ST. JOHN CLIMACUS, *The Ladder of Paradise*, XXIV; ST. FRANCIS OF SALES, *Devout Life*, P. III, C. VIII-IX; OLIER, *Introduction*, C. X; CARD. BONA, *Manuductio*, C. XXXII; RIBET, *Ascétique*; VEN. A. CHEVRIER, *Le Véritable Disciple*, p. 345-354. — See references under Anger, N° 853 and Fraternal Charity, N° 1236.

of injuries, and *benevolence* towards all, even our enemies; in this respect it is inclusive of charity. From this we see that it is a combination of virtues, rather than a distinct virtue.

1156. 2° Meekness may be defined as a *supernatural, moral virtue, by which we prevent and restrain anger, bear with the neighbor in spite of his defects, and treat him with kindness.*

Meekness is not that weakness of character which conceals deep resentment behind a suave demeanor. It is an interior virtue, existing both in the will and in the emotions, in order to make peace reign therein; but it is also outwardly manifested in word and gesture, by affability of manner.¹ It is exercised not only toward the neighbor, but also with regard to self and all beings animate or inanimate.

II. Its Excellence

Meekness is excellent both in itself and in its effects.

1157. 1° In itself, it is, as Father Olier² puts it, "the completeness of perfection in the Christian, for it presupposes in him absolute self-effacement and the death of all self-interest."

Hence, he adds: "True meekness is hardly found outside those innocent souls within which Jesus Christ has continually dwelt from the moment of their regeneration." *Penitent* souls rarely possess it in all its perfection, because few of them labor with sufficient energy and constancy to destroy the faults they have contracted. Thus Bossuet tells us that "the true mark of innocence whether preserved from the beginning or recovered, is meekness."³

1158. 2° The great benefit meekness brings us is the reign of peace in the soul, peace with God, peace with the neighbor, peace with ourselves.

a) Peace with God, because it makes us accept all events, even the most adverse, with calm and serenity, as means of growing in virtue, and especially in the love of God: "And we know," says St. Paul, "that to them that love God, all things work together unto good."⁴

b) Peace with our neighbor; for, in preventing and repressing the impulses of anger, meekness makes us bear with

¹ St. Jerome gives an excellent description of this virtue in his *Commentary on Galatians*, V. 20: "Meekness is a mild virtue, it is kindly, serene, gentle in speech, gracious in manner, it is a delicate blending of all the virtues. Kindness is akin to it, for, like meekness, it seeks to please; still it differs from the latter in that it is not as winsome and seems more rigid, for though equally prompt to accomplish good and render service, it lacks that charm, that gentleness that wins all hearts."² *Introduction*, C. X. — ³ *Méditations sur l'Évangile*. — ⁴ *Romans*, VIII, 28.

our neighbor's faults and enables us to keep on good terms with others, or at least, to remain inwardly unruffled if others be provoked at us.

c) Peace with ourselves. If we happen to commit a fault, or make a blunder, we do not become impatient or lose our temper; but we reproach ourselves quietly and kindly, and learn by the experience to be more on our guard. Thus we avoid the mistake of those who, "being overcome by anger, are angry for having been angry, and vexed to see themselves vexed."¹ Thus, we preserve our peace, which is one of the greatest blessings.

III. The Practice of the Virtue of Meekness.

1159. 1° Beginners exercise themselves in this virtue by fighting anger and the desire for revenge, as well as every impulse of passion stirring in the soul (n. 861-863).

1160. 2° Souls advanced in the way of perfection strive to attract to themselves the meekness of Jesus, which He teaches so admirably by word and example.²

A) Our Lord attaches such great importance to this virtue, that He had it announced by the prophets as one of the marks of the promised Messias, and had the fulfillment of this prophecy pointed out by the Evangelists.³

1161. B) He offers Himself as a *model* of that meekness and invites us to become His disciples, because He is meek and humble of heart.⁴

a) He fulfils perfectly the ideal of meekness described by the prophets. When He announces the Gospel, it is not with violence, animosity and bitterness, but with calm and serenity.

He utters no shouts, no useless cries, no angry words; noise dies out and does no good. His manner is so mild that He does not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax, that is, the spark of faith and love that still remain in the sinner's soul. To draw men to Himself, He is neither melancholy nor impetuous. He is kindness and meekness itself, and He invites those who labor and are heavily laden to come and seek repose in Him.

1162. b) Towards His *Apostles*: 1) His conduct is full of meekness: He bears with their faults, their ignorance, their rudeness; He proceeds tactfully with them, revealing

¹ St. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Devout Life*, Part III, C. IX.

² P. CHEVRIER, *Le Disciple*, p. 345-354.

³ *Isaïas*, XLII, 1-4; *Matth.*, XI, 17-21. — ⁴ *Matth.*, XI, 29.

to them the truth only by degrees and in the measure in which they can stand it, leaving to the Holy Ghost the care of finishing His work.

He defends them against the unjust accusations of the Pharisees who reproached them with not observing the fasts. He reprimands them when they fail in meekness towards the children that gather round about Him, and when they would wish to bring down fire from Heaven on a village of Samaria. When Peter strikes Malchus with the sword, He upbraids him; but He forgives him his threefold denial and makes him atone for it with a threefold profession of love.

2) Furthermore, He *preaches* meekness to the apostolic workers: they must have the simplicity of the dove as well as the cunning of the serpent. They must be as lambs in the midst of wolves; they must not resist evil, but proffer the left cheek to him who strikes them on the right; they must yield their cloak rather than appear before the bar of justice, and they must pray for them that persecute them.

1163. c) He readily forgives *sinner*s, even the most guilty, as soon as He sees in them the least indication of repentance.

It is with no small degree of delicacy that He elicits the avowals of the Samaritan woman and effects her conversion; that He pardons the adulteress and the penitent thief, for He is come to call, not the just, but sinners to repentance. Like the good shepherd, He goes in search of His stray sheep and brings it back to the fold upon His shoulders. He even gives His life for His sheep. If at times He speaks severely to the Scribes and the Pharisees, it is precisely because they impose upon others unbearable burdens and thus hinder them from entering into the kingdom of God.

d) Even with His enemies He is meek: Judas after his sin of treason hears himself called by the sweet name of friend. Upon the Cross He prays for His executioners and asks His Father to take account of their ignorance and pardon them.

1164. C) *In order to imitate Our Lord* we must: a) avoid quarrels, harsh or hurtful words and actions, so as not to frighten away the timid. We must strive never to render evil for evil, to avoid all abruptness of manner, and never to speak while in an angry mood.

b) We must try to treat with due regard all those that approach us; to present to all a pleasant and affable mien, even if they be a cause of fatigue or boredom to us; to be especially kind to the poor, the afflicted, the sick, sinners, the timid, children; to soothe with a few kind words the sting which the reprimands we are called upon to administer may leave; to be ever ready to render service, at times to do even more than we are asked and, above all, to do so with good grace. We must, if need be, be ready to bear affronts, and to turn the left cheek to him who strikes us on the right.

1165. 3° Perfect souls strive to imitate the very meekness of God, as Father Olier¹ remarks: "He is meekness

itself, and when He wishes to share it with a soul, He makes His abode therein in such a way that nothing of the flesh remains in it, but is all absorbed in God, in His being, His substance, His perfections, so that all that it does is done in meekness, and even when moved by zeal, it is always in a meek manner, because bitterness and harshness no longer have any part in it, just as they can have no part in God Himself."

1166. Conclusion. Not to be too long, we end here the explanation of the cardinal virtues. a) They *discipline, school* and perfect all our faculties by subjecting them to the dominion of reason and will. Thus, the original order that once prevailed in the soul, that is, the submission of the body to the soul, and the subjection of the lower faculties to the will, is gradually restored.

b) The cardinal virtues do even more: not only do they eliminate the obstacles which impede our union with God, but they *initiate* that union. For the *prudence* we acquire is a participation in God's wisdom, and our *justice* a participation in His justice; our *fortitude* proceeds from Him and unites us to Him; our *temperance* makes us share in the wondrous poise and harmony that exist in Him. When we yield *obedience* to our Superiors, it is He Whom we obey. *Chastity* is but a means of approaching the perfection of His purity. *Humility* creates a void in our soul solely that it may be filled with God, and our *meekness* is but a participation in the meekness of God.

Thus, our union with God, begun by the practice of the moral virtues, will be perfected by the theological virtues, the object of which is God Himself.

CHAPTER III

The Theological Virtues

1167. 1° St. Paul makes mention of the three theological virtues. He groups them together as three essential elements of the Christian life, and points out their superiority over the moral virtues.¹ Thus he urges the Thessalonians to put on the *breast-plate of faith* and *charity* and the *helmet of hope*,² and he praises in them the *work of faith*, the *labor of charity* and the *enduring of hope*.³ As con-

¹ P. PRAT, *The Theology of St. Paul*, II.

² *1 Thess.*, V, 8. — *3 1 Thess.*, I, 3.

trasted with the *charisms* (special gifts), which are of a transitory nature, faith, hope and charity are lasting.¹

1168. 2° Their rôle is to *unite us to God* through Jesus Christ, in order to make us sharers in the Divine life. They are, then, at once *unifying* and *transforming* virtues.

a) Thus, *faith* unites us to God, *Infinite Truth*, and makes us enter into communion with the *divine mind*, since it makes us know God as He made Himself known through revelation. Thereby faith prepares us for the *Beatific Vision*.

b) *Hope* unites us to God, *Supreme Beatitude*, and makes us love Him for His *goodness to us*. By it we *firmly* and *trustfully* expect the happiness of Heaven, as well as the means necessary to attain it. Through it we prepare ourselves for the full enjoyment of celestial bliss.

c) *Charity* unites us to God, *Infinite Goodness*, and makes us love Him as infinitely *good and lovable in Himself*, and establishes a holy friendship between Himself and us, a friendship which makes us partake even now of His life, because we begin to love Him as He loves Himself.

Here on earth, charity always includes the other two theological virtues. It is, so to speak, their *soul*, their *vital principle* or *life*: so much so, that, devoid of charity, faith and hope remain imperfect, inert, dead. Thus, according to St. Paul, faith is not complete unless it bring forth love and action: "Faith that worketh by charity."² nor is hope complete until it gives us a foretaste of heavenly bliss through the possession of sanctifying grace and charity.

ART. I. THE VIRTUE OF FAITH 3

Three things must be explained: 1° the *nature* of faith; 2° its *sanctifying power*; 3° the *progressive growth* in the *practice* of this virtue.

I. The Nature of Faith

We briefly recall here what we have explained more at length in *Dogmatic and Moral Theology*.

¹ 1 Cor., XIII, 13. — ² Galatians, V, 6.
³ ST. AUGUSTINUS, *Enchiridion de Fide, Spe et Caritate*; ST. THOMAS, II^a II^a, q. 1-XXI; JOHANNES A. S. THOMA, *De fide*; SUAREZ, *De fide*; DE LUGO, *De virtute fidei divinae*; SALMATICENSIS, *De fide*; SCARAMELLI, *Guide ascétique*, t. IV, art. 1; BILLOT, *De virtutibus infusis*, thesis IX-XXIV; GAY, *Christian Life and Virtues*, Vol. I, Treat. III; NEWMAN, *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, X, XI; FINLAY, *Divine Faith*; BAINVELL, *Faith and the Act of Faith*; VAUGHAN, *Faith and Folly*; *Thoughts for All Times* P. III, C. VI, VII; McNABB, *On Faith, and McKenna, Theology of Faith*; HEDDLEY, *The Spirit of Faith*.

1169. 1° The *meaning of faith in Holy Writ*. The word *faith* signifies, in the most instances, *an assent of the mind to truth*, which assent, however, is based upon *trust*. To believe any one, we must have confidence in him.

A) In the *Old Testament*, faith is presented as a necessary virtue, on which depends the salvation or the ruin of the nation: "Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be secure."¹ "If you will not believe, you shall not continue."² This faith is an assent given to the word of God, but accompanied by trust, self-abandonment, and love.

B) In the *New Testament*, faith is so essential that to believe means to profess Christianity, and not to believe is not to be a Christian: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned."³ Faith means the acceptance of the Gospel preached by Jesus Christ and His Apostles; therefore, it presupposes preaching: "Faith, then cometh by hearing."⁴ This faith, then, is not an intuition of the heart, nor a direct vision: "We now see through a glass in a dark manner;"⁵ but it is the acceptance of divine testimony, free and enlightened, since man, on the one hand, can refuse belief, and on the other, he does not arrive at belief without reasons, without an intimate conviction that God has really spoken.⁶ This faith is associated with hope and is perfected by charity: "Faith that worketh by charity."⁷

1170. 2° *Definition*. Faith is a *theological virtue* that *inclines the mind, under the influence of the will and of grace, to yield a firm assent to revealed truths, because of the authority of God*.

A) Faith is before all else an act of the *intellect*, since it is a question of knowing the truth. But, since this truth is not self-evident our assent cannot be effected without the action of the *will*, bidding the mind study the reasons for believing, and, when these are convincing, giving a further command to assent. Because it is a question of a supernatural act, *grace* must intervene to enlighten the mind, and to aid the will. It is in this way that faith becomes a *free, supernatural* and *meritorious* act.

B) The *material object* or the subject-matter of our faith is the sum-total of revealed truths, both those that reason alone could not possibly discover, and those others which reason could come to know, but which faith makes better known.

All these truths refer to God and to Jesus Christ. They refer to God with regard to the Oneness of His Nature and His Trinity of Persons, our first beginning and our last end. They refer to *Jesus Christ*, Our Redeemer and Mediator, Who is none other than the Eternal Son of God made man in order to save us. Hence, these

¹ 11 Paral., XX, 20. — ² Isaias, VII, 9. — ³ Mark., XVI, 16. — ⁴ Rom., X, 17.
⁵ 1 Cor., XIII, 12. — ⁶ Phil., III, 8-10; 1 Peter., III, 15. — ⁷ Galat., V, 6.

truths refer likewise to the work of Redemption and to whatever is connected therewith. In other words, we believe what we shall one day behold in the glory of Heaven: "This is eternal life: that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."¹

1171. C) The formal object or what is generally called the *motive* of our faith is *divine authority* made known through revelation and imparting to us some of the secrets of God. Thus, faith is a virtue entirely supernatural, both as to its object and its motive; it puts us in communion with the divine thought.

D) Ofttimes revealed truth is authentically proposed to us by the *Church* which Jesus Christ instituted as the official interpreter of His teaching; this teaching is then termed a doctrine of *Catholic faith*. If there has been no authentic definition of the Church regarding revealed truth, the said teaching is simply called a doctrine of *Divine faith*.

E) There is nothing more firm than the assent of faith. Having full confidence in the Divine authority much more than in our own lights, we believe revealed truth with our whole soul. We do so with a far greater sense of security, inasmuch as divine grace comes to facilitate and strengthen our assent. And so it happens that the assent given by faith to revealed truth is more prompt and more firm than that given to natural truth.

II. The Sanctifying Power of the Virtue of Faith

1172. Faith thus understood cannot but have an important share in our sanctification. By bringing us into communion with divine thought it becomes the *foundation* of our supernatural life and *unites us to God* in a most intimate way.

1173. 1° It is the **foundation** of our supernatural life. We said that humility is looked upon as the foundation of all the virtues, and we explained (n. 1138) in what sense it is so regarded; but faith is itself the *foundation of humility* (which, as we have said, was unknown to Paganism) and therefore it is in a truer sense the foundation of all the virtues.

The better to understand this fact, we have but to comment on the words of the Council of Trent stating that "*faith is the beginning, the basis and the root of all justification*,"² and by that very fact, of sanctification.

A) It is the *beginning* of justification, because it is the mysterious means used by God to initiate us into His life, to make us know Him as He knows Himself. On our part, it is the first supernatural disposition for justification, without which we can neither hope nor love. It is, so to speak, the taking possession of God and of divine things. In order to lay hold upon the supernatural and live by it we must first of all come to the knowledge of it: "*Nothing can be willed that is not foreknown*." Now, we arrive at a knowledge of the supernatural through faith, a new light added to reason, which enables us to look into a new world, the supernatural world. It is like a telescope that enables us to discover far-off things invisible to the naked eye. Still, this is but an imperfect comparison, for a telescope is an outward instrument, whilst faith penetrates into the recesses of the mind and sharpens its power of perception as well as its field of vision.

1174. B) Faith is likewise the *foundation* of the spiritual life. This simile is intended to show that sanctity is like an edifice, vast and lofty, the basis of which is faith. Now, the deeper the foundations, the higher the edifice may rise without danger to its stability. Hence, it is important to strengthen the faith of devout souls, especially of seminarians and priests, so that upon this solid foundation may rise the temple of Christian perfection.

C) Lastly, faith is the *root* of sanctity. Roots seek in the soil for the chemicals necessary to nutrition and growth in a tree; so, faith sinking its roots into the furthest recesses of the soul, and feeding there on divine truths, furnishes perfection with a rich, life-giving sap. Roots, if deep, lend solidity to the tree they sustain; so the soul, imbedded in faith, withstands spiritual storms. Hence, deep faith is of capital importance in order to attain a high degree of perfection.

1175. 2° Faith *unites us to God*, and makes us share in His thought and in His life. This is God's own knowledge of Himself given in some measure to man. "By it," says Mgr. Gay, "the light of God becomes our light; His wisdom our wisdom; His knowledge our knowledge; His Spirit our spirit; His life our life."

It unites our intellect directly to the Divine Wisdom; but, since the act of faith cannot be performed without the action of the will, this faculty also has a share in the results produced in our soul by faith. One may say, therefore, that faith is a source of *light* to the mind, a source of

¹ John, XVII, 3. — ² Sess. VI, Cap. 8.

¹ *Life and Virtues*, Vol. I, p. 156.

strength and comfort to the will, a source of *merit* to the entire soul.

1176. A) It is a light which illumines our intellect, and differentiates the Christian from the philosopher, as reason distinguishes a human being from an animal. There is in us a threefold knowledge: *sense* knowledge, attained through the senses; *rational* knowledge, acquired through the intellect; and *spiritual* or *supernatural* knowledge, obtained through faith. The last is by far superior to the other two.

a) It widens the scope of our knowledge of God and the things of God. Reason tells us little of God's nature and of His inner life, whilst faith teaches us that He is a living God; that from all eternity He has begotten a Son, and that from the mutual love of the Father and the Son proceeds a Third Person, the Holy Ghost; that the Son became man for our salvation and that those who believe in Him become the adopted sons of God; that the Holy Ghost comes to dwell in our souls, to sanctify them and to endow them with a supernatural organism which enables us to perform acts that are Godlike and meritorious. This is but a portion of what has been revealed to us.

b) It gives us a *deeper insight* into the truths already known by reason. Thus the moral precepts of the Gospel are far more definite, far more perfect than those of mere natural ethics.

To be convinced of this we have but to read the *Sermon on the Mount*. From the very outset, Our Lord does not hesitate to proclaim blessed the poor, the meek, the persecuted; He requires His disciples to love their enemies, to pray for them and to do good to them. The holiness He preaches is not legal or exterior sanctity; it is an inward holiness, based on the love of God and of the neighbor. To arouse our fervor, He proposes to us the most perfect ideal, God and His perfections, and since God seems far removed from us, He sends us His Son from Heaven to be made man, to live our own life, and thus to offer us a concrete example of the perfect life which we must lead on earth. To impart to us the strength and constancy such an undertaking demands, He does not rest satisfied with going before us, but He comes Himself to dwell within us with all His graces and virtues. We cannot, then, plead weakness. He is Himself our strength, as well as our light.

1177. B) That our faith is a source of strength is well brought out in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Faith provides us with *deep convictions* which greatly strengthen our will: a) It shows us what God has done and what He incessantly does in our behalf, how He lives and acts in our soul to sanctify it,

how Jesus incorporates us into Himself and makes us share in His own life (n. 188-189); then, having our eyes directed towards the author of our faith, Who preferred the Cross and humiliation to joy and success, "*who having joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame,*"¹ we feel ourselves strong enough to carry our cross courageously after Jesus.

b) Faith ever keeps before our eyes the *eternal reward* that will be the rich fruit of the sufferings of a moment: "*That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.*"² Then, with St. Paul, we say: "*I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come,*"³ and like him we rejoice, even in the midst of tribulations,⁴ for each of these, if patiently borne, will earn for us a further degree of God's vision and of God's love.

c) If we are at times conscious of our weakness, faith reminds us that, since God is Himself our strength and our support, we have nothing to fear, even when the world and the devil join forces against us: "*And this is the victory which overcometh the world: Our faith.*"⁵

This is most evident in the wondrous change wrought by the Holy Ghost in the Apostles. Armed at His coming with the power of God, they, who up to this time, had been timid and slothful, go courageously to meet all kinds of trials—scourgings, imprisonment, and death itself—glad to undergo suffering in the name of Jesus: "*They went forth rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.*"⁶

1178. C) Faith is likewise a *source of comfort*, not only in the midst of tribulations and of humiliations, but also when we have the misfortune of losing our dear ones. We are not among those who sorrow without hope. We know that death is but a sleep, to be soon followed by the resurrection, and that through death we merely exchange a temporary dwelling for an everlasting mansion.

Our chief consolation is the doctrine of the *Communion of Saints*. Whilst awaiting the day when we shall be reunited to those that have departed this life, we are even now bound to them by the most intimate ties in Christ Jesus. We pray that their time of trial be shortened and their entrance into Heaven hastened; they in their turn, now assured of their salvation, ardently pray that we may one day join them.

1179. D) Finally, faith is a *source of manifold merit*: a) The *act of faith* itself is *highly meritorious*, for it subjects to divine authority the best that is in us, our intellect and

¹ *Hebr.*, XI.

² *Hebr.*, XII, 2. — ³ *II Cor.*, IV, 17. — ⁴ *Rom.*, VIII, 18. — ⁵ *Rom.*, V, 3-5. — ⁶ *I John*, V, 4.

our will. This faith has all the more merit since in our times it is made the object of more numerous attacks, and since those who make open profession of their faith are, in certain countries, exposed to ridicule and persecution.

b) Furthermore, it is faith that *renders meritorious our other acts*, since they cannot become so without a supernatural motive and the help of grace (nn. 126, 239); but faith by directing the soul towards God and towards Jesus Christ enables us to act in all things with supernatural intentions. Likewise, by disclosing to us our own weakness and God's power, faith makes us pray ardently to obtain His grace.

III. Practice of the Virtue of Faith

1180. Since faith is at once a *gift of God* and a *free assent* of the mind to revealed truth, it is evident that in order to grow in faith, we must rely on *prayer* and our own *personal efforts*. Under this twofold influence, faith will become more enlightened, simple, strong and active.

We shall apply this principle to the various stages of the spiritual life.

1181. ^{1°} **Beginners** should strive to strengthen their faith.

A) They *thank God* for this great gift, which is the foundation of all others, and with their whole soul they repeat the words of St. Paul: "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift"¹. They thank Him all the more at the sight of so many unbelievers round about them. They pray therefore for the grace to preserve this gift in spite of all the dangers that beset it, and implore God's help for the conversion of unbelievers, heretics and apostates.

1182. **B)** With humble submission and with a firm conviction they *make acts of faith*, saying with the Apostles: "*Increase our faith*"². Moreover, to prayer they add *study* or the *reading* of books calculated to enlighten and strengthen their faith. Much reading is done in our day, yet how few even among intelligent Christians read serious books on religion and spirituality! What a mistake! Men wish to know all things, save the one thing necessary.

1183. **C)** They *avoid* carefully whatever could trouble their faith: **a)** those *dangerous writings*, wherein the truths of faith are either attacked, ridiculed or called into question.

Most of the books that appear in our day, not only doctrinal works, but novels and plays as well, contain open or covert attacks against our

faith. Unless we be on our guard, we are liable to drink in little by little the poison of unbelief or, at least, to lose the purity of faith, and a time may come when, shaken by hesitation and doubt, we no longer know how to resist. In this matter we must respect the wise prescriptions of the Church, made known to us in her catalogue of bad or dangerous books, and not make light of them on the plea that we are immune to the danger. In truth we are never immune. Balmes, one of the great defenders of the Church, gifted with a keen mind and a well-balanced judgment, and obliged as he was to read heretical books in order to refute them, used to say to his friends: "You know how deeply rooted within me are orthodox sentiments and doctrines. Notwithstanding, I never read a forbidden book without feeling the need of going to the Bible, the Imitation, or Louis of Granada for strength *against unbelief*. What will become of our foolish youth, which in its inexperience dares read everything without the necessary safeguards? The mere thought of it fills me with horror." For the same good reason no doubt we must avoid the conversations and discourses of unbelievers.

b) Beginners likewise shun that *pride of intellect* which seeks to bring all down to its own level and refuses to accept what lies beyond its comprehension. They remember that there is above us all a Spirit whose infinite intelligence sees what our reason cannot understand, and that God greatly honors us by the communication of His thought. Once, therefore, we have ascertained that He has spoken, there is but one rational attitude to take, to welcome gratefully this superadded knowledge. If we bow before the authority of a man of genius, who deigns to impart to us some of his knowledge, with what confidence should we not bow before Infinite Wisdom Itself?

1184. D) With regard to *temptations* against faith, a distinction is to be made between those that remain *vague* and those that definitely center around some particular object.

a) When they are *vague*, taking such form for instance as: *Who knows if all that be true?* then we must quietly drive them away.

¹⁾ We are in possession of truth, and we are sure of our title; this is enough for us. ²⁾ Besides, we have seen that our faith rests upon solid grounds; again, this suffices, for we cannot be every day raising doubts over things already proved. In the affairs of every-day life, we do not stop when such doubts, such inane ideas, cross our mind, but we go on, and certitude reasserts itself. ³⁾ Lastly, others more intelligent than ourselves believe these truths, and are persuaded that they are well proved; therefore, I submit to their judgment which is far wiser than that of those extremists who take a malicious delight in attracting notice by undermining all the bases of certitude. To these common-sense reasons we should add prayer: "I believe Lord, help thou my unbelief."³

¹ *II Cor.*, IX, 15. — ² *Luke*, XVII, 5.

³ A. DE BLANCHE-RAFFIN, *J. Balmes*, p. 44. — ² *Mark*, IX, 23.

1185. **b)** If the *temptations* are *well-defined*, bearing on some particular doctrine, we hold firmly to our belief since we are in possession of the truth. But we seize the first opportunity to clear up the difficulty, either by personal study, if we have the intelligence and the documents required, or by consulting some learned man who may help us to solve the problem more easily. If we add prayer to this earnest and loyal research, a solution, as a rule, will not be long in coming.

However, we must remember that such a solution does not always do away with the difficulty. There are at times historical, critical, exegetical objections that can be cleared away only after long years of study. We must reflect, then, that once we have a good reason to hold something as true, wisdom demands that we continue to give it our assent even while the darkness lasts. The difficulty does not destroy the grounds of belief, it simply shows the deficiency of our minds. "Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt."¹

1186. ²⁰ **Advanced** souls practice not only faith, but the *spirit of faith*: "*The just man liveth by faith.*"²

A) They read the Gospel with loving attention, happy to follow Jesus step by step, to relish His maxims, to contemplate His examples in order to imitate them. Jesus becomes the center of their thoughts: they seek Him in their readings and in their labor, desiring to know Him better so that they may love Him more.

1187. **B)** They accustom themselves to see all things, to judge all things from the point of view of faith. **1)** They see the Hand of the Creator in all *His works*, and they hear all creatures repeat the refrain: "*He made us, and not we ourselves.*"³ Hence, it is God Whom they admire everywhere. **2)** The *persons* that surround them are to them so many images of God, children of the same Heavenly Father, brethren in Christ Jesus. **3)** Events, which at times are so baffling to unbelievers, are interpreted by them in the light of the great principle that all is ordained in behalf of the elect, and that good and evil are dispensed with a view to our salvation and perfection.

1188. **C)** Above all, they strive to *be led* in all things according to the principles of faith. **1)** Their *judgments* are based upon the maxims of the Gospel, not upon those of the world; **2)** their *words* are inspired by the Christian spirit, not by the spirit of the world, for they conform their words to their judgments and thus triumph over

human respect; **3)** their *actions* become more and more Christlike for they delight in considering Our Lord as their model, and thus escape being carried away by the examples of worldlings. In short, they live a life of faith.

1189. **D)** They strive, finally, to spread round about them *this faith* that is in them: **1)** through their *prayers*, asking God to send apostolic workers to labor for the evangelization of infidels and heretics: "*Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he may send forth laborers into his harvest;*"¹ **2)** through their *example*, discharging so well their duties of state, that those who witness their life may feel drawn to imitate them; **3)** through their *words*, declaring in all simplicity but without any human respect, that they find in their faith *power* to do good, and comfort in the midst of their trials; **4)** through their *works*, doing their share by their generous offerings, their sacrifices, and their personal efforts for the moral and religious instruction and education of the neighbor.

³⁰ **Perfect** souls, by cultivating the gifts of *knowledge* and *understanding*, perfect their faith still more, as we shall explain when treating of the *unitive way*.

ART. II. THE VIRTUE OF HOPE ²

We shall describe: ¹⁰ its *nature*; ²⁰ its *sanctifying power*; ³⁰ its *practice*.

I. Nature of Hope

1190. ¹⁰ **Different significations.** **A)** In the natural order, hope means two things: a *passion* and a *sentiment*.

a) Hope is one of the eleven passions (n. 787). It is, therefore, an *impulse of the sensitive appetite*, that tends towards some *absent good apprehended* by the senses, and which is attainable, but not without some difficulty. **b)** Hope is one of the worthiest *sentiments* of the human heart, which tends towards some *absent moral good*, despite the obstacles that stand in the way of its acquisition. This sentiment plays an important part in human life; it sustains men in their arduous undertakings: the laborer when he sows, the seafarer when he sails, traders and pliers of fortune when they embark on some enterprise.

B) There is also a *supernatural* hope that sustains the Christian midst the obstacles encountered in the attainment of salvation and perfection. The object of this hope is

¹ *Matth.*, IX, 38.

² ST. THOMAS, II^a II^a, Q. XXVII-XX; SUAREZ, *De Spe*; ST. FRANCIS OF SALES, *The Love of God*, Book II, C. XV-XVII; SCARAMELLI-STOCKMAN, *Christian Perfection*, P. IV, Art. II; GAY, *Christian Life and Virtues*, Vol. I, Treat. V; FABER, *Growth in Holiness*, II.

³ NEWMAN, *Apologia*, p. 239. — ² *Rom.*, I, 17. — ³ *Ps.* XCIX, 3.

eternal life and the means of reaching it. Since this hope is founded upon the power and the goodness of God, it is firm and unshakable.

1191. ^{2o} Its essential elements. If we analyze this virtue, we notice that it comprises three principal elements: a) The *love* and *desire of supernatural good*, that is to say, of our supreme happiness, which is God.

The origin and development of this sentiment is as follows. The desire for happiness is universal. Now, faith shows us that God alone can constitute our happiness. We, therefore, love Him as the source of our happiness. This is an *interested* love, but it is *supernatural* since it has for object God as known to us through faith. Because this good is difficult to attain, we instinctively experience fear lest we fail to attain it, and to overcome this fear a second element intervenes, namely, the *well-founded expectation* of obtaining it.

b) Evidently, this expectation is not based upon our own strength which is insufficient of itself to attain such good, but it is based upon God, upon His *all-powerful help*. It is from Him that we expect all the necessary graces to obtain perfection in this life and salvation in the next.

c) But grace demands our *co-operation*, and hence there is a third element. This is an earnest *effort* to tend towards God and make use of the means of salvation placed at our disposal. This effort must be all the more determined and steadfast, the higher the object of our hope.

1192. ^{3o} Definition. From what we have said, we may thus define hope: *a theological virtue that makes us desire God as our highest good, and expect with a firm confidence eternal bliss and the means of attaining it, because of God's goodness and power.*

A) The primary and essential object of our hope is God Himself, inasmuch as He constitutes our happiness; it is God eternally possessed by clear vision and undivided love. Our Lord said that eternal life is the knowledge, the vision of God and of Him Whom He sent: "*Now this is eternal life: That they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom thou hast sent.*"¹ Besides, since we cannot attain this object without the help of grace, our hope is, likewise, directed towards all the supernatural aids needed in order to avoid sin, overcome temptation, and acquire Christian virtue; it even extends to temporal goods in the measure in which they are necessary or profitable to our perfection and salvation.

¹ John, XVII, 3.

1193. B) The motive of hope depends upon the point of view from which we consider hope itself. a) If we think, as Scotus did, that its principal act is the *desire* or *love* for God inasmuch as He is our happiness, the motive will be God's *goodness towards us*. b) If, with St. Thomas, we consider hope as consisting essentially in the *expectation* of a good difficult to attain, namely, the possession of God, then the motive will be the *assisting omnipotence* of God, which elevates our souls, snatches them from the hold of earthly goods and bears them towards Heaven. The *Divine promises* simply confirm the certainty of such help.

We may, then, say that the adequate motive of hope is both the goodness of God and His power.

II. The Sanctifying Power of Hope

Hope furthers our sanctification in three principal ways: ^{1o} it *unites us to God*; ^{2o} it imparts *efficacy to our prayers*; ^{3o} it is a principle of *fruitful activity*.

1194. ^{1o} It *unites us to God by detaching us from earthly goods*. We are drawn by *sense-pleasures*, the gratification of *pride*, the fascination of *wealth*, and lastly by the higher, *natural joys* of the mind and heart. Hope, based upon a lively faith, shows us that all these earthly joys lack two elements: *perfection* and *permanence*.

A) None of these goods is perfect enough to satisfy us. Having provided a short period of enjoyment, they soon produce satiety and weariness. Our heart is too great, its aspirations too vast and too high to be satisfied with material goods, which are but means of reaching a far nobler end. Neither do the natural goods of the mind and heart suffice us. Our intellect never rests satisfied but with the understanding of the First Cause, and our heart that seeks a perfect friend does not find him but in God. He alone possesses the plenitude of being, the perfection of beauty and of goodness, the fulness of power. He Who is perfectly self-sufficient is evidently sufficient for our happiness. The one important thing is to reach Him, and it is hope that shows Him to us stooping down in order to give Himself to us. Once we have understood this, our hearts break away from the things of earth to move towards Him, like the iron towards the magnet.

1195. B) Even if the goods of earth could satisfy us, they have their day and cease to be. We know this, and this thought casts its shadow upon our joy even when we

possess these goods. God, on the contrary, abides forever, and death that severs us from all earthly things, merely unites us more perfectly to Him; and so despite the natural horror death inspires, we face it with confidence, because of the hope we harbor of being everlastingly united to Him Who alone can constitute our bliss.

1196. ²⁰ It is hope also, that, united to humility, imparts efficacy to our prayers and thereby obtains for us all the graces of which we stand in need.

A) Nothing is more touching than the manner in which the Sacred Writers urge us to place our confidence in God. The Book of *Ecclesiasticus* sums up in these words the teaching of the Old Testament concerning hope: "My children, behold the generations of men: and know ye that no one hath hoped in the Lord and hath been confounded. For who hath continued in his commandment and hath been forsaken? Or who hath called upon him, and he despised him? For God is compassionate and merciful, and will forgive sins in the day of tribulation."¹

B) But it is chiefly in the New Testament that the efficacy of confidence is brought out.

Our Lord works His wonders in behalf of those who trust in Him. We have but to recall His attitude towards the centurion;² towards the paralytic who, unable to come near the Master, has himself let down through the roof³; towards the blind men of Jericho⁴; towards the Chananæan woman⁵ who, thrice rebuked, reiterates her request; towards the sinful woman⁶; towards the leper who comes to thank Him.⁷ Besides, how can we lack confidence when Christ Himself authoritatively asserts that all that we shall ask the Father in His name will be granted to us: "*Amen, amen, I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you.*"⁸ Here lies the secret of our strength. When we pray in the Name of Jesus, that is to say when we trust in His merits and satisfactions, His Blood pleads more eloquently for us than do our own poor prayers.

C) Moreover, nothing so honors God as confidence. Thereby we proclaim His power and His goodness, whilst He, Who lets not His generosity be surpassed, responds to this confidence by a further effusion of graces. We may therefore conclude with the Council of Trent that *we must all place the most unhesitating confidence in the help of God.*⁹

1197. ³⁰ Finally, hope is a principle of fruitful activity.

a) It begets holy desires, particularly the desire to possess

God. This gives the soul the impulse, the motion, the necessary yearning to attain the coveted good, and it sustains our efforts until we have reached the goal.

b) It increases our energies, through the prospect of a reward that will be far in excess of our efforts. If people in the world labor with such earnestness to acquire perishable riches, if athletes submit to such arduous training, if they make desperate efforts in order to gain a corruptible crown, how much more should we not labor and endure for an eternal crown? "*And every one that striveth for the mastery refraineth himself from all things. And they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown: but we an incorruptible one.*"¹

1198. **c)** It infuses into us that courage, that endurance that gives us the assurance of success. Just as there is nothing so disheartening as to struggle without any hope of victory, so on the other hand, the certainty of triumph is a singular source of energy. Such certainty hope furnishes. Of ourselves we are weak, but we have powerful allies, God, Jesus Christ, the Most Blessed Virgin, and the Saints (n. 188-189).

Now, if God is for us, who is against us?² If Jesus, Who overcame the world and Satan, lives within us and communicates to us His Divine energy, are we not sure of triumphing with Him? If the Immaculate Virgin, who crushed the head of the serpent, sustains us by her powerful intercession, shall we lack the needed help? If God's friends, the Saints, pray in our behalf, will not these many supplications give us absolute security? And being assured of victory, are we to shrink from the few efforts required for gaining eternal possession of God?

III. Gradual Progress in the Practice of Hope

1199. ¹⁰ **General Principle.** To make progress in the practice of this virtue, we must strengthen its foundations and make it more fruitful.

A) To render our hope more solid, it is important that we meditate often on the motives on which it rests: the power of God, His goodness and the glorious promises He has made to us (n. 1193). Should these not be enough to strengthen our confidence, we have but to recall the words of St. Paul: ³ "*He that spared not even his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath he not also, with him, given us all things? Who shall accuse against the elect of*

¹ *Ecclesi.* II, 11-13. — ² *Matth.*, 10, 13. — ³ *Matth.*, IX, 2.

⁴ *Matth.* IX, 29. — ⁵ *Matth.* XV, 28. — ⁶ *Luke*, VII, 50.

⁷ *Luke*, XVII, 19. — ⁸ *John*, XVI, 23. — ⁹ *Trent.*, sess. VI, C. 13.

¹ *I Cor.*, IX, 25. — ² *Rom.*, VIII, 31. — ³ *Rom.*, VIII, 32-34.

God? God that justifieth. Who is he that shall condemn? Christ Jesus that died. Yea that is risen also again; who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Thus, on the part of God, our hope is absolutely certain. However, on our part, we have reason to fear, because we are far from being always faithful to correspond perfectly to the grace of God. All our efforts, then, must tend to render our hope more firm by making it more fruitful.

1200. B) To gain this end, we have to collaborate with God in the work of our sanctification: "*For we are God's coadjutors.*"¹ God by according us His grace, does not mean to substitute His action for ours; He simply means to supply for our insufficiency. Doubtless, He is the primary and the principal cause, but, far from suppressing our activity, He wants to excite it and render it more effective.

St. Paul understood this well: "*But by the grace of God I am what I am. 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.*"² He urged others to do what he did himself: "*And we helping do exhort you that you receive not the grace of God in vain.*"³ It was especially to his dear disciple Timothy that he addressed the following urgent recommendation: "*Labor as a good soldier of Christ Jesus,*"⁴ because he was to labor not for his own sanctification, but for that of others. St. Peter employed the same language. He reminded his disciples that although called to salvation, they were to render certain that calling by the performance of good works: "*Wherefore, brethren, labour the more, that by good works you may make sure of your calling and election.*"⁵

We must, therefore, be fully persuaded that in the work of our sanctification all depends on God; still, we must act as if all depended on ourselves. God never refuses us His grace, and consequently, in actual practice all we have to attend to is our own personal effort.

1201. 2° Application of the general principle to the various degrees of the spiritual life. We can easily see how the principle enunciated above applies to the different stages of the Christian life.

A) Beginners should be on their guard first of all against the two excesses opposed to hope: *presumption* and *despair*.

a) *Presumption* consists in expecting from God Heaven and the graces necessary to reach it, without willing to take the means He has ordained. One may presume on the Divine Goodness, by neglecting God's commandments, persuading oneself that God is too good to

send one to damnation. This is to forget that if God is good, He is likewise just and holy, and that He hates iniquity.¹ Again, one may through pride presume on one's own strength, rushing into the midst of dangers and occasions of sin, and forgetting that he that loves danger will perish in it. Our Lord promises us the victory, but on condition that we watch and pray: "*Watch ye: and pray that you enter not into temptation,*"² and St. Paul, who so trusted in God's grace, warns us to *work out our salvation in fear and trembling.*³

b) Others, on the contrary, are exposed to *discouragement* and, at times, to *despair*. Frequently tempted, and at times overcome in the struggle, or tortured by scruples, they lose heart; imagining they cannot reform, they come to despair of their salvation. This is a dangerous state of mind, against which we must be on our guard. We shall recall how St. Paul, tempted and realizing that of himself he could not stand fast, confidently abandoned himself to the grace of God: "*The grace of God, by Jesus Christ.*"⁴ Following the example of the Apostle, we shall pray and we shall be delivered.

1202. B) After carefully avoiding these dangerous shoals, we must set ourselves to acquire *detachment from the goods of earth*, so that our thoughts and desires may frequently soar to Heaven. This St. Paul asks of us: "*Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth.*"⁵ Risen with Christ our leader, we must no longer seek and relish the things of earth, but rather those of Heaven where Jesus awaits us. Heaven is our true country, this earth but an exile. Heaven is our destiny, the true happiness we seek; this earth can yield us nothing but fleeting joys.

1203. 3° Those **advanced** in the way of perfection not only practice the virtue of hope, but entertain a *filial confidence* in God, relying on Jesus Who has become the center of their lives.

A) Incorporated into Christ, they await with *invincible trust* that Heaven where Jesus has prepared a home for them,⁶ and where they already abide, through hope, in the Person of their Saviour: "*For we are saved by hope.*"⁷ a) They await it, even in the midst of *adversities* and of the trials of this life, and with the Psalmist they say: "*I will fear no evils, for thou art with me.*"⁸ Our Lord living within them comes to comfort them, saying as He did once to the Apostles: "*Peace be to you. It is I: fear not.*"⁹

¹ Ps. CXVIII, 163. — ² Mark, XIV, 38. — ³ Phil., II, 12.

⁴ Rom., VII, 24-25. — ⁵ Col., III, 1-2. — ⁶ John, XIV, 2.

⁷ Rom., VIII, 24. — ⁸ Ps. XXII, 4. — ⁹ Luke, XXIV, 36.

¹ I Cor., III, 9. — ² I Cor., XV, 10; Phil., III, 13, 14.

³ I Cor., VI, 1. — ⁴ I Tim., II, 3. — ⁵ I Peter, I, 10.

If *intriagues* and *persecution* come to trouble them, they recall what St. Vincent de Paul said to his disciples: "Even were the entire world to rise up to destroy us, it could do nothing but what is pleasing to God, in Whom we have placed our hope."¹ If they suffer temporal losses, with the same Saint they say to themselves: "All that God does He does for the best; and therefore we must hope that this loss, since it comes from God, will be profitable to us."² If they have to face physical or moral sufferings, they look upon them as blessings from on high, destined to procure Heaven in exchange for a few fleeting pains.

1204. b) This confidence teaches them to *escape the clutches of pleasure and success*, more perilous still than the grip of suffering. "When life seems to smile upon our earthly hopes, it is hard to despise these flattering promises that seize upon our emotional nature; it is hard to steal away from the bonds of pleasure, to say to approaching bliss: you cannot satisfy my heart."³ But Christian souls remember that worldly joys are deceiving, that they hinder our flight towards God. In order to resist their attraction, they cling to the positive practices of mortification and seek for purer and holier joys in a more intimate friendship with Our Lord: "*To be with Jesus is a sweet paradise.*"⁴

c) If it be a sense of their *miserics* and *imperfections* that disturbs them, they reflect on these words of St. Vincent de Paul:

"You point out to me your miseries. Alas! and who is there that is not full of them! The only thing is to know them and to love the humiliation arising from them, as you do, without stopping save to lay the strong foundation of confidence in God; for them the house is built upon a rock and when the storm comes it remains firm."⁵ Our miseries entitle us to Divine Mercy, when we humbly implore it, and they but fit us all the better for the reception of divine graces. St. Vincent adds that when God begins to do good to a person, He continues to do so to the end, unless that person makes himself unworthy. Thus, God's past mercies are a pledge of those to come.

1205. B) Hope makes us habitually live, in spirit, *in Heaven and for Heaven*. According to the beautiful prayer that the Church puts on our lips on Ascension Day, we must, even now, "*live in mind amid heavenly things.*"⁶ This means that it is for Heaven that we must act and suffer, to heaven that we must turn our hearts and our desires: "*that amid the changing things of this world, our hearts may be fixed where true joy is found.*"⁷ And, since

¹ MAYNARD, *Life and Doctrine*, p. 10. — ² *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³ MGR D'HULST, *Carême*, 1892, p. 201. — ⁴ *Imitation*, Bk. II, ch. 8.

⁵ MAYNARD, *Life and Doctrine*, p. 10-11.

⁶ Collect of the Mass for Feast of the Ascension.

⁷ *Id.* for 4th Sunday after Easter.

the joys of Communion are a foretaste of Paradise, we shall, whilst waiting, seek therein the consolations our heart needs.

1206. C) This thought will make us pray often for the gift of *final perseverance*, the most precious of gifts. We cannot indeed merit it; but we can obtain it of the Divine Mercy. For this, we have but to join in those prayers in which the Church makes us ask for the grace of a happy death, for instance, the *Hail Mary*, which we so often recite and wherein we implore the special protection of the Blessed Virgin at the hour-of death.

⁴ *Perfect* souls practice trust in God through *holy abandonment*. This we shall explain when speaking of the *unitive way*.

ART. III. THE VIRTUE OF CHARITY ¹

1207. The virtue of charity supernaturalizes and sanctifies the sentiment of love towards God and towards the neighbor. After a few preliminary remarks on the nature of love we shall speak: 1° of charity towards God; 2° of charity towards the neighbor; 3° of the Sacred Heart of Jesus as a model of both.

Preliminary Remarks

1208. 1° *Love in general* is an impulse, a tendency of the soul towards good. If the good towards which we are drawn is the kind which appeals to our sense-nature and which our imagination apprehends as agreeable, our love is *sensible* love. If the good is *moral* good acknowledged by our reason as worthy of esteem, our love is *rational* love. If the good is a *supernatural* good perceived by faith, our love is *Christian* love.

As we can see, love always presupposes knowledge; but, as we shall explain later on, love does not always correspond to that knowledge.

Whatever be the kind of love, four elements can be discerned in it: 1) a sort of sympathy felt for another person because of a certain harmony existing between him and ourselves. Now, this harmony does not imply that both are exactly alike, but rather that the one completes the other. 2) An *impulse* of the soul towards the beloved person, to draw close to him and enjoy his presence. 3) A certain union or communion of mind and heart to share in common the goods

¹ ST. BERNARD, *De diligendo Deo*; ST. THOMAS, II^a II^{ae}, Q. 23-44; SALMANTIGENSES, Tr. XIX, *De caritate theologica*; ST. FRANCIS OF SALES, *The Love of God*; SCARAMELLI-STOCKMAN, *Manual of Christian Perfection*, P. IV, art. III.; REGINALD BUCKLER, *Spiritual Perfection*. — See Nn. 306 sqq. *Notion of Christian Perfection*.

each possesses. 4) A sense of joy, of pleasure or of happiness experienced in possessing the object of our love.

1209. 2° *Christian love* is love that is supernaturalized as to its *principle*, its *motive* and its *object*.

a) It is supernaturalized in its *principle* through the infused virtue of charity that resides in the will. This virtue, set into action by actual grace, transforms naturally good love and raises it to a higher level.

b) Then faith furnishes us with a *supernatural motive* to sanctify our affections: it directs these, first, towards *God*, by showing to us the Supreme, Infinite Good, which alone can correspond to our rightful aspirations; then, towards *God's creatures*, which it presents to us as *reflections of the divine perfections*, so much so, that in loving them we love God Himself.

c) The *object* of our love becomes supernaturalized in this wise: the God we love is not God known merely by reason, but the Living God known through faith, the Father Who begets a Son from all eternity and adopts us as His children; the Son, equal to the Father, Who by taking flesh becomes our brother; the Holy Ghost, the mutual Love of Father and Son, Who comes to diffuse into our souls divine charity. Men do not appear to us as mere creatures of God, but they are seen in the light of revelation as they truly are, the children of God, Our Common Father, brethren in Christ Jesus, living temples of the Holy Ghost. All, then, is supernatural in Christian love.

According to St. Thomas¹, charity adds to love a certain perfection that proceeds from a high esteem for the thing loved. Hence, all charity is love, but not all love is charity.

1210. Charity may be thus **defined**: a *theological virtue that causes us to love God above all things, for His own sake, in the way in which He loves Himself, and to love the neighbor for God's sake*.

This virtue, then, has a twofold object: *God* and the *neighbor*. These two objects, however, constitute but one, since we love creatures only inasmuch as they are reflections of the divine perfections, and therefore it is God Whom we love in them. We love the neighbor, adds St. Thomas², because *God is in him* or, at least, *in order that God may be*

¹ *Sum. Theol.*, 1^a II^a, q. 31, a. 3. — ² *Q. disp.* de Caritate, a. 4.

in him. This is why there is but one and the same virtue of charity.

§ I. The Love of God

We shall explain: 1° its *nature*; 2° its *sanctifying power*; 3° *how to advance in the practice of this virtue*.

I. Its Nature

1211. The first object of charity is God. Since He possesses the plenitude of being, the perfection of beauty and of goodness, He is infinitely lovable. It is God, considered in all the infinite reality of His perfections, and not some particular Divine attribute. The consideration of any given attribute, His mercy, for instance, readily leads us to the consideration of all His perfections; but it is not necessary to know them in detail. Simple souls love *Almighty* God as faith makes Him known to them, without analyzing His attributes.

To elucidate the notion of the love of God we shall explain the *precept* that imposes it upon us, the *motive* upon which it rests, and the different *degrees* through which we arrive at pure love.

1212. 1° **The Precept.** A) Already formulated in the Old Testament, it is reenacted by Our Lord in the New and proclaimed by Him as the sum-total of the Law and of the Prophets: "*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.*"¹ This is equivalent to saying that we must love God above all things and with all the faculties of our soul.

St. Francis de Sales explains this well: "Our love for Him should exceed all other affections, and reign over all the passions. He wishes that it should be the most sincere, that it should proceed from the heart and rule over its affections; He desires that we should consider it the most precious, the most valuable; He requires that it should fill the capacity of our souls; that it should be universal, extending to all our powers; that it should be elevated, and occupy the whole attention of the mind; and, in fine, that it should be generous and unalterable."² The Saint ends with a magnificent effusion of love: "Yes, Lord, I belong to Thee alone: I live more in Thee than in myself, therefore, my love should be wholly centered in Thee: I should love Thee as the origin of my being, and as the term of my repose: I should love Thee more than myself, since I only exist in Thee."³

1213. B) The precept of charity, then, is very extensive. *In itself* it has no limits, for *the measure of love of God is to*

¹ *Luke*, X, 27. — ² *The love of God*, Bk. X, C. VI. — ³ *Ibid.*, C. X.

love Him without measure. Therefore, it obliges us to tend *unceasingly towards perfection*, (n. 353-361) and our charity must continue to grow until death. According to the doctrine of St. Thomas,¹ the *perfection of charity is commanded as an end to be attained*; hence we must *want to attain it*. Cajetan explains this by saying that "precisely because it is an *end*, it is enough in order not to fail in the precept, to be in a fit condition to attain this perfection some day, even though this be in eternity. Whoever possesses charity, even in the least degree, and thus advances towards Heaven, is in the way of perfect charity and therefore keeps the precept, which is necessary for salvation."

However, souls *aiming at perfection* are not content with this first degree; they climb ever higher, striving to love God not only with their whole soul, but with all their strength as well.

1214. 2° The *motive of charity* is not the good one has received from God or that which one expects to receive from Him; it is God's *infinite perfection*, at least as the *predominant* motive. Other motives may be joined with this, motives of wholesome fear, of hope, of gratitude, provided that the said motive be truly predominant. Consequently, love of self, in so far as it is *subordinated to the love of God*, is compatible with charity. Hence, when the Saints so harshly condemn self-love, it is the inordinate love of self they have in mind.

1215. A) The opinion of Bolgeni, however, cannot be admitted. He pretends that the only love of charity possible and obligatory is that which has for motive *God's goodness towards us*, since, as he asserts, we cannot love except what we perceive as meeting our needs and aspirations. The author in question mistakes what merely constitutes a *necessarily preexisting condition* for the real motive of charity. It is, indeed, true that love of itself presupposes that the object loved corresponds with our nature and our aspirations; yet, the *motive* for which we love God, is not precisely this harmony, but God's infinite perfection loved for itself.

Once more, St. Francis de Sales explains well this doctrine in the following lines: "If there could be an infinite good, with which we had no relation, no communication, and, consequently, no prospect of union (which is also impossible) we should still esteem it more than ourselves... This, properly speaking, is not to love, because, love tends to union, which in this supposition is impossible. Still less could we be animated with love of charity for such an object, as this love is a real reciprocal friendship, terminating in union."²

¹ *Sum. theol.*, IIa IIæ, q. 184, a. 3; *Comment. of Cajetan* on this article; CARDINAL MENCHIER, *Vie intérieure*, 1919, p. 98; P. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *Perfection chrétienne*, t. I, p. 217-227.

² *Love of God*, Bk. X, C. X.

1216. B) We may ask ourselves whether the motive of *gratitude* suffices for perfect charity. Here there is room for distinction: if gratitude does not rise above the benefit received to the Benefactor Himself, it does not suffice as a motive of charity, since it remains self-centered; but, if from the love of such benefaction we pass on to the love of the Benefactor, and if this love for Him is based on His infinite goodness, then this motive becomes one with that of charity.

As a matter of fact, gratitude easily leads to pure love, for it is a most worthy sentiment; and so, Holy Writ and the Saints often propose to us God's benefits as an incentive to the love of God. Thus, St. John, after saying that perfect love banishes fear, exhorts us to love God, "because God first hath loved us." Many are the souls that have learned to love God with the purest love whilst pondering the love He has shown us from all eternity, and the love of Jesus for us in His Passion and in the Holy Eucharist.

If we desire a rule whereby to distinguish *pure* from *interested* love, we may put it thus: the former consists in loving God because He is *good* and in wishing *Him* well; the latter consists in loving God inasmuch as He is *good to us* and in desiring our own good.

1217. 3° As to the *degrees of love*, St. Bernard distinguishes four: 1) First, man loves himself for his own sake, since he is flesh, and he cannot have any taste except for things in relation to himself. 2) Then, seeing that he is not able to subsist by himself, he begins to seek God by faith and to love Him as an indispensable aid; in this second degree man loves God, not as yet for God's sake, but for his own. 3) But soon, by approaching God, living close to Him, and realizing the need of His help, man gradually sees how sweet the Lord is, and begins to love Him for His own sake. 4) Finally, the last degree, attained by few in this life, consists in loving solely for God, and consequently, in loving God exclusively for His own sake.

If we leave aside the first degree, which is nothing but self-love, there remain three degrees of the love of God that correspond to the three stages of perfection which we have already explained in numbers 340, 624-626.

II. The Sanctifying Power of the Love of God

1218. 1° Charity is of itself the *most excellent* and the *most sanctifying* of all virtues. This we have already

¹ *1 John*, IV, 19, — ² *De diligendo Deo*, C. XV; *Epistola* XI, n. 8.

proved by showing that it is the very essence of perfection, that is embodies all virtues, and that it imparts to them all a singular perfection, by causing all their acts to converge towards God loved above all (n. 310-319).

This is proclaimed by St. Paul in lyric language: "If I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

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; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Charity never falleth away... And now there remain faith, hope and charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity."¹

1219. In its power to unite the soul to God and to transform it, charity far excels all other virtues.

a) It unites to God the whole soul with all its faculties and powers. It unites the *mind* to God through the esteem conceived for Him and the frequent thought of Him. It unites the *will* by perfect submission to the Divine Will. It unites the *heart* by the subordination of all our affections to the Divine Love. It unites our *energies* by dedicating them all to the service of God and of souls.

b) In thus uniting the whole soul to God, charity transforms it. Love takes us away from self, raises us up to God, and inclines us to imitate Him, to reproduce in ourselves the divine perfections. We desire, in truth, to become like the one we love, because we consider him a model worthy of imitation, and we wish, by becoming more like him, to advance further in our intimacy with him.

1220. ²⁰ In its effects, charity contributes most effectively to our sanctification.

a) It establishes between the soul and God a certain fellowship, *sympathy*, or affinity which causes us to *understand* and to *relish* better God and divine things. It is this mutual sympathy that makes friends understand one another, and become more and more intimately united. Many a simple, untutored soul, seized by love for God, relishes and lives the great Christian truths far better than the learned. This is an effect of charity.

1221. b) It increases our *energies* for good a hundredfold by communicating to us an indomitable strength to overcome obstacles and to perform the highest acts of virtue, "for love is strong as death."¹ How great is the strength a mother derives from love for her child!

Perhaps no one has described better the effects of divine love than the author of the Imitation.² It lightens our sufferings and our burdens: "For it carrieth a burden without being burdened, and maketh all else that is bitter, sweet and savoury." It lifts us unto God, because it is born of God: "For love is born of God, and cannot rest but in God." It gives us wings to fly with joy unto the doing of the most perfect actions, unto the entire gift of self: "The lover flieth, runneth, and rejoiceth... he giveth all for all," thus, it urges us to do great things and to aim at the highest perfection: "The noble love of Jesus impelleth us to do great things, and excelleth us always to desire that which is the more perfect." It is ever watchful, uncomplaining of fatigue, untroubled by fear; rather, like a living flame it soars ever higher and passes securely through the midst of dangers: "Love watcheth... When weary, it is not tired; when straitened, is not constrained; when frightened, is not disturbed; but, like a vivid flame... it mounteth upwards, and securely passeth through all."

1222. c) Charity, likewise, is productive of great joy and expansion of soul; for it is the initial possession of the Sovereign Good, the beginning of eternal life in us, and such possession fills our soul with joy: "Giving true joy of heart."³

The Imitation goes on to say: "Nothing sweeter than love... nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller or better in heaven or on earth."⁴ The cause of such joy is that we begin to be more keenly aware of the presence of Jesus and of the presence of God within us: "to be with Jesus is a sweet paradise.⁵ When Thou art present, all things yield delight; but when Thou art absent, all things grow loathsome."⁶

1223. d) This joy is followed by a profound peace. Once we are convinced that God dwells within us and that He exercises a paternal action, a paternal solicitude over us, we abandon ourselves with sweet trust into His hands, we confide all our interests to His care, and thus we enjoy perfect peace and serenity: "Thou makest a tranquil heart, great peace, and festive joy."⁷ Now, there is no disposition more favorable for spiritual growth than inward peace: "In silence and in solitude the devout soul maketh progress."⁸

Hence, from whatever point of view we consider charity, in itself or in its effects, it is of all the virtues the most potent to unite us with God and to sanctify us; it is, indeed, the bond of perfection.

¹ Cant., VIII, 6. — ² Imitation, Book III, C. V.

³ Hymn for the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus.

⁴ Imit., Bk. III, C. V. — ⁵ Imit., Bk. II, C. VIII. — ⁶ Imit., Bk. III, C. XXXIV.

⁷ Imit., Bk. III, C. XXXIV. — ⁸ Imit., Bk. I, C. XX.

III. Progress in the Practice of Charity

1224. General principle. Love being the gift of self, our love for God will be more perfect the more completely we give ourselves to Him, *without reserve and forever, with our whole soul, with our whole heart, with our whole strength.* Since on earth we cannot make the gift of self without self-sacrifice, our love will be more perfect the more unselfishly we practice this *spirit of self-sacrifice* for the love of God (n. 321).

1225. 1° **Beginners** practice the love of God by striving to avoid sin, especially mortal sin, and its causes.

a) They practice *repentant love* by bitterly regretting having offended God and having deprived Him of His due glory (n. 743-745).

This love has two effects: 1) it removes us further from sin and from creatures to which pleasure had made us cling; 2) it reconciles us with God and unites us with Him, not only by removing sin, the great obstacle to divine union, but also by infusing into our heart those sentiments of contrition and humiliation which constitute the beginning of love, and which under the action of grace are often transformed into perfect love. "For," as St. Francis de Sales says, "perfect love wants God and needs Him; penance seeks and finds Him; perfect love possesses and holds Him fast." At all events, our sins are more perfectly remitted, the purer and the deeper is our love.

1226. **b)** They also practice, in its first degree, *the love of conformity with the divine will*, by obeying God's commandments and those of the Church, and manfully withstanding the trials that Providence sends them for the purification of their souls (n. 747).

c) Soon their love becomes a *grateful love*. Realizing that despite their sins, God continually showers upon them His blessings, and grants them such generous pardon, they evince a sincere sense of gratitude towards Him, praise His goodness, and strive to profit better by His graces. This is in itself a noble sentiment which constitutes an excellent preparation for pure love; we easily rise from the benefaction received to the love of the Benefactor, and we desire His goodness to be recognized and praised the world over. This is perfect love, or charity.

1227. 2° Those **advancing** in the way of perfection practice the love of *complacency*, of *benevolence*, of *conformity to the will of God*, and thereby arrive at the love of *friendship*.

A) *The love of complacency*¹ is born of faith and reflection. **a)** Through faith we know and through meditation we realize

that God possesses the fulness of being, of perfection, of wisdom, of power, of goodness. Now, with but a little good-will, we cannot help taking complacency in such infinite perfection; we rejoice at seeing that our God is rich in goodness, we delight more in God's pleasure than in our own, and we show our joy by acts of admiration, approbation and praise.

b) Thereby we draw unto ourselves the perfections of the Godhead. God becomes *our God*; we live on the thought of His perfection, His goodness, His sweetness, His Divine life; for the heart feeds upon such things as it delights in. Thus we are enriched by the divine perfections, which we make our own by a loving complacency.

1228. **c)** But in thus attracting to ourselves the divine perfections, we attract God Himself, and we give ourselves entirely to Him, as St. Francis de Sales¹ well explains:

"It follows that through this love of complacency we not only enjoy the perfections of God as if they were our own; but also, that since the divine perfections are infinitely above the powers and capacity of our mind and heart, we could not attract them into us to enjoy and possess them without being also possessed by them in turn. The love of complacency is then a reciprocal donation, in virtue of which we may truly assert that we belong to God, Who is also our possession." Thus, "the soul inflamed with the love of complacency exclaims from the midst of its repose and sacred silence: 'It suffices to my happiness to know that God is God; that His perfections are boundless, that His goodness is infinite. I am indifferent to life and death, since the object of all my love lives, and will live eternally, surrounded by the unfading splendor of endless glory.' Death cannot terrify a heart which breathes but to love, and which is aware that its sovereign good lives forever. It suffices to her to know, that He Whom she loves more than herself is overwhelmed with bliss: she lives more in the object of her predilection than in herself."

1229. **d)** This love, when it contemplates the Suffering Christ turns into *compassion* and *sympathy*. A devout soul, beholding the depths of dejection and grief wherein the Divine Lover is plunged, cannot but share in the holy love that makes Him endure such afflictions. It was this love that caused the stigmata to be imprinted upon the flesh of St. Francis of Assisi, and the Sacred Wounds upon that of St. Catherine of Sienna. Complacency produced compassion, and compassion produced a wound like that of the Beloved.

1230. **B)** From the love of complacency springs the love of *benevolence*, that is to say, an ardent desire of glo-

¹ ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *The Love of God*, Bk. V, C. I-V.

¹ *The Love of God*, Bk. V, C. III.

rifying the object of our love and of causing it to be glorified. This may be done in two ways in regard to God.

a) In what concerns His interior perfections, to which we can add nothing, we can give glory only in a hypothetical way, saying, for example: "If (assuming the impossible) I could procure Thee any good, I would unceasingly desire it, even at the cost of my life. If, being what Thou art, Thou couldst receive an increase of perfection, I would desire it with all my heart."

1231. b) In what touches His *outward glory*, we desire unconditionally to increase it both in ourselves and in others, and with this end in view we desire to know and love Him better, in order that we may in turn make Him better known and better loved. That this love be not a merely speculative love, we strive to study in detail the beauties and the perfections of God, to praise them and cause them to be blest, sacrificing to this end studies and occupations which would naturally be more agreeable to us.

Filled, then, with esteem and admiration for God we long to have His Holy Name blessed, exalted, praised, honored, adored all over the earth. And as we are of ourselves incapable of doing this in a perfect manner, we call upon all creatures to praise and bless their Maker: *Let all the works of the Lord praise the Lord.*¹ We rise in spirit to Heaven there to join the Angelic choirs and the host of the Saints and sing in unison with them: "*Holy, Holy, Holy Lord...*"² We join the Blessed Virgin, who raised above the Angels, renders to God more glory than all other creatures, and we repeat with Her: "*My soul doth magnify the Lord.*"³ We join ourselves especially to the Incarnate Word, the Great Worshiper of the Father, Who, being God and Man, offers the Most Blessed Trinity a praise that is infinite.

Lastly, we unite with God Himself, that is to say, with the Three Divine Persons, in their mutual praise and congratulation. "Then we exclaim: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost! And in order to prove that the object of this aspiration is not the accidental glory of created praise, but the essential, eternal glory which God has in Himself, by Himself, from Himself, and which is, in a word, nothing else than Himself, we add immediately: 'As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end,' wishing that God be ever glorified with that infinite eternal glory, which he possessed in Himself before the formation of creatures."⁴

Religious and Priests realize that they are by virtue of their vows or of their priesthood specially bound to promote God's glory. Burning with the desire of glorifying Him, they never cease, even in the midst of their occupations, to bless and praise the Almighty, and they have but one end in view, one ambition, that of extending the Kingdom of God and of procuring the eternal praise of Him Whom they love as the only portion of their inheritance.

¹ *Dan.*, III, 57. — ² *Apoc.*, IV, 8. — ³ *Luke*, I, 46.

⁴ ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *The Love of God*, Bk. V, C. XII.

1232. c) The love of benevolence is manifested by the *love of conformity*. Nothing strengthens the reign of God in the soul more effectively than the accomplishment of His Holy Will: "*Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.*" Love is above all else a union, a fusion of two wills into one; and, since the Will of God is alone good and wise, it is evidently we who must conform our will to His: "*Not my will, but Thine be done.*"¹

As we have explained in nos. 480-492, this conformity comprises obedience to the Commandments, the Counsels, the inspirations of grace, and the humble and loving submission to providential events whether fortunate or unfortunate: failure, humiliations, all sorts of trials sent to us for our sanctification and God's glory. Conformity in turn produces a *holy indifference* to whatever does not concern itself with God's service. Persuaded that God is everything and the creature nothing, we want but God, His love and His glory, and our will remains indifferent to all else. This indifference is not a stoical insensibility, for we continue to feel the attraction of those things that please us, but it is an indifference of mind and will. Neither does this indifference consist in *letting things take their course*, as the Quietists pretended. We are not indifferent to our salvation; on the contrary, we ardently desire it, but we desire it only in agreement with the Divine Will.

This holy abandon produces a *profound peace* of soul. We know that nothing can happen to us that will not be profitable unto our sanctification: "*To them that love God all things work together unto good.*"² Hence we joyfully embrace trials and the Cross, out of love for the Divine Crucified and in order to become more like unto Him.

Thus, perfect conformity to the Will of God, as Bossuet says,³ "makes us find our rest whether in pain or in joy, according to the pleasure of Him Who is our good. It makes us rest, not in our satisfaction, but in that of God, ever praying Him to be well pleased and to do ever with us as He pleases."

1233. d) This conformity leads us to *friendship with God*. Friendship implies, besides benevolence, *reciprocity* or the mutual giving of self. Now this is well realized in charity.

This love is a true friendship, says St. Francis de Sales,⁴ "for it is known and acknowledged to exist on both sides; for God cannot be ignorant of our love for Him, since He Himself enkindles it in our hearts; nor can we have a doubt of His eternal predilection for us, since He has so frequently assured us of it... and He incessantly speaks to our hearts by the inspirations of His grace." The Saint adds: "The mutual love subsisting between God and His creature is not what is termed simple friendship; it is a friendship of benevolent preference, that is, a special love of God founded on our choice and our preference."

1234. This friendship consists in the gift of Himself, which God makes to us, and the gift of self which we make

¹ *Luke*, XXII, 42. — ² *Rom.*, VIII, 28.

³ *Elevations*, XIII, 7. — ⁴ *Love of God*, Bk. II, C. XXII.

to Him. We must, therefore, see what is God's love for us in order to understand what must be our love for Him.

a) His love for us is 1) *eternal*: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love"; 2) it is *disinterested*, for being absolutely self-sufficient, He simply loves us for our good; 3) it is *generous*, for He gives Himself entirely, coming Himself to live lovingly in our soul (n. 92-97); 4) it is *preventive*, for not only has He loved us first, but He solicits our love and begs for it as if He were in need of it: "*My delight is to be with the children of men... Son, give me thy heart.*"³ No one could ever dream of such delicate thoughtfulness.

1235. b) We must, therefore, correspond to this love with a love that is as perfect as possible: "*Who would not love Him Who loves us so much!*"³

1) Our love must be *forever growing*. Not having been capable of loving God from all eternity, and never being able to love Him as He deserves, we must at least love Him more each day, placing no limits to our affection for Him, refusing Him no sacrifice that He may demand, and ever seeking to please Him: "*I do always the things that please him.*"⁴ 2) Our love must be *generous*, expressing itself in loving affections, frequent ejaculations and such simple acts of love as: "I love Thee with all my heart"; but it must also express itself by actions, chiefly by the entire gift of self. God must be the center of our entire being: of our *intelligence*, by the frequent thought of Him; of our *will*, by a humble submission to His least desire; of our *sensitive nature*, by not allowing our heart to become entangled in affections that would only be an obstacle to God's love; of all our *actions*, by ever striving to please Him. 3) Our love must be *disinterested*. We must love God far more than we love His gifts. Hence we must love Him whether in desolation or consolation, protesting to Him again and again that we want to love Him and for His own sake. It is in this way that in spite of our weakness we respond to His friendship.

§ II. The Love of the Neighbor

After explaining the *nature* of this virtue and its *sanctifying power*, we shall indicate the *manner* of practicing it.

I. Nature of Fraternal Charity

1236. Fraternal charity is indeed a theological virtue, as we have said, provided that we love God Himself in our neighbor, or in other words, that we love the neighbor for God's sake. Should we love the neighbor *solely* for his

¹ Jeremias, XXXI, 3. — ² Prov., VIII, 31; XXIII, 26.

³ *Adeste fideles*. — ⁴ John, VIII, 29.

⁵ ST. FRANCIS OF SALES, *Devout Life*, P. III, C. VII, XXVIII, XXIX, P. IV, C. VI; RODRIGUEZ, *Christian Perfection*, Vol. I, Treat. IV; SCARAMELLI-STOCKMAN, *Manual of Christian Perfection*, P. IV, Art. III; VALUY, *Fraternal Charity*; REGINALD BUCKLER, *Spiritual Perfection*, Book II, C. II; FABER, *Spiritual Conferences, Kindness*; GUBBERT, *Kindness*; SCHUYLER, *The Charity of Christ*; HEDLEY, *Retreat*, XXVI, *A Bishop and His Flock*, XXI-XXII; *The Little Flower of Jesus*, C. X, XI.

own sake, or because of the services he may render us, this would not be charity.

A) Hence, it is God that we must see in the neighbor. He manifests Himself in men by *natural* gifts, which are a participation in His being and in His attributes, and by *supernatural* gifts, which are a participation in His nature and in His life (n. 445). Since the virtue of charity is supernatural, it is supernatural qualities that we must have in view as the motive of our love. Therefore, if we consider the neighbor's natural qualities, we must look on these with the eye of faith, that is, see them as supernaturalized by grace.

1237. B) The better to understand the *motive* of fraternal charity, we should analyze it by considering men in their relations with God. Then they will appear to us as *children of God, members of Jesus Christ, co-heirs* with us of the *Kingdom of Heaven* (nos. 93, 142-149).

Even if they be not in the state of grace or have not the faith, they are called to the possession of these supernatural gifts and it is our duty to contribute, at least by our prayers and our example, to the work of their conversion. This is a most powerful motive for loving them as brethren, and the differences that separate us from them dwindle into insignificance in comparison with all that binds us to them.

II. The Sanctifying Power of Fraternal Charity

1238. 1^o Since the supernatural love of the neighbor is but another form of the love of God, we should repeat in this place all we have explained concerning the marvellous effects of the love of God.

Let it suffice to quote some texts of St. John: "*He that loveth his brother abideth in light; and there is no scandal in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness.*"¹ In the language of this Apostle, to abide in light means to abide in God, the source of all light, and to walk in darkness means to be in the state of sin. The same Apostle goes on to say: "*We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren... Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.*"² He concludes by saying: "*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. If we love one another, God abideth in us: and His charity is perfected in us... God is charity: and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him... If any man say: I love God, and hateth his brother: he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not? And this commandment we have from God, that he, who loveth God, love also his brother.*"³ It would be impossible to express more clearly that to

¹ I John, II, 10-11. — ² I John, III, 14-15. — ³ I John, IV, 7, 8, 12, 16, 20, 21.

love the neighbor is to love God, and that the love of the neighbor confers on us all the privileges attached to the love of God.

1239. ²⁰ Futhermore, Our Lord tells us that whatever service is rendered to the least of His brethren, He considers as rendered to Himself: "*Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me.*"¹ Now, Our Lord will not let Himself be outdone in generosity, and He will make return a hundredfold by giving all manner of graces for the least service done to Him in the person of His brethren.

How consoling is this thought to those who practice fraternal charity and perform the spiritual or corporal works of mercy; how much more consoling to those whose entire life is devoted to works of charity or zeal! Every moment of the day they do some service to Jesus Christ in the person of His brethren, and every moment of the day Jesus likewise labors in their own souls to beautify and sanctify them.

III. The Practice of Fraternal Charity

1240. The principle that must always guide us is to see God and Jesus Christ in our neighbor: ² "*Christ in all,*" and thus render our charity more *supernatural* in its motives and its *means of action*, more *universal* in its scope, more *generous* and more *active* in its exercise.

1241. ¹⁰ **Beginners** strive chiefly to *avoid the faults* contrary to charity, and to *practice* those acts to which we are bound by *precept*.

A) In order not to give pain to Jesus and the neighbor they carefully avoid:

a) *Rash judgments*, slander and calumny, which are against justice and charity, (n. 1043); **b)** natural *antipathies*, which when consented to are often the cause of faults against charity; **c)** *bitter words*, words of ridicule or contempt that cannot but engender or intensify enmities; likewise, witticisms indulged in at the expense of the neighbor which cause at times smarting wounds; **d)** *strife* and *discussions* born of pride; **e)** *rivalries*, *discord*, *false reports*, which cannot but sow dissension among the members of the great Christian family.

1242. Nothing so effectively helps us to avoid all these faults opposed to Christian charity, as the frequent consideration of the touching words of St. Paul to the first Christians: "I therefore, a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation

¹ *Matth.*, XXV., 40.

² St. JOHN EUDES explains this very well in *The Kingdom of Christ Within Us*, C. I, p. 29-30: "See your neighbor in God and God in him; that is, regard him as one who has come forth from the heart and goodness of God, who is created to return to Him one day, and to dwell within His bosom glorifying God for all eternity; and in whom God will, in reality, be eternally glorified either by His mercy or justice."

in which you are called... supporting one another in charity, careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one Spirit: as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all... Doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in Him who is the head, even Christ."¹ Elsewhere he writes: "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ... fulfill ye my joy: that you be of one mind, having the same charity, being of one accord, agreeing in sentiment. Let nothing be done through contention: neither by vain glory. But in humility, let each esteem others better than themselves; each one not considering the things that are his own, but those that are other men's."²

Who could remain unmoved by these exhortations of the Apostle? Forgetting the chains that bind him in his prison-cell, he is concerned with the thought of repressing the dissensions that disturb the Christian community; he reminds the Christians that since there are so many ties that unite them, they must put aside what divides them. After twenty centuries of Christianity this urgent appeal is not less pertinent today.

1243. But there is a fault against charity that must be especially avoided; it is scandal, that is, whatever could probably lead others to sin. We must carefully abstain from things, in themselves indifferent or lawful, but which, because of circumstances, may become to others an occasion of sin. This principle is enjoined by St. Paul regarding the meats offered to idols. Since idols are nothing, these meats are not *in themselves* forbidden; but, because many Christians believe that they are forbidden, the Apostle asks those who are more enlightened to take into account the scruples of their brethren: "And through thy knowledge shall the *weak* brother perish, for whom Christ hath died? Now when you sin thus against the brethren and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat scandalize my brother, I will never eat flesh, lest I should scandalize my brother."³

And today these words should still be the object of meditation. Christian men and women indulge in reading, shows and dances that are at least unbecoming, under the pretext that for them such things have no evil effects. This may be questioned, for alas! many who speak in this manner at times deceive themselves. Be this as it may, do they consider the scandal they give to those who witness their conduct and who take it as an excuse to indulge in pleasures still more dangerous?

1244. **B)** **Beginners** are not satisfied with avoiding these faults; they practice also *what the precept of charity*

³ *Ephes.*, IV, 1-16. — ² *Phil.*, II, 1-4. — ³ *I Cor.*, VIII, 13.

commands, particularly bearing with the neighbor and forgiving injuries.

a) They bear with the neighbor despite his faults.

Have we not ourselves faults that others must bear with? Besides, we are apt to exaggerate the faults of others, especially of those towards whom we feel a natural antipathy. Should we not, on the contrary, overlook their faults, and ask ourselves if it becomes us to notice the mote in the neighbor's eye when perhaps there is a beam in ours? Instead of condemning the faults of others, let us honestly ask ourselves if we have not like faults or perhaps worse ones. Let us think first of all of correcting ourselves: "*Physician, heal thyself.*"¹

1245. b) Beginners have the further duty of forgiving injuries and of seeking reconciliation with their enemies, with those who have offended them or those whom they have offended. This duty is so imperative that Our Lord says: "If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee; leave there thy offering before the altar and go first to be reconciled to thy brother."²

According to Bossuet, the first gift we must offer God is a heart free from all resentment, of all enmity towards our brother. He adds that we must not even wait for the day on which we are to approach the altar, but that we must follow the advice of St. Paul: "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath;"³ for "darkness will add to our resentment; our anger will return upon our awakening and become more bitter still."⁴ We must not ask ourselves whether our adversary is more in the wrong than we are, whether it is for him to make the first advance. Let us, at the very first opportunity, clear up every misunderstanding by a frank explanation. If our enemy is the first to present his excuses, we must hasten to forgive: "For if you will forgive men their offences, your Heavenly Father will forgive you also your offences. But if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offences."⁵ This is but justice, since we ask God to forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

1246. 2° Souls advancing in the spiritual life strive to draw unto themselves the charitable dispositions of the Heart of Jesus.

A) They remember that the precept of charity is His precept, and that its observance will be the characteristic mark of Christians: "A new commandment I give unto you; that you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another."⁶

This commandment is new, says Bossuet,⁷ "because Jesus Christ adds to the old this important feature of loving one another as He has

loved us. His love reached out to us when we were not even thinking of Him. He came to us first. He is not dishheartened by our infidelities, our ingratitude: He loves us to make us holy, to make us happy; He loves us in a disinterested way, for He has no need of us, nor of our service." Charity is to be the distinctive sign of Christians: "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another."¹

1247. B) They also try to imitate the examples of the Saviour.

a) His charity is *prevenient*. He loved us first, when we were His enemies: "*When as yet we were sinners.*"² He came to us sinners knowing that we were the sick who needed a physician. His preventing grace went to seek the Samaritan woman, the adulterous woman, the thief upon the cross, in order to convert them. It is to anticipate and heal our troubles that He gave us this tender invitation: "*Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened: and I will refresh you.*"³

We should imitate this divine thoughtfulness by taking the initiative with our brethren in order to discover and relieve their miseries, as do those who visit the poor to help them in their needs, and sinners, to lead them back gradually to the practice of virtue, and who do this without losing heart if at first they meet with resistance.

1248. b) Christ's charity is *compassionate*. When He beholds the multitudes that followed Him into the desert in danger of fainting from hunger, He multiplies the bread and the fishes to give them food. Above all, when He sees souls deprived of spiritual food, He takes pity at their plight, and desires that God be asked to send apostolic workers to their aid: "*Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he send forth labourers into his harvest.*"⁴ Leaving awhile the ninety nine faithful sheep, He goes after the lost one and brings it back upon His shoulders to the fold. No sooner does a sinner give signs of repentance than He hastens to forgive him. Full of compassion for the sick and the afflicted, He heals them in great numbers and often restores their souls to health by pardoning their sins.

Following Our Lord's example, we must harbor a great compassion for all the unfortunate and aid them according to our means. When our means are exhausted, let us at least show them kindness in word and deed. Let us, then, not be discouraged by the faults of the poor; and besides giving alms for the relief of the body, let us add some good word of advice that one day or other may bear fruit.

¹ John, XIII, 35. — ² Rom. V, 8.

³ Matth., XI, 28. — ⁴ Matth., IX, 38.

¹ Luke, IV, 23. — ² Matth., V, 23-24. — ³ Ephes., IV, 26.

⁴ Méditat., XIV^e jour. — ⁵ Matth., VI, 14-15.

⁶ John, XIII, 34. — ⁷ Méditations, La Cène, I Part., 75^e jour.

1249. c) Christ's charity is *generous*. Through love of us He consented to labor, and suffer, and die: "*He hath loved us and hath delivered Himself for us.*"¹

Hence, we must be ever ready to render service to our brethren at the cost of real self-sacrifice, ready to care for them in illnesses, even if these be of a repelling nature, and to give them financial aid. This charity should be *whole-hearted and sympathetic*; for the manner of giving is worth more than the gift itself. It should likewise be *intelligent*, offering the poor not only a piece of bread, but if possible, the means of earning a livelihood. It should be *zealous*, doing good to souls by prayer and example and, upon occasion, by discreet and wise counsels. This duty of zeal is imposed especially upon priests, religious and devout persons. These must always remember that "*he who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way shall save his soul from death and shall cover a multitude of sins.*"²

1250. 3° Perfect souls love the neighbor unto the *immolation of self*: "*In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*"³

a) This is what apostolic laborers do. Without shedding their blood for their brethren, they give their life-blood drop by drop, forever working for souls, immolating themselves in prayer, in study, even in the recreation they take. This is the ideal proposed by St. Paul: "I most gladly will spend and be spent myself for your souls: although loving you more, I be loved less."⁴

1251. b) This is what impelled holy priests to take the *vow of servitude* for souls: thereby they engaged themselves to consider the neighbor as a superior with the right to exact service, and they bound themselves to comply with all his legitimate wishes.

c) This charity is further shown by readiness to anticipate the least of our neighbor's wishes and to render him all possible service; at times also by the cordial acceptance of proffered service, for this is the means of making happy the one who offers it.

d) Lastly, it is manifested by a *special love for our enemies*, whom we consider as the executors of divine vengeance, and whom we revere as such, praying for them in a special way and doing them good on all occasions, according to the counsel of Our Lord: "Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you."⁵ Thus we resemble Him "Who maketh His sun rise to upon the good and bad."⁶

§ III. The Sacred Heart of Jesus the Model and Source of Charity⁷

1252. 1° Preliminary Remarks. In concluding our study of charity, we cannot do better than to invite our

readers to seek in the Sacred Heart of Jesus the *source* and the *model of perfect charity*. In the Litanies officially approved by the Church we invoke the Sacred Heart as an "ardent furnace of charity" and as "full of goodness and love."

There are two essential elements in the devotion to the Sacred Heart: the one *sensible*, the heart of flesh hypostatically united to the person of the Word; the other *spiritual*, symbolized by the physical heart, which is nothing else but the love of the Incarnate Word for God and for men. Just as a symbol and the thing symbolized are but one, so these two elements are but one. Now, the love symbolized by the Heart of Jesus is, no doubt, His *human* love, but it is also His *divine* love, since in Jesus the divine and the human operations are indissolubly united. It is His love for *men*: "Behold the heart that has loved men so much"; but it is also His love for *God*, since, as we have shown, charity towards men flows from charity towards God, and draws from the latter its real motive.

We can, then, consider the Heart of Jesus as the most perfect Model of *love towards God* and of *love towards the neighbor*, and even as the *Model of all virtues*, for charity contains and perfects them all. Since Jesus, during the course of His mortal life, merited for us the grace of imitating His virtues, He is also the *meritorious cause*, the source of the graces that enable us to love God and our brethren and to practice all the other virtues.

1253. 2° The Heart of Jesus as the Source and Model of love towards God. Love is the complete gift of self. How perfect, then, must be the love of Jesus for His Father! From the first moment of the Incarnation He offers Himself and yields Himself as a victim in order to restore glory to God outraged by our sins.

At His birth, as well as on the day of His Presentation in the Temple, He renews this offering. During the years of His *hidden* life He shows His love for God by yielding obedience to Mary and to Joseph, in whom He sees the representatives of the Divine Authority. Who could tell of the acts of pure love that arose to the Most Blessed Trinity from the little house of Nazareth? In the course of His *public*

J. CROISSET, *La dévotion au S. Cœur*; STE. MARGUERITE-MARIE, *Cœurs*, éd. Gauthier; P. DE GALLIFET, *Excellence de la dévotion au S. Cœur*; DALGAIRNS, *Devotion to the Sacred Heart*; MANNING, *The Glories of the Sacred Heart*; J.-B. TERRIEN, *La dévotion au S. Cœur*; P. LE DORÉ, *Les Sacrés Cœurs et le V. J. Eudes*; Le Sacré Cœur; J. BAINVEL, *La dévotion au S. Cœur, doctrine, histoire*; L. GARRIGUET, *Le Sacré Cœur, exposé historique et dogmatique*, *Cath. Encyclop.*, Heart of Jesus; NOLDIN, *Devot. to Sacred Heart of Jesus*; HUSSLEIN, *The Sacred Heart*.

¹ *Ephés.*, V. 2. — ² St. James, V. 20. — ³ I John, III, 16.

⁴ I Cor., XII, 15. — ⁵ *Matth.*, V, 44. — ⁶ *Matth.*, V, 45.

⁷ ST. JOHN EUDES, *Le Cœur admirable de la T. S. Mère de Dieu*, I. IV et I. XII;

life He seeks but the pleasure of His Father: "I do always the things that please Him..."¹ "I honor my Father."² At the Last Supper He can declare that He has glorified His Father during His entire life: "I have glorified Thee upon the earth."³ The following day He carries out His self-surrender even to self-immolation on Calvary: "Made obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."⁴ Who could ever number the interior acts of pure love that sprang incessantly from His Heart, and which made of His whole life a continual act of perfect charity?

1254. Above all, who could give an idea of the perfection of that love?

"It is a love" says St. John Eudes,⁵ "worthy of such a Father and of such a Son; it is a love that fits most perfectly the unspeakable perfections of the Beloved One; it is an infinitely loving Son that loves an infinitely lovable Father; it is God Who loves God... In a word the Divine Heart of Jesus, whether considered in its humanity or in its divinity, is infinitely more inflamed with love for His Father, and loves Him infinitely more at each single instant than all the Angels and Saints together could love Him throughout all eternity."

Now, this love of Jesus for His Father we can make our own, by uniting ourselves to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and by offering it to the Father, saying with Saint John Eudes: "My Saviour, I give myself to Thee in order to unite myself with the eternal, boundless, and infinite love which Thou bearest Thy Father. Adorable Father, I offer Thee all this eternal, boundless, infinite love of Thy Son Jesus as a love that is mine... I love Thee as Thy Son loves Thee."

1255. ³ **The Heart of Jesus The Source of Love for Men.** We have seen (n. 1247) how Jesus loved men while on earth; it remains for us to point out here how He never ceases to love them now that He is in Heaven.

a) It is because He loves us that He sanctifies us through the *Sacraments*: these are, to borrow once more the thought of St. John Eudes, "so many inexhaustible fountains of grace and holiness which have their source in the boundless ocean of the Sacred Heart of Our Saviour; and all the graces that issue from the sacraments are so many flames of that divine furnace."⁶

1256. b) It is in the *Eucharist* especially that He gives us the greatest proof of His love.

¹ For nineteen centuries He has been with us night and day, like a father who is loath to leave His children, like a friend who finds his pleasure with his friends, like a devoted physician who constantly

¹ *John*, VIII, 29. — ² *John*, VIII, 49. — ³ *John*, XVII, 4. — ⁴ *Philipp.*, II, 8.
⁵ *Le Cœur admirable*, I, XII, ch. II. — ⁶ *Ibid.*, Ch. VII.

remains by the bed-side of his patients. 2) He is ever active, adoring, praising and glorifying His Father for us, thanking Him for all the benefits He continually bestows upon us, loving Him in our stead, offering Him His Own merits and satisfactions to atone for our sins, and ever asking new graces in our behalf: "Always living to make *intercession for us*."¹ 3) He never ceases to renew upon the altar the Sacrifice of Calvary; He does so thousands of times a day, wherever there is a priest to consecrate, and He does so out of love for us, in order to apply to each one of us the fruits of His Sacrifice (n. 271-273). And not content with immolating Himself, He gives Himself whole and entire to every communicant, to impart to each His graces, His dispositions and His virtues (n. 277-281).

This Divine Heart ardently longs to communicate to us His Own charity. "My Divine Heart," said He to St. Margaret Mary, "is possessed of such a passionate love for men and for you in particular, that unable to contain the flames of its burning charity, it must needs extend them through you, that it may be made known to them in order to enrich them with its priceless treasures."² It was then that Our Lord asked the Saint for her heart in order to unite it to His own and place in it a spark of His love. What Christ did in a miraculous manner for her, He does in an ordinary way for us in Holy Communion and every time that we unite our hearts to His; for He is come to earth to bring the sacred fire of charity, and His only desire is to enkindle it in our hearts: "I am come to cast fire on the earth. And what will I, but that it be kindled?"³

1257. ⁴ **The Heart of Jesus the Source and Model of All Virtues.** In Holy Writ the heart often signifies all the interior sentiments of man in contradistinction to his exterior acts: "Man seeth those things that appear; but the Lord beholdeth the heart."⁴ The heart of Jesus, therefore, symbolizes not only love, but all the inward sentiments of His soul. It is thus that the great mystics of the Middle Ages, and, after them, St. John Eudes, understood the devotion to the Sacred Heart. The same may be said of St. Margaret Mary. No doubt she lays special stress, and rightly so, on the love wherewith this Divine Heart is filled; but in her various writings she shows us this Heart as the model of all virtues. Father de la Colombière, her confessor and interpreter, sums up her thoughts in an act of consecration, which is found at the end of the *Spiritual Retreats*.⁵

¹ *Hebr.*, VII, 25. — ² *First of the Great Revelations*. — ³ *Luke*, XII, 49.
⁴ *I. Kings*, XVI, 7.
⁵ *Œuvres complètes*, Grenoble 1901, ch. VI, p. 124.

"This offering is made in order to honor this Divine Heart, seat of all virtues, source of all blessings, and the refuge of all holy souls. The principal virtues intended to be honored therein are: *in the first place*, the most ardent love for God His Father, together with the most profound respect and the deepest humility ever known; *secondly*, infinite patience in the midst of sufferings, the keenest of pains for the sins He had laid upon Himself, the trust of a tender son together with the shame of a great sinner; *thirdly*, a most lively compassion for our wretchedness, and in spite of all these emotions, an unalterable serenity, the result of the most perfect conformity to the Will of God, a serenity that could not be troubled by any event whatsoever."

Besides, since all virtues flow from charity and find therein their highest perfection (n. 318-319), the Heart of Jesus, being the source and model of Divine Charity, is at the same time the source and model of all virtues.

1258. In this the devotion to the Sacred Heart joins with the devotion to the *Interior Life of Jesus*, explained by Father Olier and practiced in the Seminaries of St. Sulpice. This interior life consists, says he, "in His interior dispositions and sentiments towards all things, for example: His sense of *religion towards God*, His *love towards the neighbor*, His *self-abnegation*, His *horror for sin*, His *condemnation of the world and its maxims*."¹

Now, all these dispositions are found in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and it is there that we must seek them. Father Olier wrote to a pious soul who delighted to withdraw within the Heart of Jesus: "Lose yourself a thousand times a day in His lovable Heart whether you feel yourself so strongly attracted... The Heart of the Son of God is the pearl of great price; it is His most precious gem; God's own treasury wherein He pours all His riches and where He dispenses all His graces... It is within that Sacred Heart, within that adorable Soul, that first are enacted all mysteries... See, then, to what Our Lord calls you by opening to you His Heart, and see how much you must profit by this grace, one of the greatest that you have obtained in your life. Let not creatures ever draw you out of that place of delights and may you be plunged therein for time and for eternity with all the holy spouses of Jesus."² In another place he said: "What a Heart is that of Jesus! What an ocean of love is contained therein, flooding the whole earth! O rich and overflowing source of all love! O inexhaustible depths of all religion! O Divine center of all hearts... O Jesus! allow me to worship, to adore the inmost recesses of Thy holy soul, to adore Thy Heart which I have but to-day beheld. I would picture it, but its ravishing beauty will not permit me. I beheld it as a Heaven radiant with light, full of love, of gratitude, and of praise. It breathed forth God, it showed forth His grandeur and magnificence."³ For Father Olier, the Interior Life and the Heart of Jesus were but one and the same thing, that is, the center of all the dispositions of Christ's holy soul and of His virtues, the sanctuary of love and of worship, where God is glorified and whither fervent souls love to withdraw.

¹ *Cat. for an Int. Life*, P. I, Lesson I. — ² *Lettres*, t. II, lettre 426.

³ *Esprit de M. Olier*, t. I, 186-187, 193.

1259. Conclusion. That devotion to the Sacred Heart may be productive of these happy effects, it must consist of two essential acts: *love* and *atonement*.

1° Love is the first and the foremost of these duties, according to St. Margaret Mary as well as according to St. John Eudes.

Giving an account to Father Croiset of the second great apparition the former writes: "He made me see that it was the great desire He had of *being loved by men*, and of withdrawing them from the road of perdition, that induced Him to conceive this plan of making His Heart known to men, with all the treasures of love, of mercy, of grace, of sanctification and of salvation, in order that those who wish to render and procure Him all the honor, glory, and love of which they are capable, might be abundantly and profusely enriched with the treasures of the Heart of God." Another letter, to Sister de la Barge, ends thus: "Let us, then, love this, the only love of our souls, since He has loved us first and loves us still so ardently that He continually burns with love for us in the Blessed Sacrament. To become saints it suffices to love this Holy of Holies. What shall hinder us? We have hearts to love and a body to suffer... Only His Holy love can make us do His pleasure; only this perfect love can make us do it in His own way; and only this perfect love can make us do it in His own acceptable time."²

1260. 2° The second of these essential acts is *atonement*; for the love of Jesus is outraged by the ingratitude of men, as He Himself declared in the third great apparition to St. Margaret Mary: —

"Behold this Heart which has so loved men that it has spared nothing, even to exhausting and consuming itself, in order to testify its love. In return, I receive from the greater part only *ingratitude*, by their irreverences and sacrileges, and by the coldness and contempt they have for Me in this Sacrament of love." Then He asks her to atone for these ingratitude by the ardor of her own love: "My daughter, I come into the heart I have given you in order that *through your fervor you may atone for the offences which I have received from lukewarm and slothful hearts which dishonor me in the Blessed Sacrament*."

1261. These two acts are highly sanctifying. Love will, by uniting us intimately to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, make us share in His virtues, and give us the strength to practice them in spite of all obstacles. *Atonement* will further enkindle our fervor, by having us sympathize with the sufferings of Jesus, and will lead us, out of love for Him and in union with His Sufferings, to endure all the trials that it may please God to send us.

Thus understood, devotion to the Sacred Heart contains nothing that could savor of artificiality or sentimentality.

¹ *Lettres inédites*, IV, p. 142. — ² Letter CVIII, t. II, p. 227.

It is rather the very spirit of Christianity, a happy blending of love and sacrifice, attended by the gradual development of the moral and the theological virtues. It is like a *summary* of the *Illuminative Way*, and an apt initiation into the Unitive Way.

CHAPTER IV

Counter-attacks of the Enemy

1262. Whilst we labor in the acquisition of the virtues, our spiritual foes are not idle. They return stealthily to take the offensive, either by causing in us a re-awakening, in a more subtle form, of the *seven capital sins*, or by leading us to *lukewarmness*.

ART. I. THE RE-AWAKENING OF THE CAPITAL SINS

1263. St. John of the Cross gives an excellent description of these capital sins as they exist in those whom he calls the *beginners*, that is to say, in those who are on the threshold of contemplation through the *night of the senses*.¹ We shall simply condense his psychological analysis.

I. *The Inclination to Pride*

1264. This inclination is manifested in six principal ways:

- 1) Whilst aiming at fervor and remaining faithful to their spiritual exercises, these beginners *take complacency in their works* and hold themselves in too high esteem. They presumptuously plan many projects and carry out scarcely any.
- 2) They *speak of the things of the spiritual life* rather to give lessons to others than to put these lessons into practice themselves, and harshly condemn those who do not approve of their type of spirituality.
- 3) Some of them cannot stand rivalry. If a rival happens to appear, they condemn him and belittle him.
- 4) They seek the good graces and the intimacy of their spiritual director, and if the latter does not approve of their ways, they look for another who will be more accommodating. The better to succeed in this, they tone down their faults, and if they happen to fall into a grave sin, they accuse it to another confessor and not to their regular director.
- 5) Should they commit a grievous sin, they get out of sorts with themselves and lose heart, peevish at not having reached sanctity as yet.
- 6) They love to attract notice by outward manifestations of their piety, and readily speak to others of their good works and their success.

¹ *Dark Night*, Bk. I, C. II-VII.

From pride springs **envy**, which betrays itself by displeasure at the sight of the spiritual good of others. They are pained at hearing others praised, saddened at their virtue, and, when the occasion presents itself, they do not fail to speak ill of them.

II. *Sensuality*

1265. A) **Spiritual Gluttony** manifests itself in two ways:

a) By an excessive craving for *consolations*. One seeks them even in the practice of austerities, in the *discipline* for instance, and one importunes one's director for permission to practice mortifications with the hope of thus obtaining consolations.

b) For the same reason, some persons make forced efforts during meditation or at the time of communion, in order to procure a feeling of devotion, or they wish to go frequently to confession with a view of finding some comfort in this exercise. Often these efforts and longings remain sterile, and then discouragement takes hold of these souls, who are more attached to consolations than to God Himself.

1266. B) **Spiritual Lust** appears especially under two forms: a) one seeks sentimental or sensual friendships, under the pretext of devotion, and one is loath to give them up, pretending that such relations are an aid to piety. b) At times, the sensible consolations experienced at prayer or Communion produce in persons of a tender and affectionate nature pleasures of another sort, which may prove to them a source of temptation or anxiety.¹

1267. C) **Sloth** leads: a) to weariness in the performance of spiritual exercises when one does not find therein any relish, and prompts one either to shorten or omit them; b) to dejection of spirit, when one receives from a superior or spiritual director orders or advice which seem too difficult; one would prefer a more congenial sort of spirituality that does not interfere with one's ease or petty schemes.

¹ St. THERESA, writing to her brother Lorenzo de Cepeda, who complained of vexations of this kind, gave him this wise counsel: "As regards the distress of which you complain, in no instance must it be heeded. Although I be not able to speak from experience, since God has always preserved me from such passions, I understand what occurs. It is the very intensity of the soul's delight that produces such reaction in nature. With God's grace that shall pass away, if you will not be disturbed by it." Letter 138, edition of *Vicente de la Fuente*.

III. *Spiritual Avarice*

1268. This avarice is thus described by St. John of the Cross:

a) "There are beginners who do not cease to cram their souls with spiritual counsels and precepts; they must possess and read numerous spiritual treatises on which they put all their time and have none left for the fulfilment of their first duty; namely, mortification and perfect interior detachment. b) Besides, they load themselves with holy pictures, rosaries, crucifixes and expensive and curious objects of devotion. Then they quit one thing for another, change and exchange, arrange and rearrange, and their final choice centers upon that which is singular or expensive." All this is clearly against the spirit of poverty, and it shows at the same time that one attaches undue importance to accidentals and neglects the essentials of true devotion.

1269. Conclusion. Evidently these imperfections are a great hindrance to spiritual progress. St. John of the Cross says that God, in order to correct them, introduces souls into the *Dark Night*, of which we shall soon speak. As to those souls who do not enter into this phase of the spiritual life, they must strive to disentangle themselves from these meshes by carrying out into practice what we have explained concerning consolations and dryness of soul, (n. 921-933) obedience, fortitude, temperance, humility and meekness (nos. 1057, 1076, 1127, 1154).

ART. II. LUKEWARMNESS¹

Unless we react against the aforesaid faults, it will not be long before we fall into lukewarmness, a most dangerous spiritual disease the *nature, dangers and remedies* of which we shall now explain.

I. *Nature of Lukewarmness*

1270. 1^o Notion. Lukewarmness is a spiritual malady that may attack beginners or even perfect souls, but which manifests itself especially in the course of the *Illuminative Way*. It presupposes, in fact, that a soul has already reached a certain degree of fervor, and that it gradually allows itself to become lax.

Lukewarmness consists in a sort of *spiritual languor* which saps the energies of the will, inspires one with a horror for effort and thus leads to the decline of the Christian life. It is a kind of sluggishness, a species of

torpor which, though not death as yet, insensibly leads to it through a gradual weakening of our moral forces. One may compare it to those slow-working diseases, such as consumption, which little by little prey upon some vital organ.

1271. 2^o Its causes. They are chiefly two: a *defective spiritual nourishment*, and *the entry into the soul of some noxious germ*.

A) To live and grow, our soul needs wholesome spiritual food. Now, the soul is nourished by the various spiritual exercises, that is, meditation, devout reading, prayer, examinations of conscience, the fulfilment of the duties of state, exercise in the practice of the virtues—all of which keep it in communion with God, the Source of spiritual life. Therefore, if these exercises are performed with negligence, with voluntary distractions, without efforts to react against routine or sluggishness, the soul is deprived of many graces, is poorly nourished, and becomes weak and incapable of practicing the virtues of the Christian life in face of even little difficulties.

We must note in passing that this condition is altogether different from that dryness or affliction of soul permitted by God to try us. In these, instead of welcoming distractions, one experiences pain and humiliation at having them, and one earnestly seeks to avoid them. The lukewarm man, on the contrary, lets himself be carried along by useless thoughts, takes pleasure in them, hardly makes any effort to be rid of them, and soon distractions well-nigh overrun his prayers.

Then, seeing how little profit he derives from his exercises of piety, he begins to shorten them, and in time suppresses them entirely. Thus, his examination of conscience, becoming wearisome, irksome, a mere matter of routine, ends by being omitted; he is no longer aware of his faults, of his defects, and he allows them to gain the upper hand. He no longer strives to grow in virtue, and soon his vices, his inordinate inclinations, tend to revive.

1272. B) The outcome of this spiritual apathy is the gradual weakening of the soul—a species of *spiritual anemia*—which paves the way for the entrance of some destructive germ, that is to say, one of the three concupiscences, or perhaps all of them at once.

a) The avenues of the soul being poorly guarded, the exterior and interior senses readily lay themselves open to the unwholesome suggestions of curiosity and sensuality, and frequent temptations arise only to be half-repulsed. At times the heart yields itself to the current of disturbing affections: one commits imprudences and courts danger; venial sins are multiplied and hardly regretted; one glides down a perilous grade, skirts the abyss, and is extremely fortunate to avoid a fall.

b) Besides, *pride*, never completely subdued, renews its onslaughts. One begins to indulge in self-complacency, to delight in exterior

¹ BELLECIUS, *Solida virtutis impedimenta*, P. I, cap. II; BOURDALOUE, *Retreat*, 3rd Day, 1st Medit.; FABER, *Growth in Holiness*, C. XXV.

qualities, in outward successes. The better to exalt self, one makes comparisons with others still more lax than oneself, and despises as narrow and small-minded those who are more faithful to duty. This pride brings in its wake envy, jealousy, impatience, anger and harshness in the relations with others.

e) *Avarice* is rekindled in the heart. One feels the need of money to secure more pleasures, to make a greater impression; and to provide more of it one has recourse to questionable means, which border on injustice.

1273. Hence, *innumerable deliberate venial sins* are committed for which one feels scarcely any compunction, since the light of judgment and delicacy of conscience have been gradually weakened; one lives in habitual dissipation of mind, and performs the examination of conscience carelessly. Thus, horror for sin diminishes, God's graces become more rare, and the profit derived from them smaller. In a word, there is a weakening of the spiritual organism, which prepares the way to shameful surrenders.

1274. 3° *Its Degress.* From what we have said it is evident that there are many degrees in lukewarmness. However, it is enough to distinguish *incipient* from *extreme* lukewarmness.

a) In the first instance, one as yet preserves horror for mortal sin, though committing imprudences that may lead thereto. One easily commits *deliberate venial sins*, notably, such as correspond to one's predominant fault. Besides, one brings little earnestness to the performance of spiritual exercises, and often performs them through mere routine.

b) By dint of allowing oneself to drift into such culpable negligences, one ceases to harbor the old instinctive horror for mortal sin. On the other hand, the love of pleasure so increases that one comes to regret the fact that such or such pleasure is forbidden under the pain of grave sin. One repels temptations but feebly, and a moment arrives when one asks, and not without reason, whether or not one is still in the state of grace. This is *extreme* lukewarmness.

II. The Dangers of Lukewarmness

1275. The special danger of this state consists in the *gradual weakening* of the soul's energies, a condition fraught with more danger than the commission of some isolated mortal sin. This is the sense in which Our Lord speaks to the lukewarm: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. But because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest: I am rich and made wealthy and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor

and blind and naked."¹ It is just like the difference existing between *chronic* and *acute* diseases. The latter, once cured, leave no bad effects; the former, having slowly sapped the strength of the body, leave it for a long time in a state of great weakness. The succeeding paragraphs will show this in detail.

1276. 1° The first effect of lukewarmness is a kind of *blinding of conscience*. By dint of excusing and palliating faults, the judgment becomes warped, and sins in themselves grave come to be considered as slight. Thus a *lax conscience* is formed, which can no longer discern the gravity of the imprudences or the sins committed, which lacks the energy required to detest them, and which soon falls into culpable illusions: "There is a way which seemeth just to man: but the ends thereof lead to death."² One thinks himself rich, because one is proud, but in reality one is poor and miserable in the eyes of God.

1277. 2° Along with this comes the *gradual weakening of the will*.

a) By dint of making concessions to sensuality and to pride in small things, one ends by yielding to pleasure in things of greater moment; for all the elements of the spiritual life hold together. Holy Writ teaches us that "he that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little";³ that "he that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater; and that he that is unjust in that which is little is unjust also in that which is greater";⁴ all of which means that the earnestness or carelessness with which we perform certain acts transfers itself to other actions.

b) Soon one reaches the point of *loathing effort*. The spring of the will being run down, one lets oneself go the way of natural desires, of indifference, of pleasure. In this there is great danger, and unless one reacts, grave faults are bound to ensue.

c) Indeed, in so acting, one abuses grace and offers frequent resistance to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost; one lends a reader ear to the voice of pleasure, and ends by sinning grievously.

1278. Such a fall is all the more *difficult to repair* since it occurs almost *insensibly*. One lets oneself slide, so to speak, to the depths of the abyss without any great shock. Then one tries to practice self-deception: one would convince oneself that the fault is only venial; that, if the matter be grave, there was no full consent; that it is a fault of surprise which cannot be mortally sinful.

¹ *Apoç.*, III, 15-17. — ² *Prov.*, XIV, 12.

³ *Eccl.*, XIX, 1.

⁴ *Luke*, XVI, 10. In the literal sense, the least things mean temporal goods and the greater things those of heaven.

In this manner a false conscience is formed and the regular confession continues to reveal only trivial matters; the confessor is deceived and thus may be begun a long series of sacrileges. When a ball falls from on high, it rebounds; when it rolls down to the bottom of the abyss, it stays there. And so it happens at times with lukewarm souls; they remain in the depths into which they have gradually and almost insensibly fallen.

III. *The Remedies for Lukewarmness*

1279. Our Lord has Himself pointed out the remedies: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold fire-tried, that thou mayest be made rich (the gold of charity and fervor of spirit); and mayest be clothed in white garments, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not appear (purity of conscience); and anoint thy eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see (frankness towards self and towards one's confessor). Such as I love, I rebuke and chastise. Be zealous therefore, and do penance. Behold, I stand at the gate, and knock. If any man shall hear my voice, and open to me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."¹ One must, therefore, never despair. Jesus is ever ready to give us His friendship, nay, His intimate friendship, if we be converted.

1280. To be converted: 1° one must needs *have frequent recourse to a wise confessor*, frankly open one's soul to him and sincerely beg his help to overcome tepidity. One must take and follow his counsels energetically and with constancy.

2° Under his guidance, one will return to the *fervent practice of the exercises of piety*, especially of those that secure the fulfilment of the others; namely, mental prayer, examination of conscience and the frequent renewal of the intention of doing all for God (n. 523-528). The fervor of which we here speak lies not in feeling, but in a generous will that strives to refuse God nothing.

3° One will also take up once more the practice of the *virtues* and the fulfilment of one's *duties of state* in all earnestness, making one's particular examination of conscience successively upon the chief points, and giving an account thereof in confession (nn. 265, 468-476).

By these means one will regain *fervor* and one will not forget that past faults demand an atonement through the spirit and the works of penance.

APPENDIX: RULES CONCERNING THE DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS IN THE ILLUMINATIVE WAY

1281. We have, following St. Ignatius, already outlined the rules for the discernment of spirits with regard to beginners (n. 953-957). It will be useful to sum up in this place the rules he gives for the *Illuminative Way*, that is, for the Second Week of the Exercises. They refer to two principal points: 1° *spiritual consolations*, 2° *desires* and *projects* for the future.

1282. 1° **Rules concerning Consolations.** a) The distinctive work of the *good spirit* in a well-disposed soul is *true spiritual joy and peace*. The *evil spirit*, on the contrary, labors to destroy this joy by means of sophistries, subtleties, and illusions. He resembles an artful lawyer defending a bad case. This rule is based on the fact that God is the Author of peace, whilst the devil casts trouble upon the soul in order to discourage it.

b) God alone can infuse *true consolation without any antecedent natural cause*, for He alone can penetrate into the inmost recesses of the soul and draw it to Himself. We say that such consolation has no antecedent cause when nothing has intervened capable of producing it. For instance, a soul is plunged in desolation, and lo! in an instant it finds itself reassured, full of joy, of strength and of good-will. This was the case with St. Francis de Sales after violent scruples had assailed him.

c) When consolation has been preceded by some cause, it may come either from the good or the evil spirit. It proceeds from the former, if the said consolation enlightens and strengthens the soul to know and to do good. It proceeds from the latter, if it causes laxity, softness, love of pleasure or of honors, and presumption. In other words, the tree is judged by its fruits.

d) It is the part of the devil to transform himself into an angel of light to enter at the outset into the pious desires of the soul, and to end by suggesting his own designs. Thus when he sees a soul given to the practice of virtue, he first suggests sentiments in harmony with that soul's good dispositions; after that, relying on the soul's self-love, he suggests sentiments of vain complacency or of presumption, excessive penances, so as to drive it to discouragement, or, on the contrary, less strictness of life, under pretexts of health or study. In this way he succeeds in making the soul lower its standards little by little.

1283. 2° **Rules concerning desires or projects for the future.** a) We must submit such inspirations to a strict examination, considering if in their *inception*, in the course of their *formation*, and in their final *unfolding*, they tend towards good; for if at any of these stages there should enter anything of *evil*, anything of a nature to *distract* us from God, anything less good than what we had previously proposed; or again, if these desires disturb, trouble and weaken the soul, this is a proof that they proceed from the enemy of our spiritual progress and salvation. The reason for this is, that for an action to be good, there must not be in it anything contrary to the will of God or to the spiritual welfare of the soul. Hence, if in any of the

¹ *Apoc.*, III., 18-20.

elements of an action some defect is noticed, it bears the mark of the evil spirit.

b) Once the intervention of the evil spirit is discovered, the best course is to go over the entire line of thought from the beginning and find out the way in which he entered into the soul to disturb it and lead it astray. This study will enable us to be on our guard against his manoeuvres in the future.

c) There is another rule deduced from the difference in the *mode of action* of the two spirits. The good spirit comes with sweetness upon the soul advancing in the way of perfection, like the morning dew penetrating a sponge; the evil one rushes in violently like a heavy rain beating on a rock.

d) Even when consolation comes from God, we must know how to distinguish between the moment itself of consolation and the time that follows. In the former, we act under the inspiration of grace; in the latter, we form resolutions and projects which are not directly inspired by God, and which must therefore be carefully scrutinized according to the preceding rules.

1284. 3° To these rules drawn up by St. Ignatius, a few others may be added, which flow from what we have said in this Second Book.

a) To aspire to a perfection inconsistent with our present duties, to practice showy *virtues*, to become singular, all this bears the mark of the *bad spirit*; for the good spirit inclines us indeed to the attainment of high perfection, but to such as is compatible with our duties of state and in keeping with a humble and hidden life.

b) *Contempt for little things* and the desire to be sanctified in a grand manner are not characteristic of the good spirit, which urges us to perfect fidelity to our duties of state and to homely virtues: "*One jot or tittle shall not pass of the law, till all be fulfilled.*"¹

c) To reflect complacently upon self, to think one has done well, to desire to be held in esteem on account of one's piety and virtue, is also in opposition to the Christian spirit, whose first concern is to please God alone: "If yet I pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."² Hence, *false humility*, which blames self that self may be praised, and false meekness, which is in reality but the desire to please men, are contrary to the spirit of God.

d) To complain, to lose patience, to lose heart in the midst of trials and aridity of soul is a sign of the human spirit; the spirit of God leads, on the contrary, to the love of the Cross, to resignation, to a holy abandonment, and causes us to persevere in prayer amidst dryness and distraction.

SUMMARY OF THE SECOND BOOK

1285. 1° The end proposed in the *Illuminative Way* is the following of Christ by the imitation of His virtues. We advance by the light of His examples: "*He that followeth me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light*

of life."³ The ideal which we try to realize from day to day is that of *making Jesus the center of our thoughts, of our affections, of our entire life.*

For this reason our mental prayer becomes *affective* prayer, keeping Jesus continually before our eyes to adore Him, bringing Him into our *heart* to love Him and share in His dispositions, and holding Him in our *hands* to practice virtue in union with Him. The virtues which we practice are the *Theological* and the *Moral* Virtues; they go hand in hand and aid one another. Nevertheless, there are as it were two phases in the development of our spiritual life; in the one, the moral virtues are emphasized, and in the other, the theological.

1286. 2° The first requirement is that of training our faculties, of fitting them for union with God. This is effected by the *moral* virtues:

1) *Prudence* trains the mind to think before acting, to consult God and to take counsel with those who represent Him. Thus, prudence makes the mind *share in the wisdom of God.*

2) *Justice* bends our *will*, schooling it to respect God's rights and those of the neighbor by the practice of absolute honesty, religion and obedience to superiors. Thus we *take on something of God's justice.*

3) *Fortitude* disciplines our violent passions, moderates and restrains their excesses, and uses their energies in overcoming difficulties in the pursuit of supernatural good. It makes us practice *magnanimity, munificence, patience and constancy*, and thus gives us something of *God's own strength.*

4) To deaden and hold in check the *love of pleasure, temperance* helps us to mortify our gluttony through *sobriety*, to overcome lust through *chastity*, to subdue pride through *humility*, and anger through *meekness.*

1287. 3° Then follows the *second phase* of the *Illuminative Way*, the practice of the theological virtues, which unite us directly to God.

1) *Faith*, by its obscurity, submits the mind to God, and by its light unites it to Him, making it share in God's own knowledge.

2) *Hope*, like a powerful lever, raises the will, detaches it from the things of earth, directs its longings and ambitions heavenwards, and *unites us to God, the source of our bliss*, infinitely Powerful and infinitely Good, from Whom we confidently expect all the help we need to attain our supernatural end.

3) *Charity* lifts us higher still; it makes us love God for His Own sake, because He is infinitely Good in Himself, and makes us love our neighbor also for God's sake as a reflection of His own perfections. Therefore, *it unites the whole soul to God.*

¹ John, VIII, 12.

² Matth., V, 18. — ³ Gal., I, 10.

It is from the *Sacred Heart of Jesus* that we draw this twofold love. Intimately united with Our Lord, we overcome our selfishness, and, making His love and His dispositions our own, we live for God as He Himself did.

1288. 4° Doubtless, in the course of our progress in the spiritual life we are to expect *counter-attacks* on the part of our enemies. The *Seven Capital Vices* seek in a more subtle manner to reassert themselves, and, if we are not on our guard against them, they will cause us to fall into the state of lukewarmness. Vigilant souls however, relying on Jesus-Christ, repel these attacks, nay even turn them to profit, using them to strengthen their virtue, and thus prepare themselves for the *joys* and *trials* of the *Unitive Way*.

BOOK III

The Unitive Way

1289. Once we have purified our soul and adorned it by the practice of the virtues, we are ripe, so to speak, for habitual and intimate union with God, that is, for entrance into the *Unitive Way*.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS ¹

Before entering into the different questions in detail, we must briefly explain: 1° the *end* to be attained in the unitive way; 2° the *distinguishing* marks of this way; 3° the general notion of *contemplation*, which is one of its general characteristics; 4° the *order* to be followed in this third part.

I. *The End to be attained*

1290. This end is none other than habitual and intimate union with God, through Jesus Christ. It is very well expressed in these words of Father Olier at the beginning of his "*Pietas Seminarii*": "*The first and last aim of this Institution is to live supremely unto God, in Christ Jesus Our Lord, so that our inmost hearts may be penetrated with the interior dispositions of the Son of God, and each may be able to say what St. Paul truly said of himself: I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me.*" ²

To live altogether unto God, the Living God, the Most Blessed Trinity dwelling in us, to praise God, serve Him, revere Him and love Him, such is the aim of the perfect Christian; to live, not on the level of mediocrity, but to live *intensely*, with all the *fervor* that love imparts. Hence, we must aim at forgetting ourselves so as to think only of that God Who deigns to live within: us, to love Him with our whole soul and to make all our thoughts, all our longings, all our actions converge towards Him. In this way will be realized what we ask in the office at *Prime*: "*Vouchsafe this day, Lord God of Heaven and Earth, to*

¹ PHIL. A. SS. TRINITATE, *op. cit.*, III^a P., Tr. I, dist. I; TH. DE VALGORNERA, *op. cit.*, Q. IV. Disp. I; SAUDREAU, *The Degrees of the Spiritual Life*, Vol. I; P. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *op. cit.*, t. I, introduction.
² *Galat.*, II, 20.

direct and sanctify, rule and govern our body and soul, our thoughts, words and actions in the keeping of Thy law and in the observance of Thy commandments."

1291. Since we are of ourselves incapable of all this, we must unite ourselves intimately with Our Lord. Made one with Him through Baptism, we are to render this union even closer by the frequent reception of the Sacraments, especially by the reception of Holy Communion. This communion is prolonged by habitual recollection in order that His *interior dispositions* may become ours and may inspire all our actions, and that we may thus be able to repeat and actually live the words of St. Paul: "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me."¹ In order to obtain this happy result, Jesus sends us, through His merits and His intercession, His Holy Spirit, that same *Holy Spirit* Who produced in His soul the perfect dispositions wherewith it was animated. By allowing this Divine Spirit to lead us, by being prompt and generous in obeying His inspirations, we come to think, speak and act as Jesus would were He in our place. Then it is that Christ actually lives in us; with us and through us He glorifies God, sanctifies us, and helps us to sanctify our brethren. If therefore devotion to the Most Blessed Trinity becomes predominant in the unitive way, we do not for that reason cease to unite ourselves with the Incarnate Word through Whom we are to ascend to the Father: "*No man cometh to the Father, but by me.*"²

II. The Characteristics of the Unitive Way

All these characteristics are embodied in one, the need of simplifying all, of reducing all to unity, that is, of bringing all things to converge towards *intimate union with God through charity*.

1292. 1^o The soul lives continually in the presence of God; it delights to contemplate Him living in the heart, "to walk inwardly with God." In order to live thus, it carefully detaches itself from creatures, so as "to be held by no outward affection." It is on this account that the soul seeks solitude and silence; it gradually builds in the heart a *sanctuary* where it finds God and converses with Him heart to heart. Then there is established between the soul and God a sweet and loving intimacy.

¹ Gal., II, 20. — ² John, XIV, 6.

"Intimacy," says Monsignor Gay,¹ "is the consciousness, on the part of those who love, of mutual understanding and sympathy, a consciousness rich in light and feeling and joy and fruit. It is the sense and experience of their mutual attraction, of their fellowship and of their absolute accord, if not of their perfect similarity. It is a union that results in oneness... It is unbounded reliance and confidence in one another, it is a spontaneous candor which makes the heart transparent. Finally, it is as a consequence a mutual liberty, freely given, of contemplating one another and of looking into the very depths of the soul." Now, it is such intimacy that God permits and even deigns to offer to those who lead an interior life, as the Author of the Imitation so well explains: "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."²

1293. 2^o In this way *the love of God* becomes not only the principal virtue of the soul, but, one may say, its *only virtue*, in the sense that all the other virtues which it practices are for it but so many acts of love.

Thus, prudence becomes a loving consideration of things divine for the purpose of finding therein the standard of its judgments; justice becomes an imitation, as perfect as possible, of Divine righteousness; fortitude, the complete mastery of the passions; temperance, the utter forgetfulness of earthly pleasures, in order to make room for thoughts of Heaven.³ Still more do the theological virtues now become an exercise of perfect love: faith is no longer limited to occasional acts, but becomes the spirit of faith, the life of faith animated by charity, "the *faith that works through charity*," hope becomes filial confidence, a holy abandonment to God. At such heights, all the virtues are but one; they are so to speak but different forms of charity: "*Charity is patient, is kind, etc.*"

1294. 3^o A similar simplifying process takes place with regard to *prayer*: reasonings gradually disappear to make room for pious sentiments, which in turn become more simple, as we shall soon explain, until they become but a loving, lingering thought of God.

1295. 4^o All this results in a *simplification of our whole life*. Whilst previously there were set hours of meditation and prayer, now *life is a perpetual prayer*: whether working, or recreating, whether alone or in the company of others, we continually rise towards God by conforming our will to His: "*I do always the things that please Him.*"⁴

¹ *Elevations sur la vie... de N. S. J. C.*, 5^o èlev., t. I, p. 429.

² *Imit.*, Bk. II, C. I, n. 1.

³ St. THOMAS explains this well in Ia IIæ, q. 61, a. 5: "There are some virtues of men who are on their way to and tending towards the Divine simultitude; and these are called *perfecting* virtues... Thus, prudence sees nought else but the things of God; temperance knows no earthly desires; fortitude has no knowledge of passions; and justice, by imitating the Divine Mind, is united thereto by an everlasting covenant. Such are the virtues attributed to the Blessed, or, in this life, to some who are at the summit of perfection."

⁴ *John*, VIII, 29.

1297. ^{1°} **Natural Contemplation.** In general, to contemplate means to look admiringly at an object. There is a *natural contemplation*, which may be *sensitive, imaginative, or intellectual*.

1) It is *sensitive* when we linger with admiration on some beautiful scene, the vastness of the ocean, for example, or a range of mountains. 2) It is called *imaginative*, when we picture with admiration and affection, some person or thing we love. 3) It is termed *intellectual* or *philosophic* when our mind dwells admiringly with one simple glance on some great philosophical synthesis, for instance, the absolutely simple and immutable Being, the beginning and end of all things.

1298. ^{2°} **Supernatural Contemplation.** There is also a *supernatural* contemplation with which we are here concerned, the notion and species of which we shall now explain.

A) Notion. The term *contemplation* in its *proper signification* designates the act by which the mind simply looks upon some object, apart from the various emotional or imaginative elements which accompany this act. However, when the object of contemplation is beautiful and lovable, contemplation is attended by admiration and love. By *extension* of the term, we call contemplation a *prayer* characterized by the *predominance* of that simple intellectual gaze; hence, this act need not last as long as the meditation lasts, but it suffices that it recur frequently during the prayer and that it be accompanied by *affections*. In this way *contemplative prayer* differs from *discursive* or reasoned prayer (n. 667), since it excludes long reasonings; it differs, too, from *affective* prayer (n. 976), because it excludes the *multiplicity* of acts which characterize this latter. Contemplative prayer, then, may be defined as a *simple and affectionate gaze on God or things divine*. It is more briefly defined by St. Thomas as a *simple gaze on truth*.¹

1299. B) Species. We can distinguish three kinds of contemplation: acquired, infused, and mixed contemplation.²

a) *Acquired contemplation* is, at bottom, nothing more than a *simplified affective* prayer, and may be defined as *contemplation in which the simplification of our intellectual and affective acts is the result of our own activity aided by grace*. Frequently even the Gifts of the Holy Ghost exert

spirit., sept. 1923, p. [277]; LEHODEY, *The Ways of Mental Prayer*, F. II, C. IX, p. III, C. I, IV; FOULAIN, *Graces of Interior Prayer*, SAUDREAU, *The Degrees of the Spiritual Life*, Vol. II, Bk. V.

¹ *Summa theol.*, II^a II^a, q. 180, a. 1 and 2.

² P. G. DE STE MADELEINE, *La contemplation acquise chez les Carmes*, *Vie spirit.*, Sept. 1923, (P. 277).

This conformity is but an act of love and of abandonment into His Hands: prayers, ordinary actions, sufferings, humiliations, all are but so many means of manifesting our love for God: "*My God and my All*."

1296. Conclusion. From what has been said, one can readily see which persons belong to the unitive way: they are those in whom the three following conditions are verified:

a) *A great purity of heart*, that is to say, not merely the expiation and reparation of past faults, but detachment from whatever may lead to sin, horror for all deliberate venial sins, and even for any wilful resistance to grace. This however does not imply exemption from certain venial faults of frailty, which are forthwith deeply regretted. This purification of the soul, begun in the purgative way and gradually perfected in the illuminative way by the positive practice of the virtues and the generous acceptance of providential crosses, is finally completed in the unitive way by *passive trials*, which we shall soon describe.

b) *A great mastery over self*, acquired by the mortification of the passions and the practice of the moral and theological virtues, which, by disciplining the faculties, subject them little by little to the will, and the will in turn to God. In this way the original order of things is to some extent restored, and the soul now in the full control, can give itself entirely to God.

c) *A constant need of thinking of God*, of conversing with Him and of performing every action with the view of pleasing Him. Real suffering is experienced at not being able to be constantly occupied with the thought of God, and, should the duties of state demand that attention be given to earthly cares, strenuous efforts are made to keep in mind His presence and to turn constantly towards Him: "*My eyes are ever towards the Lord*."¹

III. General Notion of Contemplation²

By dint of thinking of God, the soul lovingly fastens its gaze on Him. This is contemplation, which is one of the characteristic marks of this stage of the spiritual life.

¹ Ps. XXIV, 15.

² P. DE GUIBERT, R. A. M., avril 1922, *Trois définitions de théologie mystique*, p. 162-172; P. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *Perf. et contemplation*, t. I, ch. IV, a. 2, p. 272-294; GABR. DE STE MARIE MADEL., *La contemplation acquise*, dans *la Vie*

their hidden influence, especially the gifts of *knowledge*, of understanding and of wisdom, in order to help us fix our gaze lovingly on God, as we shall explain further on.

1300. b) Infused or passive contemplation is necessarily a free gift; we cannot obtain it by our efforts even with the help of ordinary grace. It is a *kind of contemplation in which the acts of the mind and of the will have become simplified under the influence of a special grace which takes hold of us and causes us to receive lights and affections which God produces in us with our consent.*

It is called *infused*, not because it proceeds from the infused virtues, since acquired contemplation likewise proceeds from them, but because it is not within our power to produce such acts, even with the aid of ordinary grace; and yet, it is not God *alone* that acts in us, but it is God acting in us with our consent, in the sense that we freely accept what He gives us. If our soul under the influence of operating grace is said to be *passive*, it is because it *receives* divine gifts, but it receives them freely,¹ as we shall explain later on. It is called *supernatural* by St. Theresa for a twofold reason: on the same ground that other acts are supernatural, and because God operates in us in a very special way.

1301. The third kind of contemplation is called *mixed* contemplation. We shall see later that *infused* contemplation is at times of *very short duration*. It may therefore happen that, in the course of the same prayer, the acts arising from our own initiative alternate with those produced by the special action of operating grace. This is exactly what occurs in the case of those who are being initiated into infused contemplation. Contemplation is then *mixed*, that is to say, it is alternately active and passive; however, this kind of contemplation is generally referred to infused contemplation of which it constitutes, so to speak, the first degree.

IV. Division of the Fourth Book

1302. In the unitive way two distinct² forms or phases may be distinguished:

1° *The simple or active unitive way*, characterized by the *cultivation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost*, especially the *active gifts*, and by the *simplification of prayer*, which

¹ One may say of contemplation what St. Thomas says of justification (I^a II^a, q. III, a. 2, ad 3): "God does not justify us without our co-operation; because whilst we are justified, we freely conform to God's righteousness."

² This division is generally accepted today under one name or another. In a remarkable article in the *Vie spirituelle* for March 1923, p. 645, J. MARIÉTAINE, whilst declaring the aim to be the same for all, namely, union with God through perfect charity and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, recognizes that there are in fact two ways, the way of those who are under the rule of the *active gifts* and who have

becomes the prayer of simplicity, called by many active contemplation.

2° The *passive or mystic unitive way*, characterized by *infused* contemplation, or contemplation *properly so-called*.

3° Moreover, contemplation is at times attended by *extraordinary phenomena* such as visions and revelations, to which are opposed the diabolical counterfeits of obsession and possession.

4° In matters of so difficult a nature, it is not surprising to find *varying opinions* or *controverted* questions. These we shall examine in a special chapter.

In the *conclusion* we shall point out what should be the attitude of the spiritual director toward contemplatives.

CHAPTER I The Simple or Active Unitive Way

CHAPTER II The Mystic or Passive Unitive Way

CHAPTER III Extraordinary Mystical Phenomena

CHAPTER IV Controverted Questions

CONCLUSION: The Spiritual Direction of Contemplatives

CHAPTER I

The Simple Unitive Way

1303. This Way is the state of fervent souls who habitually live in intimate union with God, without having so far received the gift of infused contemplation. Already accustomed to the practice of the moral and theological virtues, they strive to perfect these by the cultivation of the *gifts of the Holy Ghost*. Their mental prayer is *simplified* more and more, and becomes a *prayer of simplicity* or of *simple recollection* which goes by the name of *contemplation improperly so-called, acquired or active*. The existence of this state is shown by *experience*, by the distinction of the *two kinds of contemplation*, as well as by the difference between the *active* and the *contemplative* gifts.

1304. 1° First of all, *experience* shows that there are, both in the cloister and in the world, truly fervent souls,

only a contemplation in the loose sense of the word, and the way of the *contemplatives*, in whom the gifts of understanding and wisdom predominate. We shall come back later to this teaching.

living in habitual union with God, generously and perseveringly, and at times heroically practicing the Christian virtues, who nevertheless do not possess infused contemplation. These souls are docile to the Holy Ghost, habitually correspond to His inspirations, and from time to time are even the recipients of special inspirations, yet there is nothing that betrays either to themselves or to their spiritual director that they are in the passive state properly so-called.¹

1305. ^{2o} The same conclusion flows from the distinction between *acquired* contemplation and *infused* contemplation. Traces of this distinction are found even in the writings of St. Clement of Alexandria² and Richard of St. Victor, and since the end of the seventeenth century it has become *classical*. Such souls as continue to practice acquired contemplation during a notable period of their life are in the simple unitive way.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding we must state in this place that we do not say that there are two *diverging* ways; on the contrary, we admit that acquired contemplation is an excellent *preparation* for infused contemplation, whenever it shall please God to grant the latter. There are, however, numerous souls who do not receive it, although they remain intimately united to God. These remain therefore in the *simple unitive way* without any fault of their own.³

1306. ^{3o} What confirms this is that among the gifts of the Holy Ghost, some are given chiefly for *action*, and others chiefly for *contemplation*. Now, it happens that certain souls, endowed with a more active temperament and otherwise absorbed by more numerous occupations, cultivate more especially the active gifts and are thus less fitted for contemplation properly so-called.

Father Noble⁴ has this to say: "It is not midst the fatigue of labor, or the performance of tasks which are complicated and absorb our

¹ When one reads, for example, such biographies as those of Fathers Olivaint and Ginbac, of Mollevaut or de Courson, and so many others that have been published, one cannot help admiring their virtues, their union with God, their docility to the Holy Ghost, and yet, one cannot see where they practiced infused contemplation.

² DOM MENAGER, *La doctrine spirituelle de Clément d'Alexandrie, Vie spirituelle*, Jan. 1923, p. 424; See *Études carmélitaines*, 1920-1922, where there is a series of articles on acquired contemplation; our own article on *l'oraison de simplicité, Vie spirit.*, Dec. 1920, p. 167-174.

³ This conclusion is admitted by Father GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE in answer to a letter of J. Martinian (*Perfection Chrét. et contemplation*, t. II, p. 75): "And so we have experienced no difficulty in recognizing it many a time: it may happen that even very generous souls, in default of certain conditions which do not depend on their will, would not arrive at the mystic way, except after a period of time longer in duration than that of average existence here below. This can be the result not only of an unfavorable environment, of a want of spiritual direction, but also of physical temperament."

⁴ *Rev. des Jeunes*, 25 Sept. 1923, p. 613. J. Martinian proves the same in the afore-mentioned article. He adds, it is true, that souls in which the active gifts

whole attention, that we can concentrate on our own thoughts and keep our eyes steadily fixed on spiritual and eternal realities. To be able to contemplate, one must not be harassed by persistent and fatiguing labors; at least one must be in a position to suspend them long enough to enable the heart and the mind to rise peacefully towards God."

These souls will not enjoy, at least habitually, infused contemplation; still, they will be intimately united with God and docile to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost. Such is the state which we call the *simple unitive way*.

Since it is characterized 1^o by the *cultivation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost* and 2^o by the *prayer of simplicity*, we shall treat successively of these two elements.

ART. I. THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST¹

We shall treat: 1^o of the gifts of the Holy Ghost in *general*; 2^o of each of them in *particular*; 3^o of the *share they have in contemplation*; 4^o of the *fruits* and the *beatitudes* which correspond to the gifts.

§ I. The Gifts of the Holy Ghost in General

We shall explain: 1^o their *nature*; 2^o their *excellence*; 3^o the manner of *cultivating* them; 4^o how they may be *classified*.

1. Nature of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost

1307. We have spoken in no. 119 of how the Holy Ghost dwells in our soul and infuses, besides habitual grace, supernatural habits which perfect our faculties and enable them to perform supernatural acts under the impulse of actual grace. These habits are the *virtues* and the *gifts*. By bringing out the difference between these two kinds of habits we shall see more clearly in what the gifts consist.

predominate are in the *mystic state*, though they do not have infused contemplation. We think that to avoid misunderstandings it should be said they are in the so-called mystic state.

¹ ST. THOMAS, *In III Sent.*, dist. XXXIV-XXXV; Ia IIæ, q. 68; IIa IIæ, qq. 8, 9, 19, 45, 52, 121, 139; see commentators, especially JOHN OF ST. THOMAS, in *Im IIæ*, q. 68; SUAREZ, *De gratia*, P. III, cap. VIII; DENYS LE CHARTREUX, *de Donis Spiritus S.*; J.-B. DE ST. JURE, *L'homme spirituel*, le Part., C. IV, Des sept dons; L. LALLEMANT, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 4th Principle, Docility to the Guidance of the Holy Spirit; MGR PERRIOT, *L'Ami du Clergé*, 1892, p. 389-393; FROGET, *The Indwelling of the Holy Ghost*, p. 378-424; CARD. BILLOT, *De virtutibus infusis* (1901), p. 162-190; GARDEIL, *Donis au S. Esprit, Dict. de Théol.*, t. IV, col. 1728-1781; D. JORET, *Les dons au S. Esprit, Vie spirituelle*, t. I, pp. 229, 383; P. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *Perfect. et contemplation*, t. I, ch. IV, a. 5-6, p. 338-417; MGR LANDRIEU, *Le divin méconnu*.

1308. 1° **Difference between the Gifts and the Virtues.** A) The fundamental difference does not come from their *material object* or field of action, since this is the same in both, but from the *different manner in which they act* in the soul.

St. Thomas¹ tells us that God may act in us in two ways: a) by accommodating Himself to the human mode of action. This is what He does in the case of the *virtues*. He helps us to reflect, to seek the best means to reach our end. In order to supernaturalize these operations He gives us actual graces, but *leaves us free to take the initiative* according to the dictates of prudence or of reason enlightened by faith. It is therefore we who act under the impulse of grace.

b) But, by means of the gifts, God acts in a supra-human way. He Himself takes the initiative. Before we have had the time to reflect and consult the dictates of prudence, He sends us *divine intuitions*, lights and inspirations which act in us, *without deliberation* on our part, but never without our consent. This grace, which sweetly invites and effectively obtains our consent, may be called *operating grace*. Under its influence we are rather passive than active; our activity consists chiefly in freely consenting to the operation of God, in allowing ourselves to be led by the Holy Ghost, and in promptly and generously following His inspirations.

1309. B) By the light of this fundamental principle, we understand better the **differences** existing between the *gifts* and the *virtues*:

a) The virtues incline us to act *in accordance with the nature of our faculties*: thus, with the help of the grace we receive, we inquire, reason and work as we do in actions of a purely natural order. The virtues are therefore energies that are primarily and directly *active*. The gifts on the contrary impart to us a *docility* and a *receptiveness* that enable us to *receive* and *follow* the motions of operating grace. This grace moves our faculties to act, without however taking away their liberty, so that the soul, as St. Thomas tells us, is more passive than active, "*is not the mover, but the thing moved.*"²

b) In the case of the virtues, we act according to the principles and rules of *supernatural prudence*. We are obliged to reflect, deliberate, take counsel, make choices, etc.

¹ In the *Book of Sentences* (III Sent., d. 34, q. 1, a. 1) he employs this expression: "The gifts are distinguished from the virtues by the fact that the virtues contribute to the performance of the act in a human way, but the gifts in a preichnoman way." In the *Summa* he uses a different expression: "By them (the gifts) man is disposed to become amenable to the Divine Inspiration." (Ia IIæ, q. 68, a. 1.) Cf. J. DE GUBERT, *Dons du S. Esprit et mode d'agir ultra-humain* in *Rev. d'Asc. et de Mystique*, Oct. 1922, p. 394. No doubt, there is here a shade of distinction; however, it remains true that under the influence of the gifts, once they have reached their full development, we are more passive than active.

² *Sum. theol.*, IIa IIæ, q. 52, a. 2.

Under the influence of the gifts, we let ourselves be led by a *divine inspiration* which suddenly and without any reflection on our part vigorously urges us to do such or such a thing.

c) Since the share of grace is far greater in the case of the gifts than in that of the virtues, the acts performed under the influence of the former are, all other circumstances being the same, *more perfect* than those performed under the action of the virtues. It is due to the gifts that the third degree of the virtues is practiced and heroic acts performed.

1310. C) Divers *comparisons* are employed to give a better understanding of this doctrine. a) To practice virtue is *to row*, to use the gifts is *to sail*: in this latter way one advances more rapidly and with less effort. b) The child who with his mother's help takes a few steps forward stands for the Christian who practices the virtues with the help of grace; whilst the child whom the mother takes in her arms to make him advance more rapidly stands for the Christian who makes use of the gifts by corresponding to operating grace. c) The artist who strikes the strings of a harp to produce harmonious sounds represents the Christian who practices the virtues; but, when the Holy Ghost comes Himself to touch the strings of the heart, the soul is then under the influence of the gifts. This is a comparison employed by the Fathers to picture the action of Jesus upon Mary's soul: "*A most melodious harp used by Jesus to delight the Eternal Father.*"

1311. 2° **Definition.** From what has so far been said, we can conclude that the gifts of the Holy Ghost are *supernatural habits which impart such docility to our faculties that they promptly comply with the inspirations of grace*. However, as we shall soon explain, this docility is at the outset but mere receptiveness which needs to be *cultivated* to attain its full development. Besides, it is never exercised, except when God bestows that actual grace which we call *operating* grace. On such occasions, the soul, whilst passive under the action of God, is most active in accomplishing His Will, and so, one may say that the gifts are at once "sources of suppleness and of energy, of docility and of power... which render the soul more passive under the Hand of God, and at the same time more active in His service and in the practice of good works."¹

II. Excellence of the Gifts

This excellence will appear if we consider the gifts *in themselves* and in their relation to the *virtues*.

1312. 1° That these gifts are excellent *in themselves* is evident. The more united and the more docile we are to

the Holy Ghost, the source of all sanctity, the holier we are. Now, the gifts place us under the direct action of the Holy Ghost Who, living in our soul, enlightens our mind with His lights, points out clearly what we must do, enkindles our heart and strengthens our will to make us accomplish the good suggested. This union is therefore as close as it can be in this life.

The effects are likewise priceless. It is the gifts that cause us to practice the third or highest degree of the moral and the theological virtues, and the same gifts inspire the performance of heroic acts. It is through them that, when God so wills it, the soul is raised to contemplation, the suppleness and docility they produce being the *immediate disposition* required for the mystic state. This is, then, the shortest way to the highest perfection.

1313. ²⁰ If we compare the gifts with the virtues, the former are, as St. Thomas¹ says, more perfect than the moral and the intellectual virtues. God is not the immediate object of these, whilst the gifts direct the virtues to a higher plane where, blending with charity, they unite us to God.

Thus, *prudence* perfected by the gift of *counsel* makes us share in the light of God; the gift of *fortitude* imparts to us, places at our disposal, God's very strength. The gifts however are not superior to the theological virtues, especially charity, for charity is the most perfect of all spiritual goods, the source whence the gifts flow. Nevertheless, it may be said that the gifts perfect the *exercise* of the theological virtues. Thus, the gift of understanding renders our faith more vivid and more discerning by disclosing the inner harmony that exists among our dogmas; and the gift of wisdom perfects the exercise of the virtue of charity by making us relish God and divine things. The gifts are therefore with regard to the theological virtues as means to an end, but they impart to the virtues a further perfection.

III. Cultivation of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost

1314. ¹⁰ **Gradual Development.** We receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost at the same time that we receive the state of grace. They are then merely *supernatural faculties*. When we come to the age of reason and our heart turns towards God, we begin, under the influence of actual grace, to use our whole supernatural organism, the gifts of the Holy Ghost included. It is indeed incredible that

these gifts should remain unavailing and unavailable during a long period of our life.¹

However, in order that they may attain their normal and complete development, we must have previously practised the moral virtues during a notable period of time, varying according to the providential designs of God and our co-operation with grace. It is, in fact, the moral virtues, as we have said, that little by little make the soul tractable and dispose it to enjoy that perfect docility required for the full exercise of the gifts. In the mean time, the latter grow as habits, together with habitual grace, and frequently, unknown to us, join their energies to those of the virtues to make us perform our supernatural acts.

There are even times when through His *operating* grace the Holy Ghost enkindles *temporarily* an unwonted fervor of soul which is a kind of passing contemplation. What fervent soul has not at times felt these sudden inspirations of grace when all it had to do was to receive the divine motion and follow it? It may have been while reading the Gospels or some devout book, on the occasion of some Communion or of a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, at the time of some retreat or when making a choice of a state in life, at the time of ordination or religious profession, that it seemed to us that the grace of God sweetly and strongly carried us along.

1315. ²⁰ **Means for the Cultivation of the Gifts.**
A) *The practice of the moral virtues is the first requisite condition for the cultivation of the gifts.* Such is the teaching of St. Thomas²: "*The moral and the intellectual virtues precede the gifts, since man, through being well subordinate to his own reason, is disposed to be rightly subordinate to God.*" Indeed, to acquire that divine docility which the gifts confer, one must needs have previously conquered one's passions and vices and formed habits of prudence, of humility, of obedience, of meekness, of chastity. How can one discern, accept and follow with docility the inspirations of grace, when the soul is troubled by the prudence of the flesh, by pride, wilfulness, anger and lust! Before being led by divine impulses, one must needs have followed, first of all, the rules of Christian prudence; before obeying

¹ Some theologians, like Abbé Perriot (*Ami du Clergé*, 1821, p. 391), think that the gifts intervene in every meritorious work. Most theologians, without going that far, hold that they frequently exert their influence upon these acts without our being conscious of it.

² *Sum. theol.*, I^a II^a, q. 68, a. 8, ad 2.

¹ *Sum. theol.*, II^a II^a, q. 9, a. 3, ad 3. "The gifts are more perfect than the moral and intellectual virtues; they are not more perfect than the theological; but they are all rather related to the perfection of the theological virtues, as to an end." Cf. I^a II^a, q. 68, a. 8.

the motions of grace, one must needs have observed the commandments and triumphed over pride.

Cajetan,¹ the faithful commentator of St. Thomas rightly says: "Let spiritual directors note this and let them see to it that their disciples are, first of all, exercised in the active life before proposing to them the heights of contemplation. One must, in fact, tame one's passions by habits of meekness, of patience, etc., of liberality, of humility, etc., in order to be able, once the passions have been dominated, to rise to the contemplative life. In default of this previous exercise in asceticism, many who instead of walking rush along the ways of God, find themselves after having devoted a great part of their life to contemplation devoid of all the virtues, impatient, irritable, proud, if they are put to the least test. Such persons have neither had an active nor a contemplative life, nor the combination of the two, but have rather built upon sand, and would to God that this were a rare blunder!"

1316. B) The gifts are likewise cultivated by *combating the spirit of the world*, which is diametrically opposed to the Spirit of God. This is what St. Paul asks of us: "Now, we have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God... But the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined."² The better to combat this spirit of the world we must read and meditate upon the Gospel maxims and live according to them as perfectly as possible. Then indeed shall we be prepared to yield ourselves to the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

1317. C) Next come the *positive* and direct means which place us under the action of the Holy Ghost:

a) First of all, there is *interior recollection* or the habit of frequently thinking of God living not only near us but in us (n. 92). In this way one gradually comes to the point of never losing sight of God's presence, even in the midst of the most absorbing occupations. Often one withdraws into the inner shrine of the heart, there to meet the Holy Ghost and harken to His voice: "I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me."³ Then one realizes what the author of the Imitation says: "Happy is the soul which heareth the Lord speaking within her, and receiveth from His mouth the word of comfort."⁴ The Holy Ghost speaks to the heart, and His words bring with them light, strength, and consolation.

¹ In *IIam* II^æ, q. 182, a. 1, § VII; cfr. JORET, *Vie Spir.*, to avril 1920, p. 45-49, and *La Contemplation Mystique*, 1923, p. 71.
² *I Cor.*, II, 12-14. — ³ *Ps.* LXXXIV, 9. — ⁴ *Imitation*, Bk. III, C. I.

1318. b) Since this Divine Spirit demands sacrifices, one must become accustomed to follow *promptly* and *generously* the least of His inspirations, whenever there is no doubt that it is He Who speaks: "For I do always the things that please Him."¹ Otherwise, He would cease to speak, or at least He would speak much less frequently: "To-day if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts: As in the provocation, according to the day of temptation in the wilderness: where your fathers tempted me..."² If the sacrifices He demands seem difficult, let one not lose heart, but say with St. Augustine: "Grant, O Lord, what Thou commandest, and command then what Thou wilt." What is important is never to resist deliberately His inspirations; for the more docile one is, the more will He be pleased to act on the soul.

1319. c) We must even go to meet Him, and in union with the Incarnate Word, Who promised to send us His Spirit, in union with Her who is the most perfect Temple and the Spouse of the Holy Ghost, confidently invoke Him as did the Apostles in the Upper Room where they were persevering in prayer "with Mary, the mother of Jesus."³

The Church in her liturgy places at our disposal magnificent prayers for drawing unto ourselves the Spirit of God, such as the sequence, *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, the hymn, *Veni Creator Spiritus*, and other invocations found in the Pontifical for the ordinations of subdeacons, deacons, and priests. These prayers have no doubt a special efficacy, and their content is so full of beauty that we cannot recite them without being moved by pious emotions.

Another excellent practice is that of reciting before each one of our actions the antiphon, *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, and the adjoined prayer. In it we ask for Divine Charity, the source of the gifts, and the gift of wisdom, "*recta sapere*," which, being the most perfect, contains all the others. This prayer, if recited with attention and fervor, cannot remain ineffectual.

IV. Classification of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost

1320. The prophet Isaias in announcing the coming of the Messias declares that "*the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge, and of godliness*";⁴ and since by Baptism we are incorporated into Christ, we share in these same gifts, which according to Tradition are seven in number.

They may be classified in various ways:

A) From the point of view of *perfection*, fear of the Lord is the least perfect, and wisdom the most perfect.

B) If we consider the *faculties* upon which they exercise their action, we may distinguish *intellectual* and *affective*

¹ *John*, VIII, 29. — ² *Ps.* XCIV, 8; *Hebr.*, III, 7-8. — ³ *Acts*, I, 14.

⁴ *Isaias*, XI, 2-3. — The Hebrew text makes no mention of the gift of *piety*, but the Septuagint and the Vulgate do so, and Tradition, from the third century on, confirms the sevenfold number.

gifts. The former are those which enlighten the mind: knowledge, understanding, wisdom and counsel. The latter are those which strengthen the will: piety, strength and the fear of the Lord. Among the intellectual gifts there are chiefly three which produce infused contemplation: *knowledge, understanding and wisdom*. The others are called *active gifts*.

C) If we examine the gifts in relation to the special virtues they perfect, the gift of *counsel* perfects the virtue of *prudence*; the gift of *piety* perfects the virtue of *religion* as related to the virtue of justice; the gift of *strength* perfects the virtue of *fortitude*; the gift of *fear* perfects the virtue of *temperance*; the gifts of *knowledge* and *understanding* perfect the virtue of *faith*; the gift of *fear* is connected with the virtue of *hope*, and the gift of *wisdom* with that of *charity*.

This is the division we follow, because it shows us better the nature of each gift, by placing it side by side with the corresponding virtue.

§ II. The Seven Gifts in Particular

I. The Gift of Counsel

1321. 1^o Nature. A) The gift of counsel perfects the *virtue of prudence by making us judge promptly and rightly, as by a sort of supernatural intuition, what must be done, especially in difficult cases*. By the virtue of prudence we reflect, and we carefully seek out the best means of attaining a certain end, profiting by the lessons of the past and putting to advantage our present knowledge, in order to reach a wise decision. With the gift of counsel it is otherwise. The Holy Ghost speaks to our heart and in an instant makes us understand what we must do. Thus is fulfilled the promise made by Our Lord to His Apostles: "But when they shall deliver you up, *take no thought how or what to speak*:" for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak.¹ This is exactly what we see in the conduct of St. Peter after Pentecost. Arrested by order of the Sanhedrin and forbidden to Preach Jesus Christ any longer, he replies immediately: "*We ought to obey God, rather than men*."²

Many Saints have enjoyed this gift of counsel. St. Antoninus had it to such a high degree that posterity bestowed on him the title of good counsellor, *Antoninus, the Counsellor*; for he was consulted not

only by the simple faithful, but even by statesmen, particularly by Cosmo de Medici, who on several occasions chose him as his ambassador. We see this gift admirably exemplified in St. Catherine of Siena, who, though very young and without having as yet pursued any studies, gave wise counsels to princes, Cardinals, and to the Sovereign Pontiff himself. We behold this gift also in St. Joan of Arc, who, unskilled in the art of war, planned a campaign that astonished the best generals of the time. She tells us whence she drew her wisdom: "You have held your council and I have held mine."

1322. B) The *proper object* of the gift of counsel is the right ordering of particular acts. The gifts of knowledge and understanding furnish us with the general principles, but the gift of counsel enables us to apply these to the thousand and one particular cases which present themselves. The light of the Holy Ghost then shows us what must be done at the time, at the place, and in the circumstances in which we are, and, if we are charged with the direction of others, what advice we must give to them.

1323. 2^o Necessity. A) This gift is necessary to all in some of the more important and difficult situations, in which salvation or sanctification are concerned, for example, in matters of vocation, or in certain occasions of sin encountered even in the discharge of duty. Human reason being fallible and uncertain in its ways and able to proceed only slowly and with caution, it is of importance to receive in the decisive moments of our life the lights of this Divine Counsellor, Who with a single glance takes in all, and Who at the opportune moment makes us see with certainty what we must do in such or such difficult circumstances.¹ "With the gift of counsel," says Mgr. Landrieux, "the soul is able to discern the means; it sees its way; it goes along with assurance, be the way steep, deserted and forbidding... and it knows how to wait for the acceptable time."²

B) This gift is especially necessary to *superiors* and to *priests*, both for their own sanctification and for that of others. a) At times it is so difficult to know how to reconcile an interior life with one of zeal, or the affection due to souls with perfect chastity, or the simplicity of

¹ "Since, however, human reason is unable to grasp the singular and contingent things which may occur, the result is that the *thoughts of mortal men are fearful, and our counsels uncertain* (Wis. IX, 14). Hence in the research of counsel, man requires to be directed by God, Who comprehends all things: and this is done through the gift of counsel, whereby man is directed as though counselled by God, just as in human affairs those who are unable to take counsel for themselves seek counsel from those who are wiser." (St. THOM., IIa IIæ, q. 52, a. 1, ad 1).

² MGR. LANDRIEUX, *op. cit.*, p. 163.—"The privation of this gift is for us a cause of very great evils," says Father St. JURE, Part I, C. IV, § 7. "because without it there is confusion in our thoughts, blindness in our designs, hastiness in our resolutions, lack of reflection in our words, presumption in our actions."

the dove with the prudence of the serpent, that a special light from the Holy Ghost is none too much to show us what line of conduct to pursue. b) Likewise *Superiors* who must see that the rule is faithfully observed and retain at the same time the confidence and affection of their subjects, need great tact to combine due strictness and kindness, not to multiply orders and reprimands, and to have the rule observed through love rather than fear. c) *Spiritual directors* above all stand in need of special enlightenment in order to discern what suits their various penitents, to know their defects and select the best means to effect their reformation, to decide their vocations and to lead them to that degree of perfection or to that manner of life to which they are called.

1324. 3^o **Means of cultivating this gift.** A) The cultivation of this gift requires, first of all, a deep sense of our weakness and frequent recourse to the Holy Ghost so that He may teach us His ways: "*Shew, O Lord, thy ways to me, and teach me thy paths.*"¹ He will not fail to come to enlighten us in one way or another, for He stoops down to the humble; and He will not fail us, especially if we take care to ask His help in the morning for the entire day, at the beginning of the principal actions of the day, and particularly in all difficult cases.

B) Further, we must accustom ourselves to *listen* to the voice of the Holy Ghost, to judge all things by His light without allowing ourselves to be influenced by human considerations, and to follow the least of His inspirations. Then, finding our soul open and docile, He will speak to the heart still more frequently.²

II. The Gift of Piety

1325. 1^o **Nature.** This gift perfects the virtue of religion, which is a virtue related to that of justice, by *begetting in our hearts a filial affection for God and a tender devotion towards those persons and things consecrated to Him, in order to make us fulfil our religious duties with a holy joy.*

The virtue of religion is acquired only through effort, whilst the gift of piety is communicated to us by the Holy Ghost.

A) This gift makes us see in God not merely our Sovereign Master, but the best and most loving Father: "*You*

have received the Spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry Abba (Father)."¹ It fills the soul with confidence and love without endangering the reverence due to God.

It fosters in us a threefold sentiment: 1) *filial respect* towards God, which makes us adore Him with a holy joy as our most beloved Father. Then our spiritual exercises, instead of being an arduous task, become a need of the soul, a longing of the heart for God; 2) a *generous and tender love* that leads us to sacrifice self for God and God's glory, in order to please Him: "*I do always the things that please Him,*"² hence, it is not a selfish piety, which seeks consolations, nor an inert piety, which remains inactive when it should act, nor yet a sentimental piety, which but looks for emotional satisfaction and loses itself in idle dreams; but it is a virile piety, which expresses its love by complying with the Will of God; 3) an *affectionate obedience*, which sees in the commandments and in the counsels the wise and paternal expression of the Divine Will in our regard; hence results a holy abandonment into the hands of this loving Father, Who knows far better than we do what is good for us and Who tests us only to purify us and unite us to Himself: "*To them that love God all things work together unto good.*"³

1326. B) This same sentiment makes us love those persons and things which have a participation in the Divine Being and in His perfections.

1) Thus, we love and venerate the Blessed Virgin, because she is the Mother of God and our Mother (n. 155-156); and so we refer to her some of the veneration and some of the love we have for God, since of all creatures she best reflects His perfections. 2) We likewise love and revere in the Angels and Saints a reflection of the divine attributes. 3) Holy Writ is for us the Word of God, a letter from Our Heavenly Father, communicating to us His thoughts and His designs in our regard. 4) *Holy Church* is for us the *Spouse of Christ*, born of His Sacred Heart, perpetuating His mission upon earth, and invested with His own infallible authority; she is for us a *holy mother* who has brought us forth to the life of grace and nourished us with her sacraments. We are therefore interested in whatever concerns her, in her successes and her humiliations; we espouse all her interests and are glad to further them; we sorrow at her sorrows; in a word we bear her a *filial love*. To this we add a *sincere obedience*, well knowing that when we submit to her injunctions we yield obedience to God Himself: "*He that heareth you heareth me.*"⁴ 5) The head of this Church, the Sovereign Pontiff, is for us the vice-regent, the visible representative of Jesus Christ upon earth. We therefore offer him the veneration and love we hold for the Invisible Head of the Church, and we delight in obeying him as if he were Christ Himself. 6) We entertain these same sentiments towards our *superiors* in whom we love to see Jesus Christ: "*I look upon my superior as upon the likeness of Christ,*"⁵ and if God confides subjects to our care, we have for them the same fatherly tenderness which God shows towards us.

1327. 2^o **Necessity.** A) All Christians stand in need of this gift if they are to fulfil joyfully and readily their duties of religion towards God, of respectful obedience

¹ Ps. XXIV. 4.
² This is why DONOSO CORTÉS asserted that it is the contemplatives who make the best counsellors: "Among the people whom I have observed closely, and I have observed many, the only ones in whom I have discerned an unruined common sense, true sagacity, wondrous aptitude to offer practical and sound solutions to the most difficult problems... are those who have led a retired contemplative life." (*Essai sur le catholicisme*, p. 200).

towards their superiors, and of condescension towards their inferiors. Without it they will act towards God as towards a master, prayer will be a burden rather than a comfort, and God's providential trials will appear as severe or even unjust punishments. Under the influence of this gift, on the contrary, God appears to us as a Father; it is with child-like joy that we render Him our homages, and with a sweet resignation that we kiss the hand of Him Who strikes us only to cleanse us and unite us even more closely to Himself.

1328. B) This gift is even more necessary to priests, to religious and to all who strive to live a perfect life in the world. a) Without it, the numerous spiritual exercises which form so great a part of their life would soon become an intolerable burden; for no one can abide long in the thought of God, except he love Him. It is this very gift of piety which, united to charity, infuses into the soul those sentiments of filial tenderness towards God, that transforms our exercises of piety into sweet communion with Our Heavenly Father. Doubtless, aridity comes at times to disturb this intimate colloquy, but it is patiently, nay, joyfully accepted as coming from a Father Who hides Himself only to make His child seek Him; and since we entertain but one desire, to please Him, we are content to suffer for Him: "*When one loves, one labors not.*"

b) This gift is no less necessary in order to treat with kindness and love those persons who do not naturally appeal to us, to entertain for those whom God deigns to confide to our care a paternal tenderness, and to share the sentiments of St. Paul, who wanted to beget Jesus Christ Himself in the souls of his disciples: "*My little children, of whom I am in labour again, until Christ be formed in you.*"

1329. 3^o Means of cultivating this gift. A) The first means is frequent meditation upon the beautiful texts of Holy Scripture which portray the goodness, the paternal mercy of God towards men and particularly towards the just (n. 93-96). It is by the name of Father that He is pleased to be known and loved, especially under the New Dispensation. We must then have recourse to Him in all our difficulties, with all the eagerness and confidence of children. We shall thus perform our exercises of piety with love, seeking first and foremost the good pleasure of God and not our personal consolation.

B) The second means is that of *transforming our ordinary actions into acts of religion*, doing these actions in order to please Our Father Who is in Heaven (527). In this way our entire life becomes a prayer and consequently an act of filial piety towards God and of fraternal piety towards the neighbor. We fulfil perfectly the words of St. Paul: "*Exercise thyself unto godliness... for godliness is profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.*"

¹ Galat., IV, 19. — ² I. Tim., IV, 7-8.

III. The Gift of Fortitude

1330. 1^o Nature. *It is a gift which perfects the virtue of fortitude, by imparting to the will an impulse and an energy which enable it to do great things joyfully and fearlessly despite all obstacles.*

It differs from the virtue of fortitude in that it is not the outcome of our efforts, but of the action of the Holy Ghost, Who takes hold of the soul and gives it a singular dominion over the lower faculties and over exterior difficulties. The *virtue* of fortitude does not relieve us of a certain amount of hesitancy, of a certain apprehension with regard to obstacles or failures. The *gift* of fortitude brings with it determination, assurance, joy, the certain hope of success, and thus effects greater results. Thus, St. Stephen was said to be full of fortitude because he was full of the Holy Ghost: "*And Stephen, full of grace and fortitude... being full of the Holy Ghost...*"

1331. To act and to endure, even midst difficulties of the most arduous nature, and at the price of heroic effort are the two acts to which the gift of fortitude leads us.

a) To act, that is to say, to undertake without hesitation or fear the most arduous tasks, for example, to practice perfect recollection in the midst of tireless activity, as did St. Vincent de Paul and St. Theresa; to remain humble when surrounded by honors, like St. Louis; to face dangers, weariness, labors, and death itself, as St. Francis Xavier did; to trample under foot human respect, to contemn honors, like St. John Chrysostom, who feared but one thing, sin. b) No less strength is required to endure long and painful maladies, as did St. Ledwina, or moral sufferings such as are endured by certain souls in the course of the passive trials; or to observe faithfully throughout life all the precriptions of a rule. Martyrdom is considered the highest act of this gift, and rightly so, since we thereby surrender to God our most cherished possession, life; yet, to shed our blood drop by drop by spending ourselves completely for souls, as so many humble priests and devout laymen do, following the example of St. Paul, constitutes a martyrdom hardly less meritorious, and one which is within the reach of all.

1332. 2^o Its Necessity. It would be useless to insist at length upon the necessity of this gift. We have already said (n. 360) that in many an instance we must do the heroic in order to preserve the state of grace, and it is precisely this gift of fortitude that enables us to perform in a spirit of generosity these difficult acts.

This gift is even more necessary in the discharge of duty imposed by certain professions or vocations in which health and even life itself are endangered. Such is the case with the physician, the soldier and the priest.

1333. 3^o Means of cultivating fortitude. A) Since our strength is not from ourselves, but from God, we must

¹ Acts, VI, 8; VII, 55.

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evidently look for it in Him, by humbly acknowledging our weakness. Providence makes use of the weakest instruments, provided they be conscious of their own weakness and rely upon Him Who alone is able to make them strong. Such is the meaning of the words of St. Paul: "*But the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the strong... that he might bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his sight.*"¹ It is principally in the reception of the Holy Eucharist that we can seek from Jesus the strength we need in order to overcome all obstacles. St. Chrysostom speaks of the Christians returning from the Holy Table as having the strength of lions, since they share in the very power of Christ.²

1334. B) We must likewise carefully use the thousand and one circumstances wherein, by reason of the continuity of the effort, we can exercise ourselves in fortitude and in patience.

This is done by those who from morning to night submit joyfully to a rule, who strive to be attentive at their prayers, and recollected all day long, who keep silence when they feel inclined to speak, who avoid the sight of such objects as excite curiosity, who suffer without complaint the unseasonableness of the weather, who show kindness to those towards whom they feel a natural antipathy, who accept humbly and patiently the reproaches made to them, who accommodate themselves to the tastes, desires, and temperaments of others, who stand in contradiction without irritation, in a word, who strive to vanquish their own petty passions and to conquer themselves. To do all this, not once in passing, but habitually, to do so not merely patiently, but joyfully—this is already heroic virtue, and when later on grave circumstances present themselves, heroic action will not prove too difficult:³ for we shall then have the strength of the Holy Ghost Himself: "*You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me.*"⁴

¹ *I Cor.*, I, 27-29.

² "Let us return from that table as lions breathing fire, terrible to the devil." (*In Joan.*, homil. LXI, 3).

³ The following is the lesson given one day to Blessed Henry Suso by Divine Wisdom: "First of all, my servant must love self-abnegation and die entirely to self and to all creatures. This degree of perfection is rarely met with, but he who reaches it rises rapidly unto God... Is it surprising, then, that afflictions and crosses should not frighten such a one as they do those whose avowed desire is to avoid suffering? The Saints are not less sensitive to pain than are other men... But their souls are sheltered from harm, because they but seek after, they but love, the Cross... Their bodies suffer, but their souls are absorbed in God, and in such transport, they taste of an unspeakable sweetness... The love wherewith they are inspired allows them no longer to reckon pain as pain and affliction as affliction: they find in God but deep and unalterable peace."

⁴ *Acts*, I, 8.

IV. *The Gift of Fear*

1335. 1° Nature. It is not question here of that fear of God which, caused by the remembrance of our sins, disturbs, saddens and troubles us. Nor is it question of the fear of hell, which suffices to bring about a conversion, but not to achieve our sanctification. Here it is question of a *filial and reverential fear*, which causes us to dread every offence against God.

The gift of fear perfects the virtues of hope and temperance. It perfects the former by inspiring us with a fear of displeasing God and of being separated from Him. It perfects the latter by detaching us from the pleasures that could bring about that separation.

Hence, it may be defined as a *gift which inclines our will to a filial respect for God, removes us from sin, displeasing to Him, and gives us hope in the power of His help.*

1336. It comprises three principal acts: **a)** a vivid sense of God's greatness, and therefore extreme dread of the least sin that may offend His infinite Majesty. "Know you not," said Our Lord to St. Catherine of Sienna, "that all the sufferings a soul undergoes or could undergo in this life are not sufficient punishment for even the slightest fault. The offence done to Me, the Infinite Good, demands an infinite satisfaction. This is why I want you to know that all the sufferings of this life are not a punishment, but a correction."¹ The Saints understood this well: they reproached themselves bitterly for their slightest faults, and they never thought that they had done enough to atone for them. **b)** A lively sorrow for the least faults committed, because they have offended an Infinite God, Who is infinitely good. From this sorrow is born an ardent and earnest desire of atoning for sin by multiplying acts of sacrifice and of love.² **c)** *Vigilant care in avoiding occasions of sin as one avoids a serpent: "Flee from sin as from the face of a serpent;"*³ and hence, a great concern to know at all times God's good pleasure in order to conform our conduct thereto. Acting in this wise, we evidently perfect the virtue of temperance by avoiding all forbidden pleasure, and that of hope by lifting up our eyes to God with filial trust.

1337. 2° Its Necessity. A) This gift is needed in order to avoid an excessive familiarity with God. Some are tempted to forget God's greatness and the infinite distance

¹ *Dialogue*, Bk. I, C. II.

² "What I want," God said to St. Catherine, "are the manifold works of manly endurance, effects of patience and the other interior virtues of the soul... I, the Infinite, am forever seeking infinite works, that is to say, an infinite sentiment of love. Hence, I require that works of penance and all other external practices be employed as means, and not occupy in the heart the principal place... It is the soul that conceives and begets virtue in truth, and it is through this interior virtue that finite works are united to the sentiment of charity; and then these works will be the object of my approval and delight." (*Dialogue*, Bk. I, C. X.)

³ *Ecclus.*, XXI, 2.

that separates us from Him, assuming towards Him and towards holy things an unbecoming familiarity, speaking to Him with too much boldness, and treating Him as an equal. No doubt, God Himself encourages certain souls to a sweet intimacy, to an astounding familiarity with Him; but it is for Him, not for us, to take the initiative. Besides, filial fear in no way excludes that tender familiarity that we witness in certain Saints.¹

B) This gift is no less useful for preserving us in our relations with others especially our inferiors, from the haughty and proud manner that is more in accord with the pagan than with the Christian spirit. The reverential fear of God, Who is their Father as well as ours, will make us exercise our authority in a modest way, as befits those who hold authority not of themselves but of God.

1338. 3^o Means of Cultivating this Gift. A) We must frequently meditate upon God's infinite grandeur, His attributes, His sovereignty, and reflect upon the nature of sin, which, no matter how slight, constitutes an offence against the infinite Majesty of God. We cannot help, then, conceiving a reverential fear of Our Sovereign Master, Whom we continually offend: "*Pierce thou my flesh with thy fear: for I am afraid of thy judgments;*"² and when we come into His presence, it is with a humbled and contrite heart.

B) In order to abide in this sentiment, it is well for us to perform with care our *examinations of conscience*, striving rather to stir up compunction in our hearts than to seek a detailed knowledge of our faults: "*A contrite and humbled heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*"³ To secure a greater purity of heart, it will be well to unite ourselves more and more with the Penitent Christ; for the more we share in His hatred for sin and in His humiliations, the fuller will be our pardon.

V. The Gift of Knowledge

1339. Remarks on the three intellectual Gifts.
With the gift of knowledge we come to treat of the

¹ The following is the apposite remark of Father de Smedt (*Notre vie surnat.*, Vol. I): "When we harbor a high idea of another's superiority over us... we first approach him with a certain sense of timidity and even of anxiety; but if the said person, whom we consider far above ourselves, manifests great kindness, shows a genuine pleasure at seeing us, at speaking with us, at realizing our love for him... if he consents to live with us on terms of the most intimate familiarity, the respect with which his superiority inspires us is no hindrance to our conceiving an ardent affection for him... On the contrary, the loftier the idea we have of his superiority, the greater is our love, by tenderness and devotedness. Furthermore, when we see him at close range and enter into intimacy with him, we conceive an even higher appreciation of his qualities; our veneration for him grows, we feel overcome with gratitude and confusion at the esteem, the tenderness, the devotedness, and the thoughtfulness which he manifests to us."
² Ps. CXVII, 120. — 3 Ps. L, 19.

three *intellectual* gifts which bear more directly upon contemplation; the gift of *knowledge*, which makes us form a sound judgment of creatures in their relation to God; the gift of *understanding*, which discloses to us the intimate relations which exist among revealed truths; the gift of *wisdom* which makes us appreciate, prize and relish these truths. The three possess this in common, that they furnish us with *experimental* or *quasi-experimental* knowledge; for, they acquaint us with things divine, not through any process of reasoning, but by means of a higher light which makes us grasp them as though we had actual experience of them. This light communicated to us by the Holy Ghost is, no doubt, the light of faith, but it is now more active, more illuminating than it ordinarily is, and gives us a sort of intuition of these truths, similar to that which we have of first principles¹.

1340. 1^o Its Nature. The knowledge of which we speak here is not *philosophical* knowledge acquired through the exercise of reasoning; nor is it *theological* knowledge, acquired by applying reason to the data furnished by faith; but it is the *science of the Saints*, whereby we rightly judge of creatures in their relation to God.

Hence, we may define the gift of science as a *gift which, by the illuminating action of the Holy Ghost, perfects the virtue of faith, and thereby gives us a knowledge of created things in their relations to God.*

Father Olier² tells us that God "is an Omnipresent and All-pervading Being. He manifests Himself in all external things. In the heavens as well as upon the earth He reveals something of what He is in Himself... Therefore, in all creatures, which are as it were sacraments, visible signs of the perfections of God, we must adore what they represent... This we should have done easily if the grace given to Adam had not been taken away from us... but sin despoiled us of it, and it is restored through Jesus Christ to only those pure souls to whom faith reveals God's Majesty wherever it appears... This light of faith is properly called the science of the Saints. Without the instrumentality of the senses, without the aid of reason, it makes known to the soul the dependence of each creature upon God. This knowledge is acquired instantly and without labor. At a glance one discerns the cause of all things, and in each of these one finds food for prayer and for perpetual contemplation."

1341. The *object* of this gift of knowledge is therefore created things, inasmuch as they *lead us to God.*

a) If we consider them in their *origin*, they tell us that

¹ D. JORET, *Les dons du S. Esprit*, dans *Vie spirit.*, Mars, 1920, p. 383-393.
² *Esprit de M. Olier*, t. II, p. 346.

they come from the Hands of God, their Creator and Preserver: "He hath made us and not we ourselves." If we examine their nature we see therein a likeness or a reflection of God. Their end and purpose is to bring us to God; they are steps, as it were, by which to rise unto Him.

It is in this way that the Saints, particularly St. Francis of Assisi, looked upon created things. He looked upon all creatures as sharing a common relationship with the one and same Father of all, and each was to him a brother in the great family of the Heavenly Father—the Sun, the crystal waters, the flowers of the field, the birds of the air: "When he felt the immovable firmness and strength of the cliffs and rocks, he directly felt that God is strong and is to be trusted. The sight of a flower in the silence of the early morning, or of the mouth of a little bird confidently opened, revealed to him the pure beauty of God and His purity and the endless tenderness of the Creator. This feeling filled Francis with a constant joy in God, an uninterrupted tendency to thankfulness."¹

b) This gift of knowledge likewise enables us to perceive quickly and rightly what concerns our own sanctification and the sanctification of others.

Thus it enlightens us as to the state of our soul, as to its secret motions, their source, their motives, and the effects that may result therefrom. It teaches us how to deal with others in view of their salvation. By it the preacher knows what he must say to his hearers in order to do them good; the spiritual director, how he must lead souls according to their particular spiritual needs and the attractions of grace, and this, in virtue of a light that enables him to see into the depths of the heart. This is the infused gift of discernment of spirits. Thus it was that some Saints, enlightened by Him Who searches the hearts and reins knew before the telling the most secret thoughts of their penitents.

1342. 2° Its Usefulness. It is evident that this gift is of great help to the faithful, but especially to priests and religious.

a) It detaches us from creatures, by showing us how empty and fleeting they are, how incapable of making us happy, nay how dangerous they are, since they tend to pervert us by alluring us, by enslaving us, by turning us away from God. Being detached from all these, we can more easily rise unto God Who alone can satisfy the longings of our heart, and we cry out with the Psalmist: "Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest? Lo, I have gone far off, flying away; and I abode in the wilderness."²

b) It helps us to make a right use of creatures, by prompting us to use them as so many means by which to rise as by a ladder to Almighty God. We instinctively long to enjoy creatures and we are tempted to make them our end; but under the influence of this gift we no longer see in them anything except what God has placed in them, and from this imperfect reflection of the Divine Beauty our mind turns

¹ J. JOERGENSEN, *St. Francis of Assisi*, p. 312. (tr. by Sloane).
 timents are to be found in the *Journée chrétienne* of Father Olier.

² Ps. LIV, 7-8.

to Infinite Beauty Itself, and with St. Augustine we say: "Too late have I known Thee, Beauty ever old and ever new, too late have I loved Thee."¹

1343. 3° Means of Cultivating this Gift. a) The great means is always to look upon creatures with the eyes of faith. Instead of tarrying in the contemplation of such fleeting shadows, must we not rather look beyond to the First Cause Who deigns to impress upon them a likeness of His perfections, and must we not cling to their Author and condemn all the rest? This is precisely what the Apostle St. Paul did, who, overcome by love for Christ, wrote: "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ."²

b) Animated by this spirit we shall know how to deprive ourselves of whatever is useless, and even of some things that are useful. We shall know, for instance, how to forego at times looking at beautiful objects, reading some interesting book, enjoying some delicious food, and the like, in order to make a sacrifice to God. In this manner we shall gradually detach ourselves from creatures, and see in them only that which can lead us to their Maker.

VI. The Gift of Understanding

1344. 1° Its Nature. The gift of understanding differs from that of knowledge in that the object of the former is by far more extensive. Its scope is not limited to created things; it extends to all the revealed truths. Furthermore, its insight is much deeper; it enables us to penetrate the inner meaning of revealed truths. It does not, of course, give us an understanding of mysteries, but it enables us to see that, despite their obscurity, they are credible, that they are in accord one with the other and with reason.

It may be defined as a gift which, under the enlightening action of the Holy Ghost, gives us a deep insight into revealed truths, without however giving a comprehension of the mysteries themselves.

1345. 2° Its Effects. This gift produces in us three principal effects:

A) It enables us to penetrate into the very core of revealed truths in six different ways, says St. Thomas: 3

1) It discloses to us the substance hidden beneath the accidents, for example, Jesus Christ under the eucharistic species. This is what moved the peasant, of whom the Cure of Ars speaks, to say: "I look at Him, and He looks at me."

¹ ST. AUGUSTINE, *Confessions*, Bk. X, C. 27.
² Phil., III, 8. — ³ II^a II^a, 9, 8, a. 1.

2) It explains to us the *meaning hidden beneath the words*. This is what Our Lord did in disclosing to the disciples on the way to Emmaus the meaning of the prophecies. The Holy Ghost often makes known to interior souls the depth of meaning contained in one or other passage of Holy Writ.

3) It makes manifest the mysterious signification of *sensible signs*. Thus, St. Paul shows us in Baptism by immersion the symbol of our death to sin, of our spiritual burial and our resurrection with Christ.

4) It makes us lay hold of the *spiritual realities* contained *beneath the outward appearances*, showing us the Creator of the world in the artisan of Nazareth.

5) By it we see the *effects contained in their cause*, for instance, in the Blood of Christ shed on Calvary we see the purification of our soul and our reconciliation with God; in the pierced side of Jesus we see the birth of the Church and the source of the Sacraments.

6) Lastly, by it we see the *cause in its effects*, for instance, the action of Providence in external events.

1346. B) This gift shows us the truths of faith under so full a light, that, though we do not comprehend their very nature, we are *conformed in our belief*. This is what St. Thomas tells us: "We know that whatever be the outward appearances, they do not contradict the truth... we ought not to depart from matters of faith."¹ In a higher degree, this gift enables us to *contemplate* God, not indeed through a positive, immediate intuition of the Divine Essence, but by showing us *what God is not*, as we shall explain later.²

C) Finally it brings us to the knowledge of a *greater number* of truths, by aiding us to draw from revealed principles the theological conclusions therein contained. Thus, from the text, "*And the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us*," nearly all our teaching concerning the Incarnate Word is deduced; and from the words, "*From whom was born Jesus Who is called the Christ*," we draw all the teaching regarding the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This gift, so advantageous to all the faithful, is especially useful to priests and theologians, in order to gain an understanding of the revealed truths they are to explain to others.

1347. 3^o The Cultivation of the Gift of Understanding. A) The main disposition required to obtain this gift is a *lively and simple faith* which humbly implores divine light, the better to lay hold of revealed truth: "*Give me understanding, and I will learn thy commandments.*"³

¹ IIa IIæ, q. 8, a. 2.

² "In this life, the (mind's) eye being cleansed by the gift of understanding, we can, so to speak, see God... The sight of God is twofold. One is perfect, whereby God's essence is seen: the other imperfect, whereby, though we see not what God is, yet we see what He is not... This second vision of God belongs to the gift of understanding in its state of inchoation, as possessed by wayfarers." (Ia IIæ, q. 69, a. 2, ad 3; IIa IIæ, q. 8, a. 7).

³ Ps. CXVII, 73.

It was thus that St. Anselm was accustomed to act. He would make a lively act of faith before searching into the mysteries of our faith, in accordance with his maxim: "*Faith seeking reason*," for it is through faith that we come to an understanding of supernatural truths.

B) Once this act of faith has been made, we should accustom ourselves to go to the very heart of the mystery, not in order to comprehend it, which is impossible, but in order to grasp its meaning, its bearing, its relation to reason. After studying a number of mysteries, we should compare them, one with the other, for such a comparison will often throw much light upon each one of them. The relations of the Word to the other two Persons of the Most Blessed Trinity, for instance, enable us to understand better the mystery of His union with a human nature and His work of redeeming mankind. The Incarnation and the Redemption, likewise, throw light upon the Divine Attributes and the relations existing between Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The better to grasp these truths however, we must love them, we must study them, even more with the heart than with the mind, and above all with a humble spirit. Our Lord Himself tells us this in the following beautiful prayer to His Father: "*I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them to little ones.*"¹

VII. The Gift of Wisdom²

We shall explain its nature, its effects, and the means of cultivating it.

1348. 1^o Its Nature. Wisdom is a gift which perfects the virtue of charity, and which resides at once in the intellect and in the will, since it infuses *light* and *love* into the soul. Hence, it is rightly considered as the most perfect of all the gifts, the one which embodies all the others, just as charity embodies all the virtues.

A) St. Bernard calls this gift the *knowledge which relishes things divine*. The gift of wisdom therefore contains a twofold element: 1) a *light* which illumines the mind, and enables it to judge aright of God and of created things by relating them to their first principle and last end. It enables us to estimate things according to their highest causes and to gather them into one grand synthesis; 2) a *supernatural taste* which acts upon the will and enables it to relish divine things as by a sort of natural attraction.

A comparison may serve to set forth more clearly this twofold rôle of the gift of wisdom. It is like the sunbeam, a ray of light illuminating and delighting the eyes of the soul, and a ray of heat that warms the heart, inflames it with love, and fills it with joy.

1349. B) Wisdom, then, may be defined as a gift which perfects the virtue of charity by enabling us to discern God

¹ *Matth.*, XI, 25.

² St. THOMAS, IIa IIæ, q. 45.

and divine things in their ultimate principles, and by giving us a relish for them.

It differs therefore from the gift of understanding, which enables us to know the divine truths in themselves and in their mutual relations, but not in their ultimate causes, and does not make us relish them directly; whilst wisdom makes us both love and relish them: "*Taste and see that the Lord is sweet.*"¹

It was this gift which enabled St. Paul to see at a glance the divine plan of Redemption, with the glory of God as its principal, final cause, the Incarnate Word as its meritorious and exemplary cause, the happiness of the elect as its final, secondary cause, and divine grace as its formal cause. It was this gift which brought forth from the depths of his soul this prayer of thanksgiving: "*Blessed be the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ.*"²

With the aid of this gift, St. John makes the whole of theology to converge in the mystery of the Divine Life, of which love is both the principle and the end: "*God is love.*" By the assistance of this same gift, St. Thomas sums up his entire Summa in this one thought: God is at once the first principle whence all creatures proceed, the last end whither they return, and the way they must follow to reach Him.³

1350. 2° **Effects of the Gift of Wisdom.** Besides the increase of charity produced in the soul, this gift perfects all the other virtues.

a) It renders *faith unshakable* because of the quasi-experimental knowledge it gives us of the truths of revelation; thus, after tasting for some time the joys of Holy Communion, how can we harbor doubts as to the Real Presence? b) It steadies our *hope*; having understood and relished the dogma of our incorporation into Christ, how can we fail in hope, since He Who is our Head is already in Heaven, and the Saints who reign with Him in the heavenly city are our own brethren? c) It enables us to practise the *moral* virtues in their highest degree; for when we have once tasted the joys of divine love, those of earth hold no relish for us; we love the Cross, mortification, effort, temperance, humility, meekness, because these are so many means of becoming more and more like the Beloved and of returning His love.

This, then, is the difference between the gift of *wisdom* and that of *understanding*, the latter is a view taken by the mind, while the former is an *experience undergone by the heart*; one is light, the other love, and so they unite and complete one another. Wisdom, withal, remains the more perfect gift; for the heart outranges the intellect, it sounds

greater depths, and grasps or divines what reason fails to reach. This is particularly the case with the Saints, in whom love often surpasses knowledge.

1351. 3° **Means of Cultivating this Gift.** A) Since wisdom is one of the most precious gifts, we must *long* for it ardently, *beg* for it insistently, and *pursue* it with untiring efforts.

This is the advice given us in the Book of *Wisdom*. The Sacred Author would have us espouse Wisdom, choose her as our lifelong companion, and he offers us a beautiful prayer to win her: "God of my fathers, and Lord of Mercy, ... who by thy wisdom hast appointed man, that he should have dominion over the creature that was made by thee, that he should order the world according to equity and justice... give me wisdom that sitteth by thy throne, and cast me not off from among thy children: for I am thy servant and the son of thy handmaid, a weak man, and of short time, and falling short of the understanding of judgment and laws... Send her out of thy holy heaven, and from the throne of thy majesty, that she may be with me, and may labour with me, that I may know what is acceptable with thee. For she knoweth and understandeth all things, and shall lead me soberly in my works, and shall preserve me by her power. So shall my works be acceptable, and I shall govern thy people justly, and shall be worthy of the throne of my father."¹

B) Since wisdom *refers all to God*, we should strive to see how all the truths we study proceed from Him as their *first principle*, and tend towards Him as their *last end*. We must, then, acquire the habit of referring all things to their principles, without losing ourselves in details; of reducing all things to unity, by making a particular synthesis of what we have studied, thus preparing the general synthesis of all our knowledge.

1352. C) Since this gift makes us *relish* divine things, we must seek to love and enjoy these things by recalling that all knowledge is vain that does not lead to love. And indeed, how can we help loving God, Who is Infinite Beauty and Infinite Goodness? "*Taste and see that the Lord is sweet.*"² How can we help loving divine things, in which we see a participation in God's beauty and God's goodness; we cannot love and enjoy God, and not love those things which share in His perfections.

§ III. Rôle of the Gifts in Prayer and Contemplation

From what has been said, it follows that the exercise of the gifts is of great help to us in prayer.

¹ Ps. XXXIII, 9. — ² Eph., I, 3.
³ Simple souls exercise the gift of wisdom after their own fashion, by pondering at length some divine truth. Such was the poor woman who could never finish the recitation of the Our Father: "For nearly five years now," she said, "as soon as I speak the word *Father*, and think that He Who is in Heaven above is my Father, I begin to weep and so I remain all day long." (H. BREMOND, *Histoire littéraire*, t. II, p. 66).

to dwell more at length and more affectionately upon one and the same truth.

1355. 3° But, it is above all in *infused contemplation* that the gifts play an important part. Having attained their complete development, they impart a wondrous docility to the soul, which fits it for the mystic or contemplative state.

A) Three of the gifts, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, unite in a special manner in contemplation.

Let us explain: **a)** It is our higher faculties of intellect and will as perfected and transformed by the theological virtues and the gifts, and set in motion by actual operating grace, which are the principles that produce contemplation. The gifts are grafted on our faculties, and consequently, faculties and gifts act as one in the production of the same act. These faculties, thus transformed, constitute the *principles* which call forth contemplation, that is to say, they are the *proximate cause* whence flow, under the influence of an *operating* grace, the acts of contemplation. Thus, the intellect perfected by the virtue of faith is the principle which produces acts of faith.

b) All theologians recognize the gifts of *understanding* and *wisdom* as the principles which call forth contemplation, but some few do not attribute this function to the gift of knowledge. We believe with the majority of authors that there is no reason to exclude it, for contemplation at times takes creatures as its point of departure and then the gift of knowledge acts to enable us to see the image of God in creatures.

St. John of the Cross says that "God created all things and left in them some semblance of Himself, not only by creating them out of nothing, but also by endowing them with innumerable graces and qualities. He even increased their beauty by the admirable order and the unailing dependence that unite them one to the other.... Creatures have preserved a trace of the passage of God, that is to say, the imprint of His majesty, His power, His wisdom, and His other divine attributes." Now, the proper function of the gift of knowledge is to raise us from the creature to the Creator, to show us God's beauty hidden beneath visible symbols.

1356. B) These three gifts support one another and either lend a united action, or act one after the other in the prayer of contemplation.

a) The gift of *knowledge* lifts us up from creatures unto God in order to unite us to Him: 1) It is accompanied by an *infused light* whereby we see clearly the nothingness of all that the world prizes, honors, riches, pleasures; the value of suffering and of humiliations as means of reaching God and of glorifying Him; the reflection of the divine perfections hidden in God's creatures.

* *A Spiritual Canticle*, V. Stanza.

1353. 1° From the moment we begin cultivating the gifts, and therefore, even before they have reached their full development, they add their light and their action to that of the virtues in order to facilitate prayer. Without introducing us into the passive or mystic state, they dispose the soul and render it more docile to the action of the Holy Ghost.

This is the common teaching of theologians. Father Meynard summarizes it thus. After noting the opinion of a few authors who thought that the gifts of the Holy Ghost are limited to the performance of heroic acts and have no part in the practice of ordinary virtue, he adds: "Their action extends as well to a multitude of circumstances in which the Will of God demands of us a certain readiness and docility, for example, when it is question of overcoming vice, of subduing the passions, of resisting the temptations of the flesh, the world and the devil. This is especially true if the weakness and the frailty of the person in question require more abundant and more effective help, and therefore a higher principle of activity. This view, which we believe to be the true one, is based upon the fact that the gifts do not produce results peculiar to themselves and distinct from those of the virtues." Now, if the gifts of the Holy Ghost exert an influence upon the exercise of the ordinary virtues, they also facilitate the exercise of prayer, which is an act of the virtue of religion and one of the most effective means of practicing the virtues.

These gifts, therefore, act in a *hidden manner*, so that it is not possible to distinguish their action from that of the virtues. At times, however, they act in a more evident way by imparting to us passing intuitions which move the soul more strongly than do reasonings, and by giving rise to impulses of love loftier than those we habitually experience.

1354. 2° These gifts aid us even more in *active contemplation*, which is a sort of *loving gaze* on truth. In fact, the proper function of the gifts of understanding and of wisdom even before their complete unfolding in the soul, is to facilitate this simple view of faith, by making our thought more penetrating and our love more ardent.² Without introducing us as yet into the mystic state, their action is already more frequent and more affective than in ordinary prayer; and this fact explains how our soul is able

¹ *Traité de la vie intérieure*, t. I, n. 246. He cites in support of his view St. Antoninus, John of St. Thomas, and Suarez. Such is also the teaching of GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *op. cit.*, t. I, p. 404: "We have always maintained that previous to entrance into the mystic state, the gifts exert their influence either frequently in a hidden way, or rarely in an open manner." Cf. P. J. DE GUIBERT, R.A.M., Oct. 1923, p. 338.

² Such is the teaching of Father MEYNARD, t. I n. 126, 128, based on John of St. Thomas.

2) This light is attended by a grace that acts upon the will in order to detach it from creatures and to aid it in using them solely as steps by which to attain God.

b) The gift of understanding gives us a still deeper insight by showing us the hidden harmony that exists between our soul and God, between revealed truths and our deepest aspirations, as well as the relations existing among those truths themselves; it centers our mind and our heart upon God's intimate life, upon His immanent operations, upon the mysteries of the Trinity, of the Incarnation, of grace, and makes us contemplate them in themselves and in their mutual relations. Indeed, it attaches us to these great truths in such a way that we find it difficult to turn our mind and heart from them. Ruysbroeck compares it to the light of the sun, which by its radiance fills the air with pure light, illuminating every form and figure, and bringing out every shade of color. So, this gift permeates the intellect, producing therein a singleness of vision, through which rays of a singular clearness penetrate. Then we are indeed capable of receiving the knowledge of those sublime attributes of God, which are the source of all His works.

e) The gift of *wisdom*, by causing us to appraise all things according to their relation to God, and to relish things divine, centers our mind and heart more lovingly still on the object of our contemplation. Ruysbroeck thus describes the *savor* produced by this gift: "This savor is so intense that it seems to the soul that heaven and earth and all that they contain would dissolve and be absorbed in its unfathomable depths. These delights reach above and below (that is to say the higher and the lower faculties), within and without, and have encompassed and penetrated the entire domain of the soul. Thus, the mind contemplates the single principle whence all these delights flow. In virtue of this fact, enlightened reason begins to ponder, though it realizes full well that such incomprehensible delights must ever escape its knowledge; for the consideration of them is made by the aid of a created light, while its joys know no bounds. This is why reason fails in this consideration; but the intellect, which is transformed by this marvelous light, contemplates and finds the incomprehensible bliss of beatitude."²

1357. C) The other four gifts, though not playing such an important role in contemplation, have nevertheless a share in it, and that in two ways:

a) They fit us for it in that they themselves contribute to make our soul more responsive and more docile to the action of the Holy Ghost; b) they co-operate in this work by arousing in our heart pious affections which sustain contemplation. Thus, the gift of *fear* stirs within us sentiments of compunction and of detachment from creatures; the gift of *piety*, sentiments of filial love; the gift of *fortitude*, sentiments of generosity and constancy; the gift of *counsel* enables us to apply both to ourselves and to others the lights we have received from the Holy Ghost.

It is therefore evident that each one of these gifts plays its own part in contemplation.

² 11^e Livre, C. 66-68. — ² *Royaume des amants*, C. XXXIII.

NOTE: THE FIVE SPIRITUAL SENSES AND THE GIFTS

1358. Some of the Fathers and theologians and many mystical writers speak of *five spiritual senses*,¹ analogous to the five *imaginative* senses of which we have already spoken in number 991.

St. Augustine describes them in this beautiful text: "What do I love, O my God, when I love Thee?... It is a kind of light that I love, and melody, and fragrance, and meat, and embracement of my inner man: where there shineth unto my soul what space cannot contain, and there soundeth what time beareth not away, and there smelleth what breathing disperseth not, and there tasteth what eating diminisheth not, and there clingeth what satiety divorceth not. This is what I love when I love my God."²

What must we understand by these spiritual senses? It would seem that they are but functions or operations of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, notably of the gifts of *understanding* and of *wisdom*. Thus the spiritual senses of *sight* and of *hearing* refer to the gift of understanding, which makes us see God and things divine (n. 1341), and *hear* God speaking to our heart. The other three senses refer to the gift of *wisdom*, which causes us to *relish* God, to *breathe* the fragrance of His perfections, and to enter into *contact* with Him by a sort of spiritual embrace which is nothing else than an *experimental* love of God.

In this way one can harmonize the teaching of St. Augustine and St. Thomas, of Father Poulain and Father Garigou-Lagrange concerning this matter.

§ IV. The Fruits of the Holy Ghost and the Beatitudes

With the gifts come the *Fruits* of the Holy Ghost and the *Beatitudes*, which correspond to and complete them, as well as the *charisms*, which have a certain relation to them (n. 1914).

I. *The Fruits of the Holy Ghost*

1359. When a soul corresponds faithfully to the actual graces which set in motion the virtues and the gifts, it performs acts of virtue, at first imperfectly and with difficulty, then more perfectly and with greater relish, so that the heart is filled with holy joy. These are the fruits of the Holy Ghost, and they may be defined as *acts of virtue*

¹ Father POULAIN, *Graces of Interior Prayer*, C. VI, cites many texts to prove this.
² *Confessions*, Bk. X, C. VI.

which reach a certain degree of perfection and fill the soul with holy joy.

St. Paul enumerates nine such fruits, charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, faith, mildness, temperance.¹ It was not his mind to give a complete list, and St. Thomas rightly notes that this number is symbolic, and in reality designates all those acts of virtue wherein the soul finds spiritual consolation: "The fruits are any virtuous deeds in which one delights."²

1360. These fruits differ from the virtues and gifts in the same way as acts differ from the faculty which produces them. Moreover, the designation of fruit does not correspond to every act of virtue, but only to such as are attended by a certain spiritual sweetness. At the outset, acts of virtue often demand great effort and are at times distasteful to us. But once we have grown accustomed to the practice of virtue, we acquire facility and perform these acts without great difficulty, nay, rather with pleasure such as we take in the acts which we perform as the result of an acquired habit. It is then that we call them fruits.

It is therefore through the cultivation of the virtues and the gifts that the fruits are obtained; and through these the beatitudes, which are a prelude to eternal bliss.

II. The Beatitudes

1361. The beatitudes put the final touch to the divine work in us. Like the fruits, they are acts, but possessed of such perfection that they seem to flow from the gifts rather than from the virtues;³ they are fruits, but fruits of such mature perfection that they already furnish us with a foretaste of heavenly happiness; hence, their name, beatitudes.

In the Sermon of the Mount, Our Lord reduces them to eight: poverty of spirit, meekness, tears, hunger and thirst for justice, mercy, purity of heart, and patience in the midst of persecution. One may say however that this number is also symbolic and is not meant to set a strict limit.

These beatitudes do not connote absolute and perfect bliss; they are rather effective means of reaching eternal happiness; for if one joyfully embraces poverty, meekness, purity, humiliation; if one has attained such mastery of self as to pray for one's enemies and to love the Cross, one is faithfully following the example of the Master and making great strides in the ways of perfection.

¹ *Galat.*, V, 22-23. The *Vulgate* enumerates twelve: "But the fruit of the Spirit is: charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, mildness, faith, modesty, continence, chastity. Thus, it adds *longanimity, modesty* and *continence*, and puts *chastity* in place of *temperance*.

² *Sum. Theol.*, I^a II^a, q. 76, a. 2.
³ "Beatitudes are none but perfect works which, by reason of their perfection, are assigned to the gifts rather than to the virtues." (*Sum. theol.*, I^a II^a, q. 70, a. 2.)

1362. Conclusion. Through the cultivation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost we are introduced into the unitive way. 1) They cause us to practice all the virtues, moral and theological, in their highest degree, and thus unite us to God, making us gradually grow like unto Him by the imitation of His divine perfections. 2) They impart to our soul that responsiveness, that docility, that enables the Holy Ghost to take possession of it and to act therein with perfect freedom. It is even under the hidden influence of these gifts, and at times under their evident influence, that the prayer of simplicity is made.

ART. II. THE PRAYER OF SIMPLICITY ¹

1363. The prayer of simplicity, called thus by Bossuet, was well known before him, and was given various names which it is well to recall.

1) St. Theresa calls it the *prayer of recollection*. This must be understood of active recollection in contradistinction to passive recollection, of which we shall speak in the second chapter. In this prayer the soul gathers its various faculties to concentrate them upon God, to listen to Him, and to love Him.

2) Many authors call this the *prayer of simple regard, of the simple presence of God, of the simple committal to God, or of the simple view of faith*, because the soul fixes its affectionate gaze on God, remains in His presence, yields itself to His action, and through a simple and unreasoned faith, gazes upon God and loves Him.

3) Bossuet calls it the prayer of simplicity, because it causes us to simplify all: the reasonings and affections of prayer, and even our whole life.

4) The Carmelites, and with them many authors since the seventeenth century, call it *acquired contemplation* to distinguish it from infused contemplation.

We shall explain: 1° the nature of this prayer; 2° its advantages; 3° how to make it; 4° its relation to contemplation properly so-called.

§ I. Nature of the Prayer of Simplicity

1364. Bossuet has given an excellent description of this kind of prayer:

"One must accustom oneself to nourish the soul by a simple, loving gaze on God and on Jesus Christ; to attain this result, one must gently

¹ BOSSUET, *Manière courte et facile pour faire l'oraison en foi, et de simple présence de Dieu*; THOMAS DE JÉSUS, *De contemplatione divinâ*; VEN. LIBERMANN, *Ecrits spirit.*, *De l'oraison d'affection*; *Instruct. aux missionnaires*, C. V, art. II; POULAIN, *Grâces of Interior Prayer*, C. II; LEHODEY, *The Ways of Mental Prayer*, p. II, C. VIII; TANQUERET, *L'oraison de simplicité, Vie spirit.*, dec. 1920, p. 161-174; LALLEMANT, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 7th Principle; GROU, *How to Pray*,

free the soul from reasonings, from arguments and from the multitude of affections, in order to keep it simple, respectful and attentive and thus have it draw closer and closer to God, its first principle and its last end.... Meditation is excellent in its proper time, and highly profitable at the outset of the spiritual life; but one must not linger there, since the soul by its fidelity in mortifying and in recollecting itself, ordinarily becomes the recipient of a purer and a more intimate kind of prayer which one may call the prayer of *simplicity*, and which consists in a simple view, regard, or loving thought on some divine object, be it God Himself, or some of His mysteries, or any other Christian truth. The soul puts aside reasoning and employs a gentle contemplation that keeps it at peace, attentive and docile to the divine operations and impressions which the Holy Ghost communicates; it does little and receives much; its labour is sweet, yet very fruitful; and since it approaches nearer to the source of all light, of all grace, and of all virtue, it receives a still greater share in all these gifts."

This prayer, therefore, comprises two essential acts: *contemplation and love*; to contemplate God or divine objects in order to love them, and to love them, the better to contemplate them. If we compare this kind of prayer with *discursive or affective* meditation, we discover a three-fold simplification which well justifies the expression employed by Bossuet.

1365. 1° The first simplification consists in the *diminution* and then in the *suppression of reasoning*, which occupied such a large place in the meditation of beginners. Obligated to acquire profound convictions, and little accustomed to making pious affections, beginners needed to reflect at length upon the fundamental truths of religion and their relation to the spiritual life, upon the nature and necessity of the principal Christian virtues and the means of practising them, before their heart was able to bring forth sentiments of gratitude, love, contrition, humiliation and firm purpose of amendment, and to send up long and ardent petitions. **a)** But the moment comes when those convictions are so grounded in our soul that they form, so to speak, part of our habitual state of mind, and but little time is required to recall them. Then the pious affections of which we have spoken spring forth readily and easily, and prayer becomes *affective*.

1366. **b)** Later on, another simplification is effected: the short space of time given to reflection is replaced by an *intuitive intellectual gaze*. We thereby come to understand first principles without effort, as by an intuition. After we have meditated for a long time upon the funda-

mental truths of the spiritual life, they become to us as certain and as clear as first principles, and at one glance we grasp them with ease and delight, without recourse to a detailed analysis. Thus, the idea of *father* applied to God, which at the outset required lengthy reflections before we could grasp its meaning, now appears to us at a glance so rich and so fruitful that we linger with it lovingly in order to relish its manifold elements.

e) It even happens at times that the soul rests content with but a *vague* vision of God or of divine things, which view however keeps it sweetly and affectionately in God's presence, and renders it more and more docile to the action of the Holy Ghost. Then, without multiplying the acts of the intellect or of the will, it abandons itself to God in order to receive His commands.

1367. 2° The *affections* undergo a similar simplification. At the outset they were manifold and varied and followed one another in quick succession: love, gratitude, joy, compassion, sorrow for sin, desire of amendment, petition for help, etc. **a)** But soon one and the same affection is prolonged during five or ten minutes: the idea of God Our Father, for example, excites in the heart an ardent love which, without expressing itself in a multiplicity of words, completely absorbs the soul for several minutes, penetrates it, and gives birth therein to dispositions of generosity. No doubt, this one idea will not suffice to occupy the entire time of prayer, and it will be necessary to pass on to other affections so as to avoid falling into distractions and into a sort of idle day-dreaming; still, each successive affection will last longer, and so there will be no need as before of multiplying their number.

1368. **b)** One of these affections will finally become predominant and recur continually to our mind and heart, while its object will become like a *fixed idea* towards which, no doubt, other ideas gravitate, but in small number and in subordination to the dominant affection. For some, it will be the thought of Our Lord's Passion, accompanied by the sentiments of love and sacrifice that it arouses: "*He loved me, and delivered himself for me.*"¹ Others will make Jesus living in the Eucharist the center of their thoughts and affections, and they will continually repeat the words: "Devoutly I adore Thee, O my Hidden God." Others,

¹ Galat., II, 20.

and *Manual of Interior Souls: Cursus Asceticus*, Vol. III, Disp. III; SAUDREAU, *The Degrees of the Spiritual Life*, Vol. II, p. 251 et sq.

again, will be possessed by the idea of God abiding in their souls and they will think only of glorifying Him all the day long: "*We will come to him and will make our abode with him.*" — "*The temple of God is holy which you are.*" — "*Glorify and bear God in your body.*"¹

This is explained very well by Father Massoulié:² "When the soul considers that not only is she privileged to be in the presence of God, but that it is her happiness to possess that presence within herself, such thought pierces her to the quick and causes her to enter into a deep state of recollection. She contemplates this God of love and of majesty, and the Three Divine Persons, Who deign to enter within her and dwell there as in Their temple. She beholds the Godhead with the keenest joy, she delights in the bliss of her possession, and she finds therein an unspeakable rest, seeing all her longings fulfilled in so far as they can be upon this earth; for what greater thing can the soul long and hope for than the possession of God?"

1369. ³ The process of simplification *soon* extends to our whole life. "The practice of this kind of prayer," says Bossuet, "must begin with our first conscious moment of the day, by an act of faith in God Who is everywhere, and in Jesus Christ Whose eyes are ever upon us, were we buried in the depths of the earth." It persists all the day long. While we devote ourselves to the performance of our ordinary actions, we unite ourselves to God, and contemplate and love Him. While engaged in liturgical and vocal prayer, we think rather of the presence of God living within us than of the particular meaning of the words, and we seek above all to show Him our love. The examinations of conscience are likewise simplified: a rapid glance shows us the faults we have committed, and we regret them immediately. Study and works of zeal are done in the spirit of prayer, under the eye of God, with the ardent wish of glorifying Him: "*To the greater glory of God.*" There are no actions, even the most commonplace, that are not permeated by the spirit of faith and of love and that do not thus become so many repeated sacrificial offerings to God: "*To offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God.*"³

§ II. Advantages of the Prayer of Simplicity

1370. The great advantage of this prayer is that it gives to our whole life a unity of purpose and makes it more and more like unto God's own life for the *greater glory of God* and for the *spiritual welfare of the soul*.

¹ *God is glorified* during the entire day. This habitual and loving gaze of the soul on God makes Him better known and better loved than He would be in virtue of mere considerations: we forget self, and, with greater relation to God, under the influence of the gift of knowledge (n. 1341). Life becomes a protracted act of the virtue of religion, an act of thanksgiving and of love, and we repeat with Mary: "*My soul doth magnify the Lord.*"

1371. ² Thus, *our soul is sanctified.* **a)** By concentrating our attention upon one truth during a notable period of time, we gain a better knowledge of God, and since this contemplation is accompanied by love, we love Him more intensely and unite with Him in a more intimate way, thus drawing to ourselves the divine perfections and the virtues of Our Lord.

b) *Detachment* then becomes easier. When we habitually think of God, creatures appear but as so many steps by which to reach the Creator. Full of imperfections and misery, they have no value except in the measure in which they reflect the divine perfections and urge us to rise to the Source of all good.

c) *Humility* also becomes easier: by the divine light, we clearly see our nothingness and our sins, and we rejoice at being able, by the humble avowal of our faults, to give glory to Him Who alone is worthy of all honor and glory: "*To God alone honor and glory, unto me humiliation and shame.*" Instead of preferring ourselves to others, we consider ourselves as the worst of sinners, ready to suffer out of love all kinds of trials and humiliations.

One may therefore say in all truth that the prayer of simplicity helps us in a singular manner to give glory to God and to sanctify our soul.

1372. Solution of Difficulties. **a)** At times an objection is made to this kind of prayer on the grounds that it fosters *idleness*. St. Teresa thus makes answer: "But to return to those who discourse with the understanding: these I would advise not to spend all their time in this exercise; for though it be very meritorious, yet as prayer is so sweet, they think there will be no Sunday nor any season wherein they will not be obliged to labor, and therefore they immediately suppose all that time is lost; whereas I think that loss is great gain. But let them (as I have said) represent themselves to be in the presence of Christ; and without tiring the understanding, let them speak and regale themselves with Him, and not be fatiguing themselves in com-

¹ John, XIV, 23; 1 Cor. III, 17; VI, 20.

² *Traité de la véritable oraison.* — 3 1 Peter, II, 5.

³ *Life of St. Teresa*, by Herself, C. XIII.

posing discourses, but only present their necessities, and acknowledge themselves unworthy to be allowed to appear in His presence. Some of these considerations may be used at one time and some at another, that so the soul may not grow tired of always feeding on the same food: they are also very sweet and profitable, if once we accustom ourselves to feed on them, for they bring with them great support for giving life to the soul, as well as much profit." In reality, the soul does not remain idle: it reasons no longer, but it gazes on God, loves and praises Him, and gives itself to Him, and if it remains silent for a moment, it is in order to listen to Him; if God ceases to speak, it takes at once to its own pious affections, and so is never idle.

1873. b) Others contend that to concentrate one's attention in this manner upon a fixed idea *fatigues the mind* and brings on mental strain. This would constitute a real danger were one to enter into this kind of prayer before being ready for it, and to persist in it by sheer force. But this is precisely what must be avoided, as Bossuet remarks: "One must guard against *torturing the mind*, and against stirring up the emotions; one must rather take what presents itself to the gaze of the soul in all humility and simplicity, *with none of those violent efforts* which affect the imagination more than the will; one must allow oneself to be sweetly drawn to God and yield oneself to His Spirit." It is not question, then, of making violent efforts, but of gently following the attractions of grace. When one has exhausted the contents of one idea one must not force oneself to linger with it, but pass quietly to another. Then the prayer of simplicity instead of becoming a cause of fatigue, becomes a sweet haven of rest to the soul, which abandons itself to the action of the Holy Ghost.

§ III. How the Prayer of Simplicity is Made

1874. 1^o **The Call to this Kind of Prayer.** In order that the prayer of simplicity become *habitual*, one must fulfil the conditions required for the *unitive* way indicated in number 1296. However, if it is question of practising it only from time to time, it suffices that one be attracted thereto by the grace of God.

One may reduce to two the *distinctive signs* of a divine call to this sort of prayer: a) A certain *dislike* for discursive prayer or for a multiplicity of affections, together with the *little profit* derived therefrom. We take it for granted that it is question of a *fervent* soul striving to meditate well, and not of a *lukewarm* soul resolved to live in mediocrity. b) A certain *attraction* for *simplifying prayer*, in order to fix one's gaze on God and remain in His presence, together with the profit drawn from this holy exercise.

In *practice*, when a spiritual director notices that an earnest person experiences great difficulty in making reasoned considerations or in producing manifold affections,

it is then time to explain to him the main lines to be followed in this kind of prayer, to urge him to try it, and to ask for a report. If the results are good, the director will advise him to continue the practice.

1875. 2^o **The Prayer Itself.** Properly speaking there is no such thing as a method for this kind of prayer, since in it there is hardly anything to do but to *contemplate* and to *love*. Still, a few words of *advice* can be given to the souls that are called thereto, in order to help them keep themselves in the presence of God. These counsels should correspond to the character, the dispositions and the supernatural attractions of the different penitents.

a) Those who feel a need to *fix their senses* upon some pious object, should be advised to direct their eyes to the Crucifix, the tabernacle or some pious image apt to center their thoughts on God. As the Curé of Ars said, "we do not need to say much in order to pray well. We know that the Good Lord is there in the *tabernacle*; we open our heart to Him; we delight to be in His Holy Presence. This is the best form of prayer."¹

b) Those possessed of a *lively imagination* may represent to themselves some *Gospel scene*, not in detail as before, but in a general way; for instance, Our Lord in the Garden of Olives or upon Mount Calvary; then they may lovingly contemplate Him suffering for us, and say to themselves: "*He loved me and delivered Himself for me.*"²

1876. c) There are others who like to repeat slowly some *text of Holy Writ* or some pious prayer, to ponder over it and draw food from it. This is recommended by St. Ignatius in his *Second Manner of Praying* (n. 993); and experience shows that many a soul is thereby initiated into the prayer of simplicity. Such persons should be advised to make a collection of the most beautiful texts, of those which have already impressed them³ and to make

¹ *Life* by MONNIN, Bk. V, C. IV.

² *Galatians* II, 20.—St. Teresa, in her *Life* C. XIII, gives us an example of this prayer; after inviting her Sisters to meditate upon the subject of Jesus scourged at the pillar, she goes on to say: "But we should not weary ourselves with seeking out these reasons, but only dwell upon them with a calm understanding. If possible we should employ ourselves in considering Who looks upon us; and we should accompany Him and pray to Him, and humble ourselves before Him, and regale ourselves with Him remembering that Our Lord deserved not to be there. Whenever we are able to do this, though it should be at the very commencement of our prayer, we shall find great benefit from it..."

³ Father Sr. JURE has made such a collection entitled: *Le Maître Jésus-Christ enseignant les hommes*. One may also find inspiration in "*Le Disciple*" by Father CHEVRIER.

use of them in accordance with the attractions of the Holy Ghost.

1377. d) Persons of an affectionate nature should be advised to make *acts inspired by love for God* and to relish at length the thoughts called forth by such acts; such are, for instance, "I love Thee with my whole heart, O my God, because Thou art Goodness itself; God is charity, infinite beauty..." Or else they may address themselves to Jesus and think on all the titles He has to our love: "I love and follow Thee, O Jesus, Who art all-lovable; Thou art my Lord, I wish to obey Thee; Thou art my Shepherd, I wish to follow Thee and be fed by Thee; Thou art my Teacher, I believe in Thee; Thou art my Redeemer, I bless Thee and cling to Thee; Thou art my Leader, I am one with Thee; Thou art my most faithful Friend, I love Thee above all things, and I want to love Thee forever more." They may also employ the old method of prayer bequeathed by Father Olier to his followers: *Jesus before our eyes*: "Let us stand in awe and reverence before the Divine, the Holy One of God, and after our heart has poured itself out in love, in praise, and in other acts of homage, let us for a time remain in silence before Him...; *Jesus in our heart*: that He may make us conformable to Himself, the Divine Model: "We shall yield ourselves to Him, in order to be possessed by Him and to be animated by His power; after this we shall still abide in silence before Him to allow His divine unction to permeate our whole being...; *Jesus in our hands*: we shall desire "that His Divine Will be accomplished in us, His members, who must be subject to our Head, and who must perform no action except that which is received solely from Jesus Christ, our life and our all, Who, replenishing our soul with His Spirit, His power and His strength, must work in us and through us whatever He desires."¹

1378. e) There are persons in whom the faculty of *will* is dominant and who can no longer engage in discursive reasonings. Moreover, finding themselves troubled by aridity and distractions, they succeed only with the greatest difficulty in drawing from their heart some devout affections. The simplified prayer that is proper for them is thus described by Father Fimé: "This prayer consists in *willing* to spend all the time of prayer in loving God and in loving

¹ *Introduction*, C. IV. — ² *L'oraison du cœur*, C. I.

Him more than ourselves; in willing to pray God for the spirit of charity; in willing to remain abandoned to the Divine Will... It must be noted that love has this advantage over the acts of most other virtues and over the other ways of effecting a union with God, that if we *will* to love, we *do love*, that if by a real act of the will we choose to unite ourselves in love to the Will of Him Whom we love, or Whom we desire to love, we forthwith effect that union by this act of our will: love is in truth nothing else but an affective act of the will."

1379. f) In this kind of prayer we are exposed to *distractions* and to *aridity*, just as in affective prayer. We have but one course to follow: to humble ourselves, to offer to God the pain we experience, and to strive, in spite of all, to remain in God's presence, in perfect submission to His Will. Distractions may then prevent the mind from concentrating on God, but the *will* remains united to Him despite the wanderings of the imagination.

1380. 3° The Preparation and the Conclusion.

A) The question has been raised as to whether the *subject of prayer* is to be prepared when one makes this prayer of simplicity. Generally, the answer must be in the *affirmative*. It is known that St. Francis de Sales advised St. Chantal to prepare her prayer: "I do not mean that once the preparation has been made one must not turn to this kind of prayer (of simple regard) if at the actual time for prayer one is attracted thereto. But to adopt the practice of making no preparation at all seems to me rather improper, for this would be to appear of a sudden before God without any thanks, without any offering, without any petition. All this may be done with profit, but I must confess to a certain repugnance at making it a rule."¹ This advice is very wise: the preparation of a subject will not prevent the Holy Ghost from suggesting another if He so pleases; but, if in His wisdom He should refuse to do so, we can then occupy ourselves with the subject we have prepared.

1381. B) This preparation includes the *resolution* which is taken at the end of prayer; it is assuredly better to determine upon one the evening before. It may be that the Holy Ghost will inspire another, or simply lead the soul to yield itself to God the whole day long; still, the one already prepared will not be without fruit. We may add,

¹ Lettre du 11 mars 1610, t. XIV, p. 266.

however, that since the process of simplification extends to everything, often the best resolution will be one and the same, for instance that of living habitually in the presence of God, or of refusing Him nothing, or of doing all things out of love for Him. However, vague as these resolutions may seem to those who do not practice this kind of prayer, they are very definite to those whom God has led thereto, for God Himself will give them a practical turn through the inspirations He will frequently vouchsafe during the day.

§ IV. Relation of the Prayer of Simplicity to Infused Contemplation

To express accurately the common doctrine on this point, we shall show: 1° that in its beginnings the prayer of simplicity is in reality but *acquired* contemplation; 2° that it constitutes an excellent *preparation* for infused contemplation and at times leads up to it.

1382. 1° It is a form of contemplation. a) This was Bossuet's opinion. After describing this kind of prayer, he adds: "The soul then, leaving reasoning aside, resorts to a gentle *contemplation* which keeps it peaceful and attentive, and docile to the divine operations and impressions that the Holy Ghost communicates." The same conclusion follows from the very nature of this prayer when compared with contemplation, which is defined as a *simple intuition of truth* (n. 1298). Now, the prayer of simplicity, says Bossuet, "consists in a simple view, regard, or loving thought, directed towards some divine object." Therefore, it is rightly called contemplation.

b) It is, at least in the beginning, *acquired* and not infused contemplation, as long as it remains faint and intermittent; for it lasts but for some short moments, and then yields to other thoughts and affections. It is only little by little that the soul becomes accustomed to look at and to love God Himself by a simple view of faith for a notable period of time, much as the artist contemplates his master-piece the details and elements of which he had previously studied. It seems indeed that here there takes place an ordinary psychological process which evidently presupposes a live faith, and even the hidden action of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, but not a special intervention of God.

1383. 2° The prayer of simplicity *disposes* the soul for infused contemplation, for it induces a condition that

renders the soul highly attentive to the motions of grace and *docile to the action of the Holy Ghost*. Therefore, whenever it will please Divine Goodness to *take* possession of it in order to produce a still deeper state of recollection, a simpler insight, a more intense love, then the soul enters into the second degree of the prayer of simplicity, such as Bossuet¹ described:

"Then we must not scatter our efforts in striving to produce other acts or different dispositions, but we must simply be mindful of the presence of God, remaining exposed to His divine gaze, continuing in this devout thought as long as Our Lord gives us such a grace; not hastening to do anything except what is done in us, since this is a prayer with God alone, a union which eminently contains all the other special dispositions and *prepares the soul for that passive state wherein God becomes the sole Master of our inner life and wherein He operates more particularly*. In this state, *the less the creature labors, the more powerfully does God act*; and since God's operation constitutes a *rest*, the soul becomes, in this kind of prayer, in a way like unto Him, and receives during it wonderful graces."

Note should be taken of the phrases we have italicized and which indicate so clearly the powerful, special action of God and the passivity of the soul. Here it is indeed a question of *infused* contemplation; the prayer, begun with a certain amount of activity through a loving gaze on God, ends in repose or quietude where God acts more powerfully than does the soul.

1384. Thus there is a certain *continuity* between simplified, affective prayer, which one may acquire through a spirit of faith, and *quietude* or infused prayer, produced by the gifts of the Holy Ghost with the co-operation of the soul. There is an essential difference between the two, since the one is *acquired* and the other *infused*; but there is a bond of union, a link between them, that is, the prayer of simplicity, which begins by a simple view of faith and ends, *when it pleases God*, by the Holy Ghost's laying hold of the soul. No doubt, the Holy Spirit is not constrained, even when one has arrived at the prayer of simplicity, to transform this into infused prayer, which ever remains the gratuitous gift of God and to which we cannot rise of ourselves; still, the Holy Ghost does frequently effect that transformation, when He finds the soul well disposed; for He desires nothing so much as to unite to Himself in a more perfect way generous souls who will refuse Him nothing.

¹ *Opuscule*, N° V.

CONCLUSION OF THE FIRST CHAPTER

1385. This first degree of the unitive way is already very high. 1) The soul, affectionately and habitually united to God, strives to practice the virtues in their highest form, with the aid of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which act sometimes in a *hidden*, at other times in a more manifest way. The gifts that *predominate* in the soul are those which, due to temperament, occupations, and divine attractions, lead to action; but in acting, the soul remains united to God; it is for Him, with Him and under the action of His grace that it labors and suffers. 2) At the time of meditation its prayer is very *simple*: the soul looks through the eyes of faith at that God Who is its Father, Who dwells within it, Who works with it; and whilst contemplating Him, it loves Him. At times, this love manifests itself by generous aspirations; at other times by pure acts of the will, for the soul has its moments of aridity and trial, and then it can but say: My God, I love Thee, or at least I want to love Thee; I want to do Thy Will through love, whatever be the cost. 3) There are moments when the gifts of knowledge, of understanding, and of wisdom, which generally act only in a hidden way, manifest themselves as in a flash and place the soul for a moment in a state of sweet repose. It is a kind of *initiation into infused contemplation*.

CHAPTER II

Infused Contemplation¹

After explaining the *general notions* concerning infused contemplation, we shall examine its *different degrees*.

ART. I. GENERAL NOTIONS
REGARDING INFUSED CONTEMPLATION

I. Definition

1386. A) Earlier writers, not making any explicit distinction between acquired and infused contemplation, do not as a rule give the specific difference between the two. From different articles of St. Thomas on this subject one can draw the conclusion that contemplation is a *simple, intuitive gaze on God and divine things proceeding from love and tending thereto*.² St. Francis de Sales defines it thus: "*A loving, simple, and permanent attentiveness of the mind to divine things.*"³

B) Modern authors generally make the distinction between the two kinds of contemplation, and with Pope Benedict XIV they define or describe infused contemplation as: "a simple look of the mind attended by a gentle love

¹ ST. THOMAS, IIa IIæ, q. 180-182; ST. BONAVENTURE, *De triplici via; Itinerarium mentis ad Deum*; H. SUSO, *The little Book of Eternal wisdom; Le livre de la vérité*; B. F. RUISBROECK, *L'ornement des noces spirituelles*; GERSON, *La montagne de la contemplation; La théologie mystique spéculative et pratique*; DENIS THE CARTHUSIAN, *De Fonte Lactis et semitis vitæ; De contemplatione*; BLOSSIUS (Louis de Blois), *A Book of Spiritual Instruction*; D. A. BAKER, *Sancta Sophia*; ST. TERESA, *Life by Herself; The Way of Perfection; The Interior Castle*; ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel; The Dark Night of the Soul; Living Flame*; ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *The Love of God*, Books VI-VII; ALVAREZ DE PAZ, *De Vita Spirituali*, T. III, Lib. V; M. GODINEZ, *Praxis Theologicæ Mysticæ*; LALLEMANT, *Spiritual Doctrine*, Principle VII; SCARAMELLI, *Direttorio mistico*; RUBET, *La Mystique divine*; DE MAUMIGNY, *Practice of Mental Prayer*; POULAIN, *The Graces of Interior Prayer*; LEHOEY, *The Ways of Mental Prayer*; SAUDREAU, *The Degrees of the Spiritual Life*, Vol. II; MEYNARD, *Traité de la vie intérieure*; LAMBALLE, *Mystical Contemplation*; FARGES, *Mystical Phenomena*; JORET, *La contemplation mystique d'après saint Thomas; GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, Perfect. chrét. et contemplation*; LEJEUNE, *An Introduction to the Mystical Life*; WILLIAMSON, *Supernatural Mysticism*; A. B. SHARPE, *Mysticism, Its nature and value*; HOWLEY, *Psychology and Mystical Phenomena*.

² *Sanc. theol.*, IIa IIæ, q. 180, a. 3. c. et ad 1; u. 7. c. et ad 1. "Contemplation regards the simple act of gazing on the truth... It has its beginning in the appetite since it is through charity that one is urged to the contemplation of God. And since the end corresponds to the beginning, it follows that the term also and the end of the contemplative life has its being in the appetite, since one delights in seeing the object loved, and the very delight in the object seen arouses a yet greater love.

³ *Love of God*, Bk. VI, C. 3.

for things divine, proceeding from God, Who in a special way moves the mind to know and the heart to love divine things, and Who through the gifts of the Holy Ghost — understanding and wisdom — co-operates in these acts by shedding a powerful light upon the mind and by inflaming the will with love." This gives a very complete notion and points out clearly the share of God and of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost as well as the part our faculties play. Though God moves our mind to know and our heart to love, we co-operate freely with His divine motion.

We must note, however, that this definition only extends to *sweet* and not to arid contemplation. Hence, if one is looking for a definition that embraces both, one may say that it is a *simple, loving, protracted gaze on God and things divine, under the influence of the gifts of the Holy Ghost and of a special actual grace which takes possession of us and causes us to act in a passive rather than in an active manner.*

To understand this definition well, we must explain the share of God and that of man in contemplation.

II. *The Role of God in Contemplation*

God has the principal part, since He alone can take possession of us and put us in the passive state.

1387. ¹⁰ It is *God Who calls the soul to contemplation*, for according to all mystics contemplation is essentially a *gratuitous* gift. Such is the teaching of St. Theresa. Often she calls this prayer *supernatural*. In her second relation to Father Rodrigo Alvarez, she explains the term thus: "I call *supernatural* that which cannot be acquired either by industry or by effort, no matter what pains we take for the purpose. As to disposing oneself thereto, this indeed one can do, and this is no doubt a great thing."¹ She further elucidates her thought by the following graceful comparison: "Our Lord is pleased to make the soul mount higher and higher towards Him; then He catches this little dove and places it in a nest, there to repose."²

Such is also the teaching of St. John of the Cross. He distinguishes two methods, one active and the other passive; the latter, which is none other than contemplation, is "that in which the soul does nothing as of itself; neither does it make therein any efforts of its own; but it is God Who works in it, giving special aids, and the soul is patient, freely consenting thereto."³ The Saint often returns to this distinction:

¹ *The Living Flame*, III Stanza.
² *L'état mystique*, 2^e éd., 1921, p. 19-20. — Father Janvier affirms the same doctrine (*Carême 1923*, Retraite, 2^e Instr.); "Infused contemplation is an eminent and singular grace which we do not obtain by our own efforts; God grants it to whom He pleases, when He pleases, and to the extent in which He pleases."
³ *A Book of Spiritual Instruction*. London, 1900, c. XII.

"There is between the two states all the difference that exists between human and divine work, between natural and supernatural operation. Such souls do not act of themselves, but are under the action of the Holy Ghost; He is the principal agent, the guide, the mover in this state, and ceases not to watch over them, and lead them as so many instruments in His hands towards perfection through Faith and the Divine Law, through the spirit which God imparts to each one." Now, if the initiative is all God's, if it is He Who moves souls, if He is the principal agent, and the soul but an instrument, it is clear that the soul cannot intrude itself into this state, nor merit it in the strict sense, that is, in justice, for we cannot merit in this way except what God has deigned to include within the scope of merit, namely, sanctifying grace and eternal glory.

The gratuity of this state is acknowledged even by that school which holds that all souls are called to contemplation. After saying that meditation is not beyond our efforts, Father Saudreau adds: "No one can of himself enter into mystic prayer; no matter what efforts one may make, one will not attain it if one has not been raised to such a high state by divine favor."² Some indeed are of the opinion that one can merit it by a title of fitness, but such merit does not detract in the least from its essential gratuity.

1388. ²⁰ Again, it is God Who *determines the moment and the manner*, as well as the *duration* of contemplation. He alone puts the soul into the passive or mystic state seizing its faculties in order to act in them and through them, but always with the free consent of the will. This constitutes a sort of *divine possession*; and since God is the Sovereign Master of His Gifts, He intervenes when He wills and as He wills.

1389. ³⁰ In contemplation God acts especially in what mystics call the *subtle point of the soul*, the *summit of the soul*, the *summit of the will* or the *inmost depth of the soul*. By this we must understand all that is loftiest in the intellect and the will; it is the intellect, not inasmuch as it reasons, but inasmuch as it perceives truth by a simple glance, under the influence of the higher gifts of understanding and of wisdom; it is the will in its simplest act, which is that of loving and of relishing things divine.

The Venerable Louis de Blois³ thinks that this center of the soul wherein contemplation takes place is far superior to the three controlling faculties, since it is the source of these faculties. "Therein," he adds, "the higher faculties themselves are but one thing; therein reign perfect tranquility and perfect silence, for no image can ever reach there. It is in this center wherein the divine

¹ Relation 54. — ² *Life*, C. XVIII.
³ *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Bk I, C. XIII, (Translation by David Lewis M. A. London, 1889).

image lies hidden, that we put on the divine likeness... O Peerless Center! the holy Temple whence the Lord never departs? O wondrous Recess! the dwelling-place of the Hallowed Trinity, and the source here below of eternal delights!"

1390. 4^o It is in this center of the soul that God produces at the same time *knowledge* and *love*.

a) He produces there a knowledge which though *obscure*, makes a vivid impression, because it is *experimental* or *quasi-experimental*. God may produce it in four different ways:

1) By *attracting our attention* to an idea already possessed, but which heretofore had not impressed us deeply. Thus we knew that God is love, but now divine light makes us understand and relish this thought so well that it penetrates our whole being and takes complete possession of us.

2) By *bringing together* in our mind two ideas which we have had and making us draw from them a forceful conclusion. Thus, from the thought that God is all and we are nothing, the Holy Spirit makes us understand that humility is for us an imperative duty: I am Who am, thou art what is not!

3) By producing within us what are called *infused impressions* which, because they proceed from God, represent divine things in a more perfect and more telling fashion; this is what occurs in some *visions* or *revelations*.

4) By granting to a soul a *transient vision of God* as He is in Himself, as was the case, according to St. Thomas, with Moses and St. Paul,¹ and, according to some of the Fathers, with the Blessed Virgin.² This, however, is a favor altogether exceptional, the actuality of which is doubted by grave theologians, who explain otherwise the texts of scripture adduced by St. Thomas.

1391. b) God also produces in the soul an *ineffable love*. He enables it to understand by a sort of intuition, that He, and He alone, is the Supreme Good, and thus He attracts the soul to Himself in an irresistible way, like a magnet does, yet without doing violence to its free-will. The soul then moves towards God with all the ardor wherewith it moves towards happiness, yet freely, because its vision of God, though obscure, does not take away its freedom.

Then, according to the Venerable Louis de Blois, the soul goes out of itself in order to pass wholly into God and be lost in the abyss of

eternal love. "And there, dead to itself, it lives in God, knowing nothing, feeling nothing, save the love that inebriates it. It loses itself in the vastness of divine solitude and darkness; but to lose oneself here, is rather to find oneself, for the soul really divests itself of all that is human in order to clothe itself with God. It is all changed and transformed in God, just as iron in a fire assumes the aspect of fire and is changed into it. But the essence of the soul thus deified remains what it was, just as the incandescent iron ceases not to be iron. Heretofore there was but coldness in this soul, from now on it is all aflame; from darkness it has passed into the most radiant brightness; once insensible, it is now all tenderness... All consumed by the flame of divine love and wholly melted thereby, it passes into God by uniting itself to Him without any intermediary; it forms but one spirit with Him, just as gold and brass fuse to form one metal. Those that are thus ravished and lost in God reach different heights, for each one penetrates further into the divine depths in proportion as he turns towards God with greater sincerity, earnestness and love, and as he foregoes more completely in this quest all personal interest."¹

III. The Role of the Soul in Contemplation

Moved by God's grace, the soul freely responds to the divine motion.

1392. 1^o It lets itself be freely seized and moved by God, as a child lets itself be carried in its mother's arms. The soul is therefore both *passive* and *active* during contemplation.

a) It is *passive* in this sense, that it is powerless to act on its own initiative as it did previously; at the moment of contemplation it can no longer employ its faculties in a discursive way; it is dependent upon a higher principle which governs it, which fastens its gaze, its mind and its heart upon the object of contemplation, makes it love and relish that object, suggests what it must do and imparts to it a powerful impulse to enable it to act. However, in the first stages of contemplation there is not a complete powerlessness; the phenomenon of the *ligature of the faculties* is effected but gradually and does not exist *completely*, except in some of the higher stages of contemplation, particularly in ecstasy. Thus, in the state of quietude, vocal prayer and meditation fatigue the soul, but generally they are not beyond its powers;² in the state of perfect union, God suspends the exercise of the understanding, not indeed completely by preventing it from acting, but by preventing it from reasoning; He halts thoughts by centering them on a determined object; He causes speech to die away upon

¹ L. DE BLOIS, *A Book of Spiritual Instruction*, c. XII.

² ST. TERESA, *2nd Relation to Fr. Rodrigo; Way of Perfection*, C. XXXI.

¹ *Sum. theol.*, II^e II^e, q. 175, a. 3, ad 1.

² SUAREZ, in I^{um, c. 30, n. 18: "We should not be too quick to affirm or to extend such privileges. It may be piously believed that this favor was accorded the Most Blessed Virgin, and indeed, that if it was granted to any one, it was given to her above all."}

the lips so that one cannot utter a single word without a painful effort.¹

1393. b) Although the soul cannot reason as it did heretofore, it does *not* remain *idle*. Under the influence of the divine action, it *acts* by gazing on God and by loving Him, even if it be by acts that are at times but implicit. Nay, the soul exerts a greater activity than ever; for it receives an influx of spiritual energy which considerably increases its own. It feels itself transformed by a superior being which is, so to speak, its soul, and which lifts it up and carries it on towards God. This is the effect of *operating grace* to which the soul joyfully consents.

1394. 2^o In this state God appears to the soul under a new aspect, as a *living reality*, grasped by a sort of *experiential* knowledge which human language cannot express. It is no longer by a process of induction or deduction that God is known, but by a simple intuition. However, this intuition is not as yet the clear vision of God; it remains obscure and is obtained by a sort of contact with God, Who causes us to feel His presence and relish His favors.

Perhaps no one has better described this experimental knowledge than St. Bernard: "I confess, though I say it in my foolishness, that the **Word** has visited me, and even very often. But although He has frequently entered my soul, I have never at any time been sensible of the precise moment of His coming. I have felt that He was present. I remember that He has been with me; I have sometimes been able even to have a presentiment that He would come, but never to feel His coming, nor His departure... And thus I have learned the truth of the words I had read: In Him we live and move and have our lives for Him, who is moved by Him. You will ask then, how, since being (*Acts*, XVII, 28); but blessed is the man in whom He is, who lives for Him, who is moved by Him. You will ask then, how, since the ways of His access are thus incapable of being traced, I could know that He was present. But He is living and full of energy, and as soon as He has entered into me He has quickened my sleeping soul; has aroused and softened and goaded my heart, which was in a state of torpor and hard as a stone. He has begun to pluck and destroy, to plant and to build, to water the dry places, to illumine the gloomy spots, to throw open those which were shut close, to inflame with warmth those which were cold, as also to straighten its crooked paths and make its rough places smooth, so that my soul might bless the Lord, and all that is within me praise His Holy Name. Thus, then, the Bridegroom-Word, though He has several times entered into me, has never made His coming apparent to my sight, hearing or touch. It was not by His motions that He was recognized by me, nor could I tell by any of my senses that He had penetrated to the depths

¹ St. TERESA, *2nd Relation*, I. c.

² *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, Sermon LXXIV, n. 5-6. Translation by S. J. Eales, London, 1896.

of my being. It was as I have already said, only by the *revived activity of my heart* that I was enabled to recognize His Presence; and to know the power of His sacred Presence by the sudden departure of vices and the strong restraint put upon all carnal affections. From the discovery and conviction of my secret faults I have had good reason to admire the depth of His wisdom; His goodness and kindness have become known in the amendment, whatever it may amount to, of my life; while in the reformation and renewal of the spirit of my mind, that is, of my inward man, I have perceived, in a certain degree, the excellency of the Divine beauty." Thus the soul that contemplates the Word feels at once His Presence and His sanctifying power.

This is therefore an intermediate knowledge between ordinary faith and the Beatific Vision, but which in its last analysis belongs to faith and shares in its obscurity.

1395. 3^o Often the soul's *love is greater than its knowledge*: this is *seraphic* contemplation, in contradistinction to *cherubic* contemplation in which knowledge predominates. The will attains its object in a manner different from that of the mind: the latter knows an object only according to the representation, the image, which it receives from that object; the will or the heart tends towards the *object* such as it is *in itself*. This is why we are able to love God as He is in Himself, although our mind here on earth does not understand His inner nature. This very obscurity but causes a rekindling of our love for Him and makes us long ardently for His Presence. By an aspiration of the heart, the mystic, who cannot see God, rends the mystery that veils his own face and loves God in himself, in His infinite essence.¹ At all events some knowledge always precedes love; therefore, if certain of the mystics seem to deny this, it is because they emphasize what has particularly impressed them. But it still remains true, even in the mystic state, that no one can love what he in no wise knows.

1396. 4^o In contemplation there is a *mixture of joy and sadness*: unspeakable joy in relishing the Presence of the Divine Host, sadness at not having complete possession of Him. At times it is joy that predominates, at others, it is sadness, according to the designs of God, the various phases of the mystic life and the different individual temperaments. Thus there are periods that are particularly *painful*, called *nights*, and others that are sweet or *pleasant*. Some minds, like that of St. John of the Cross and St. Jeanne Chantal, perceive and describe especially the trials of the mystic life;

¹ JOHN OF ST. THOMAS, in *Iam II^æ*, q. 68-70, disp. 18, n. 11-12; JORET, *Vie Spirituelle*, Sept. 1920, p. 455-456.

others, like St. Teresa and St. Francis de Sales, dwell more readily upon the joys and raptures of contemplation.

1397. 5° As the mystics admit, this contemplation is beyond the powers of human description.

"It cannot be discerned or described," says St. John of the Cross.¹ Moreover, the soul has no wish to speak of it, and besides, it can discover no way or proper similitude by which to describe it, so as to make known a knowledge so high, a spiritual impression so delicate and infused. Yea, if it could have a wish to speak of it, and find terms to describe it, it would always remain secret still. The soul is like a man who sees an object for the first time, the like of which he has never seen before; he handles it and feels it, yet he cannot say what it is, or tell its name, do what he can, though it be at the same time an object cognizable by the senses. How much less then can that be described which does not enter by the senses?"

This impossibility of describing what one has experienced is explained on two grounds: on the one hand, the mind is plunged into *divine darkness* and perceives God but vaguely and obscurely, although it is very deeply impressed; on the other hand, the most striking phenomenon is that of an *intense love for God*, which one experiences but knows not how to describe.

1398. A) Let us see first of all what is meant by the *divine darkness*, an expression borrowed from the Pseudo-Dionysius.²

"Delivered from the world of sense and the world of thought, the soul enters into the *mysterious darkness of a holy ignorance*, and dismissing all scientific knowledge, it loses itself in Him Who can neither be seen nor apprehended; it gives itself over completely to this Sovereign Object and belongs no longer to itself or to any other; it is united to the Unknown by the noblest part of its being in virtue of its renouncement of knowledge; finally, it draws forth from this utter ignorance a knowledge that the intellect would not be able to attain." To attain therefore to this contemplation, we must rise above sense knowledge, which evidently cannot perceive God, and even above *rational* knowledge, which knows God only by induction and abstraction. It is indeed solely through the subtle part of the intellect that we can perceive Him. On earth we cannot see Him directly; we can but reach Him through the method of *negation*.

St. Thomas explains this more clearly: "From negation to negation, the soul rises above the most excellent creatures and unites itself to God in what measure it can here below. For in our present existence, our mind can never see the Divine Essence, it can only know what It is not. Such union therefore as is possible here below between the mind

and God takes place when we come to know that God surpasses the noblest of creatures."¹ The very notion of *being*, such as we conceive it, is too imperfect to be applied to God; it is only after eliminating all specific being known by reason that our mind unites again with God. It is then that the mind finds itself in the *divine darkness*, and it is there that God dwells.²

If we ask ourselves how it is that such negative intuition can enlighten us as regards God, we can answer that we thereby learn not what God is, but what He is not; that we thereby acquire a very exalted idea of Him, which produces in the superior part of the soul a profound impression of the divine transcendence and at the same time an ardent love for Him Whose grandeur and goodness nothing can express and Who alone can fill the soul. This contemplation, vague and affectionate, suffices under the influence of grace to cause implicit acts of faith, confidence, love and religion to well up in the soul, filling it completely, and generally producing in it a great sense of joy.

1399. B) The second element which renders a description of contemplation difficult is the ardent love which one experiences therein and which one knows not how to express.

"It is a canticle of love," St. Bernard tells us,³ "which the anointing of grace alone teaches, and experience alone makes the soul familiar with. Those who have had experience of it know it well; let those who have not had that happiness earnestly desire, not to know it, but to experience it. It is not a cry from the mouth, but the gladness of the heart; not the sounding of the lips, but the impulse and emotion of joys within; not a concert of words, but of wills moving in harmony. It is not heard without, nor does it make a sound in public. Only she who sings, and He in whose honour it is sung, that is, the Bridegroom and the bride, hear the accents of that song. It is a nuptial song which is expressive of the chaste and sweet emotions of souls, the entire conformity of character, the blending of affections in mutual charity. But for the rest, this song is not to be sung or to be understood by a soul which is as yet a neophyte in virtue and but newly turned from the world. It belongs to the advanced and instructed soul which, far as to reach a perfect age, and, as it were, to have become marriageable through the merits it has acquired, and by its virtues to have become worthy of its Spouse."

1400. 6° When contemplation is *arid* and *weak*, as in the first night of St. John of the Cross, *one is not conscious*

¹ *Comment. de div. nomin.*, c. XIII, lect. 3.

² St. THOMAS, *1 Sent.*, dist. 8, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4.

³ *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, Sermon 1, n. 11-12.

¹ *Dark Night of the Soul*, Bk. II, C. 17. Translation by David Lewis, London, 1897.

² *Mystical Theology*, C. 1, § 3.

of it; it is only later that, by examining the *effects* it has produced, one is able to establish the fact of its existence. When it is *sweet* it seems quite certain that one is not always conscious of it in its beginnings, because while it is still weak it is difficult to distinguish it from the prayer of simplicity, and because at times one passes from the one to the other without realizing it. However, once it has become intense, one is conscious of it. It may be said that all the various *supernatural* prayers described by St. Teresa are of this type, as we shall note when explaining the different phases of contemplation.

1401. Conclusion. From what we have said, it follows that the *essential element* of infused contemplation is passivity, as we have described it, which means that the soul is led, acted upon, moved, directed by the Holy Ghost, and does not lead itself, move itself, or direct itself, though it preserves its freedom and its activity.

Therefore, it must not be said that the essential element of contemplation¹ is the consciousness of the presence of God or the *presence of God felt*, since at times this is lacking, particularly in the arid contemplation described by St. John of the Cross in the course of the *first night*. It is, however, one of its chief elements, since it reappears in all the degrees of contemplation described by St. Teresa, from the prayer of quiet to the transforming union.

§ II. Advantages of Contemplation

These advantages surpass even those of the prayer of simplicity, precisely because in contemplation the soul is more closely united to God and under the influence of a more efficacious grace.

1402. 1° God thereby receives greater glory.² a) By causing us to experience the infinite transcendence of God, infused contemplation abases our whole being before His majesty, causes us to praise and bless Him, not only at the time of mental prayer, but likewise the whole day long: once we have caught a glimpse of this divine grandeur, we are held spellbound in admiration and worship before it. This is so true that we are unable to contain ourselves, and

we feel forced to invite all creatures to bless and thank God, as we shall see further on (n. 1444).

b) These homages are all the more pleasing to God, and honor Him all the more as they are directly inspired by the Holy Ghost: it is He Who adores in us, or rather, He Who causes us to adore with sentiments of great fervor and humility. He makes us adore God as He is in Himself, causing us to realize that this is a duty of our very condition, and that we are created solely in order to sing His praises. And in order to make us sing them with greater earnestness, He bestows upon us new favors and a great peace of soul.

1403. 2° The soul is thereby made more holy. Contemplation produces so much *light*, so much *love*, and so much *virtue* that it is rightly called a *royal road* to perfection

A) It enables us to know God in an ineffable and highly sanctifying way. "God now secretly and quietly infuses wisdom into the soul together with the loving knowledge of Himself, without many divers, distinct or separated acts, though He produces them sometimes in the soul, and that for some space of time."¹ This knowledge is very sanctifying, because it enables us to know by *experience*, what we had previously learned through reading or personal reflection, and because it makes us see at a glance what we had analyzed by successive acts of the mind.

St. John of the Cross² gives an excellent explanation of this: "God in His one and simple essence is all the power and majesty of His attributes. He is omnipotent, wise, good, merciful, just, strong, loving; He is all the other attributes and perfections of which we have no knowledge here below. He is all this. When the soul is in union with Him, and He is pleased to admit it to a special knowledge of Himself, it sees all these perfections and majesty together in Him... and as each one of these attributes is the very being of God, Who is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and as each attribute is God Himself; and as God is infinite light, and infinite divine fire, it follows that each attribute gives light and burns as God Himself."³ Now one can understand what St. Teresa³ says: "When it is Our Lord who stops and suspends the understanding, He supplies it with matter to occupy itself, and ravish it with astonishment, so that without any reasoning it then understands more during the short space of a "*Cratio*" than we ourselves could understand, with all possible study, during many years."

Doubtless there are instances in which the light is not so clear but rather obscure and vague; but even then it

¹ Thus, FATHER POULAIN, *Graces of Interior Prayer*, C. V, while giving as the fundamental element of contemplation the presence of God felt, adds that in the lower degrees, the prayer of quiet, God makes His presence felt only in a rather obscure manner.

² St. JOHN OF THE CROSS, *Living Flame*, Stan. III, v. 5 and 6.

¹ St. JOHN OF THE CROSS, *Living Flame*, Stan. III, v. 3.

² *Living Flame*, Stan. III, v. 1.

³ *Life by Herself*, C. XII.

makes a deep impression on the soul as we explained in number 1398,

1404. B) Contemplation produces, above all, a *very ardent love*, which, according to St. John of the Cross, is characterized by three special qualities: **a)** First of all, the soul loves God, not of itself, but *through Him*; this constitutes an excellent practice; for it loves through the Holy Ghost, as the Father and the Son love One Another. This the Son Himself declares through St. John: "*That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*"¹

b) The second excellence is that of *loving God in God*; for, in this ardent union, the soul is absorbed by the love of God, and God yields Himself with great readiness to the soul.

c) The third quality of the supreme love is that in this state the soul loves God *for what He is*, that is to say, it loves Him not only because He shows Himself generous, good, glorious, etc., but much more because He is essentially generous and good etc.

We can add, with St. Francis de Sales,² that this love is all the more ardent, because it is based upon experimental knowledge. In the same way that he who "with clear eyes feels and feels again the vivifying splendour of the rising sun" loves that light far more than one born blind who knows light but from hearsay, so he who enjoys God by contemplation loves Him far better than the one who knows Him but through study; "for the actual experience of some good renders it more lovable to us than all the speculative knowledge of it that we could have." He goes on to say, that St. Catherine of Genoa loved God more than the subtle theologian, Ocham; the latter had more knowledge of God through science, the former through experience; and this experience carried her far ahead in seraphic love.

What increases this love still more is that it facilitates contemplation, and that contemplation in turn deepens love: "For, love having aroused our attention to contemplate, reciprocally this attention gives birth to a greater and stronger love which finally attains its crowning perfection when it enjoys the possession of the object loved... love urges on the mind to the ever more attentive contemplation of the beloved beauty, and the sight impels the heart to love it ever more ardently."³

1405. C) This love is attended by the practice of all the *moral virtues* in their highest degree and, in particular, of humility, of conformity to God's will, of holy abandonment, and thereby of joy and peace of spirit even in the very midst of the trials, terrible at times, which mystics undergo.

This we shall see more in detail when analyzing the various degrees of contemplation, n. 1440 etc.

§ III. Proximate Call to Contemplation

1406. We set aside for the time being the controverted question concerning the *general* and *remote* call of all the baptized to contemplation. We wish to remain as far as possible on the *solid ground of facts* and to examine these two questions: 1° To whom does God generally grant the grace of contemplation? 2° What are the signs of a *proximate* and *individual* call to contemplation?

I. To Whom does God Grant Contemplation?

1407. 1° Contemplation being essentially a free gift (n. 1387), God grants it to whom He wills, when He wills, and in the way He wills. Usually, however, He bestows it only upon souls well prepared for it.

By exception, God grants it at times in an extraordinary way to souls devoid of virtues, so as to snatch them from the power of the devil.

St. Teresa¹ affirms this: "God knows that He can attract certain souls to Himself by means of divine favours: He sees they are on the way to be lost, but He does not wish it to happen through any fault of His; therefore, though they are in a bad case and are lacking in goodness, He gives them consolations, delights, and tenderness of devotion which begin to excite their desires, He even sometimes raises them to contemplation, although but rarely, and for a very short time. This is to prove whether such a grace will induce them to prepare themselves to enjoy His favours more often."

1408. 2° There are *privileged souls* whom God calls: to contemplation from their infancy, such as St. Rose of Lima, and in our own time, St. Teresa of the Child Jesus. Others are brought to it later and make such rapid progress in it as would seem to be out of proportion to their virtues.

St. Teresa² recounts the following: "I remember one whom God in three days so enriched that were it not for the several years' experience together with her constant and growing improvement, I would think it impossible. Another one I know who in three months reached contemplation; and both of these were still young. I have seen others receive this grace only after a long time... No limits can be set to so great a Master, Who is so anxious to bestow His favours."

1409. 3° But ordinarily God selects for contemplation those who have prepared themselves for it by detachment,

¹ *Way of Perfection*, C. XVI.

² *Concepts of Divine Love*, C. VI.

¹ *John*, XVII, 26. — ² *Love of God*, Bk. VI, C. 3.

³ *Love of God*, Bk. VI, C. 3.

and the practice of the virtues and of mental prayer, especially affective prayer.

This is the teaching of St. Thomas,¹ who declares that one cannot arrive at contemplation except by mortifying the passions through the practice of the moral virtues (cfr. n. 1315).

St. John of the Cross is no less emphatic; he develops this teaching at length in the *Ascent of Carmel* and in the *Night of the Soul*, and shows that in order to reach contemplation, one must practice the most complete and universal self-abnegation. He adds that if contemplatives are so few, it is because there are few who are completely detached from self and creatures. "So act," the Saint goes on to say, "that the soul may be established in pure, spiritual nakedness, and having become pure and simple it will be transformed into the simple and pure wisdom of God, which is the Son of God."² St. Teresa returns to this again and again, recommending, above all, humility: "After having done what those in the preceding mansions do, practice humility, and again, humility! Thereby does the Lord suffer Himself to be overcome and to yield to all we desire of Him... My opinion is that when His Majesty bestows it, He gives it to such as are already taking leave of the things of the world. I do not say they do so in fact, for their condition prevents them, but they do so by desire. Then He calls them to concern themselves specially with interior things; hence, I believe that if we allow His Majesty full freedom of action, He will not limit Himself to this gift alone on behalf of one whom He has invited to higher things."³

1410. 4° The main virtues to be practiced are: a) A great purity of heart and a complete detachment from all that can lead to sin and trouble the soul.

As examples of habitual imperfections which prevent a perfect union with God, St. John of the Cross cites: "much talking; certain attachments, which we never resolve to break with, such as to individuals, to a book or a cell, to a particular food, to certain society; the satisfaction of one's taste, science, news, and such things." He then gives the reason why: "Does it make any difference whether a bird be held by a slender thread or by a rope, while the bird is bound and cannot fly till the cord that holds it is broken?... This is the state of a soul with particular attachments: it never can attain to the liberty of the divine union, whatever virtues it may possess."⁴

1411. b) A great purity of mind, that is to say, the mortifying of curiosity, which troubles and disturbs the soul, distracts and scatters its attention in all directions. This is why those whose duties of state require them to read much and to study, must often mortify their curiosity, stop from time to time, and refer all their study to the love of God. This purity likewise demands that one be willing

to abridge and, at the accepted time, relinquish reasoning in prayer, and simplify one's affections, so as to come, little by little, to a simple and loving gaze on God. On this point St. John of the Cross bitterly reproaches unskilled directors of souls who, being acquainted with discursive meditation only, want to oblige all their penitents to keep their faculties constantly in action.¹

1412. c) A great purity of intention attained through mortification of the will and the practice of holy abandonment (nn. 480-497).

d) A lively faith, which makes us live in all things according to the maxims of the Gospel (n. 1188).

e) A religious silence which enables us to transform all our actions into so many prayers (n. 522-529).

f) Finally, and chiefly, an ardent and generous love which goes as far as self-immolation and the joyous acceptance of all trials (n. 1227-1235).

II. Signs of a Proximate Call to Contemplation

1413. When a soul is thus consciously or unconsciously disposed for contemplation, a time comes when God makes it understand that it must relinquish discursive meditation.

Now, St. John of the Cross² tells us there are three signs which indicate this moment.

1° "When one finds one cannot meditate nor exert his imagination, nor derive any satisfaction from it, as he was wont to do — when he finds dryness there, where he was accustomed to fix the senses and draw forth sweetness — then the time is come. But while he finds sweetness, and is able to meditate as usual, let him not cease therefrom, except when his soul is in peace, of which I shall speak when describing the third sign." The cause for this dislike, the Saint goes on to say, is that the soul has already drawn from divine things well-nigh all the spiritual profit that discursive meditation can yield; it can no longer make such

¹ "A Spiritual director who, like a rough blacksmith, knows only the use of his hammer, and who, because all his knowledge is limited to the coarser work, will say 'Come, get rid of this, this is waste of time and idleness; arise and meditate, resume thine interior acts, ... everything else is delusion and folly... Such a director as this does not understand the degrees of prayer, nor the ways of the Spirit ... understands not that the soul has already attained to the life of the Spirit ... where God is Himself the agent in a special way, and is speaking in secret to the solitary soul. Directors of this kind bedaub the soul with the coarse ornaments of particular knowledge and sensible sweetness to which they bring it back." (*Living Flame*, Stan. III, V. 3). St. Teresa also complains of such directors, who force the faculties to work even on Sundays. (*Life by Herself*, C. XIII).

² *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Bk. II, C. XI.

¹ *IIæ* q. 180, a. 2. — ² *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Bk. II, C. 13.

³ *Interior Castle*, IV Mansion, C. II and III.

⁴ *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Bk. I, C. XI.

a prayer; the craving and the relish for it are gone; hence it needs a new method.¹

1414. 2° "When he sees that he has no inclination to fix the imagination or the other senses on particular objects, exterior or interior. I do not mean when the imagination neither comes nor goes, — for it is disorderly even in the most complete self-recollection, — but only when the soul derives no pleasure from trying it down deliberately to other matters."

This the Saint explains: "Such a soul betaking itself to prayer — like a man with water before him — drinks sweetly without effort, without the necessity of drawing it through the channel of previous reflections, forms and figures. And the moment such a soul places itself in the presence of God, it makes an act of knowledge, confused, loving, peaceful and tranquil, wherein it drinks in wisdom, love and sweetness. This is the reason why the soul is troubled and disgusted when compelled, in this state, to make meditations and to labour in particular acts of knowledge. Its condition, then, is like that of an infant at the breast, withdrawn from it while it was sucking it, and bidden to procure its nourishment by efforts of its own; like one who loses a prize already in his power."²

1415. 3° "The third sign is the most certain of the three, namely, *when the soul delights to be alone, waiting lovingly on God, without any particular considerations, in interior peace, quiet, and repose, when the acts and exercises of the understanding, memory, and will have ceased, at least discursively, that is, going from one subject to another, nothing remaining except that knowledge and attention, general and loving, of which I have spoken, without the particular perception of aught else.*"³

"This general knowledge of which I am speaking is at times so subtle and delicate — particularly when most pure, simple, perfect, spiritual, and interior — that the soul, whilst, in the practice thereof, is *not observant or conscious of it*. This is the case when that knowledge is most pure, clear and simple, that is, when it enters into a soul most pure and detached from all other acts of knowledge and special perceptions, to which the understanding or the sense may cling. Such a soul, because freed from all those things which were actually and habitually objects of the understanding or of the sense, is not aware of them, because the accustomed objects of sense have failed it. This is the reason why this knowledge, when most pure, perfect, and simple, is the less perceived by the understanding; and is the most obscure. On the other hand, when this knowledge is less pure and simple, the more clear and the more important it seems to the understanding; because it is mixed up with, clothed in, or involved in, certain intelli-

¹ The explanations of each of these three signs are found in the fourteenth chapter of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book II.

² *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Bk. II, C. XIV.

³ *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Bk. II, C. XIV.

gible forms, of which the understanding most easily takes cognizance, to its hurt."¹

The Saint explains this by the following comparison: "When the rays of the sun penetrate through a crevice into a dark room, and the air within is full of atoms and particles of dust, these are more palpable than, more visible to the eye; and yet, those rays are then less pure, simple, and perfect, because mixed up with so much impurity: also, when they are most pure and most free from dust, the less are they cognizable by the material eye; and the more pure they are, the less are they seen and considered."² The same takes place in the case of spiritual light: the purer and more radiant it is, the less it is perceived, so much so that the soul believes it finds itself in darkness; if on the contrary it be charged with some intelligible forms, it is more easily discerned, and the soul thinks itself better enlightened.

1416. We must note here with Saint John of the Cross that *these three signs must exist at the same time before one can safely venture to abandon the state of meditation for the way of spiritual contemplation*. And let us add with this Saint that it is profitable in the beginning of one's advancement to the ways of contemplation to return at times to discursive meditation. This will even become necessary if the soul finds itself unoccupied during the quiet of contemplation; for meditation is imperative as long as the soul has not acquired the habit of contemplation.³

Conclusion: *The Desire of Contemplacion*

1417. It is permissible to desire infused contemplation, since it is an *excellent means of perfection*, but it must be done *humbly and conditionally, with a holy abandonment to the will of God*.

a) Since contemplation has so many advantages, n. 1402, it follows that one may desire it: "Contemplation is like a dew which makes virtues grow, which nourishes them, and from which they obtain their crowning perfection."⁴

b) But this desire must be *humble*, it must be accompanied by the conviction that we are very unworthy of such a gift and by the desire of using it solely for the glory of God and the good of souls.

c) It must be *conditional*, subordinated in every way to the good pleasure of God. It must therefore be neither over-eager nor unpractical: one should remember that contemplation normally presupposes the practice of the moral and theological virtues, and that it would be presumption

¹ *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Bk. II, C. XIV.

² *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Bk. II, C. XIV.

³ *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Bk. II, C. XV.

⁴ *Congrés carmélitain de Madrid*, theme VI.

to desire it before being schooled for a long time in these virtues. Besides, one must fully realize that if contemplation procures unspeakable joys, it is also attended by terrible trials which only strong souls can withstand, God's grace helping.

ART. II. THE DIFFERENT PHASES OF CONTEMPLATION

1418. Infused contemplation is not the same in all persons. God, Who is pleased to vary His gifts and to adapt them to the different temperaments and characters, does not confine His action within set forms; and so, when reading the mystics one finds very different forms of contemplation.¹ However, there seems to be a certain unity running through all this multiplicity which has enabled spiritual writers to classify the principal stages traversed by the mystics.

We shall not present here the different classifications adopted by the different authors.² They distinguish a greater or lesser number of degrees, according to their point of view, and at times they reckon as different degrees what in reality are but varying forms of the same state.

1419. Since all admit that St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross are the two great exponents of the mystic union, we shall keep to the divisions they give, and strive to combine them harmoniously. The various degrees are marked by a greater and greater hold of God on the soul, 1° When He takes possession of the subtle *point of the soul*, letting the lower faculties and the senses free to exercise their natural activity, we have the *prayer of quiet*. 2° When He seizes *all the interior faculties*, leaving merely the exterior senses to their own activity, we have the *full union*. 3° If He takes possession at the same time of the interior faculties and of the exterior senses, we have *ecstatic union* (spiritual espousals). 4° Lastly, once He extends His hold over all the internal and external faculties and this, no longer in a transitory manner, but in a *stable and per-*

¹ Cf. *Mère Suzanne-Marie de Villerey: Ami du Clergé*, 2 Août 1923.
² M. J. RIBET, *Mystique divine*, t. I, ch. X, enumerates the main classifications. Alvarez de Paz counts 15: intuition of truth, interior concentration of the energies of the soul, silence, repose, union, hearing of God's word, spiritual sleep, ecstasy, rapture, bodily apparition, imaginative apparition, intellectual vision, divine darkness, manifestations of God, intuitive vision of God. Schram has a more complete and more obscure nomenclature. Scramelli distinguishes twelve degrees: recollection, spiritual silence, quietude, inebriation of love, spiritual sleep, the anxieties and thirst of love, the divine touch, the simple mystic union, ecstasy, rapture, stable and perfect union. Father Philip of the Blessed Trinity numbers six: recollection, quietude, ordinary union, the divine impulse, rapture, spiritual marriage.

manent fashion, we have the *spiritual marriage*. Such are the four degrees of contemplation according to St. Teresa. St. John of the Cross adds to these the *nights or passive trials*; but the first night is but a species of quietude, *arid* and *crucifying*; the second night comprises the *sum-total of trials*, which precede the spiritual marriage, and which are found in the full union and in the ecstatic union. Therefore, we shall treat of:

- I Quietude { arid
 { sweet
- II Full Union
- III Ecstatic Union { sweet
 { crucifying
- IV Transforming Union or Spiritual Marriage

§ I. The Prayer of Quiet

This prayer generally begins in its *arid* form and terminates in its *sweet* form.

I. Arid Quietude or the Night of the Senses.

1420. We have said that a great purity of heart is required for contemplation. Now, even advanced souls are subject to many imperfections, and experience, though in a milder form, a reawakening of the seven capital sins (n. 1264). In order to purify them still more and to prepare them for a higher degree of contemplation, God sends them various trials which are called *passive* trials because it is God Himself who causes them and the soul has but to accept them *patiently*.

No one has described these trials better than St. John of the Cross does in the "Dark Night." He calls them *night* because the divine action binds to some extent the sense-faculties in order to subject them to the mind, and prevents the mind in turn from reasoning, so that the latter finds itself in a kind of night: on the one hand, the mind can no longer exercise itself in discursive *reasoning* as it did before, and on the other, the light of contemplation it receives is so faint and so crucifying that the soul believes itself plunged into a night of darkness. The Saint distinguishes two nights: the first calculated above all to detach us from the things of *sense*, and therefore called the *night of the senses*; the second, to detach us from spiritual consolations and from all self-love.

1421. Here we speak only of the night of the senses.

"God establishes the soul in the dark night of sense," says St. John of the Cross; "that He may purify, prepare and subdue its lower

³ *The Dark Night of the Soul*, Bk. I, C. XI.

nature, and unite it to the Spirit, by depriving it of light and causing it to cease from meditation."

This is a complex state of soul and a baffling mixture of darkness and light, of aridity and intense though hidden love of God, of real weakness and latent energy, difficult to analyze without falling into apparent contradictions. St. John of the Cross himself should be read with the help we shall try to furnish. With this end in view, we shall explain: 1° the *constituent elements* of this spiritual night; 2° the *trials which attend it*; 3° its *advantages*.

1° CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS OF THIS ORDEAL

1422. A The first and foremost of these elements is *infused contemplation*, which God begins to communicate to the soul in a secret, obscure manner as yet unknown to the soul, but which produces there a painful and agonizing impression. This, the Saint¹ says, is a "commencement of contemplation, dim and dry to the senses, which is, in general, secret und unknown to him who is admitted into it;... it makes the soul long for solitude and quiet, without the power of reflecting distinctly, on anything or even desiring to do so."

To help us understand this state of soul, the Saint further on² employs the following comparison which it will be well to keep in mind from now on: "The first action of material fire on fuel is to dry it, to expel from it all the water and all the moisture. It blackens it at once and soils it, and drying it by little and little, makes it light and consumes all its foulness and blackness which are contrary to itself. Finally, having heated and set on fire its outward surface, it transforms the whole into itself, and makes it beautiful as itself. The fuel under these conditions retains neither active nor passive qualities of its own, except bulk and weight, and assumes all the properties and acts of fire. It becomes dry, being dry it glows, and glowing, burns; luminous, it gives light, and burns more quickly than before. All this is the property and effect of fire. It is in this way we have to reason about the divine fire of contemplative love which, before it unites with, and transforms the soul into itself, purges away all its contrary qualities. It expels its impurities, blackens it and obscures it, and thus its condition is apparently worse than it was before. For a while the divine purification is removing all the evil and vicious humours, which, because so deeply rooted and settled in the soul, were neither seen nor felt, but now in order to their expulsion and annihilation, are rendered clearly visible in the dim light of the divine contemplation, the soul — though no worse in itself, nor in the sight of God — seeing at last what it never saw before, looks upon itself not only as unworthy of His regard, but even as a loathsome object, and that God does loath it."³

1423. B This kind of contemplation produces in the soul a *great aridity*, not only in the sense-faculties which are deprived of consolations, but also in the higher faculties which can no longer meditate in a discursive way as they did before. This is a painful situation: accustomed to the light, these faculties find themselves plunged into darkness; formerly they knew how to reflect and to cause numerous affections to pour forth from the heart; but now they have lost that facility, and prayer becomes most painful.

So it is, too, with the practice of the virtues: the efforts to grow in virtue once gladly made now appear arduous and forbidding.

1424. It is important to distinguish this purifying dryness from that caused by negligence and lukewarmness. St. John of the Cross¹ gives us three signs by which to make this distinction:

1) "The first is this: when we find no comfort in the things of God, and none also in created things," whereas the lukewarm while they have no inclination towards the things of God, do feel drawn to earthly pleasures. "But still, inasmuch as this absence of pleasure in the things of heaven and of earth may proceed from bodily indisposition or a melancholy temperament, which frequently cause dissatisfaction with all things, the second test and condition become necessary."

2) "*The memory dwells ordinarily upon God* with a painful anxiety and carefulness; the soul thinks it is not serving God, but going backwards, because it is no longer conscious of any sweetness in the things of God; the peculiarity of lukewarmness is the want of earnestness in, and of interior solicitude for, the things of God." Likewise, when dryness comes from physical weakness, it produces nothing but disgust without the least sign of a desire of serving God such as accompanies purifying aridity, and which obscure contemplation infuses into the soul.

3) "The third sign we have for ascertaining whether this dryness be the purgation of sense, is *inability to meditate and to make reflections*, and to excite the imagination, as before, notwithstanding all the efforts we may make; for God begins now to communicate Himself, no longer through the channel of sense as formerly, in consecutive reflections by which we arranged and divided our knowledge, but in pure spirit which admits not of successive reflections, and in the act of pure contemplation to which neither the interior nor exterior senses of our lower nature can ascend." The Saint remarks however that this inability is not always continuous, and that at intervals one can return to ordinary meditation.

Let us also note that this inability generally refers only to things spiritual; one is able to busy oneself with studies or business matters.

1425. C To this aridity is added a *painful and persistent longing for a more intimate union with God*. At first

¹ *Night*, Bk. I, C. IX. — ² *Night*, Bk. II, C. X.

³ Another comparison may further illustrate this state of soul: when we examine a glass of water with the naked eye, we see nothing in it to startle us; but if we look at that same water through the microscope, we shudder at the sight of the living

germs we now discover. Now, contemplation is like a microscope which helps us to see better our faults. — ¹ *Night*, Bk. I, C. IX.

this desire is not felt, but "the more it grows, the more the soul feels itself touched and inflamed with the love of God, without knowing or understanding how or whence that love comes, except that at times this burning so inflames it that it longs earnestly after God... Secret contemplation keeps the soul in this state of anxiety, until, in the course of time, having purged the sensual nature of man, in some degree, of its natural forces and affections by means of the aridities of its natural forces and affections by means of the aridities it occasions, it shall have kindled within it this divine love. But in the meantime, like a sick man in the hands of his physician, all it has to do, in the dark night and dry purgation of the desire, is to suffer, healing its many imperfections and practising many virtues that it may become meet for the divine love."¹

The soul is now turned towards God and no longer desires creatures; but this turning to God is as yet vague and confused; it is like homesickness for God; the soul longs to be united to Him and to possess Him. If it has not so far experienced quietude in its sweet form, the attraction is indistinct, the longing undefined, the uneasiness indefinable; but if it has already experienced the mystic union, the desire to return to it is clear and well-defined.²

2° TRIALS WHICH ATTEND THE NIGHT OF THE SENSES

1426. Spiritual writers generally give a terrifying account of these trials, because they describe what transpires in the souls of the Saints, who, being called to a high degree of contemplation, have to bear very heavy crosses. There are however other souls called to a less exalted degree who are not so severely tried. It is well to know this, in order to reassure timid souls whom the fear of the cross might hinder from entering into this path. It must be remembered that God proportions His graces to the severity of the trials.

A) Besides that persistent dryness of which we have spoken, the soul also undergoes *terrible temptations*: 1) against *faith*: feeling nothing, it imagines that it believes nothing; 2) against *hope*: deprived of consolations, it believes itself abandoned, and is tempted to weariness and discouragement; 3) against *chastity*: "to some is sent the tool of Satan, the spirit of impurity to buffet them with horrible and violent temptations of the flesh, to trouble their minds with filthy thoughts, and their imaginations with representations of sin most vividly depicted; at

¹ *Night*, Bk. I, C. XI.

² LEHOUEY, *The Ways of Mental Prayer*, P. III, C. III.

times, becomes an affliction more grievous than death;"¹ 4) against *patience*: amidst all this weariness, the soul is tempted to complain of others or of self; blasphemous thoughts present themselves to the imagination in such a vivid manner that the tongue seems to utter them; 5) against *peace of soul*: obsessed by a thousand scruples and perplexities, the soul becomes so enmeshed in its own ideas that it can follow no advice nor yield to any reasoning; this is a source of the most intense pain.

1427. B) One likewise suffers from the actions of others: 1) at times from the repeated and varied persecutions of unbelievers: "*All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution*;"² 2) sometimes also from *superiors or friends* who, not being able to understand such a condition, are unfavorably impressed by one's failures and persistent aridities; 3) at other times from the spiritual director, who either mistakes this state of soul for lukewarmness, or is unable to relieve such distress.

C) *Evils from without* come sometimes to add to this suffering from within: 1) one becomes a prey to strange ailments which baffle physicians; 2) one *cannot succeed* as one did before, on account of the helplessness in which one finds oneself, or because one is absorbed in these interior sufferings: one feels *stupid*, and others become aware of the fact; 3) one undergoes at times *temporal losses* which bring about a precarious situation. In a word, it seems as if heaven and earth had joined against this poor soul.

In many cases these trials are natural and do not go beyond what God sends fervent souls in order to procure their perfection. But in other instances, these trials are really *mystic*: they are recognized by their *suddenness*, by their *keenness*, and by the good *effects* they produce in the soul.

3° ADVANTAGES OF THIS PURIFICATION

To be introduced into passive contemplation, even though it is dark and painful, is already a great benefit; in addition, there are others which St. John of the Cross calls accessory advantages.

1428. 1° The *experimental knowledge of self* and one's miseries: "The soul counts itself for nothing, having no satisfaction in itself, because it sees of itself it does and can do nothing. God then esteems more highly this diminished

¹ *Night*, Bk. I, C. XIV. — ² *11 Tim.*, III, 12.

satisfaction with self and the affliction it feels because it thinks it is not serving God, than He did all its former delights and all its good works, however great they may have been... The soul learns to commune with God with more respect and reverence, always necessary in converse with the Most High. Now, in its prosperous days of sweetness and consolation, the soul was less observant of reverence, for the favours it then received rendered the desire somewhat bold with God, and less reverent than it should have been."¹ Thus, the virtue of religion gains by this purification.

1429. ²⁰ The *knowledge of God* becomes purer and truer, and the *love* for Him more independent of feeling. The soul no longer seeks for consolations: it wants but to please God: "It is not presumptuous and self-satisfied, as perhaps it may have been in the day of its prosperity, but timid and diffident, without any self-satisfaction. Herein consists that holy fear by which virtues are preserved and grow."²

1430. ³⁰ The soul is thereby cured of the capital sins in their more refined form (cf. n. 1263).

a) The soul now practices humility, not only towards God, but also towards the neighbor: "Now, seeing itself so parched and miserable, it does not enter into its thoughts, even for a moment, to consider itself better than others... on the contrary, it acknowledges that others are better. Out of this grows the love of our neighbor, for it now esteems them, and no longer judges them as it used to do... Now, it sees nothing but its own misery, which it keeps so constantly before its eyes that it can look upon nothing else."³

b) It practices *spiritual sobriety*: since it can no longer feed upon sensible consolations, it gradually detaches itself from them, as well as from all created things, in order to concern itself solely with eternal goods; this is the beginning of spiritual peace which before was disturbed by consolations and attachments to creatures. In the midst of this peace, the soul exercises itself in fortitude, patience and longanimity, by persevering in practices which offer neither consolation nor attraction.

c) With regard to spiritual vices, such as envy, anger, sloth, the soul rids itself of them and acquires the contrary virtues: having become docile and humble under the influence of aridities and temptations, it becomes more tolerant with itself and with others; charity displaces envy, because humility causes the soul to admire the qualities of others; and the better it sees its own faults, the more it feels constrained to labor and exert itself in order to correct them.

1431. ⁴⁰ Lastly, God seasons these aridities with a certain amount of *spiritual consolation*. When the soul

least expects it, He gives it vivid intellectual lights and a pure love. These favors are far superior to anything previously experienced, and more sanctifying, although at the beginning they do not appear so, because this divine influence remains hidden.

To sum up, these aridities make the soul advance in the pure love of God: it no longer acts under the influence of consolations, and its only wish is to please God. No more the presumption and vain complacency of former days of sensible fervor; no longer those impetuous actions, those over-ardent and natural aspirations! Spiritual peace has already begun to reign in the heart.¹

Conclusion: The Course to Follow in this Trial

1432. The spiritual director of souls who pass through this trial must show them the *greatest kindness* and devotion; he must *enlighten* and comfort them by telling them frankly that this is a purifying ordeal, and that they will come out of it better, purer, humbler, better grounded in virtue and more pleasing to God.

a) The chief disposition which must be instilled into them is that of *holy abandonment* to God: they must kiss the Hand that strikes them, by acknowledging that they have indeed merited these trials; they must join Jesus in His agony and humbly repeat His words: "*My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.*"²

b) In spite of dryness, they must persevere in prayer, in union with Our Lord, Who "*being in agony, prayed the longer.*"³ The words of St. Teresa should be kept in mind: "Whoever has begun mental prayer, I wish him not to give it up, whatever sins he may commit in the meantime, since this is the means by which he may recover himself again; but without it, he will find the work much more difficult. And let not the devil tempt him, as he did me, to leave it off through a motive of humility," and, we might add, under pretext that it is useless.

1433. ^c But there *must be no return to discursive meditation* once they have ascertained their inability to pray in that manner; they must keep their souls at rest, even though it may appear they are doing nothing, and they must be content with a loving and peaceful gaze on God.

¹ *Night*, Bk. II, C. XIII. — ² *Matth.*, XXVI, 39.
³ *Luke*, XXII, 43. — ⁴ *Life by Herself*, C. VIII.

¹ *Night*, Bk. I, C. XII. — ² *Night*, Bk. I, C. XIV. — ³ *Night*, Bk. I, C. XII.

"For if a man while sitting for his portrait cannot be still, but moves about, the painter will never depict his face, and even the work already done will be spoiled. In the same way when the soul interiorly rests, every action and passion, or anxious consideration at that time will distract and disturb it;"¹ and so when God wants to imprint His likeness upon their souls, and suspends the activity of their faculties, they have but to abide in peace, and through this peace the spirit of love will flare up and burn more brightly within them. This state of repose is by no means one of inaction; it is rather a different kind of occupation, which excludes sloth and languor. They must therefore expel distractions, and if in order to do so they must return to considerations, let them not hesitate, provided they can accomplish this without violent efforts.

1434. d) As to the *virtues*, it is evident that they must continue to cultivate them, particularly those that are proper to their state of life: humility, self-denial, patience, charity towards the neighbor, love of God through conformity to His holy will, and trustful prayer. They must practice all these virtues in a spirit of holy abandonment into the hands of God; and if they go about this courageously, this state of soul will prove a gold mine which will yield great profits.

e) The *duration* of this trial varies according to the designs of God, the degree of union to which He destines the soul, and the number of imperfections from which it must still be purified. Spiritual writers tell us that this period may extend from two to fifteen years.² But there are intervals of respite, during which the soul is at peace, enjoys God, and builds up strength for future combats; hence, the need of *patience, confidence* and *holy abandonment*. This is, in summary, what the spiritual director must urge on these sorely tried souls.

II. Sweet Quietude

1435. In treating this and the following states of soul, we shall make use, chiefly, of the Works of St. Teresa, who has described this prayer with a clarity of vision and a precision that have never been excelled. She calls it by various names: the *Fourth Mansion* of the Interior Castle, 3

¹ *Night*, Bk. I, C. XI.

² Cardinal BONA (*Via Conspendii ad Deum*, C. 10, n. 6) says that St. Francis Assisi spent two years in these purifying trials; St. Teresa eighteen; Blessed Claire of Montefalco fifteen; St. Catherine of Bologna five; St. Magdalen of Pazzi five years at first and sixteen subsequently; the Venerable Balthassar Alvarez sixteen. These figures embrace, no doubt, the duration of the two Nighis, which are generally divided by a notable interval of sweet consolations.

³ *The Interior Castle*, composed in the year 1577, at the Monastery of Toledo, five years before her death, at the request of Father Gratian and Father Velasquez, is the crown and synthesis of all her works. In it she clearly and accurately de-

or the prayer of *Divine Delights*, because it is here that for the first time the presence of God is felt by a kind of spiritual delight; in her *Life* (C. XIV) she calls it the prayer of *quiet* and she explains it by the *second way of watering* the garden. Other writers call it the prayer of *silence*, precisely because the soul then ceases to reason.

This prayer has, as it were, three distinct phases: 1° *passive recollection*, a preparation for it; 2° *quietude properly so called*; 3° the *sleep of the faculties*, which completes it and prepares for the full union of the faculties.

1° PASSIVE RECOLLECTION

1436. A) *Nature*. This kind of recollection is called passive in order to distinguish it from *active* recollection, which is acquired through our own efforts aided by grace (n. 1317). *Passive* recollection is not obtained "by means of the understanding labouring to consider God within itself, nor by the imagination representing Him within us,"¹ but by a direct action of divine grace upon our faculties. On this account St. Teresa calls it the first supernatural prayer of which she had experience: "It is an inward recollection felt in the soul, seeming to it as though it possessed other senses analogous to the exterior ones. The soul seems as if it would want to withdraw from the din of the latter; and thus sometimes it does draw them after itself; and one longs to close the eyes and neither hear nor see anything, nor be aware of anything but that which it does then, that is, to converse all alone with God. In this state, the senses and faculties are not suspended; they remain in the soul's possession, but they so remain in order to be applied to God."²

In another place she explains this by a graceful comparison: "Our faculties and senses had gone out (of the castle) to associate with

scribes the seven principal degrees of prayer corresponding to the seven stages of the spiritual life. On the eve of the Feast of the Blessed Trinity, she was asking herself what would be the fundamental idea of this Treatise, when God deigned Himself to suggest it. He showed her the soul in the state of grace as a magnificent crystal globe, having the shape of a castle with seven mansions, the seventh the center, in which God Himself dwells radiant with a marvellous brightness by which all the mansions are illumined, each more brilliant as it stands closer to the center. Outside the castle there are only darkness and uncleanness, and poisonous creatures which attack those who venture near. The entrance to the castle is mental prayer, which makes us enter into ourselves and find God. One leaves the castle through mortal sin, of which the Saint gives a terrifying description (I Mansion, C. II). There are seven Mansions: the first two correspond to the purgative way; the third to the illuminative way; and with the fourth begins the contemplative plateau.

¹ St. TERESA, *Interior Castle*, IV Mansion, C. 3.

² *Letter to Father Rodrigo Alvarez*.

strangers." Afterwards realizing their fault, they drew nigh again to the castle, though not yet resolved to enter. The Great King within the castle is willing in His mercy to call them back to Him: "Like a good shepherd (acts towards his sheep) He makes them know His voice by so sweet a call, that they themselves can scarcely hear it. This He does that they may not wander and be lost, but return to their mansion. This call of the Shepherd has such power, that they immediately abandon all those external things which deceived them, and hasten into the castle. Methinks I have never explained myself in the way I have now."¹ St. Francis de Sales furnishes us with a no less telling comparison: "As when a loadstone is placed in the midst of several needles, they immediately turn towards the magnet and fix themselves firmly thereto, so something similar occurs when the Almighty favours us with His sensible presence: the faculties of the soul then direct all their strength and activity to the spot where it is most sensibly felt, in order that they may enjoy the company of their God, Who communicates such ineffable delights."²

Passive recollection may therefore be defined as a gentle and affectionate absorption of the mind and the heart in God, and produced by a special grace of the Holy Ghost.

1437. B) Course To Follow During This Prayer.
This favor is ordinarily a prelude to the prayer of quiet; but it may be but *transitory*, as on certain occasions when one abounds in fervor, for instance at the time of receiving the religious habit, or of taking vows, or of receiving orders. From this fact two practical conclusions follow:

a) If God plunges us into this prayer of recollection, let us gently keep the understanding from reasoning, but without endeavoring to suspend it altogether:

"We should, without any violence or noise, keep the understanding from discoursing, but not suspend it, nor the imagination either; it is good for the soul to remember that it is in the presence of God, and who this God is. If what the understanding feels in itself absorbs it, well and good; but let it not try to understand what this is; for such a gift is bestowed on the will. Let the soul enjoy it without the interference of its own efforts, limiting itself to the utterance of some few words of love."³

b) But if God does not speak to our heart, "if we perceive that this King has not heard us, nor pays any heed to us, we must stand there like dolts," says St. Teresa. "For when the soul strives to bind its thoughts, it experiences a still greater aridity than before, and the very effort it makes to think of nothing makes the imagination more active. Besides, we must have but God's glory in view, not our consolations and personal tastes. When His Divine Majesty wishes the understanding to leave off discoursing,

He employs it in another way, and gives it a light and knowledge so far above what we can arrive at, that He makes it to remain absorbed."¹ Outside of this however our faculties are made for action.

2° QUIETUDE PROPERLY SO CALLED

We shall explain its nature, its origin, its development, its various forms, and the course to follow during this prayer.

1438. A) Nature. In this prayer the higher faculties of the soul, the intellect and the will, are seized by God and made to enjoy a very gentle repose and a very keen joy at His Presence; but the understanding, the memory and the imagination remain free and are at times a source of distractions.

a) St. Teresa explains in the following manner the *supernatural* character of this prayer, and the way in which the will is seized by God.² "This is something *supernatural*, which we cannot acquire by all our diligence, because it is a settling of the soul in peace; or rather, to speak more correctly, Our Lord leads her into peace, just as He did holy Simeon, for all the faculties are calmed. The soul understands, in a manner different from understanding by the exterior senses, that she is now placed near her God, and that in a very short time, she will become one with Him by union. This does not happen because she sees Him with the eyes of the body or of the soul, ... but that she sees herself in the kingdom (at least, near the King Who is to give it to her), and the soul seems so impressed with such reverence that then she dare not ask anything..."

Here the will is a captive, and if she feel any pain in this state, it is to see that she is to return to her former liberty... Nothing troubles them (those who are in this state) and it seems nothing can do so. In a word, while this continues, they are so inebriated and absorbed with the delight and satisfaction contained therein, that they remember not that there is anything more to desire; and they exclaim with St. Peter: *Lord let us make here three tabernacles.*"³

The Saint adds that, since the will alone is made captive, the other two faculties may wander. "The will must not heed them, but abide in the enjoyment of her pleasure and quiet; for if it seeks to recollect them, both she and they will roam."⁴ It is especially the imagination which strays at times and fatigues us by its deafening noise: "Let the mill-clapper go round and let us but heed the grinding of our own meal, not halting the action of our will and understanding."⁵

1439. b) The spiritual joy produced in the state of quietude is quite different from that experienced in active

¹ Interior Castle, Mansion IV, C. 3.

² Way of Perfection, C. XXXI. The Saint speaks only of the will, because being the master-faculty, it is seized first and foremost, for contemplation is rather an act of love than of knowledge. However since the will acts only when enlightened by the intelligence, the latter likewise comes to some extent within the Divine grasp. — 3 Way of Perfection, C. XXXI.

⁴ Life by Herself, C. XIV. — 5 Interior Castle, IV Mansion, C. 1.

¹ Interior Castle, IV Mansion, C. 3.

² Love of God, Bk. VI, C. 7. — 3 Interior Castle, Mansion IV, C. 3.

prayer. St. Teresa explains this difference by contrasting the *divine delights* produced by contemplation with the *joys* or consolations of active prayer. There is a twofold difference proceeding from the *source* and the *effects* of these prayers.

1) The *divine delights* come directly from the action of God, whilst the *joys* come from our activity aided by grace.

In order to make this clear, St. Teresa employs the comparison of the two cisterns supplied with water in different ways. In the one the water is brought from a distance through pipes, and rushes in with a noise; this resembles the consolations experienced in active prayer. The other cistern is fed by a spring rising from its depths and is filled noiselessly; this represents contemplation, or the water of consolation which God causes to flow from our inmost soul, with great peace and calm and gentleness.¹

2) Thus, the joys of contemplation are far superior to those of active prayer: "When this heavenly water begins to rise from the source... our whole interior seems to be enlarging and dilating, and producing certain delights which cannot be expressed. Neither can the soul understand what this is which is here given to her. A certain fragrance is diffused, as if (I may say so) some odoriferous perfumes were cast into a brasier, without any light being seen, or the place whence the odour comes."² But the Saint adds that this is a very imperfect comparison. In her Life,³ she states that such joys resemble those of heaven and that the soul loses all craving for the things of earth: "She sees clearly that even one moment of these pleasures cannot be purchased here below; and that no riches, nor dominions, nor honors, nor delights are capable of giving such happiness even for one instant, because this joy is real and we feel it satisfies us..."

The principal cause of this joy is the *presence of God felt*: "God, for His greatness' sake, is pleased that this soul should now understand that His Divine Majesty is so close to her, that there is no need of sending any messenger to her; that she but needs to speak herself, to Him, though not by word of mouth, since, being so near to her, He understands her even by the sole motion of her lips."⁴ Of course, the Saint goes on to say that God is ever with us; but it is question here of a special presence: "This Divine Sovereign, our Master, wishes we should understand that He knows us, and that we should feel the effects of His presence; that He particularly wishes to begin to work in our soul by giving her a great interior and exterior satisfaction."⁵

1440. c) This dilatation of the heart produces excellent *virtuous dispositions*, particularly a *fear of offending God* (which replaces the fear of hell), *love of penance and of crosses, humility, contempt for worldly joys*: —

1) "Neither is she distressed through the fear of hell; for though she feels greater fear now for having offended God, yet she is free from servile fear, and has a great confidence that she shall enjoy Him."

¹ Interior Castle, IV Mansion, C. 2. — ² Interior Castle, IV Mansion, C. 2.
³ Life by Herself, C. XIV. — ⁴ Life by Herself, C. XIV. — ⁵ *Ibid.*, l. c.

2) The fear she used to have of losing her health by doing penance has now ceased, and she thinks she can do all in God, as she has greater desires than ever of using austerities. The fear of afflictions, likewise, which she used to have, is now more moderate, because she has a more lively faith, for she knows that if she bears them for God's sake, His Majesty will give her grace to bear them with patience; nay sometimes she desires them, since she has a great desire to do something for God. 3) And as she now understands His greatness better, she accordingly esteems herself more vile. 4) Having, likewise, tried the delights of God, she finds those of the world but dung (in comparison); she separates herself from them by little and little, and for doing this she has more command over herself. In a word, she has improved in all virtues, and will not fail to go on increasing, unless she should relapse and offend God again, for then all is lost, however highly raised a soul may have been in virtue and contemplation."¹

1441. Definition. From this description one may conclude that quietude is a *supernatural state of prayer, not wholly passive, which is produced in the superior part of the soul, and causes the latter to feel and relish God present within it.*

It is a *supernatural* state of prayer, that is to say, infused. In this we differ from some writers of the Carmelite School, who considering it as a prayer of transition, are of the opinion that it can be acquired in the same way as the prayer of simplicity.

With them we say that it is *not wholly passive*, since only the will (with the intellect) is seized, while the power of reasoning and of the imagination remain free to roam. As to the *divine delights* and the virtues which are the fruits of this prayer, we have sufficiently explained them in n. 1439.

1442. B) Origin and Growth of Quietude. a) Generally speaking, this form of prayer is granted to souls that are already accustomed to meditation for a notable period of time, and have passed through the *night* of the senses. Still, it is sometimes preceded by the latter, especially in the case of children or innocent souls who have no need of a special purification.

b) At first it is granted but at intervals, and in a rather faint and unconscious manner; it is of short duration, lasting, for instance, for the space of a *Hail Mary*,² as St. Teresa says. Later on it becomes more frequent and

¹ Interior Castle, IV Mansion, C. 3.

² St. John of the Cross remarks (*Ascent*, Bk. III, C. XIV) that the time passes so rapidly when one is in the state of contemplation that at times one mistakes its duration: what seems to have lasted but two or three minutes, may very well have lasted longer.

more prolonged, extending over a half-hour. But, since it does not always come suddenly nor stop abruptly, it may, from its first inception to its final cessation, endure for a full hour or even longer. Moreover, when it is *active* (n. 1445) and accompanied by spiritual inebriation, it may continue through an entire day or even two, without in any way interfering with the ordinary occupations.

e) As long as the purification of the soul is not completed, quietude may occur *alternately* in its *sweet* or in its arid form.

d) A time comes when quietude becomes *habitual*: then one enters into it from the moment one begins to pray. At times one is even seized by it unawares, even in the midst of the most common-place occupations. It also tends to become stronger and more conscious, and if the soul corresponds with grace, it develops into the full union and ecstasy. But if the soul is not faithful, it may fall and fall back into discursive meditation, or even suffer the loss of grace.

1443. C) Forms or Varieties of Quietude. There are three principal forms: *silent, praying, and active quietude.*¹

a) In *silent* quietude, the soul contemplates God in the midst of a loving stillness, admiration so to speak stifling every utterance. The will immersed in God and burning with love for Him rests joyfully in Him through a union that is calm, tranquil and sweet.

Like a mother who feasts her eyes upon her child, the soul lovingly contemplates its God. "The soul," says St. Teresa,² "is like the child that sucks, lying at his mother's breast; and she, to please him, without moving his lips, forces the milk into his mouth." So it is here; for the will continues to love without any labor on the part of the understanding.

1444. b) At times the soul, unable to contain its love, pours itself forth in ardent prayer. This is *praying* quietude: now it gives vent to sweet colloquies, now it abandons itself to the effusions of its tenderness and calls upon all creatures, to praise God: "She utters a thousand holy extravagances, always endeavoring to please Thee, who holdest her in this state."³

In that state St. Teresa composed stanzas to describe her love and her suffering. Sometimes God responds to such outbursts of love with affectionate caresses, which produce a species of *spiritual inebriation*. According to St. Francis de Sales this heavenly intoxication "renders us more alive to spiritual things by alienating the corporal senses; it does not reduce us to a level with brute creation, but renders us participants of the angelic, and even of the divine, nature; it transports us out of ourselves to elevate us above ourselves."⁴

1445. c) There are cases in which quietude becomes *active*. When the quietude is profound and prolonged, says St. Teresa,¹ (since the will alone is held captive), the other faculties are free to attend to things relating to God's service; and this they do with far greater energy. Then, while the soul is engaged in exterior works it continues to love God ardently: this is the union of action and contemplation, of the service of Martha and the love of Mary.

3° THE SLEEP OF THE FACULTIES

1446. This third phase of quietude is a still higher form of prayer which prepares for the full union of the interior faculties with God.

St. Teresa described it in the seventeenth chapter of her autobiography: "Now, I often have this kind of union whereof I am speaking; and Almighty God is very often pleased to bestow this favor upon me in such a manner, that He makes my will and also my understanding recollected; and then it no longer discourses, but is occupied in the enjoyment of God, as one who is looking on, and who sees so much, that he knows not which way to look... The memory remains free and so also seems to be the imagination: and when it sees itself alone one cannot conceive what a war it makes upon the will and the understanding, and how it endeavors to put everything in confusion. It makes me quite tired, so that I abhor it; and often I have besought Our Lord to deprive me entirely of it on these occasions, if it should continue to distract me... just like those importunate and restless little gnats which buzz about by night here and there. This comparison seems to me to be extremely proper; for though these faculties have no strength to do harm, yet they trouble those who feel them." As to the means of overcoming such wanderings, she notes but one: "To consider the memory no better than a madman, and to leave it alone with its madness, for God only can check its extravagances." As one can see, this is a prayer of quiet, in which the understanding itself is seized by God, but in which the imagination continues to wander. It is a preparation for the full union.

THE COURSE TO FOLLOW DURING THE PRAYER OF QUIET

1447. The general disposition to be fostered in this state is that of *humble abandonment* into the hands of God from the very beginning to the end and throughout all the phases of this prayer.

a) One must not, then, make efforts to put oneself in this state by striving to suspend the functions of the faculties and even to hold one's breath; this would be wasted effort, since God alone can grant contemplation.

b) As soon as one is aware of the divine action, one must adapt oneself to it as perfectly as possible, giving up reflection and following the motions of grace with great docility.

¹ CASSIAN had already noted these varieties, *Conf.*, X, C. 24.

² *Way of Perfection*, C. XXXI.

³ *Life by Herself*, C. XVI. — ⁴ *Love of God*, Bk. VI, C. VI.

¹ *Way of Perfection*, C. XXXI.

1) If we are called to the state of *loving silence*, let us contemplate and love uttering not a word, or at the most a few tender words, in order to rekindle the flame of love, but without making any violent efforts that might extinguish it.

2) If we are inclined to *make acts*, if our affections burst forth as from a spring, let us pray gently, without any noise of words, but with an ardent desire to be heard. "A few little straws... presented with humility, will be much more for the purpose, and will be of greater help in enkindling the fire of divine love, than great logs of wood — I mean by these those discourses that seem to us so learned, and which might extinguish that fire in the space of time required to recite the Creed." Above all, adds St. Francis de Sales,² we must avoid violent, immoderate outbursts which weary the heart and the nerves, as well as those disturbing reflections by which we try to discover whether the tranquility we enjoy is indeed tranquil.

3) If the understanding and the imagination *wander*, let us not be disturbed; let us not go in pursuit of them; let the will "remain in the enjoyment of the favor which has been granted it, as the busy bee remains in the depths of its cell. If, instead, of entering into the hive, the bees were to go in pursuit of one another, how could any honey be made?"

§ II. The Prayer of Full Union

1448. This prayer, which corresponds to the Fifth Mansion, is called *simple union* or *full union of the interior faculties*, because in it the soul is united to God, not only through the will, but also through all the interior faculties. We It is therefore more perfect than the prayer of quiet. We shall describe the *nature* and the *effects* of this prayer.

I. Nature of the Prayer of Union

1449. 1° Its essential characteristics are two: the *suspension of all the faculties*, and the *absolute certitude that God is present in the soul*.

"To return now to the proof which I said was certain. You see that God makes this soul quite stupid, in order the better to imprint upon her true wisdom; hence, she neither sees nor hears, nor understands, nor perceives all the time she is in this state, which is always short; and, indeed, it seems to her shorter than it is."³ In other words, not only the will, but the understanding, the imagination, and the memory are suspended in their functions. St. Teresa goes on: "God so fixes Himself in the interior of this soul, that when she comes to herself, *she cannot but believe she was in God* and that God was in her."⁴ This truth in so deeply rooted in her, that though many years may pass away before God bestows the like favor upon her, she never forgets it or doubts it."⁵

¹ ST. TERESA, *Life by Herself*, C. XV. — ² *Love of God*, Bk. VI, C. X.

³ *Interior Castle*, V Mansion, C. I; cf. *Life*, C. XVIII.

⁴ St. Teresa gives the reason why, *Interior Castle*, V Mansion, C. I: "I dare venture to assert that His Divine Majesty is so joined and united with the essence of the soul, that the devil dare not approach..."

⁵ *Interior Castle*, V Mansion, C. I.

1450. 2° From these two characteristics three others flow:

a) The *absence of distractions*, since the whole soul is entirely absorbed in God.

b) The *absence of fatigue*: personal effort is reduced to very little; to abandon oneself to the good pleasure of God suffices. The Manna of Heaven falls upon the soul, which has but to enjoy it; and so this prayer, no matter how long it may endure, causes no injury to health.¹

c) An extraordinary *abundance of joy*. "In this degree one feels nothing, one but enjoys, though yet without understanding what is enjoyed. One knows, however, that a certain good is possessed in which all blessings are comprised. All the senses are occupied with this joy in such a manner that they cannot apply themselves to anything else, either interiorly or exteriorly..."² The Saint adds that a simple moment of such pure delights suffices to compensate for all earthly sufferings.

This prayer therefore *differs from quietude*, in which only the will is seized, and in which one wonders at times whether the soul has been really united to God.

We may define it as a *most intimate union of the soul with God, accompanied by the suspension of all the interior faculties, and of the certitude of God's presence within the soul*.

II. Effects of the Prayer of Union

1451. 1° The principal effect is a marvellous transformation of the soul which, according to St. Teresa, can be compared to the metamorphosis of the silk-worm.

"These little worms feed on mulberry leaves, till afterwards they become bigger and then on the boughs they go spinning silk with their little mouths, and making little cells very close, in which they are enclosed. From this cell or bag, which contains a large but ugly worm that dies, there afterwards rises a white and very beautiful butterfly."³ This is an image of the wondrous change that takes place in the soul through the prayer of union. This soul, which before feared the Cross, now feels full of generosity, and is ready to make the most painful sacrifices for God's sake.

Here St. Teresa enters into some detail. She describes the *ardent zeal* which spurs the soul on to glorify God, to

¹ "This prayer, however long it may last, produces no inconvenience, at least I feel none; nor do I remember when Our Lord bestowed this favor on me, however ill I might be, that I ever found myself worse: I was, on the other hand, much better." *Life*, C. XVIII.

² *Life by Herself*, C. XVIII.

³ *Interior Castle*, V Mansion, C. II.

make Him known and loved by all; the *detachment* from creatures, whereby the soul goes so far as to desire to quit this world where God is offended so often; the *perfect submission to the will of God*, whereby the soul offers no more resistance to grace than does soft wax to the seal impressed upon it; the *great clarity towards the neighbor*, which is manifested by deeds, and which causes the soul to rejoice at the praises conferred upon others.¹

1452. 2° This union is the prelude to another one more perfect still. It is like the first meeting with the betrothed, soon to be followed, if we correspond with grace, by the spiritual espousal and finally by the mystical marriage. St. Teresa urges those in this state to make progress in the way of detachment and love. Any halt would be followed by laxity and backsliding.²

§ III. Ecstatic Union (Spiritual Espousal)

This union presents itself in two forms: the *sweet* and the *bitter*.

I. Sweet Ecstatic Union

1453. The word ecstasy does not necessarily include the phenomenon of levitation, of which we shall speak in the following chapter; it refers simply to the *suspension of the activity of the exterior senses*. Ecstatic union is therefore more perfect than the two preceding ones, since it comprises, over and above the elements peculiar to the former, this suspension of the activity of the external senses. We shall describe: 1° its *nature*; 2° its *phases* or degrees; 3° its *effects*.

1° NATURE OF THE ECSTATIC UNION

1454. There are two elements which constitute this union: the *absorption of the soul in God* and the *suspension of the activity of the senses*. It is because the soul is wholly absorbed in God that the outward senses appear to be riveted on Him or on the object which He presents to them.

A) Two principal causes give rise to the *absorption in God*, as St. Francis de Sales so well explains: 3

a) "Our admiration is excited when we discover a truth with which we were not previously acquainted, and did not expect to know. When beauty and goodness are joined to this truth, the admiration produced by the discovery is extremely pleasing... Thus, when it pleases God to enlighten the understanding of the devout soul, and to raise her to

an extraordinary degree of contemplation, she sees the divine mysteries more clearly and perfectly than before, and discovers in them new beauties and attractions which fill her with admiration... When the subject of admiration is pleasing, the mind is closely attached thereto, not only on account of its great beauty, but also because of the fact that this great beauty has been newly discovered; it cannot be satiated with contemplating what it had never seen before, and finds so lovely."

b) To admiration is joined *love*: "God touches the will by the attractions of His sweetness, and the will, inflamed with love, quickly forgets its terrestrial inclinations, to bound towards God and to be totally absorbed in Him, as a needle which has been touched with a loadstone seems to forget its natural insensibility to turn to the pole. The predominant features of this kind of rapture are not knowledge, sublime visions, admiration and speculative science, but affection, sensible consolation and enjoyment."

1455. c) Moreover, admiration grows through love, and love through admiration:

"The understanding is sometimes replenished with admiration at the view of the happiness enjoyed by the will in its ecstasy; and the will often receives a new degree of pleasure from witnessing the admiration of the understanding, so that these two powers mutually communicate their rapture."¹

It is not surprising that a soul thus given to the contemplation and the love of God, is at it were out of itself, ravished and borne towards Him. If one who lets himself be carried away by the passion of human love goes so far as to abandon all in order to yield himself to the object of his love, is there any cause for wonder if divine love, impressed upon a soul by God Himself, so absorbs it that it comes to forget all else in order to behold and to love Him alone?

1456. B) The suspension of the senses is the outcome of this absorption in God. It takes place *gradually* and does not reach the same degree in all.

a) In what regards the *exterior senses*:

1) At first, a more or less pronounced state of *insensibility* sets in together with a slowing down of the physical life, of feelings, and as a consequence of the natural body-heat: "One feels that natural warmth wanes, and that the body gradually cools, but with a gentleness and delight that are unspeakable."

2) A sort of *immobility* ensues which causes the body to preserve the attitude in which it was when seized by the ecstasy; the eyes remain fixed upon some invisible object.

3) This condition, which should naturally weaken the body, rather imparts to it new energies.² True, at the moment of returning consciousness one feels a certain sense of fatigue, but this is followed by a recrudescence of vigor.

4) At times, the suspension of the senses is *complete*; at others, it remains *incomplete* and permits a narration of the revelations received, as can be seen in the life of St. Catherine of Siena.

¹ *Love of God*, Bk. VII, C. V.

² *Life by Herself*, C. XVIII and XX.

¹ *Interior Castle*, V Mansion, C. II. — ² *Ibid.*

³ *Love of God*, Bk. VII, C. IV and V.

b) The *interior senses* are still more completely suspended than in the mystic union, of which we have already spoken.

1457. e) The question suggests itself as to whether free-will itself is not suspended. The common opinion based on such authorities as St. Thomas, Suarez, St. Teresa, Alvarez de Paz is that free-will remains, and that therefore the soul in ecstasy can merit. In fact, the soul freely accepts the spiritual favors that are then granted to it.

d) The *duration* of the ecstasy varies greatly. Complete ecstasy generally lasts but a few moments, at times a half-hour; but, since it is preceded and followed by moments of *incomplete* ecstasy, it may extend over several days if all its fluctuations are taken into account.

e) One comes out of the ecstasy by a reawakening, *spontaneous* or *provoked*: 1) in the first instance one experiences a kind of anguish, as if one were returning from another world, and then it is but gradually that the soul regains its control over the body.

2) In the second case, the reawakening is provoked by the *command of a superior*: if this command is vocal, it is always obeyed; if it is but *mental*, it is not always answered.

2° THE THREE PHASES OF ECSTATIC UNION

1458. There are three principal phases in ecstasy: *simple ecstasy*, *rapture*, and the *flight of the spirit*.

a) Simple ecstasy is a sort of *fainting-spell* which comes on gently and produces a sense of hurt at once painful and delightful. The Spouse of the soul makes it feel His presence, but only for a time. Now, the soul wants to have the joy of this divine presence continually and therefore suffers when deprived of it. Nevertheless, this enjoyment is always more delightful now than it was in the prayer of quiet.

Let us see what St. Teresa¹ has to say on this matter: "The soul feels herself to be most delightfully wounded, but she neither knows *how*, nor by whom. She knows well it is a favor which is to be prized, and she wishes never to be healed: she complains in words of love, to her Spouse, and the words are external; she cannot do otherwise, knowing Him to be present but not willing to manifest Himself. This is a great but pleasant affliction... for it gives her more delight than the suspension of the Prayer of Quiet, which has no such affliction attached to it."

It is already in this phase that the supernatural utterances and revelations occur of which we shall speak further on.

¹ *Interior Castle*, VI Mansion, C. II.

1459. b) *Rapture* takes hold of the soul with an *impetuosity* and a violence that are irresistible. It is as if one were carried on the wings of a powerful eagle, but whither one knows not. In spite of the pleasure experienced, natural weakness at first causes a sense of fear. "But this fear is mixed with an ardent and fresh love for Him Who shows such tender love to a worm that is nothing but corruption."¹ It is in the state of rapture that the spiritual espousal is concluded; and this is a precaution on the part of God; for were one to preserve the use of one's senses, one would perhaps die at seeing oneself so near to that Supreme Majesty.² Once the rapture is over, the will remains as it were *inebriated*, and can no longer occupy itself save with God; disgusted with the things of earth, it has an insatiable desire to do penance, so much so that it complains in the absence of suffering.³

1460. c) Rapture is followed by the *flight of the spirit*, which is so impetuous that it seems to sever the soul from the body, and resistance appears impossible.

"It seems to the soul," says St. Teresa, "that she has been altogether in another region quite different from this world in which we live, and there another light is shown to her very different from this here below; and though she should employ all her life long in trying to form an idea of this and other wonders, yet it would be impossible to understand them. She is in an instant taught so many things together, that should she spend many years in arranging them in her thoughts and imagination, she could not remember the one-thousandth of them."⁴

3° PRINCIPAL EFFECTS OF ECSTATIC UNION

1461. A) The one effect which includes all others is a great *holiness of life*, even to the point of heroism. So true is this that where such holiness does not exist the ecstasy itself is open to suspicion.

St. Francis de Sales⁵ makes this statement: "A soul may be transported beyond herself in prayer; but if she be not habitually united to God, and elevated to the divinity by a life superior to nature and the senses: if her conduct does not visibly display that ecstasy of action and operation which is accomplished by a renunciation of worldly desires, of self-will, of the inclinations of corrupt nature, and the practice of interior virtues, as humility of heart, meekness, simplicity, a constant tender charity for our neighbor, raptures serve only to attract the admiration of men without rendering her more pleasing to God."

¹ *Life by Herself*, C. XX.

² *Interior Castle*, VI Mansion, C. IV. — ³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Interior Castle*, VI Mansion, C. V.

⁵ *Love of God*, Bk. VII, C. VII.

1462. B) The *principal virtues* produced by the ecstatic union, are : 1) a *perfect detachment from creatures* : God, so to speak, makes the soul come to the highest ramparts of a fortress, from which it clearly sees the nothingness of things here below. So, from now on it does not want to have any will of its own; it would even wish to forego the possession of its free-will, were that possible. 2) An *immense sorrow for sins* committed : what pains it most is not the fear of hell, but that of offending God. 3) A *frequent and tender vision of Our Lord's Sacred Humanity* and of the Most Blessed Virgin. A wonderful companionship indeed, that of Jesus and Mary! Imaginative and intellectual visions become more numerous and complete the work of detaching the soul from creatures and of burying it in humility. 4) Lastly, a *marvelous patience* to withstand courageously the new passive trials which Almighty God sends, and which are called the *purification of love*.

Burning with the desire to see God, the soul feels as if it were pierced through and through by a *fiery dart*, and cries out in anguish at seeing itself separated from the sole Object of its love. This is the beginning of a *veritable martyrdom*, a martyrdom of soul and body, accompanied by an ardent desire to die so as never to be separated from the Well-Beloved, a martyrdom relieved at times by inebriating delights. We shall understand this better after studying the Second Night of St. John of the Cross, the *Night of the Spirit*.

II. The Night of the Spirit

1463. The First Night purified the soul to make it ready for the joys of quietude, of union and of ecstasy. But before entering into the still purer and more lasting joys of the spiritual marriage, there is need of a more profound and radical purification which generally takes place in the course of the ecstatic union. We shall explain : 1^o the *reason* for such a purification; 2^o the *severe trials* which attend it; 3^o the *blessed results* which follow from it.

1^o REASON FOR THE NIGHT OF THE SPIRIT

1464. To be united to God in a manner so intimate and lasting as one is in the transforming union or spiritual marriage, one must necessarily be free from the last remaining imperfections. These imperfections, St. John of the Cross¹ tells us, are of two kinds, *habitual* and *actual*.

A) The former comprise two things : **a)** imperfect *affectations* and *habits*; they are as it were roots, imbedded in the

depths of the soul, to which the purification of the senses could not reach; for instance, friendships a bit too ardent; these must be uprooted; **b)** a certain dullness of mind which makes one subject to distractions from within and to attractions from without. These frailties are incompatible with a perfect union of the soul with God.

B) *Actual* imperfections are also of two kinds : **a)** a certain pride, a vain self-complacency resulting from the abundance of spiritual consolations received. This attitude at times leads to illusions and makes one mistake false visions and prophecies for true ones; **b)** over-boldness towards God, causing one to lose that reverential fear of Him which is the safeguard of all virtue.

2^o TRIALS OF THE NIGHT OF THE SPIRIT

1465. In order to purify and reform the soul, God leaves *the mind in darkness, the will in aridity, the memory in forgetfulness, and the affections immersed in pain and anguish*. This purification is wrought, says St. John of the Cross,¹ through the *light of infused contemplation*, a light bright in itself, but *dim and painful* to the soul on account of the latter's ignorance and impurity.

A) Sufferings of the Mind. a) The brilliant and pure light of contemplation dazes the mind's eye, too weak and too impure to behold it. Just as weak eyes are dazed by a clear, bright light, so the soul, still ailing, is tortured and paralyzed by the divine light, with the result that it seems that death itself would be a welcome deliverance.

b) This pain is intensified by the meeting of the *divine* and the *human* in the same soul : the *divine*, that is to say, *purifying contemplation*, invades the soul to renew it, to perfect it, to deify it; the *human*, that is to say, the soul itself with its faults, experiences the sense of annihilation, of spiritual death, through which it must pass in order to come to life again.

c) To this pain is added a keen realization of the soul's destitution and wretchedness. Its sensitive part immersed in aridity and its intellectual part in darkness, the soul has the agonizing impression of a man suspended in mid-air deprived of any support. At times it even sees hell yawning to swallow it forever. These are, of course, figurative expressions, but they give an idea of the effect of that light which shows on the one hand the greatness and the holiness of God, and on the other the nothingness and the misery of man.

1466. B) Sufferings of the Will are likewise beyond description : **a)** the soul sees itself deprived of all joy, and

¹ *Dark Night*, Bk. II, C. II.

¹ *Night*, Bk. II, C. V.

becomes convinced that this state is to last forever. Even the confessor is unable to give consolation.

b) In order to sustain the soul in this trial, God sends intervals of relief, during which it experiences a sweet peace in the enjoyment of divine love and familiarity. But such moments are followed by counter-attacks when the soul imagines itself to be no longer loved by God and to be *justly forsaken* by Him. This is the anguish of spiritual dereliction.

c) In this state, prayer is quite impossible; or if one does pray, it is amidst such aridity that it seems that God does not give ear. There are cases in which one cannot even attend to one's temporal interests, memory for such matters having gone completely. This is a *ligature of the faculties* as regards all natural actions.

To sum up in a word: this state is a sort of *hell* by reason of the torture experienced; it is a sort of *purgatory* by reason of the purification effected.

3° HAPPY RESULTS OF THE PURIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT.

1467. A) These results are thus summarized by St. John of the Cross:

"This blessed night, though it darkens the mind, does so only to give it light in everything; and though it humbles it and makes it miserable, it does so only to raise it up and set it free; and though it impoverishes it and empties it of all its natural self and liking, it does so only to enable it to reach forward divinely to the possession and fruition of all things." To explain these effects, the Saint makes use of the comparison of a piece of green wood thrown into a fireplace, as mentioned in n. 1422.

1468. B) He then reduces them to four principal effects: a) *An ardent love for God*. From the very outset of this night, this love existed in the superior part of the soul, though unknown to itself; a time comes however when God makes the soul aware of its love and then it is ready to dare all things in order to please Him.

b) *A piercing light*: at first this light revealed to the soul only its miseries and thus inflicted pain; but once imperfections have been eliminated through sorrow, it reveals the riches to be gained and thus becomes a source of consolation.

c) A great *sense of security*, for this light preserves the soul from pride, the great obstacle to salvation. It shows

¹ Night, Bk. II, C. IX.

it that it is God Himself Who leads it, and that the suffering He sends is more profitable than joy would be. Lastly, this light places in the will the firm determination to do nothing that might offend God, to neglect nothing that redounds to His glory.

d) *A marvellous strength* to climb the *ten stepping-stones* of divine love, which St. John of the Cross¹ is pleased to describe, and upon which the soul must meditate in order to conceive an idea of the wondrous ascents which lead up to the *transforming union*.

§ IV. The Transforming Union or Spiritual Marriage

1469. After so many purifications, the soul at last reaches that calm and abiding union, called the *transforming union*, which seems to be the final goal of the mystic union, the immediate preparation for the Beatific Vision. We shall explain: 1° its *nature* and 2° its *effects*.

I. Nature of the Transforming Union

We shall call attention to: 1° its chief characteristics, and, 2° the description of it given by St. Teresa.

1470. 1° Its chief characteristics are *intimacy*, *serenity*, *indissolubility*.

A) *Intimacy*. Because this union is still more intimate than the others it is called *spiritual marriage*. Between persons united in marriage there are no longer any secrets; there is a blending of two lives. It is precisely such a union that exists between the soul and God. In order to explain it, St. Teresa² makes use of this comparison: "Here it is like water descending from heaven into a river or spring, where one is so mixed with the other that it cannot be discovered which is the river-water and which the rain-water."

B) *Serenity*. In this state there are no more ecstasies or raptures, or at least very few; these have now disappeared almost completely in order to make room for such peace and quiet rest as are enjoyed by married persons who are sure of each other's love.

C) *Indissolubility*. The other unions were but transitory; the present one by its very nature is permanent, just as is the bond of Christian marriage.

¹ Night, Bk. II, C. XIX-XX. — ² Interior Castle, VII Mansion, C. II.

1471. Does this indissolubility imply impeccability? On this point St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa differ. The former is of the opinion that in this state the soul is confirmed in grace: "I believe that no soul ever attains to this state without being confirmed in grace... The Bride has entered; that is, *passed* out of all temporal and natural things, out of all spiritual affections, ways and methods, having left on one side and forgotten all temptations, trials, sorrows, anxieties and cares." St. Teresa is far from being so positive: "Whenever I speak on this subject, and seem to mean that the soul is secure, my words must be understood thus, viz., as long as the Divine Majesty holds her in His Hand, and she does not offend Him. I know for certain that though she see herself in this state, and though it may continue some years, she does not, therefore, think herself secure." It seems to us that St. Teresa's language is more in harmony with that of theology, which teaches that the grace of final perseverance cannot be merited; in order to be assured of salvation therefore, one would need a special revelation bearing not only on the actual state of grace, but also on perseverance in this state until death.³

1472. 2° The description given by St. Teresa includes two apparitions, one of *Our Lord* and the other of the *Blessed Trinity*.

A) It is *Jesus* who introduces the soul into this last mansion by a twofold vision: one *imaginative*, the other *intellectual*.

a) In an imaginative vision which took place after Holy Communion, He appeared to the Saint⁴ "in a figure of great splendour, beauty and majesty, just as He was after His resurrection."

"He said to her that now was the time she should consider His affairs as hers, and that He would take care of hers... From henceforth you shall guard my honour, not only because I am your Creator, your King and your God, but yet because you are my true spouse. My honour is your honour and your honour mine!"⁵

b) Then follows the *intellectual* vision: "That which God here communicates to the soul in an instant is so great a secret, and so sublime a grace, and what she feels such an excessive delight, that I know nothing to compare it to, except that Our Lord is pleased at that moment to manifest to her the glory which is in heaven; and this He does in a more sublime way than by any vision or spiritual delight. More cannot be said (as far as can be understood) than that this soul becomes one with God."⁶

³ *Spiritual Canticle*, Stanza XXII.

⁴ *Interior Castle*, VII Mansion, C. II.

⁵ At times the spiritual marriage is celebrated with *special ceremonies*, exchange of rings, angelic hymns, etc. Following the example of St. Teresa we leave aside any description of these accessory details.

⁶ *Interior Castle*, VII Mansion, C. II.

⁷ Relation XXXV. — ⁸ *Interior Castle*, VII Mansion, C. II.

1473. B) *The Vision of the Blessed Trinity*. Once the soul has been introduced into this mansion, the Three Persons of the Most Blessed Trinity manifest themselves to it in an intellectual vision, and they come directly upon it as in a cloud of extraordinary brightness. The Three Divine Persons manifest themselves as distinct, and by a wonderful communication of knowledge, the soul sees with absolute certitude that all Three Persons are but one substance, one power, one knowledge, one God.

"Hence, what we behold with faith, the soul here (as one may say) understands by sight, though this sight is not with the eyes of the body, because it is not an imaginative vision. All the Three Persons here communicate themselves to her, and speak to her, and make her understand those words mentioned in the Gospel, where Our Lord said that He, and the Father, and the Holy Ghost would come and dwell with the soul that loves Him and keeps His commandments! O my Lord! *What a different thing is the hearing and believing of these words from understanding in this way how true they are!*" Such a soul is every day more astonished, because these words never seem to depart from her; but she clearly sees (in the manner above mentioned) that they are in the deepest recesses of the soul (how it is, she cannot express, since she is not learned) and she perceives this divine company in herself."⁷

II. Effects of the Transforming Union

1474. A union so profound and so intimate cannot but produce wondrous, sanctifying effects. These may be summed up in one word: *the soul is so transformed that it forgets self and thinks only of God and His glory*. Whence follow: 1° A *holy abandonment* into the hands of God in virtue of which the soul is supremely indifferent to all that is not God. In the ecstatic union it desired death as a means of uniting itself to its Beloved; now it is indifferent to life or death, so long as God be glorified: "All her thoughts and study will be how to please this Lord, and by what means she may be able to express the love she has for Him. For this object does she pray, hereunto does the spiritual marriage tend, from which good works always come."⁸

1475. 2° *An insatiable thirst for suffering*, but devoid of anxiety and in perfect conformity with the will of God:

"If He wish them to suffer they are content; if not, they do not torment themselves about it, as they used to do at other times. These

⁷ Note these expressions, which point out the immense difference between the simple act of faith and the knowledge or conviction given by contemplation.

⁸ *Interior Castle*, VII Mansion, C. I.

⁹ *Interior Castle*, VII Mansion, C. IV.

"I wish, then, to advise you not to use any violence, if you meet with some resistance, for you may thus displease Him so far as to cause you some trouble. He is a great lover of humility, and by considering yourselves unworthy even to enter the "Third Mansion", you will the sooner obtain His good-will and favor to allow you afterwards to enter the fifth; and you may serve Him there in such manner by often repairing thither, that He may at length admit you into that "Mansion" reserved for Himself."¹

SUMMARY OF THE SECOND CHAPTER

1480. After the study of the four great phases of contemplation, with their alternating bitter trials and inebriating delights, it seems that the notion we gave of infused contemplation has been confirmed, that it is a *progressive taking hold of the soul by God, freely permitted by the soul itself.*

1° God gradually takes possession of the whole soul in contemplation. First, He seizes the will in the prayer of quiet; next, He lays hold of all the *interior faculties* in the prayer of full union; later He takes possession of both the *interior faculties and the exterior senses* in ecstasy; and finally in the spiritual marriage, He binds the *whole soul* to Himself in an abiding union.

Now, if God takes possession of the soul, it is to flood it with *light and love*, it is to make it share in His perfections. a) This *light* is at first weak and *painful* so long as the soul is not sufficiently purified; but it becomes stronger and more comforting, although always mixed with darkness, by reason of the feebleness of our own mind. It produces a profound impression, because it *comes from God*, and it gives the soul an *experimental* knowledge of God's infinite grandeur, goodness and beauty, and of the littleness, the nothingness and the miseries of creatures. b) The love infused into the soul in contemplation is ardent, generous, and burning with the desire of sacrificing all: one forgets self and one longs to be immolated for the Beloved.

1481. 2° The soul *freely consents* to this *divine possession* and joyously yields itself to God through the most profound *humility*, through the *love of the Cross* for the sake of God and of Jesus, and through *holy abandonment*. It is thus still more *purified* from its *imperfections*; it is *united to God* and so completely *transformed into Him*, that Our Lord's ardent desire, "*that they also may be one in us*"² is as fully realized as it possibly can be.

¹ Interior Castle, VII Mansion, C. IV. — ² John, XVII, 21.

souls feel likewise a great interior joy when they are persecuted, for then they enjoy more peace than I have ever before spoken of; and they do not feel the least hatred against their persecutors; nay, they conceive for them a particular affection."¹

1476. 3° *The absence of desire and of interior sufferings*: "The desires of these souls do not now run after consolations... They feel in themselves a desire of being always alone, or employed in things relating to the good of some soul. They have no aridities, nor internal troubles, but always have a memory and a tenderness for Our Lord, so that they would gladly do nothing but praise Him."²

1477. 4° *The absence of raptures*. "The raptures cease in the manner I have mentioned, and there are no more ecstasies nor flights of the spirit: if they come at all, it is very seldom, and almost never in public."³ Hence, peace and *perfect serenity*: "In this Temple of God, for this mansion is His, He and the soul sweetly enjoy each other in the most profound silence."⁴

1478. 5° *An ardent, yet discreet zeal for the sanctification of souls*. It is not enough to abide in the enjoyment of this sweet repose; the soul must act, labor, suffer, become the slave of God and of the neighbor, strive to advance in virtue, especially in humility; for, not to advance is to go back. Perfection consists in taking the place of Mary and doing the work of Martha at one and the same time. One can work for the welfare of souls without leaving the cloister, and one can do good to those with whom one lives without aiming at reforming the entire world:

"A work so much nobler, as you are so much the more indebted to them. Do you think the gain small, that you have such great humility and mortification, and that you are the servant of all; and that you also have such great charity for *them*, and such love for Our Lord, that this fire inflames every one, and you are continually exciting them by the practice of your other virtues? Your gain will be exceedingly great, and your service highly pleasing to Our Lord."⁵

But above all, such works must be inspired by *love*: "Our Lord does not pay so much regard to the greatness of the works, as to the *love* whereby they are performed."⁶

1479. In concluding, St. Teresa invites her Sisters to enter these Mansions, *if it please the Lord of the Castle to introduce them*; but she warns them not to wish to force their way.

¹ Interior Castle, VII Mansion, C. III.

² Interior Castle, VII Mansion, C. III.

³ Interior Castle, VII Mansion, C. III. — ⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Interior Castle, VII Mansion, C. IV. — ⁶ *Ibid.*

Such is true mysticism, and it is important to distinguish it from *false mysticism* or *quietism*.

APPENDIX : FALSE MYSTICISM OR QUIETISM

1482. Side by side with the true mystics, whose teachings we have just expounded, there have been *false mystics* who, under various names, have perverted the notion of the *passive state* and have fallen into doctrinal errors dangerous to good morals. Such were the doctrines of the Montanists and the Beghards.¹ But the most notorious of these errors was that of *Quietism*. It made its appearance under three different forms: 1° the *gross quietism of Molinos*; 2° the *mitigated and spiritualized quietism of Fénelon*; 3° *semi-quietist* tendencies.

1° THE QUIETISM OF MOLINOS²

1483. Born in Spain in 1640, Michael Molinos spent the greater part of his life in Rome, and it was there that he disseminated his errors in two works which met with great success: *The Spiritual Guide* and *The Prayer of Quiet*.

His fundamental error lay in the assertion that perfection consists in complete passivity of soul, in a continuous act of contemplation and of love which, once made, dispenses with all other acts, even that of resistance to temptations. "Let God Act," was his motto.

1484. The better to understand these errors in detail, we give the following parallel tables of the *Catholic teaching* and the *aberrations of Molinos*.

Catholic Teaching

1) There exists a passive state of soul wherein God acts through His operating grace; but one does not *ordinarily* arrive thereat, except after a long time spent in the practice of virtue and meditation.

2) The act of contemplation lasts but a short time, even though the state of soul resulting therefrom may last for several days.

3) Contemplation eminently embodies the acts of all the Christian virtues, but outside the period

Catholic Teaching

of contemplation, it does not dispense one from making explicit acts of the virtues.

4) The *principal* object of contemplation is God Himself, but Jesus is its *secondary* object, and outside of the act of contemplation, one is not dispensed from thinking of Jesus Christ, the necessary mediator, nor from going to God through Him.

5) Holy abandonment is a virtue of high perfection; it must not, however, go as far as *indifference* concerning eternal salvation: on the contrary, one must desire it, hope for it and beg for it.

6) During interior trials the imagination and the sensitive appetite may be profoundly troubled, while the superior part of the soul enjoys a profound peace; the will, however, is ever bound to resist temptations.

Errors of Molinos

beginners, for instance, acts of faith, hope, religion and mortification, the acts connected with confession, etc.

To think of Jesus Christ and of His mysteries is an imperfection; it is necessary and sufficient to lose oneself in the divine essence: he who makes use of images or of ideas does not adore God in spirit and in truth.

In the state of contemplation one must be indifferent to all things, even to one's sanctification, to one's salvation, and one must relinquish hope, in order to make room for disinterested love.

One must not take the trouble to resist temptations; the most obscene fancies and the acts following upon them are not reprehensible, because they are the work of the devil. These are passive trials which the Saints themselves have undergone, and which one must carefully refrain from confessing. It is thus that one attains to perfect purity and to intimate union with God.³

This statement of the Catholic position obviates the need of refuting this error. The history of Quietism leads to the conclusion that when one wants to arrive at contemplation *too quickly*, and *through one's own efforts*, without having previously mortified one's passions and practiced the Christian virtues, one falls all the lower, the higher one pretends to go. *He who would play the angel becomes a beast.*

2° THE MITIGATED QUIETISM OF FÉNELON⁴

1485. In a less extreme form, and without the immoral consequences its author had deduced from it, the Quietism of Molinos was taken up by *Madame Guyon*, who, widowed at an early age, threw herself with ardor into the practice of an emotional and imaginative piety, which she styled the *way of pure love*. First, she won over to her ideas a Barnabite, Father Lacombe; later, to some extent, even

¹ In order to see how far Molinos goes, one has but to read the propositions taken from his books or from his statements and condemned by Innocent XI (Decree of August 28, and Constit., *Cælestis Pastor*, November 19, 1687) cf. DENZINGER, *Enchiridion*, n. 1221-1288.

² FÉNELON, *Maximes des Saints*, nouv. éd. par A. Cheret, 1911; GOSSELIN, *Œuvres de Fénelon*, t. IV; L. CROUSLE, *Bosquet et Fénelon*, 1894; HUVELIN, *Bosquet, Fénelon, le quietisme*; A. LARGENT, *Fénelon*, (Dict. de Théol. t. V, col. 2138-2169); Cath. Encyc., Fénelon, Guyon.

³ P. POURRAT, *Christian Spirituality*, I, p. 62-68; II, p. 211-216; Cath. Encyc.

⁴ P. DUDON, *Le Quietiste Espagnol Michel Molinos*, Paris, 1921; Cath. Encyc.,

Molinos, Mysticism, Quietism.

Fénelon, who, in the *Explanation of the Maxims of the Saints regarding the Interior Life* (1697), formulated an attenuated Quietism in which he strove to demonstrate the doctrine of pure love, "pure charity without any admixture of selfish motives or self-interest."

All the errors contained in this book can, according to Bossuet, be reduced to the four following propositions: 1) "There is in this life an habitual state of pure love, in which the desire for eternal salvation no longer has place. 2) In the final trials of the interior life, a soul can be convinced, with an *invincible* and *reasoned* conviction, that it has been justly rejected by God, and, under the influence of this conviction, offer to God an *absolute sacrifice* of its own eternal happiness. 3) In the state of pure love, the soul is indifferent to its own perfection and the practices of virtue. 4) Contemplative souls in certain states lose sight of Jesus Christ as the distinct, sensible and reasoned object of contemplation."

1486. No doubt this form of Quietism is far less dangerous than was that of Molinos. But the four propositions are false and could lead to baneful results.

1) It is false to say that there exists on this earth an *habitual state* of pure love *excluding hope*; for, as the Fifth Article of Issy² rightly states, "every Christian in every state, though not at every moment, is bound to express a desire and a prayer for his eternal salvation as something willed by God. Who wills that we desire it for His glory's sake." It is true indeed that with perfect souls the desire for eternal happiness is often prompted by charity, and that there are *moments* when they do not think *explicitly* of their salvation.

2) The second proposition is no less false. No doubt, there are Saints who in the *lower part* of their soul experienced a *keen sense* of just reprobation; this was not, however, a reasoned conviction of the superior part of the soul. If some of them have made a *conditional* surrender of their salvation, this was not an absolute sacrifice.

3) Nor is it exact to say that the soul in the state of pure love is indifferent to its own perfection and to virtuous practices; on the contrary, St. Teresa does not cease to urge the thought of progress and the exercise of the fundamental virtues, even in the highest states of perfection.

4) Finally, it is false that in the *perfect states* one loses sight of Jesus Christ as the distinct object of contemplation. We have seen, in number 1472, that in the transforming union, St. Teresa had visions of the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ. What is true however, is that during certain *passing moments* one cannot explicitly think of Him.

3° SEMI-QUIETIST TENDENCIES³

1487. One meets at times in certain devout and otherwise excellent books, tendencies which are more or less quietistic, and which, were

they to be applied as rules for the spiritual direction of ordinary souls, would lead to abuses.

The main error of these writers is that of trying to instill into all persons alike, even into those who have made but little progress in the spiritual life, dispositions of passivity which belong only to the unitive way. They would have us take up more quickly the work of simplifying the spiritual life, forgetting that most souls cannot safely arrive at such simplification until they have passed through *discursive meditation*, *detailed* examinations of *conscience* and the practice of the *moral virtues*. Their error is one of excess; they would like to bring souls to perfection as quickly as possible by suppressing the intermediate stages and by suggesting from the outset the means which succeed with the most advanced souls.

1488. a) Thus, under the pretext of fostering disinterested love, they deprive *Christian hope* of the place it should occupy; they imagine that the desire of eternal happiness is but incidental and that God's glory is everything. In reality however the glory of God and our eternal happiness are intimately united; for by knowing and loving God we procure His glory, and this knowledge and love of God in turn constitute our happiness. Far from dissociating these two elements, we must keep them united and show how they complete one another, noting however, that if they are to be considered separately, the glory of God must come first.

b) The *passive* side of piety is likewise over-emphasized. It is said that we must *let God act in us, bear us in His arms*, without adding that God does not generally do so until we have practiced for a long time an active piety.

c) With regard to the means of *sanctification*, only such are proposed as belong to the unitive way. *Methodical* and, as they call it, *rule-bound* meditation is severely criticized. *Specific* resolutions, they claim, destroy the unity of the spiritual life, and *detailed* examinations of *conscience* should be replaced by a rapid survey. They forget that beginners do not generally arrive at the prayer of simplicity except through discursive meditation; that general resolves to love God with all the heart must be particularized; that, in order to know their defects and correct them, beginners must enter into some details; that, as a matter of fact, they are but too prone to be satisfied with a superficial knowledge of self which will allow passions and defects to remain unchallenged.

In a word, these authors forget that there are many stages to be traversed before we can attain to the passive state and to union with God



¹ *Denzinger's Enchiridion* (1327-1349) contains Fénelon's propositions condemned by Innocent XII.
² These articles were redacted at the Seminary of Issy, as the result of the discussions conducted by Bossuet, Noailles, Bishop of Châlons, Fénelon, and Father Tronson, 1694-1695.
³ P. JOSÉ, *Études relig.*, 20 déc. 1897, p. 804; MGR FARGES, *Mystical phenomena*.

CHAPTER III

Extraordinary Mystical Phenomena

1489. In describing contemplation, we made no mention of the *extraordinary phenomena* such as visions, revelations, etc., which frequently accompany it, especially after the soul has reached the stage of ecstatic union. Since the devil apes divine works, *diabolical* phenomena are known to occur at times among the mystics, true or false. We shall speak first of the *divine* and then of the *diabolical* phenomena.

ARTICLE I. EXTRAORDINARY DIVINE PHENOMENA ¹

There are two kinds of such phenomena : those of the *intellectual*, and those of the *psycho-physiological* order.

§ I. Divine Intellectual Phenomena

These may be reduced to two main ones : **private revelations** and the **charisms**.

I. *Private Revelations*

We shall explain: 1° their *nature*; 2° the rules by which to distinguish the *true* from the *false*.

1° NATURE OF PRIVATE REVELATIONS

1490. A) Difference between Public and Private Revelations. Divine revelation in general is a supernatural manifestation by God of a hidden truth. When such a manifestation is made directly, *in behalf of the whole Church*, it is called *public* revelation; when it is made to private individuals for their own welfare or that of others, it is called *private* revelation. Here we speak only of the latter.

Private revelations have been made in every age: Holy Scripture and the processes of canonization furnish us with

¹ ST. TERESA, *Life*, C. XXV-XXX; *Interior Castle*, Mansion VI and elsewhere; ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS, Bk. I, C. XXI-XXX and elsewhere; ALVAREZ DE PAZ, *op. cit.*, t. III, lib. V, p. IV, *de abstractione spirituum*; GODINEZ, *Praxis theol. myst.*, lib. X; BENEDICTUS XIV, *De beatificat.*, lib. IV, P. I; RIBET, *La Mystique divine*, t. II; POULAIN, *Graces of Interior Prayer*, C. XVII-XXI; GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *Perfected contemplation*, t. II, p. 536-562; Mgr. FARGES, *Mystical Phenomena*.

abundant examples. These revelations do not form a part of Catholic faith, which rests solely upon the deposit of truth contained in Scripture and Tradition, and which has been confided to the Church for interpretation. Hence, there is no obligation for the faithful to believe them. Even when the Church approves them she does not make them the object of Catholic faith, but as Benedict XIV states, she simply *pernuit* them to be published for the instruction and the edification of the faithful. The assent to be given them is not therefore an act of Catholic faith, but one of human faith, based upon the fact that these revelations are *probable* and *worthy of credence*¹. Private revelations may not be published without ecclesiastical approbation².

Still, many theologians are of the opinion that the persons themselves to whom such revelations are made and those for whom they are destined may believe in them with real faith, provided they have had clear proof of their authenticity.

1491. B) The Manner in which Revelations are made. They are made in three different ways: through *visions*, *supernatural words*, and *divine touches*.

a) Visions are supernatural perceptions of some object naturally invisible to man. They are revelations only when they disclose hidden truths. They are of three kinds, *sensible*, *imaginative*, or purely *intellectual*.

1) *Sensible* or *corporeal* visions, also called apparitions, are those in which the senses perceive some real object that is naturally invisible to man. It is not necessary that the object be a real human body; it suffices that it be a sensible or luminous form.

The opinion of St. Thomas, which is generally held, is that after His Ascension, Our Lord rarely appeared in Person; He merely appeared in a visible form, but not in His real body. His apparitions in the Eucharist may be explained in two ways, says St. Thomas: either by a miraculous impression made on the sense of sight (which is the case when He manifests Himself to a single person) or by a form that is real and visible, but distinct from His own body; for, the Saint adds, the Body of Our Savior cannot be seen in its own proper form except in the one place which actually contains it.³

¹ *De Serv. Dei Beatif.*, l. II, c. 32, n. 11: "Although an assent of Catholic faith may not and can not be given to revelations thus approved, still, an assent of *human faith*, made according to the rules of prudence, is due them; for according to these rules such revelations are probable and *worthy of pious credence*."

² Decrees of Urban VIII, March 13, 1625 and of Clement IX, May 23, 1668.

³ *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 76, a. 8. The same conclusion is deduced from the testimony of St. Teresa, Relation XIII, where she says: "By some things which He told me, I understood that after He ascended into heaven He never descended on earth to converse with anyone, except in the Holy Sacrament."

What has been said of Our Lord applies also to the Blessed Virgin. When she appeared at Lourdes for instance, Her body remained in heaven, and at the spot of the apparition there was but a sensible form which represented Her. This explains how she could appear now under one aspect, now under another.

1492. 2) *Imaginative* visions are those produced in the imagination by God or by the Angels, either during sleep or while one is awake. Thus an Angel appeared several times to St. Joseph in his sleep, and St. Teresa relates several imaginative visions she had of Our Lord while she was awake.¹ These visions are frequently accompanied by an intellectual vision which explains their meaning.² At times, one travels in vision through distant countries: such visions are for the most part imaginative.

1493. 3) Intellectual visions are those in which the mind perceives a spiritual truth without the aid of sensible impressions: such was St. Teresa's vision of the Holy Trinity, to which we referred in number 1473. These visions take place either through ideas *already* acquired, but which are coordinated or modified by God, or through *infused ideas* which represent divine things even better than do acquired ideas. Sometimes these visions are obscure and manifest only the presence of the object³; at other times they are clear, but last only for a moment: they are like intuitions which leave a deep impression.⁴

Some visions are at once sensible, imaginative and intellectual. Such was St. Paul's vision on the road to Damascus. He beheld with his eyes blinding light; he saw with his imagination the personal traits of Ananias; and his mind understood God's will.

1494. b) **Supernatural Words** are *manifestations* of the *divine thought conveyed to the exterior* or to the *interior senses*, or directly to the *intelligence*. They are called *auricular* when they come to the ear in the form of sound-waves, miraculously produced; *imaginative* when such manifestations are directed to the imagination; *intellectual* when addressed directly to the *intellect*.⁵

1495. c) **Divine touches** are spiritual sentiments full of sweetness, impressed upon the will by a kind of divine contact and accompanied by a vivid intellectual light.

We may distinguish two kinds of such touches: *ordinary* divine touches, and *substantial* divine touches; the latter, though they affect but the will, make such a deep impression that they seem to take place within the very substance of the soul.

Hence the expressions of mystics describing their experiences as a contact of substance with substance. In reality these touches take place in the *superior part* of the will and the intellect, and according to St. Thomas,¹ it is the *faculties*, and not the substance, which receive these impressions.

1496. c) **Attitude to be taken towards these Extraordinary Graces.** The great mystics are unanimous in teaching that one must neither desire nor ask for these *extraordinary* favors. These are not necessary means to the divine union; nay, at times they are rather obstacles owing to our evil tendencies. St. John of the Cross in particular points this out. He asserts that the desire for revelations deprives faith of its purity, develops a dangerous curiosity which becomes a source of illusions, fills the mind with vain fancies, and often proves the want of humility and of submission to Our Lord, Who, through His public revelations has given all that is needed for salvation.

The Saint forcefully denounces imprudent directors who encourage the desire of visions: "They suffer their penitents to make much of their visions, which is the reason why they walk not according to the pure and perfect spirit of faith; neither do they build up nor strengthen them in faith, while they attach so much importance to these visions. This kind of direction shows that they themselves consider visions matters of importance; and their penitents, observing this, follow their example, dwelling upon these visions, not building themselves up in faith; neither do they withdraw, nor detach themselves from them... The soul is no longer humble, but thinks itself to be something good, and that God makes much of it... Some directors, when they see that their penitents have visions from God, bid them pray to Him to reveal to them such and such things concerning themselves or others, and the simple souls obey them... when in truth it is not pleasing to Him, and contrary to His will."²

Since in this matter there is great danger of illusion, we must have some rules by which to discern the true from the false.

2° RULES FOR THE DISCERNMENT OF REVELATIONS

1497. In order to know true revelations and learn to recognize the human element that may enter into them, very precise rules must be drawn up concerning the *subjects*, the *object*, the *effects*, of revelations, and the *signs* which accompany them.

¹ *Life by Herself*, C. XXVIII. — ² *Ibid.*, C. XXIX.

³ *Life by Herself*, C. XXVII. — ⁴ *Interior Castle*, VI Mansion, C. X.

⁵ St. John of the Cross treats at length of these three different kinds of supernatural words, *successive*, *formal* and *substantial* (*Ascent of Carmel*), Bk. II, C. XXVI-XXIX.

¹ ST. THOM., Ia 1^{ae}, q. 113, a. 8; *De Veritate*, q. 28, a. 3; cf. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *op. cit.*, t. II, p. 560.

² *Ascent of Carmel*, Bk. II, C. XVIII.

A) *Rules Concerning the Subjects of Revelations*

1498. God can no doubt make revelations to whomsoever He pleases, even to sinners; but *invariably*, He makes them only to persons who are not only fervent, but already raised to the *mystic state*. Moreover, even for the interpretation of true revelations, it is necessary to know the qualities and the defects of those who think themselves favored with revelations. Hence, we must study their *natural* and *supernatural* qualities.

a) Natural Qualities: 1) We must ascertain whether they are well-balanced or affected by *psycho-neurosis* or *hysteria*; for it is evident that in the latter case, there is ground for suspecting the alleged revelations, such temperaments being subject to hallucinations.

2) We must examine whether the persons in question are possessed of common sense, of sound judgment, or rather of a vivid imagination together with excessive emotionalism; whether they have received an education, and if so, from whom; whether their mind has been weakened by disease or long fasts.

3) We must see whether such persons are thoroughly sincere or whether they have the habit of exaggerating and of drawing on their imagination; whether they are self-possessed or passionate.

The mere verification of these particulars will not of itself prove the existence or non-existence of a revelation, but it will aid greatly in judging the value of the testimony proffered by those who claim to have received them.

1499. b) As to **supernatural qualities**, we must examine whether the persons concerned: 1) are endowed with *solid* and tried *virtue*, or merely with a more or less sensible fervor; 2) whether they are sincerely and deeply humble, or whether on the contrary, they delight in being noticed and in telling everybody about their spiritual favors; true humility is the *touchstone* of sanctity and the lack of it argues against a revelation; 3) whether they make the revelations known to their spiritual director instead of communicating them to other persons, and whether they readily follow his advice; 4) whether they have already passed through the *passive trials* and the first stages of contemplation; especially, whether they have *practiced the virtues in a heroic degree*; for God generally reserves these visions for perfect souls.

1500. The presence of these qualities does not prove the existence of a revelation, but simply renders more worthy of credence the word of those who claim to have received it; their absence does not disprove the fact of revelation, but makes it quite unlikely.

The information thus obtained will enable us to discover more easily the *lies* or the *illusions* of the alleged seers. There are some persons who, through pride or through the desire for recognition, voluntarily simulate ecstasies and visions.¹ There are others, more numerous, who, owing to a lively imagination are the victims of illusions, and mistake their own thoughts for visions or for interior words.²

B) *Rules Concerning the Object of Revelations*

1501. It is particularly to this point that our attention must be directed, for all revelations contrary to faith or morals must be absolutely rejected, according to the unanimous teaching of the Doctors of the Church based on these words of St. Paul: "*But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema.*"³ God cannot contradict Himself, nor can He reveal things opposed to what He teaches through His Church. From this fact follow a number of rules which we shall now recall.

a) We must consider as false every private revelation *in opposition to any truth of faith*: such are for example the alleged revelations of spiritualists which deny several of our dogmas, particularly eternal punishment. The same holds true if revelations are opposed to the unanimous teaching of the Fathers and Theologians, for this forms part of the ordinary teaching of the Church.

Any revelation pretending to solve a problem freely discussed among theologians must be suspected, for example, one claiming to settle the

¹ A notable instance was that of Magdalen of the Cross, a Franciscan Nun of Cordova, of the XVI Century, who after having given herself to the devil from her infancy, entered the convent at the age of seventeen and was three times Abbess of her monastery. Aided by the demon, she simulated all the mystical phenomena of ecstasy, levitation, stigmata, revelations and prophecies repeatedly fulfilled. Thinking herself at the point of death, she made a confession which she later retracted, was excoriated and moved to another convent of her order. See POULAIN, *Graces of Interior Prayer*, C. XXI, n. 36.

² St. Teresa in several places speaks of such persons. "It happens that some persons (and I know this to be true, for not three or four, but many persons have spoken with me on the subject) are of so weak an imagination, that whatever they think upon, they say they see it clearly, as it indeed seems to them; they have also so vigorous an understanding, or whatever else it may be, for I know not, that they become quite certain of everything in their imagination." (*Interior Castle*, VI Mansion, C. IX). — ³ *Galatians*, I, 8.

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controversy between the Thomists and the Molinists. God is not wont to pronounce on such questions.

1502. b) We must likewise reject visions *opposed to morality or decency*, for instance, apparitions of nude human forms, vulgar and immodest language, detailed or meticulous descriptions of shameful vices which cannot but offend against modesty. God, Who makes revelations only for the good of souls, cannot, it is evident, be the author of such visions as lead by their very nature to vice.

For the same reason we must suspect such apparitions as lack dignity or proper reserve, above all, such as are ridiculous. This last characteristic is a mark of human or diabolical machination.

c) Nor are we, considering the laws of Providence and the miracles which God is accustomed to work, to admit as coming from God commands impossible of realization, for God does not demand the impossible.¹

C) Rules concerning the Effects of Revelations

1503. A tree is judged by its fruits; hence, we can judge revelations by the effects they produce in the soul.

a) According to St. Ignatius and St. Teresa, a divine vision causes at first a sense of wonderment and of fear, soon to be followed by a *sense of deep and lasting peace, of joy and of security*. The contrary is true with regard to diabolical visions; if at the outset they produce joy, they soon cause *uneasiness, sadness and discouragement*. It is thus that the devil brings about the downfall of souls.

1504. b) True revelations strengthen the soul in humility, obedience, patience and conformity to the divine will; *false* ones beget pride, presumption and disobedience.

St. Teresa² says: "This is a favor of Our Lord, which brings great *confusion* of oneself and *humility*; but, were it from the devil, the effect would be quite the opposite. Since, then, it clearly proves itself to be given by God... whoever receives it can in no way whatever imagine that it is a favor of his own, but that it comes from the hand of God... It is attended with immense gain and interior effects, which would not be, were melancholy the cause; much less could the devil effect so much good, nor would the soul enjoy such great peace, or such continual desires of *pleasing God, or such contempt for whatever does not conduce to unite us with Him.*"

¹ In the life of St. Catherine of Bologna it is related that the devil sometimes appeared to her in the form of the crucified Christ and demanded of her, under the appearance of perfection, the most impossible things, in order to drive her to despair. (*Vita altera*, cap. II, 10-13 in the *Bollandists* March 9).
² *Interior Castle*, VI Mansion, C. VIII.

1505. c) Here the question arises whether one may ask for signs in confirmation of private revelations. **a)** If the thing revealed is of *importance*, one may do so, but *humbly and conditionally*; for God is not bound to perform miracles in order to prove the truth of these visions. **b)** If signs are asked for, it is well to leave their choice to God. The parish priest of Lourdes requested Our Lady in apparition to make a sweetbrier to bloom in the midst of winter; the sign was not granted, but she did cause a miraculous spring to well forth which was destined to heal both body and soul. **c)** The careful verification of the requested miracle and its relation to the apparition affords a convincing proof.

D) Rules for Discerning the True from the False in Revelations.

1506. A revelation may be true in the main and yet contain some incidental errors. God does not multiply miracles without reason, and He does not right the prejudices or errors that they may lodge in the minds of the seers; He has in view their *spiritual welfare*, not their intellectual formation. We shall understand this better if we analyze the causes of error met with in some private revelations.

a) The first cause is the *uniting of human activity with supernatural action*, especially if the imagination and the mind are very active.

1) Thus, in private revelations we find the *errors* of the times in what relates to the *physical or historical sciences*. St. Frances of Rome asserts that she had beheld a heaven of crystal between the empyreal and the starry heavens and attributed the blueness of the sky to the starry heaven. Mary of Agreda thought she knew through revelation that this crystal heaven was divided into eleven parts at the moment of the Incarnation.¹

2) At times we also meet with the prejudices and the systems of the spiritual directors of the seers. Relying upon her directors, St. Colletta thought she had seen in visions that St. Anne had been thrice married and was coming to visit her with her numerous family.² Sometimes Dominican and Franciscan Saints speak in their visions according to the systems peculiar to their Orders.

3) *Historical errors* also find their way into revelations: God is not wont to reveal the precise details of the life of Our Lord or of our Blessed Lady, when these have but little bearing on piety. Now, many seers, intertwining their own devout meditations with the revelations they receive, give details, numbers, dates, which contradict historical documents or other revelations. Thus, among the various accounts of the Passion, many little details related in visions, are either contradictory (for example, details regarding the number of strokes

¹ *The Mystic City*, Part II, n. 128; Part, I, n. 122.

² *Bollandists*, March 25th, p. 247.

Christ received in His flagellation) or in opposition to the best historical authorities.¹

1507. b) A divine revelation may be wrongly interpreted. For example, St. Joan of Arc having asked of her "voices" whether she would be burnt, received the reply that she should trust in Our Lord, Who would assist her, and that she would be delivered through a great victory. In reality, her deliverance and victory were her martyrdom and her entrance into heaven. St. Norbert affirmed that he knew through revelation and with certainty that the Antichrist would come in his generation (XII Century). Questioned closely by St. Bernard, he said that at least he would not die before seeing a general persecution of the Church.² St. Vincent Ferrer announced the *Last Judgment as nigh*, and seemed to confirm this prediction by miracles.³

1508. c) A revelation may be unwittingly *altered* by the seer himself when he attempts to explain, or, still oftener, by those to whom he dictates his revelations.

St. Brigid realized herself that at times she retouched her revelations, the better to explain them;⁴ these added explanations are not always free from errors. It is acknowledged today that the scribes who wrote the revelations of Mary of Agreda, of Catherine Emmerich, and of Marie Lataste modified them to an extent difficult to determine.⁵

For all these reasons, we can not be too prudent when examining private revelations.

CONCLUSION

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS PRIVATE REVELATIONS

1509. a) We cannot do better than to *imitate the judicious reserve of the Church and of the Saints*. The Church accepts no revelations except after long and careful investigation, and even then She does not force them on the faithful. Moreover, when it is question of inaugurating some feast or public undertaking, She waits long years before pronouncing, and decides only after the matter itself and its bearing on Dogma and Liturgy have been carefully considered.

Thus, Blessed Julienne of Liège, chosen by God to bring about the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi, did not submit her project

¹ BOLLANDISTS, January 13th, preface to the life of Blessed Veronica of Binasco; ST. ALPHONBUS LIGUORI, *Horologe of the Passion*.

² ST. BERNARD, *Letters*, No. LVI.

³ FATHER FAGES, O. P., in the *Histoire de S. V. Ferrer*, explains that this was a conditional prophecy, like that of Jonas against Niniveh, and that the world was saved precisely on account of the many conversions the Saint brought about.

⁴ *Supplementary Revelations*, C. XLIX.

⁵ In the *Works of Marie Lataste* we find among her revelations passages translated from the Summa of St. Thomas.

to the theologians until twenty-two years after her first visions; fully sixteen years elapsed before the Bishop of Liege instituted the feast for his diocese, and it was six years after the death of Blessed Julienne herself that Pope Urban IV made it a feast of the entire Church. In like manner, the feast of the Sacred Heart was not approved until long after the revelations had been made to St. Margaret Mary, and then for reasons quite apart from these revelations.

In all this the Church has given us an example which we should follow.

1510. b) We must not therefore pronounce with *certitude* on the existence of a private revelation until we have had *convincing* proofs which are well summarized by Benedict XIV in his work on Canonizations. Generally, we must not rest satisfied with but one proof, and we should see whether the various proofs agree with and lend support to one another. The more numerous the proofs, the greater assurance we shall have.

1511. c) When a spiritual director is told by a penitent of his supposed revelations, he should carefully refrain from showing any *admiration*, for this would lead the seer at once to consider these visions as true, and perhaps to take pride in them. He must rather explain that such things are of far less importance than the practice of virtue, that one can easily be deceived in these matters and that one must therefore suspect, and at the beginning discount, such visions, rather than take stock in them.

This is the rule laid down by the Saints. St. Teresa¹ says: "Sometimes, and often, it may be only fancy, especially if the persons have a weak imagination, or are subject to great melancholy. No attention is, in my opinion, to be paid to these two kinds of persons... Such things are always to be feared until the spirit is understood. I consider it best to resist these "discourses" at first, because if they come from God they are a great help to advance us onwards; they also increase when they are thus tried. This is the case; but the soul should not be troubled too much, for truly she cannot do otherwise". St. John of the Cross is still more emphatic, pointing out the six main drawbacks of a too ready acceptance of such visions, he adds: "The devil rejoices greatly when a soul seeks after revelations and is ready to accept them; for such conduct furnishes him with many opportunities of insinuating delusions, and derogating from faith as much as he possibly can; for such a soul becomes rough and rude, and falls frequently into many temptations and unseemly habits."²

1512. d) However, the spiritual director should treat kindly those who think they have received revelations. He will thus succeed in gaining their confidence and he will obtain more easily the details which will enable him, after

¹ *Interior Castle*, VI Mansion, C. III.

² *Ascent of Carmel*, Bk. II, C. XI; The entire chapter should be read.

mature reflection, to pass judgment. Then, should he find the visions to be illusory, his decision will be more readily accepted.

This is the advice of St. John of the Cross, severe as he is with regard to visions: "But remember, though I say that these communications are to be set aside, and that confessors should be careful not to discuss them with their penitents, it is not right for spiritual directors to show themselves severe in the matter, or to betray any contempt or aversion; lest their penitents should shrink within themselves, and be afraid to reveal their condition, and so fall into many inconveniences, which would be the case if the door were thus shut against them."¹

1513. e) If it be question of initiating some public enterprise, the director should carefully refrain from encouraging the venture without having previously well examined in the light of supernatural prudence the reasons *for* and *against*.

This is what the Saints did. St. Teresa, who was favored with so many revelations, did not want her directors to be guided in their decision solely by her visions. When Our Lord bade her to found the reformed monastery of Avila, she humbly submitted her plan to her director, and when the latter hesitated, she consulted St. Peter of Alcantara, St. Francis Borgia and St. Louis Bertrand.²

As to the seers themselves, they have but one rule to follow, to make their revelations known to some prudent director, and humbly follow his instructions. This is the surest way of not going astray.

II. The Charisms. 3

1514. The revelations of which we have just spoken are accorded chiefly for the personal benefit of the recipient; the charisms are bestowed principally for the benefit of others. They are gratuitous gifts of an *extraordinary* and *transitory* nature, conferred directly *for the good of others*, though indirectly they may be made to minister to one's personal sanctification. St. Paul in the first Epistle to the Corinthians distinguishes nine charisms, all of which proceed from the same Spirit:

1515. 1) *The word of wisdom*, which enables us to draw from the truths of faith, as from principles, *conclusions* rich in dogmatic teaching.
2) *The word of knowledge*, which helps us to make use of human knowledge in order to explain the truths of faith.
3) *The gift of faith*, not the virtue of faith itself, but a special assurance capable of working wonders.

¹ *Ascent of Carmel*, Bk. II, C. XXXIII.

² *Histoire de Ste Thérèse* par une Carmélite, ch. XII.

³ PRAT, *Theology of St. Paul*, II; GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *op. cit.*, II, p. 536-53

4) *The grace of healings*, or the power over disease.

5) *The working of miracles*, which confirms divine revelation.

6) *The gift of prophecy*, or the power to teach in God's name, and, if need be, to confirm this teaching by prophecies.

7) *The discerning of spirits*, or the infused gift of reading the secrets of hearts and discerning the good spirit from the evil one.

8) *Diverse kinds of tongues*, which for St. Paul means the power to pray with exalted feeling in strange tongues; according to theologians, it is the gift of speaking divers tongues.

9) *Interpretation of speeches*, or the power to interpret the aforesaid strange tongues.¹

St. Paul and St. Thomas rightly remind us that all these charisms are far inferior to charity and to sanctifying grace.

§ II. Psycho-physiological Phenomena

1516. By this term we mean such phenomena as affect both soul and body, and which are more or less related to ecstasy. The principal phenomena of this kind are: 1° *levitation*; 2° *luminous rays*; 3° *fragrant odors*; 4° *prolonged fasting*; 5° *stigmatisation*.

I. Levitation

1517. Levitation is a phenomenon whereby the body is raised above the ground and sustained in midair without any natural support. Sometimes the body rises to great heights; at other times it seems to glide rapidly over the ground.

We read of many facts of levitation in the lives of the Saints, both in the *Bollandists* and in the *Breviary*; for instance: St. Paul of the Cross, April 28th; St. Philip Neri, May 26th; St. Stephen of Hungary, September 2nd; St. Joseph Cupertino, September 18th; St. Peter of Alcantara, October 10th; St. Francis Xavier, December 3rd, etc... One of the most celebrated is St. Joseph of Cupertino. One day seeing some workmen at a loss to set a very heavy mission cross in place, he took his aerial flight, seized the cross, and planted it without effort in the place prepared for it.

This phenomenon is akin to that of an *extraordinary immobility*, which prevents one from being moved, even by a powerful force.

1518. Rationalists have attempted to explain this phenomenon by natural causes, for instance by air drawn deep into the lungs, by an unknown physical force, by the intervention of spirits, etc., which amounts to saying that they have no sufficient explanation to offer. How much

¹ St. Thomas in an interesting article (In II^m, q. III, a. 4) summarizes these, divers graces and shows how useful they are to the preacher of the Word: 1) they give him a full knowledge of divine things; 2) they confirm his preaching by miracles; 3) they help him to preach the Word of God more effectively.

wiser Benedict XIV! He requires first of all that the fact be thoroughly verified so as to eliminate any chance of fraud. Then he states: 1) that a well-authenticated *levitation* cannot be explained on natural grounds; 2) that this phenomenon is not, however, beyond the power of angels or of demons, who can lift the body; 3) that with the Saints it is a sort of anticipation of a prerogative of glorified bodies.¹

II. Luminous Rays.²

1519. Ecstasy is at times accompanied by luminous phenomena: it may be a halo about the head, or a glow enveloping the whole body.

Here again we sum up the teaching of Benedict XIV.³ The fact must first be thoroughly investigated in all its circumstances in order to ascertain whether the luminous effect can be ascribed to a natural cause.

In particular we should inquire: 1) whether the phenomenon takes place in full daylight or during the night, and if the latter be the case whether the light is more brilliant than any other light; 2) whether it is a mere spark, much like that produced by electricity, or whether the luminous phenomenon is prolonged over a considerable period of time, recurring again and again; 3) whether it is produced during the course of some religious act, an ecstasy, a sermon, a prayer; 4) whether there follow upon it effects of grace, lasting conversions, etc.; 5) whether the person, from whom this radiance proceeds is virtuous and holy.

It is only after a careful examination into all these details that we can pronounce upon the nature of the facts. If their supernatural character is ascertained, we have another anticipation of a prerogative of glorified bodies.

III. Fragrant Odors

1520. At times God permits the bodies of the Saints to give forth during their lifetime or after their death a fragrant odor, a symbol, so to speak, of the perfume of the virtues they have practised.

Thus, the stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi occasionally emitted a sweet perfume. When St. Teresa died, the water wherewith her body was washed retained a certain fragrance. During nine months a mysterious perfume rose from her grave, and when her body was exhumed, a sweet-smelling oil trickled from her limbs.⁴ Many similar facts have been recorded.

¹ *De Beatificat.*, Book III, C. XLIX.

² RIBET, *La Mystique*, 11^e P., ch. XXIX; MGR FARGES, *op. cit.*, II^e Part. ch. III, a. 3.

³ *De Beatificat.*, Book IV, I Part., C. XXVI, n. 8-30.

⁴ This miracle was carefully studied in the process of her canonization, and the examiners concluded that nothing in the natural order could explain it (BOLLANDISTS, Oct. 15th, t. LV, p. 368, n. 1132).

Pope Benedict XIV has indicated the procedure to be followed in verifying a miracle. One must examine: 1) whether the odor is sweet and persistent; 2) whether anything near the body or in the earth can account for it; 3) whether miracles have been wrought by the use of the water or the oil coming from the body of the Saint.¹

IV. Prolonged Abstinence

1521. There have been Saints, especially among those bearing the stigmata, who have lived many years without taking any other food than Holy Communion.

Dr. Imbert-Goubeyre² mentions some striking instances: "Blessed Angela of Foligno remained twelve years without taking any nourishment; St. Catherine of Siena, about eight years; Blessed Elizabeth of Rente, over fifteen years; St. Ledwina, twenty eight years; Blessed Catherine Racconigi, ten years... in our own time, Rosa Andriani, twenty eight years... and Louise Lateau, fourteen years."

The Church is very exacting in the investigation concerning facts of this kind, and demands a strict surveillance of the person at all times, during a notable period, and by numerous witnesses well able to detect any fraud.³ The examiners must ascertain whether the abstinence is *absolute*, extending to drink as well as to food, whether it is *unbroken*, and whether the person concerned continues to attend to customary occupations.

We must mention here another phenomenon of a somewhat similar nature, that of protracted vigils. St. Peter of Alcantara slept but one hour and a half a night for forty years; St. Catherine of Ricci slept but one hour a week.

V. Stigmatization

1522. 1^o Nature and Origin. This phenomenon consists in a kind of impression of Our Lord's Wounds made upon the feet, hands, side and brow. These wounds appear spontaneously, from no exterior hurt, and periodically there is a flow of fresh blood.

The first person known to bear the stigmata was St. Francis of Assisi. During a sublime ecstasy on Mount Alvernia on the seventeenth of September, 1222, he saw a Seraph presenting to him the image of Jesus Crucified and imprinting upon him the sacred stigmata. A rich, red blood used to flow from these wounds, which remained with him until his death. He tried to conceal the miracle, but was not wholly successful, and at his death, on the eleventh of

¹ *De Beatific.*, I. IV, P. I, C. XXXI, n. 19-28.

² *La Stigmatization*, t. II, p. 183.

³ BENEDICT XIV, *op. cit.*, I. IV, P. I, C. XXXVII.

October, 1226, the prodigy became known. Since that time such cases have multiplied. Dr. Imbert counts three hundred and twenty, forty of which were those of men, and sixty-two of these persons have been canonized.

1523. It seems to be a well-established fact that stigmatization occurs only among those favored with *ecstasies*, and that it is preceded and attended by very keen *physical* and *moral sufferings* which thus render the subject comfortable to the Suffering Christ. The absence of suffering would be an unfavorable sign, for the stigmata are but the symbol of union with Jesus Crucified and of participation in His martyrdom.

The existence of the stigmata has been proved by so many testimonies that unbelievers themselves generally admit the fact, but try to explain it by some natural means. They claim that it is possible to provoke in persons of an extremely sensitive nature bloody sweats resembling the stigmata, by causing in them an over-excitation of the imagination. As a matter of fact however, the few results they have obtained in this wise differ vastly from the phenomena observed in stigmatized Saints.

1524. ²⁰ **Signs by Which to Discern Stigmata.** The better to discern stigmatization from the artificial phenomena provoked in some individuals, attention must be paid to all the circumstances which characterize true stigmatization.

- 1) The stigmata are localized in the very spots where Our Lord received the five wounds, a fact which is not true of the bloody sweat produced by hypnotism.
- 2) Generally, the wounds bleed afresh and the pains recur on the days or during the seasons which recall the Savior's Passion, such as Fridays or the feast days of Our Lord.
- 3) The wounds *do not become infected*, and the blood which flows from them is pure, whilst the slightest natural lesion in some other part of the body develops pus. The wounds *do not yield to the usual medical treatment*, and remain at times thirty or forty years.
- 4) The wounds bleed freely and produce a veritable *hemorrhage*. That this should occur at the moment when they first appear is quite conceivable, but that it should take place again and again is inexplicable. The extent of the hemorrhages remains likewise unexplained; the stigmata generally lie on the surface, removed from the great blood-vessels, yet the blood literally streams from them.
- 5) Lastly, and above all, the stigmata are not met with except in persons who *practise the most heroic virtues* and possess a special love for the cross.

A study of all these circumstances proves indeed that we are dealing here not with some ordinary, pathological case, but with a free, intelligent cause which exerts its influence in

order to make these persons bearing the stigmata more like the Crucified Christ.

CONCLUSION: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THESE SUPERNATURAL PHENOMENA AND MORBID CASES

1525. The phenomena connected with ecstasy have been so well established that unbelievers cannot deny them; they strive merely to liken them to certain *morbid phenomena* which are caused by psycho-neurosis, and particularly by *hysteria*. Some go so far as to maintain that they are simply a form of *mental derangement*. No doubt, the Saints are subject to illness just as other human beings are, but the question is whether in spite of their ailments they appear to be sane and well-balanced. On this point the differences between *mystical* and *psycho-neurotic* phenomena are so essential that no honest observer can fail to note them. ¹ These differences are found: ^{1°} in the *persons* themselves; ^{2°} in the *diversity of the phenomena*; ^{3°} in the *results*.

1526. ^{1°} **Differences in the persons themselves.** If we compare those affected with *psycho-neurosis* with persons favored with ecstasies, we find that the former are unbalanced physically and mentally, whilst the latter are at least mentally sound.

A) The former lack *mental* and physical soundness.

We notice in them a decrease of intellectual and volitional power: consciousness is altered or temporarily suspended, attention is relaxed, intelligence deteriorates, memory disintegrates to such an extent that one is led to believe they have a double personality, and before long their mind is depleted save for a few fixed ideas: the final result of which is monomania bordering on insanity. Their will likewise becomes weaker and weaker, their emotions gain control, and they become the playthings of their own whims or of some stronger will. This means a disintegration of personality and a lessening of intellectual and moral power.²

1527. B) It is very different with the *mystics*. Their mind develops, their will grows stronger, and they become capable of conceiving and realizing the greatest undertakings. We have seen how they acquire a new knowledge of God, of His attributes, of the dogmas of faith, of self.

¹ This difference is brought out by unbelievers such as M. DE MONTMORAND, *Psychologie des Mystiques*, 1920, although the latter attributes these phenomena to hallucination. For the refutation of these theories our readers are referred to A. HUC, *Neurose et Mysticisme*, *Rev. de Philosophie (P. Peillaube)*, juil., août, 1912, pp. 5, 128; MGR. FARGES, *op. cit.*, p. 322-385.

² This is a summary of the characteristics noted by P. JANET, *L'Automatisme psychologique*, P. II, ch. III-IV.

Doubtless, they are unable to express all they see, but they sincerely declare that they learned more during a few moments of contemplation than by long and extensive readings. That they are right in their conviction is proved by the real progress made in the exercise of the most heroic virtues. We see that they become more humble, more charitable, more submissive to the Divine Will even in the midst of very intense suffering, and that they enjoy a sweet calm and peace which nothing can disturb. How utterly different all this from the spasms and the passionate commotions of hysteria!

1528. 2° Differences in the phenomena. Differences just as marked as the foregoing are likewise discernible in the manner in which the two kinds of phenomena occur.

A) Nothing is sadder and more heartrending than to witness the fits of hysteria.

1) The first stage of hysteria resembles a slight attack of epilepsy. It can be distinguished however from the latter by the *sensation of a lump rising in the throat*. In reality, there is a swelling of the throat which produces a feeling of suffocation accompanied by a sort of hissing sound perceptible to the ears. 2) The second stage is marked by uncontrolled gestures and contortions of the entire body. 3) The third stage gives rise to attitudes of fright, of jealousy, of lust, according to the nature of the obsessing idea or image. 4) The fit ends in a paroxysm of tears or laughter. After the crisis has passed, the patient is left weary and exhausted, and suffers from various indispositions.

B) Note once more the difference between this and ecstasy. In the latter there are no convulsions, no violent spasms, but only the peace and the rapture of a soul intimately united with its God. So true is this that those who have witnessed a person in ecstasy, those for example who saw Blessed Bernadette during her visions at the Grotto of Lourdes, could not withhold their admiration. As St. Teresa remarks (n. 1456), the body, instead of becoming exhausted, gathers new energies during the time of ecstasy.

1529. 3° Differences in the effects. Here again hysteria differs widely from ecstasy.

A) With hysterical persons the disintegration of the faculties increases in proportion to the frequency of the crises. Dissimulation, lying, stupor, brutality and lewdness follow in the wake of this disease.

B) In the case of the *mystics*, on the contrary, there is a steady mental growth, an increase of the love of God and of devoted service to the neighbor. When they have the opportunity of engaging in some public enterprise, they

give evidence of common sense, of an open and strong mind, of a determined will, and success crowns their efforts.

St. Teresa, in spite of the frequent opposition she encountered, founded sixteen convents for women and fourteen monasteries for men. St. Colletta established thirteen monasteries and restored discipline in a great number of others. Madame Acarie, who had been favored with ecstasies from her sixteenth year, was happily married for thirty years, reared a family of six children, restored her family's fortunes, which had been imperilled by her husband's imprudences, and after the latter's death, was instrumental in the establishment of the Carmelite Order in France. St. Catherine of Siena, who died at the age of thirty-two and who for a long time did not know how to read or write, played an important part in the stirring events of her times, and particularly in the return of the Popes of Avignon to Rome. A recent historian has called her a statesman, and a great statesman.¹

It is evident then that the differences existing between the phenomena of hysteria and ecstasy are such that to attempt to place them in the same category is to violate all the canons of scientific investigation.

1530. 4° Objection. A final difficulty remains to be solved. There are those who with Ribot claim that ecstasy brings about a gradual narrowing of the field of consciousness to *one affective idea*, called by them *monomania*, since mystics think of nothing else but the intimate union with God. To answer this specious objection, we must distinguish between ideas and ideas. There is the case of an *obsessing idea* which little by little breaks down personality by unbalancing the judgment. Such is, for instance, the fixed idea of suicide. But there is also the case of a *healthy, constructive singleness of purpose*, of one main idea dominating all the others and making them bear on this one purpose, without however destroying the mind's equilibrium. Far from causing any disintegration of personality, such an idea gives strength and unity. It is just because great statesmen have such fixed ideas as these, provided always that the ideas be just ones, ideas on which they center all their plans, that they are able to accomplish great things.

This is exactly the case with the mystics. They have a dominant idea, a fixed idea of pursuing above all things their ultimate end, that is, intimate union with God, the Source of all bliss and all perfection, and they make all their other thoughts bear on this one idea, this one great purpose of life. And who can gainsay the justice of their cause? We are dealing here with a force that is in no way destructive; on the contrary, it is a power which coordinates thoughts and actions by directing them towards that one end which alone can give perfection and happiness. This is the reason why, even from a human point of view, the Saints are great doers, men of action imbued with common sense, energy and steadiness of purpose, men who conceive and carry out great enterprises. Even unbelievers them-

¹ E. M. GEBHART, *Rev. hebdom.*, 16 mars, 1907.

selves have come to recognize this fact, as we pointed out before (n. 43).

Let us then be just, and acknowledge that mystics are not only saints, but men of character as well.

ART. II. DIABOLICAL PHENOMENA *

1531. The devil, jealous of God's influence on the souls of the Saints, strives to exercise his own dominion, or rather his tyranny, over men. At times he, so to speak, besieges the soul *from without* by assailing it with horrible temptations; at other times, he *takes up his abode in the human body*, which he moves at will as if he were its master, in order thus to afflict the soul itself. In the former case we have *obsession*, in the latter, *possession*.

There are two extreme views concerning the action of the devil. There are those who attribute to him all the evils that befall mankind. This is to forget that man is subject to morbid states which presuppose no diabolical intervention whatsoever, and has inordinate tendencies which proceed from the threefold concupiscence. These causes suffice to explain many a temptation. There are other persons who, forgetting what Holy Writ and Tradition tell us about the devil's influence, refuse to admit his intervention in any instance. In order to keep to the golden mean, we must follow the rule of accepting as diabolical only such phenomena as point, because of their extraordinary nature or because of the sum-total of circumstances, to the action of the Evil One.

We shall treat first of *obsession*, and then of *possession*.

§ I. Obsession

1532. I. Its Nature. Obsession consists in a series of unusually violent and persistent temptations. It is called *external* when the temptations affect the exterior senses by means of apparitions, and *internal* when they stir up sensations or emotions. It is rare that obsession is purely external, for the devil acts upon the senses in order the more easily to disturb the soul. However, there have been Saints who, though obsessed from without by all sorts of phantoms, preserved an unruffled peace of soul.

1533. 1° The devil can act upon all the external senses :

a) Upon the sense of *sight*, by appearing sometimes under *repulsive* forms to frighten persons and turn them away from the practice of virtue, as he did to the Venerable Mother Agnes of Langeac¹ and to many others; at other times under *seductive* forms in order to lead them into sin, as he frequently did to St. Alphonsus Rodriguez.²

b) Upon the sense of *hearing*, by causing blasphemous or obscene words or songs to be heard, as is told in the Life of the Blessed Margaret of Cortona,³ or by creating frightful noises, such as were experienced at times by St. Madeleine of Pazzi and the sainted Curé of Ars.⁴

c) Upon the sense of *touch*, and this in two ways : by blows and wounds, such as we read of in the Bulls of Canonization of St. Catherine of Siena, of St. Francis Xavier, and in the Life of St. Teresa;⁵ or by embraces, the purpose of which is to tempt to sin, as St. Alphonsus Rodriguez relates of himself.⁶

Father Schram⁷ remarks that there are cases in which these apparitions are pure hallucinations resulting from extreme nervous excitation. However, even in such cases they constitute formidable temptations.

1534. 2° The devil also acts upon the *interior* senses, the imagination and the memory, and upon the passions, in order to excite them. Distressing and besetting images flit through the imagination and remain there in spite of every effort to expel them. One appears to have become the prey to fits of anger, to the anguish of despair, to instinctive feelings of antipathy, or on the other hand, to a dangerous sentimentality which nothing seems to justify. No doubt, it is difficult at times to decide whether the case is one of real obsession, but when the temptations are at once sudden, violent, persistent and hard to account for by natural means, one may conclude that it is a special intervention on the part of the devil. In case of doubt, it will always be well to consult a Catholic physician, who can examine whether the phenomena are due to some morbid condition, and if they are, to prescribe the proper medical treatment.

1535. II. Attitude of the spiritual Director. He must unite enlightened *prudence* with paternal *kindness*.

a) Of course, he should not without serious evidence consider the case one of real obsession. Nevertheless,

¹ M. DE LANTAGES, *Vie de la Vm. M. Agnès* ed. Lucof, 1863, P. I, ch. X.

² POULAIN, op. cit., ch. XXIV, n. 94.

³ *Bollandistes*, Feb. 22., t. VI, p. 340, n. 178.

⁴ A. MONNIN, *The Curé of Ars*, III, C. II.

⁵ *Vie par une Carmélite*, t. II, ch. XXVII.

⁶ POULAIN, loc. cit. — *7 Institut. theol. mysticæ*, 219.

⁷ DEL RIO, *Disquisitiones magicæ*, 1600; THYREUS, *De locis infestis; De spirituum apparitionibus; De dæmoniacis*, 1699; RIBET, *Mystique arvine*, t. III; POULAIN, *Graces of Interior Prayer*, C. XXIV; SAUDREAU, *L'Etat mystique*, ch. XXII-XXIII.

whether there be obsession or not, he must be full of pity towards penitents who are assailed by violent and persistent temptations, and he must help them with judicious advice. He should remind them particularly of what we have said with regard to temptations, the manner of resisting them (n. 902-918), and the special remedies against diabolical temptation (n. 223-224).

b) If at the height of the temptation some disorder takes place but without any consent on the part of the will, he must remind them that where there is no consent, there is no sin. In case of doubt and when the person in question habitually avoids sin, he will decide that there has been no fault, at least no grave fault.

c) When dealing with *fervent* souls, the director may well ask himself whether these persistent temptations are not part of the *passive trials* which we described above (n. 1426), and if so, he must give them the advice suited to their state of soul.

1536. d) If it is morally certain or highly probable that there is diabolical obsession, the spiritual director may make use, *in private*, of the *exorcisms* contained in the *Roman Ritual* or of some shorter formulas. Should he determine to do so, he should not tell the penitent beforehand if he has reason to fear that it would only worry and excite him; it will suffice to say that he is going to recite over him some prayer approved by the Church. *Solemn exorcisms* may not be employed without the permission of the Ordinary, and then only with the precautions which we shall indicate when treating of possession.

§ II. Possession¹

We shall explain: 1° its *nature*; 2° the *remedies* prescribed by the *Roman Ritual*.

I. Nature of Possession

1537. 1° Its *constituent elements*. Two elements constitute possession: the *presence* of the devil in the body of the possessed, and the *dominion* exercised by the devil over that body, and through it, over the soul. This latter point needs to be explained. The devil does not unite with the body in the same manner as the soul does, nor does he enter into the soul itself; it is only by acting upon the body in which he dwells that he can affect the soul. He can indeed act directly on the bodily members and cause them to perform all sorts of motions, and indirectly

he can move the faculties of the soul in so far as they depend for their operations upon the body.

We can distinguish two distinct states in possessed persons: the *crisis* and the period of *calm*. The crisis is like a violent attack in which the devil manifests his tyrannical sway by imparting to the body a feverish agitation which finds expression in contortions, outbursts of fury, and impious and blasphemous utterances. There upon the victims seem to lose all sense of what takes place within them, and they retain no memory of what they say or do, or rather, of what the devil does through them. It is only at the beginning of the crisis that they are aware of the invasion of the Evil One, and after that they apparently lose consciousness.

1538. There are however exceptions to this general rule. Father Surin, who himself became possessed while exorcising the Ursulines of Loudun, was conscious of all that took place within him. He describes how his soul was divided in twain, open on one side to diabolic influences, and on the other abandoned to God's action, and how he prayed while his body rolled over the ground. He says: "My state is such that there remain to me very few actions in which I am free. If I want to speak, my tongue rebels; during Holy Mass I am constrained to stop suddenly; at table I am unable to bring the food to my mouth; if I go to confession I forget my sins; I am aware of the devil within me as within his own house, going in and out as he pleases."

1539. During the intervals of quiet and calm there is nothing to disclose the presence of the evil spirit; it is as though he had departed. Sometimes however his presence manifests itself by a sort of chronic infirmity which baffles all the efforts of physicians.

Often enough *several* devils take possession of the same person. This fact would seem to indicate their relative weakness.

Generally it is sinners who fall victims to possession, but it is not always so, as may be seen from the case of Father Surin.

1540. 2° The signs of possession. Since there are nervous diseases, cases of monomania and of mental aberration, the symptoms of which resemble the manifestations of diabolical possession, it is important to know the signs whereby the latter can be distinguished from all such morbid phenomena.

According to the Roman Ritual² there are three principal signs by which possession may be recognized: "Speaking

¹ Besides the authors already mentioned, see MGR WAFFELAERT, in the *Dictionnaire d'Apologétique*: "Possession."

² Lettre du 3 mai 1635 au P. d'Atichy.
³ *De Exorcizandis Obsessis a Dæmonio*.

an unknown tongue or understanding it when spoken by another; making known distant and hidden things; exhibiting a strength out of all proportion with one's age and circumstances. These and other like signs, when they concur in great number, are the surest indications of possession." Just a word to explain these signs.

a) *The Use of Unknown Tongues.* To verify the fact, a thorough examination must be made to see whether the person in question has had in the past any opportunity of learning some words of the language used, whether he is uttering merely a few phrases learned by heart, or whether he really has a knowledge of a language hitherto unknown to him.

b) *Making Known Hidden Things.* Here again a thorough inquiry must be made to see whether or not the knowledge can be explained by some natural means. If it be question, for instance, of things distant, one must make sure that the person had not been made aware of them by letter, telegram or some other purely natural means. If it be question of future events, one must wait for their occurrence and see whether they take place precisely as they were foretold. One must therefore take account of those vague predictions announcing some great misfortune to be followed by some happy event or notable prosperity; if this were all that is required, one could rather easily establish a reputation as a prophet. Once the fact has been properly verified, one must ascertain according to the rules for the discernment of spirits whether this preternatural knowledge proceeds from the good or from the evil spirit, and if from the latter, whether from an evil spirit actually present in the possessed person.

c) *Exhibiting a Strength out of all Proportion with One's Age and Circumstances.* One must not forget that there are instances of over-excitation of the nervous system wherein one's energies are notably increased. We have already said that the phenomenon of *levitation* when correctly established is of a preternatural character. There are indeed cases which, all circumstances considered, can not be attributed to God or to His Angels, and must therefore be ascribed to the intervention of the devil.

1541. One might add here another sign pointing to the fact of possession to be found in the reactions produced by the use of exorcisms or of holy objects, especially if they are employed *without the knowledge* of the supposedly possessed persons. At times, the mere contact with a pious object or the recitation over them of the liturgical prayers drives them into a fury and provokes horrible blasphemies. However, this is not a sure sign of possession unless the experiment just described is made unknown to the patients, for if they realize what is about to be done, they may

¹ Cases of abnormal mental states have been recorded in which words or languages once heard or understood but later forgotten, were recalled; for instance, the priest's housekeeper who recited whole passages in Greek and Hebrew which she had heard the priest recite. The statement of the *Ritual* is therefore a judicious one. "Speaking an unknown tongue or understanding it when spoken by another."

purposely work themselves into a state of frenzy, either because they have a horror of all things religious, or because they wish to deceive.

It is not easy therefore to recognize a case of real possession, and one cannot be too careful before making a decision.

1542. ^{3o} **Differences between possession and nervous diseases.** Experiments made upon persons affected with nervous troubles have shown a certain similarity between these morbid states and the *outward manifestations* of diabolical possession. We should not be surprised at this. The devil can cause nervous disorders or other external phenomena similar to those of neuropathics. This is one more reason for extreme care before passing judgment on alleged cases of possession.

It is worth noting that the similarity between nervous maladies and demoniacal possession does not go beyond the outward appearances, which of themselves are insufficient to prove the fact of possession. No one has met with neuropathics who could speak unknown tongues or foretell the future with precision and certitude. These are, as we stated before, the true signs of possession, and when all of these are absent, we may well consider the case one of simple psycho-neurosis. If exorcists have at times been deceived, it is generally because they have departed from the rules laid down by the *Ritual*. That such mistakes be avoided, one should have the case examined not only by priests, but also by Catholic physicians.

1543. Father Debreyne, who had practised medicine before becoming a Trappist, tells of how he had to treat a community of women whose condition offered many points of resemblance to that of the Ursulines of Loudun. He cured them in a short time by prescribing hygienic measures, particularly steady and varied manual labor.

One must be especially skeptical when possession seems to become *epidemic*. A real case of possession can induce in others witnessing it a nervous condition outwardly similar to that of possession. The best way to obviate such contagion is to separate the persons thus stricken and to remove them from the environment in which they contracted their nervous malady.

II. Remedies for Possession

In general, the remedies consist in anything that can weaken the influence of the devil over man, purify his soul, and strengthen his will against diabolical assaults. The *special* remedy is found in the exorcisms.

² *Essai de théol. morale*, ch. IV, revised edition by Dr. Ferrand, 1884.

1544. 1° **General remedies.** All the remedies pointed out (n. 223-224) for diabolical temptation are to be employed in dealing with possession.

A) One of the most efficacious of all is the *purification of the soul* by a worthy confession, particularly a general confession, which by humiliating and sanctifying the penitent puts to flight the proud and impure spirit. The *Ritual* counsels the addition of fasting, prayer and the reception of Holy Communion.¹ The more pure and the more mortified one becomes, the weaker becomes the influence of the devil, and in Holy Communion one receives Him Who conquered Satan. It need hardly be said that Communion should not be given except in moments of calm.

B) The *Sacramentals* and *blessed objects* are also efficacious remedies because of the prayers said by the Church when blessing them. St. Teresa had great confidence in *holy water*, and rightly so, since the Church imparts to it the power of putting the devil to flight.² But such objects are to be used in a spirit of faith, of humility and of confidence.

C) The Crucifix, the Sign of the Cross, and especially genuine relics of the True Cross are terrifying to the devil who was vanquished by the Cross: "That the one who conquered by a tree should himself be likewise conquered by the Tree."³ For the same reason the Evil Spirit dreads the invocation of the Holy Name of Jesus, which, on the Master's Own promise, possesses a wondrous power for putting the devil to flight.⁴

1545. 2° **Exorcisms.** The Church, having received from Christ the power of expelling devils, early instituted the Order of Exorcists, on whom She conferred the power of imposing hands on possessed persons, whether baptized or only preparing for baptism; and later She composed formulas of prayers to be employed by them in the exercise

¹ "The obsessed person should be urged, if he be mentally and physically able, to pray to God for help, to fast and to receive more frequently according to the advice of the confessor the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist. (*Ritualet*, De exor. obsessis).

² "That thou mayest become water exorcised to put to flight every power of the enemy, and that thou mayest be able to eject and supplant this enemy himself together with his apostate angels..." (*Rit. rom.*, Ordo ad faciendam aquam benedictam).

³ Preface for the Feast of the Holy Cross.

⁴ *Mark*, XVI, 17. — St. Alphonsus Rodriguez was wont to make a large sign of the cross at the moment of the obsession and to command the tempter to bow down and adore Jesus, in virtue of that text of St. Paul: "That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth." (*Philipp.*, II, 10). The Saint adds that this put the devil to flight.

of their office. Since this office is an extremely difficult one and presupposes much knowledge, virtue and tact, its solemn exercise has been *restricted* to priests expressly deputed for that purpose by the Ordinary. However, priests may perform private exorcisms, employing some prayers of the Church or other formulas. Even lay-persons may recite such prayers, but not in the name of the Church.¹

1546. The Ritual prescribes the procedure and gives to Exorcists a number of wise counsels. Once the fact of possession has been ascertained and one has been *delegated* to perform the exorcisms:

1) One should prepare for this function by a *humble and sincere confession*, so that the devil may not be able to accuse one of sin. Earnest prayer and fasting should form part of the preparation, for Christ has told us that there are devils who yield only to these means.²

2) The exorcisms should be performed in a church or a chapel, unless for weighty reasons another place is deemed preferable. In no case should the exorcist be alone with the person possessed. He should have serious and devout witnesses who are at the same time strong enough to control the patient during the moments of the crises. If the possessed person be a woman, the exorcist should secure the presence of matrons of tried prudence and virtue.

1547. 3) After the recitation of the prescribed prayers, the exorcist should proceed with the interrogations. He must do so *authoritatively*, limiting himself to such questions as are useful and recommended by the Ritual. He should ask about the number of the spirits present and about the time and the motives of their invasion. He should also bid them to declare when they will leave their victim and indicate the signs by which their departure is to be known, threatening to increase their torture in proportion to the resistance they continue to offer. With this end in view he should redouble those imprecations which seem to irritate the evil spirits most, such as invocations of the Holy Name of Jesus and of Mary, signs of the Cross, and aspersions with holy water. He should force the person possessed to genuflect before the Blessed Sacrament or the Crucifix, or to revere some holy relic. He should be careful to avoid useless words, idle questions, and above all, attempts at humor. Should the evil spirit or spirits give sarcastic or ridiculous answers or speak at random, he must with authority and dignity impose silence.

1548. 4) He must not allow the witnesses, who should be few in number,³ to ask any questions; they should rather be asked to maintain silence and recollection, and to pray in union with Him Who puts the demons to flight.

¹ LEHMCKUHL, *Theol. Moralis*, t. II, n. 574, edition of 1910.

² *Mark*, IX, 28.

³ "The attendants, who should be few in number, must be warned not to ask the possessed person any questions, but rather to humbly and earnestly pray to God for him." (*Rit.*, loc. cit.). Perhaps it was because of the violation of this rule that the exorcisms at Loudun had to be carried on for so long a time and not without some unfortunate happenings.

CHAPTER IV

Contraverted Questions¹

1550. So far we have explained the doctrine commonly held by all Schools of spirituality, and our readers have no doubt been able to recognize that this teaching fully suffices to lead and raise souls to the highest degrees of perfection. God does not make growth in holiness dependent upon the solution of contraverted questions. Now, however, we can afford to touch briefly upon the main points under discussion. This we shall do as *impartially* as possible, aiming not at making divergent opinions appear identical (which cannot be done), but at showing that the differences among the more moderate exponents of the various Schools are not as great as they may at first sight seem to be.

1551. **Causes of these divergences.** 1) The first cause, no doubt, is to be found in the very *difficulty* and *obscurity* of the matters at issue. It is not an easy task to look into the secret designs of God concerning the *universal call* of all baptized persons to infused contemplation, or to determine the very *nature* of that mysterious act wherein God is the principal agent and wherein the soul is more passive than active, receiving light and love without forfeiting its freedom. It is not surprising then, that writers striving to understand these wonders do not always offer the same explanations.

2) Another cause of the existing differences is the divergence of *method employed*. As we have said (n. 28), all Schools strive to combine the two methods, the *experimental* and the *deductive*; but, whilst some employ chiefly the former, others rely more on the latter. Hence the differences in the conclusions reached: the former, impressed by the *small number of contemplatives*, will say that not all are called to contemplation; the latter, seeing that we all possess a *supernatural organism* adequate for the attainment of contemplation, will conclude that if there are not many contemplatives, it is because there are not many generous souls ready to make the sacrifices demanded by contemplation.

¹ SAUDREAU, *L'Etat mystique*, ch. IX, XI, XIV et appendices; POULAIN, *Graces of Interior Prayer*; MGR. LEJEUNE, art. *Contemplation* in *Dict. de Théol.*; MGR. FARGES, *Phénom. mystiques et Controp. de la Presse*; JORET, *La Contemplation vivifiée*; GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *Perfect. et contemplation*.

5) The exorcist must not, in spite of the authority he wields, try to consign the devil to any special place; he must be content to expel the evil spirit, leaving his fate and destiny to Divine Justice. He should continue the exorcisms for several hours and even for several days, according to the nature of the case, allowing intervals of rest, until the devil departs, or at least until the evil spirit declares he is ready to leave.

6) When the deliverance has been thoroughly proved, the exorcist should beg God to forbid the devil ever to reënter the body he has just left; he should thank Him and invite the person thus freed to glorify God and to avoid all sin in the future so as not to fall again under the power of the Evil One.

Conclusion

1549. These extraordinary phenomena, whether divine or diabolical, show on the one hand the mercy and the goodness of God towards His privileged friends, to whom He imparts, along with intense sufferings, such as in the case of stigmatization, the most signal favors as a foretaste of the glory He will one day bestow upon them in heaven; and on the other hand, the jealousy and the hatred of the devil, who seeks to exercise his tyranny over men by tempting them in a most extraordinary way, by persecuting them when they resist and spread the Kingdom of God, and by torturing some of his victims through taking possession of them.

Thus, there are in the world the two Cities, so well described by St. Augustine, the two Camps and the two Standards mentioned by St. Ignatius. True Christians can not hesitate; the more completely they give themselves to God, the more surely do they escape the empire of Satan. If God permits them to be tried, it is only for their greater good. Even in the midst of their sufferings they can say in all confidence: "If God be for us, who is against us? ... Who is like unto God?"

1552. 3) This divergence of opinion is further accentuated by temperament, education and actual occupation. Some persons are better fitted for contemplation than others, and when this natural aptitude is further developed by education and occupation, or by manner of life, one is naturally inclined to think that contemplation is the normal thing. There are others of a more active disposition, whose temperament and occupation are rather obstacles to contemplation, and who are therefore readily led to believe that contemplation is an extraordinary state.

4) Moreover, it must not be forgotten that the philosophical and theological systems which one may have adopted concerning knowledge and love, efficacious and sufficient grace, make their influence felt in mystical theology. If, for instance, one admits with the Thomists that grace is *intrinsically efficacious*, one is more inclined to consider the passive state a continuation of the active state, since even in the latter one acts under efficacious motions of grace.

We should not be astonished at these divergent opinions in matters of so delicate a nature; we are free to choose the system which in our judgment has the more solid foundation. The points of present-day discussion may be reduced to these three: 1° the *nature* of infused contemplation; 2° the *universal call* thereto; 3° the *normal time* at which it begins.

§ I. Controversy regarding the nature of contemplation

1553. All admit that *infused* or *mystic* contemplation is a free gift of God, Who places us in the passive state and gives us a knowledge and a love of Himself which we have but to accept. But in what does this knowledge consist? It is evidently not identical with the knowledge which comes from the light of faith, for everyone admits that it is an *experimental* or *quasi-experimental* knowledge (n. 1394). But does this knowledge come *directly* and *immediately*, that is, without any intermediary, or *indirectly* and *mediately*, that is, through acquired or infused ideas? Two answers have been given to this question.

1554. 1° **The theory of immediate knowledge.** This theory, which claims the authority of Pseudo-Dionysius, of the School of St. Victor, and the Flemish School of Mysticism, maintains that infused contemplation is a *perception* or an *intuition* or a *direct vision of God*, although *obscure* and *vague*. Being *direct*, it differs from the ordinary know-

ledge given by faith, and being *obscure*, it differs from the Beatific Vision. There are slight differences in the various expositions of this theory.

Father Poulain, basing his explanation upon the theory of the *spiritual senses*, thinks that the contemplative soul *feels* directly the presence of God. "During the union, when it is not too exalted, we are like a man placed beside one of his friends, in complete darkness and silence. He does not *see* him, therefore; he does not *hear* him; he only *feels* that he is there by the sense of touch, because he holds his hand in his own. And so he continues to think and to love him."¹

1555. *Father Marchal*, having ascertained that mystics affirm the existence of an intellectual intuition of God and of the Indivisible Trinity during moments of exalted contemplation, is of the opinion "that in high contemplation a new element is involved, distinct in quality from normal activities and from ordinary grace... the active, not symbolic, presentation of God to the soul, with its corresponding psychology: *the direct intuition of God by the soul.*"² This, he adds, does not seem strange if one admits (as he previously explains) that the intuition of being is, so to speak, the center of perspective in human psychology.

This theory is completed by *Father Picard*.³ After explaining that from a *natural* point of view the *direct*, but *vague* and *obscure apprehension* or *intuition* of God is not impossible once one has demoted by the traditional proofs the fact of His existence, he applies this theory to mystic contemplation. That same God, Whose living presence makes itself felt in the depths of the soul "sometimes takes possession of it by focusing its cognitive faculties upon Himself in silence, in wonder and in peace; at other times by seizing upon its will and its affections... When this seizure of the soul is felt rather by the cognitive faculties, we have the prayer of recollection; when by the volitional and emotional faculties, we have the prayer of quiet." The author then goes on to show that in proportion as God tightens His hold, as He takes a more absolute, a more exclusive and a more extensive control, the soul advances to the higher degrees of contemplation.

Father Picard concludes by saying that this theory *differs* vastly from *Ontologism*, for it affirms that the *notion of being* has its origin in the perception of finite being; that it is analogous, and can be applied to God only after a demonstration of His existence. He rejects the theory that we see on earth all things in the essence of God. It is, he says, our own finite and imperfect intellect with the sole aid of its own finite and imperfect ideas and acts which perceives all the truths of which it has any knowledge. Moreover, he speaks of an intuition which is essentially vague and obscure.

1556. 2° **The theory of mediate knowledge.** The opinion *commonly accepted* is that the knowledge of the contemplative, howsoever perfect it may be, is *mediate* and at the same time *vague* and *obscure*, although it is *quasi-experimental*. In the first degrees of contemplation God

¹ *Graces of Interior Prayer*, C. VI, n. 16.

² *La Mystique chrétienne*, in *Rev. de Philosophie*, 1912, t. XXX, p. 478.

³ *La saisie immédiate de Dieu dans les états mystiques*, 1923.

contents Himself with projecting His light, the light of the Gifts, upon the ideas already possessed, either by attracting attention to an idea in a way that is calculated to make a deep impression, or by making the mind draw from two premises some striking conclusion (n. 1390). In the higher states, as in the ecstatic union, God *infuses new ideas* which represent divine truths much more clearly and impressively than do naturally acquired concepts. It is now that the soul is *enraptured* at perceiving truths which it had never known before. And since the soul lives these truths and really relishes them, it acquires of them a *quasi-experimental knowledge*. This knowledge is still within the realms of faith, but it is much more *vivid* and above all much more *affectionate* than ordinary knowledge, from which it is distinguished by the fact that it is God-given, and that the soul receiving it receives both knowledge and love, and has only to consent to the divine action which produces in it these priceless gifts.

1557. We adopt this view, which we have already exposed in the second chapter of this book. It seems to preserve better the essential difference between contemplation and the Beatific Vision, the former remaining *mediate and obscure*, "as through a glass in a dark manner," the latter being *direct and clear*. However, we are careful to refrain from making charges of Ontologism against those who maintain as probable the opinion of a direct intuition, so long as they stress its vague and obscure character and reject the basic principle of Ontologism by asserting that the intellect does not reach God except through creatures. ¹

It is true that many mystics make use of bold expressions which at first sight seem to imply that they are in direct contact with the Divine Substance and that they see God; still, when we examine the context, we find that these words must be understood of the *effects* produced in the soul by the divine action. ² Through the gift of wisdom one is made to relish the love, the joy, the spiritual peace which God infuses into the soul: hence the name of *divine delights* given by St. Teresa to the prayer of quiet. Through the *divine touches*, mystics seem to feel the very substance of their soul moved, so deep is the impression produced by divine love. But the descriptions they give us of these

¹ Such an accusation would be particularly unjust with regard to those who like MGR. FARGES, (*Mystical Phenomena*, and, *Réponses aux Controverses*) admit that from its very first stages contemplation is effected through *infused ideas*, and who call it direct simply because the impressed idea is not that *which is seen*, nor even that *wherein one sees*, but that whereby or through which *the thing itself is seen*. This opinion is subject to criticism, but it is not open to charges of Ontologism.

² In order to appreciate better this manner of speaking, one should read the passages gathered together by Father POULAIN, *Graces of Interior Prayer*, C. V-VI, as well as the interpretations of these passages given first by himself, and then in quite a different sense by Father SAUDREAU, *L'Etat mystique*, Appendice II.

impressions can all be referred to the different effects of an ardent and generous love. It may be said therefore that if they use expressions which appear too strong, it is due to the inadequacy of human language for describing the effects of grace produced in their soul.

§ II. Universal call to contemplation

1558. It is not question here of the *individual* and *proximate* call to infused contemplation of which we spoke in number 1406. On this point every one accepts the doctrine of Tauler and of St. John of the Cross. What is meant is the *remotely sufficient* and *general* call; in other words, we ask whether *all souls in the state of grace are remotely and sufficiently called to infused contemplation*. Once more we meet with two very different answers which flow to a great extent at least, from the different views held concerning contemplation.

1559. ¹ **A universal call**, remote and sufficient, is today admitted with slight variations by a great number of writers belonging to different Religious Orders, such as the Dominicans, ² the Benedictines, ³ the Franciscans, ³ the Carmelites, ⁴ the Jesuits, ⁵ the Eudists, ⁶ as well as by a number of secular priests. ⁷ Various Reviews, notably *la Vie Spirituelle*, have been published in order to defend and propagate this opinion. Father Garrigou-Lagrange vigorously expounds it when he strives to prove that the mystical life is the *normal development* of the interior life and that consequently all souls in the state of grace are called thereto. We give a brief summary of his arguments.

a) The *fundamental principle of the mystic life* is the very same as that of the ordinary, interior life, that is, sanctifying grace or the grace of the virtues and the gifts. These gifts increase with charity, and, once they have attained their full development, they act in us according to their supra-human mode of action and put us in the *passive* or *mystic* state. Hence, the principle of the interior life contains in germ the mystic life, which is here below the flowering, as it were, of the spiritual life.

1560. b) The purification of the soul as it advances in the interior life is not completed except through the *passive trials*. Now, these

¹ *Fathers Arintero, Garrigou-Lagrange, Jorêt, Janoier, etc.*

² *Dom Louismet, Dom Hayben, etc.* — ³ *Father Ludovic de Besse.*

⁴ *Father Theodore of St. Joseph, Essai sur l'oraison selon l'école carmélitaine, 1923.*

— Note his restrictions contained on, p. 128.

⁵ *L. Peeters, Vers l'union divine par les Exercices de S. Ignace, 1924.*

⁶ *Father Lamballe, La Contemplation.*

⁷ *Father Saudreau, L'Ami du Clergé, etc.*

purifications or trials are of a mystical nature. Hence, the interior life cannot attain its full development in any other way than through the mystic life.

e) The end of the interior life is the same as that of the mystic life, that is, a perfect disposition for the reception of the light of glory immediately after death. "Now, the perfect disposition for the reception of the beatific vision immediately after death can be none other than the intense charity of a soul thoroughly purified and possessed of an ardent desire of seeing God, such as we find in the mystic union, and particularly in the transforming union. The latter is therefore the highest development here below of the life of grace."

1561. 2° **Theory of a special and restricted call.** The foregoing arguments do not appear convincing to all, and a great number of spiritual writers belonging to the Society of Jesus, such as Cardinal Billot, Fathers Maumigny, Poulain, Bainvel, J. de Guibert, and to the Discalced Carmelites, such as Father Mary Joseph of the Sacred Heart, and others outside these two Schools of thought, such as Mgr. Lejeune and Mgr. Farges, think that acquired contemplation is a free gift which is not bestowed upon all, and which moreover is not necessary for the attainment of sanctity. Their arguments are these: 2

a) The theory of a universal call is indeed constructed along superb theological lines, but all of the structure is not equally solid. It has not been proved, for instance, "that the seven gifts correspond to seven distinct infused habits and not to seven kinds of graces for the reception of which the intellect and the will are prepared by a single habit. Moreover, even were this demonstrated, one would still need to prove that the gifts of wisdom and understanding can function perfectly only during contemplation and not during the reception of enlightening graces which do not necessarily include this particular form of prayer. Such demonstration has never been made."³

Nor has it been proved that the gifts always act in a supra-human way. Cardinal Billot⁴ thinks that they act in two ways, now in an ordinary manner, accommodating themselves to our human mode of action, now in an extraordinary way by producing in us infused contemplation.

1562. b) No doubt, the passive trials seem to be the more potent means of purifying the soul, since they make the soul pass through a veritable purgatory; but in this vale of tears, where the occasions for

¹ GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *op. cit.*, p. 450.

² These arguments are expounded by P. R. DE MAUMIGNY, *Practice of mental Prayer*, t. II, p. V; MGR. FARGES, *Mystical Phenomena*, P. I, C. IV; *Controv. de la Presse*, C. IV, J. DE GUIBERT, *Rev. d'Asc. et de Mystique*, Janv. 1924, p. 25-32.

³ J. DE GUIBERT, *loc. cit.*, p. 26.

⁴ *De Virtutibus infusis*, th. VIII.

suffering and mortification are so numerous, is it not possible to effect this purification by a sweet resignation to the will of God and by positive acts of mortification performed under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and the guidance of a prudent director? Has it been demonstrated that the graces of contemplation are the only choice graces of God? Every one admits that there are persons who have not yet been raised to infused contemplation and who are more perfect than others whom God has freely brought thereto precisely in order to make them become holy (n. 1407). And since they are more perfect, they are by that fact more thoroughly purified. It may well be therefore, that at the moment of death their purification is complete.

e) It is indeed true that the end of the interior life as well as that of the mystic life is to prepare for the beatific vision, and that the transforming union is for certain souls the best preparation for it. But is this the only preparation? There are persons continuing in discursive and affective prayer who are models of heroic virtue, who are outwardly, and in the estimation of those who know them well, just as virtuous as some contemplatives, or even more so. Has it been shown conclusively that the gifts of the Holy Ghost have no part in the thousand ejaculatory prayers offered up by many persons while performing their daily occupations? Has it been proved that the said gifts exert no influence on the constant and supernatural performance of professional duties, which by the very fact that they are so constant, require heroic courage? And yet, when one questions these persons, one finds no signs of contemplation properly so-called. Must we not then admit that God, Who knows how to adapt His graces to the character, training and circumstances of each individual, does not lead all souls by the same way, and that although He demands of all a perfect docility to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, He makes use of different means to sanctify them?

1563. 3° While weighing the arguments advanced by both sides of the controversy, it seems to us that the two opinions are not so far apart as they may appear.

A) Let us first of all examine the points on which the moderate exponents of either view agree:

a) There have been and there are contemplatives of every temperament and of every condition of life; still, in point of fact, there are temperaments and modes of life which lend themselves better to infused contemplation. The reason for this is that contemplation is a free gift bestowed by God when and on whom He pleases (n. 1387), and that moreover God is wont to adapt His graces to the temperament and the duties of state of each individual.

b) Contemplation is not sanctity, but only one of the most effective means of attaining it. Sanctity really consists in charity, in intimate and habitual union with God. Now, although contemplation is in itself the highway to this union, it is not the only way. There are indeed persons who are not contemplatives "who are more advanced in virtue,

in true charity, than others who have already received infused contemplation."¹

c) We have all received in Baptism a *supernatural organism* (habitual grace, the virtues and the gifts) which, when it attains its full development, leads *normally* to contemplation in the sense that it imparts that *docility* which permits God to put us in the passive state *when He pleases* and *in the way He pleases*. But as a matter of fact, there are souls who through no fault of theirs never attain to contemplation here below.²

1564. B) Despite agreement upon these important points, there remain *divergences* which proceed, in our opinion, from tendencies more or less favorable to the mystical state and from the more or less extraordinary character attributed to that state. We shall in all modesty offer our solution in two assertions: a) Infused contemplation considered *in itself* is a normal development of the Christian life. b) *In point of fact*, however, not all souls in the state of grace seem to be called to such contemplation inclusive of the transforming union.

a) Infused contemplation when considered independently of the extraordinary mystical phenomena which attend it, is not of a miraculous or of an abnormal nature; it is simply the resultant of two causes: the *cultivation* of our supernatural organism, especially of the gifts of the Holy Ghost (n. 1355), and of a *special grace* which of itself has nothing of the miraculous about it. We said that the infusion of *new ideas* is not necessary for the first degrees of contemplation (n. 1390). We might even assert with the Carmelite Congress of Madrid that *in itself* contemplation is the most perfect state of union between the soul and God that can be had in this life, the highest ideal and, as it were, the last stage of the Christian life in this world *for souls called to mystic union with God*, the ordinary way of sanctity and of habitual heroic virtue.³ This seems indeed to be the traditional teaching as found in the mystic writers from Clement of Alexandria to St. Francis de Sales.

¹ GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *op. cit.* t. II, p. [78].

² This may proceed not only from an unfavorable environment, but from a want of direction, as well as from *natural temperament*. On this point it is well to recall with J. Maritain that, according to many Thomists, such as Banez, John of St. Thomas, the Carmelites of Salamanca, the very temperament of the Elect is in a sense an effect of predestination." GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *op. cit.*, t. II, p. [75].

³ *Carmelite Congress*, 1923, Theme V. — The Congress avoided pronouncing on the question of the *universal call* to contemplation, because, no doubt, it looked upon this matter as doubtful.

1565. b) However, it does not necessarily follow from these premises that all souls in the state of grace are truly called, even in a remote way, to the *transforming union*. Just as in heaven there are different degrees of glory, "for star differeth from star in glory,"¹ so there are on earth different degrees of sanctity to which souls are called. Now, Who knows how to adapt His action to the temperament, education and manner of life of each individual, can raise souls by divers ways to the heights of holiness to which He destines them.

To those who by their more active character and their more absorbing occupations seem to be made for action, He gives graces especially suited to the exercise of the *active gifts*. Such persons live in intimate, habitual union with God; at times they even multiply their ejaculatory prayers beyond what seems possible to human power. Above all else they perform out of love for God, and with heroic constancy and docility to the inspirations of grace, the thousand and one little duties of daily life. Thus, they reach the degree of sanctity to which God destines them, and this without the help (at least habitual) of infused contemplation. They are in the simple unitive way, such as we have described it (n. 1303 and foll.).

No doubt, one might say that such persons are *exceptions* and that the *normal way* to sanctity is contemplation.² Still, when such exceptions are *numerous*, must one not take account of them in the problem of a remote call, since temperament and duties of state are elements which aid in deciding the question of vocation?

At bottom, the agreement of these authors is more real than the difference of language would seem to indicate. Some, viewing the matter in an *abstract* and *formal way*, admit numerous exceptions to the universal call while maintaining the principle of its universality; others, taking a more *practical view*, prefer to say simply that the call is not universal albeit that contemplation is the normal development of the Christian life.

1566. c) The solution we propose is, it seems, based on *traditional teaching*. 1) On the one hand, well-nigh all the spiritual writers, from Clement of Alexandria to St. Francis de Sales, speak of contemplation as the normal consummation of the spiritual life. 3) 2) On the other hand, rather few

¹ *I. Cor.*, XV, 41. — ² GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *op. cit.*, t. II, p. (71-79).

³ Abundant documents can be found in the following works: HONORÉ DE STE MARIE, *Tradition des Pères et des auteurs ecclésiastiques sur la contemplation*,

of them explicitly examine the question of a universal call to contemplation. Those that do so have in mind most of the time choice souls living in contemplative communities, or at least, very fervent souls. When, therefore, they assert that all or nearly all can arrive at the fountain of living waters (contemplation), it is for the members of their communities that they speak, and not for all souls in the state of grace. Besides, from the seventeenth century on, from which time greater precision of language began to prevail in these matters, a great number of writers require for infused contemplation a *special call*, and many positively assert that one can arrive at sanctity without contemplation.¹

The two questions are therefore not to be confounded, for one can admit that contemplation is the normal development of the spiritual life without affirming that all souls in the state of grace are called to the transforming union.

1567. Let us add that the attainment of sanctity and the direction of the souls tending thereto do not depend upon the solution of such a difficult problem. By insisting upon the cultivation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost as well as upon perfect detachment from self and from creatures, by gradually leading souls to the prayer of God and to follow teaching them to listen to the voice of God and to follow His inspirations, one places them in the way that leads to contemplation; the rest belongs to God, Who alone can lay hold of these souls, and, according to St. Teresa's graceful metaphor, *place them in the nest*, that is to say, in the contemplative repose.

1568. With most authors we think that infused contemplation belongs to the unitive way. Of course, there are exceptional cases in which God raises less perfect souls to contemplation, precisely with the intent of perfecting them more effectively (n. 1407). This is not however what He ordinarily does.

Still, there are writers of note, such as Father Garrigou-Lagrange, who refer the *purification of the senses* and the

SAUDREAU, *La vie d'union à Dieu*, Ed. 3, 1921; GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *op. cit.*, t. II, p. 662-749; POURRAT, *Christian Spirituality*. However, a critico-historical study of these documents from the special point of view of the *universal* call to contemplation is still wanting.

¹ This seems to be the solution of Dom V. LEHOUEY, *Ways of Mental Prayer*, P. III, C. XIII; of MGR WAFFELAERT, *op. cit.*, P. III, C. XIII; *Le saint Abandon*, P. III, ch. XIV; of the Carmelite School, and R. A. M., janv. 1923, p. 31, and in his various works; of the Carmelite School, and those writers who admit a state of *acquired* contemplation, no matter how brief. It is similar to the solution given by P. M. DE LA TAILLE, *L'oraison contemplative*, as well as to that proposed by M. J. MARIATIN, *Vie Spirituelle*, mars 1923, and appearing in the work of GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, t. II, p. (58-71).

prayer of quiet to the illuminative way. They take their stand on the authority of St. John of the Cross, who in the Dark Night writes: "The night of sense is common, and the lot of many: these are the beginners..."¹ The soul began to set out on the way of the spirit, the way of *proficients*, which is also called the *illuminative way*, or the way of *infused contemplation*, wherein God Himself teaches and refreshes the soul."² We have been for a long time acquainted with this text, but like H. Hoornaert,³ who has translated the works of the great mystic, we find in it quite a different meaning. In his various works, St. John of the Cross speaks only of infused contemplation; now, as regards this contemplation there are beginners, proficients and perfect souls: for him, the *beginners* are those who are about to enter into the *passive purification of the senses*: this is why he speaks of them from the very first chapter of the Dark Night. By the *proficients* he means those who have entered upon infused contemplation, *quietude* and *full union*. The *perfect* are those who have gone through the night of the spirit and are in the ecstatic or in the transforming union. This is an altogether different point of view.

1569. Furthermore, since we are writing a text-book, it is important to bring together and compare all that relates to the various kinds of contemplation, in order to bring out more clearly its nature and divers degrees. This is why we thought we should keep to the plan commonly followed. But we hasten to add that God, Whose ways are *manifest* as they are *wonderful*, does not always follow the *logical lines* we strive to trace. It is therefore important that the spiritual director follow and not anticipate the motions of divine grace.

1570. Hence, we conclude with these words of *L'Ami du Clergé*: "What is so energetically discussed in theory does not prevent certitude regarding a goodly number of essential practical rules... In order to profit by the medicinal qualities of a plant, it is not absolutely necessary to know its history and nomenclature. The same may be said of contemplation: there is no agreement concerning its definition or its place in theological classifications... Without waiting for technical and theoretical conclusions, directors are quite able to distinguish the goal towards which generous and predestined souls turn their steps, and to help them reach it."⁴

¹ *Dark Night*, Bk. I, C. VIII. — ² *Ibid.*, C. XIV.

³ Note sur la *Nuit obscure*, p. 5-6. — ⁴ 8 dec. 1921, p. 697.

CONCLUSION OF BOOK III: SPIRITUAL DIRECTION
OF CONTEMPLATIVES

In several places of this book we have laid down rules for the direction of contemplatives; however, it may be well to give a resume of them here and to point out what course the spiritual director should follow in order to *prepare* souls for contemplation, to *guide* them through its dangers, and to *lift them up* if they falter in the way.

1571. 1° It is the duty of the director, if he has in his care *generous* souls, to prepare them little by little for the unitive way and for contemplation. He must avoid two extremes: that of urging *indiscriminately* and too hastily all fervent souls to contemplation, and that of not being concerned at all about this matter.

1572. A) In order to avoid the first mistake, a) the spiritual director should remember that one cannot ordinarily aim at contemplation until one has for a long time exercised oneself in prayer and in the practice of the Christian virtues of purity of heart, detachment from self and from creatures, humility, obedience, conformity to the Will of God, the spirit of faith, of trust and of love.

He should call to mind the teaching of St. Bernard: 'If among the monks there are any contemplatives, they are not the novices in virtue, who but erstwhile dead to sin, labour in tears and in the dread of judgment in order to heal their as yet fresh wounds. They are rather those who after a long co-operation with grace have made solid progress in virtue, who need no longer revolve again and again in their minds the sorrowful picture of their sins, but, on the contrary, find their delight in meditating day and night and in keeping the law of God.

b) Should the director notice that the desire of contemplation is *excessive* and even *presumptuous*, he must seek to restrain it, recalling that no one can force his way into contemplation, and that moreover the joys of prayer generally come only after bitter trials.

c) He must carefully guard against mistaking the *sensible consolations* of beginners, or even the *spiritual* ones of advanced souls for the *divine delights* (n. 1439), and he should wait, before passing judgment on the entrance of a soul into the passive state, for the three distinct signs which we indicated in numbers 1413-1416.

1573. B) In order to avoid the second error, he should remember that God, ever prodigal of His gifts, gives Himself generously to fervent and docile souls.

a) Without speaking explicitly about contemplation, he should exercise these good souls not only in virtue, but also

in devotion to the Holy Ghost. He should frequently speak to them of the indwelling of that Divine Spirit in the human soul, of the duty of thinking often of Him, of adoring Him, of obeying His inspirations, of cultivating His gifts.

b) He must teach them to make their prayer more and more affective, to prolong the acts of religion, of love, of self-offering, of self-abandonment to the Will of God, and to repeat these acts frequently during the course of the day by a simple elevation of the heart without in any way neglecting duties of state or the exercise of virtue. When he notices that they are inclined to remain in silence in the presence of God in order to listen to Him and to do His bidding, he must encourage them by extolling this practice as excellent and exceedingly fruitful.

1574. 2° Once the soul has entered into the mystic ways, the director will need the greatest prudence in order to be a faithful guide amidst the *ardities* and the *divine delights*.

A) He must lend his help during the *passive trials* so that the soul may be able to fight off discouragement and the other temptations of which we spoke in numbers 1432-1434.

B) In sweet contemplation, the soul may be exposed to *spiritual gluttony* and to *vain-complacency*.

a) In order to avoid the first of these defects, it is important ever to remember that we must love the God of consolations rather than the consolations of God, that consolations are only a *means* to unite us to Him, and that we must be ready to renounce them completely the moment it pleases God to withdraw them: *God alone sufficeth*.

b) Sometimes God Himself undertakes to curb the impulses of pride by vividly impressing upon the soul a sense of its nothingness and its miseries, and by showing clearly that His favors are *pure gifts* in which we can in no way glory. As long as souls have not been completely purified through the night of the spirit, they need, as St. Teresa says, to be exercised in humility and in conformity to the Will of God (n. 1447, 1474). Above all, they must be warned against the desire of visions, revelations and other extraordinary phenomena. We are *never* permitted to desire these, and the Saints went so far as to repel them by acts of humility (n. 1496).

1575. C) We must not forget that ecstasy is but an illusion if, to use the expression of St. Francis de Sales, it is unrelated to ecstatic manner of life, that is to say, to the practice of heroic virtue (n. 1461). It would be a serious mistake to neglect our duties of state in order to give more time to contemplation. Father Balthazar Alvarez, confessor to St. Teresa, distinctly declared that one must relinquish contemplation in order to fulfil one's duties or to minister to the neighbor's needs, and that God bestows upon him who thus learns to mortify himself more light and

* In *Cantica* sermo LVII, n. II. We have given a summary of his thought.

more love in one hour of prayer than He gives to others during several hours.¹

1576. D) It would be a still greater mistake to imagine that contemplation confers the privilege of *impeccability*. History shows that false mystics, like the Beghards and the Quietists, who thought themselves impeccable, fell into the grossest vices. St. Teresa insists constantly upon the necessity of watchfulness in order to avoid sin, even after the highest degrees of contemplation have been reached, and St. Philip Neri was used to say: "My God, beware of Philip, or he will betray Thee." Indeed we can not persevere for long without a special grace, and this grace is given to the humble who know how to distrust themselves and to place all their confidence in God.

1577. ³⁰ We must therefore realize that contemplative souls can fall into sin. Such falls may come from several causes:

a) The soul may have been raised to contemplation before it had sufficiently mastered its passions. Instead of courageously keeping up the fight, it lulled itself to sleep in the sweetness of repose. Then violent temptations arose, and the soul, trusting overmuch in its own strength, fell a victim to sin. The means of restoration are *compunction of heart*, return to God with a contrite and humbled heart, and long and laborious penance. The greater the heights from which one has fallen, the more humble and constant must be the efforts to take up the long and arduous climb once more. It is the office of the director to drive home this truth with kindness but also with firmness.

b) There are contemplatives who fought valiantly and successfully to bring their evil tendencies into subjection. But imagining that the struggle was over, they relaxed their efforts and became less generous in fulfilling certain duties which they looked upon as less important. Indifference gradually set in and finally begot lukewarmness. Now, the director must check this downward movement by reminding them that the more generous God has been with them, the more they must increase their fervor, that the least negligence on the part of God's friends hurts to the quick Him Who bestows His favors so freely upon them. One should read St. Margaret Mary's autobiography in which she relates the severe reproaches Our Lord addressed to her in order to correct her smallest infidelities, her lack of respect and attention during the Office and during mental prayer, her lack of uprightness and purity of intention, her vain curiosity, her least failings in obedience, even when these latter were due to an attempt to increase her austerities. This reading should move the director to work energetically for the return of such souls to fervor.

1578. e) Other souls expected to find only sweetness and divine delights in contemplation, once the first passive trials were over. But in reality God continues to send them

¹ *Vie* by P. DUPONT, ch. XIII, ch. XLII, ⁵⁰ diffusé.

alternately desolation and consolation, so as to sanctify them all the more effectively. They give way to discouragement and thus lay themselves open to laxity and its consequences. The director should teach them to apply the great remedy, *love for the Cross*. Not that the Cross is in itself lovable, but because it renders us more conformable to Jesus Crucified.

The sainted Curé of Ars used to say: "The cross is the gift which God makes to His friends. The love of crosses must be asked for. Then they become sweet. I have tried it... O, I had plenty of crosses; I almost had more than I could bear! I began to ask for a love of crosses; then I became happy... Truly, there is no happiness except there."¹

One word may sum up the duty of the spiritual director towards contemplatives: to study the works and the biographies of the mystics, and to beg for the gift of counsel, so as never to address these souls without having previously consulted the Holy Ghost.

EPILOGUE :

THE THREE WAYS AND THE LITURGICAL CYCLE ²

1579. After taking a survey of the Three Ways, or the three stages, which lead to perfection, it will not be without profit to see how each year Holy Mother the Church invites us through her *liturgy* to start anew and to perfect the work of our sanctification with its three degrees of *purification*, *illumination* and *union with God*. The spiritual life is in truth a continuous series of *new beginnings*, and the *liturgical cycle* comes each year to inspire us to new efforts.

Everything in the liturgy centers about the **Incarnate Word**, our Mediator and Redeemer, presented to us not only as a model for imitation, but also as the Head of a mystical body, Who comes to live in His members in order to enable them to practise the virtues of which He has given them the example. Each festival, each liturgical period recalls to us some one or other of the virtues of Jesus and brings to us the graces which He has merited and which enable us with His co-operation to reproduce these virtues in ourselves.

1580. The liturgical year, which corresponds to the four seasons of the year, also symbolizes the four main phases of

¹ MONNIN, *The Curé of Ars*, Bk. III, c. III.

² DOM. GUÉRANGER, *The Liturgical Year*; DOM LEDUC and DOM BAUDOT, *Catéchisme Liturgique*; DOM FESTUGIÈRE, *La Liturgie Catholique*; F. CAVALLERA, *Ascétisme et Liturgie*.

the spiritual life.¹ *Advent* corresponds to the *purgative way*; *Christmastide* and *Epiphany* to the *illuminative way*; wherein we follow Jesus by the imitation of His virtues; the period of *Septuagesima* and the season of *Lent* bring about a *second purification of the soul* more thorough than the first; *Paschal* time typifies the *unitive way*, the union with the Risen Christ, a union perfected by the Ascension and the Descent of the Holy Ghost. We add a brief explanation of this liturgical year.

1581. 1^o *Advent*, which signifies a coming, is a preparation for the coming of the Savior, and as such is a period of *purification and penance*.

The Church invites us to meditate upon the threefold coming of Christ: His advent upon earth through the Incarnation, His entrance into the souls of men through grace, and His appearance at the end of time to judge all mankind.² It is chiefly upon the first coming that the Church centers our attention: she recalls to us the longings of the Patriarchs and the Prophets, in order to make us long with them for the coming of the promised Redeemer and the establishment or strengthening of His Kingdom in our souls. This is, then, a time of *holy desires* and ardent supplications, a time when we ask God to pour down upon us the dew of grace, and above all, the Redeemer Himself: "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just!"³ This prayer takes on the character of still more earnest longing in the great antiphones, *O Emmanuel*, King of Glory, etc... which, by recalling the glorious titles given by the Prophets to the Messias and the chief characteristics of His mission, make us yearn for the coming of Him Who alone can relieve our misery.

1582. But Advent is also a season of *penance*. It is then that the Church reminds us of the Last Judgment for which we must make ready by the expiation of our sins: the preaching of St. John the Baptist invites us to do penance and thus to prepare the way for the Savior: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths."⁴ Formerly, Christians fasted three days a week, a practice still kept up by some Religious Orders, and if the Church no longer holds her children to this fast, she urges them to make up for it by other practices of mortification. In order to remind us of our duty of penance, she has her priests celebrate the Masses of Advent in violet vestments, the color of mourning.

These holy desires and penitential practices evidently tend to purify the soul and thus prepare it for the reign of Christ.

1583. 2^o *Christmastide*. The Word appears in the weakness of our flesh, with the charms of childhood, but also with its helplessness. He invites us to open our hearts to Him that He may reign therein as our King and enable us

¹ Although but three ways are distinguished in the spiritual life, there is such a great difference between the *passive purifications* and *sweet contemplation*, that a division within the unitive way into two stages is quite justified.

² *Luke*, III, 4

to share in His dispositions and His virtues. This is the beginning of the *illuminative way*. Purified of our faults and separated from sin and its causes, we unite ourselves more and more closely to Jesus in order to share in His abasement, in His virtues of *humility, obedience and poverty*, which He practised from the very first moment of His birth. He comes to redeem the world; but, who is there to welcome Him? None but a few shepherds and the three Wise Men from the East come to offer Him their homage. The Jews, His Chosen People, refuse to receive Him: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."¹ He is forced to flee into the land of Egypt. Returning, He buries Himself in a small Galilean village and there He remains for thirty years, growing in wisdom and knowledge as well as in age, performing the manual labor of a simple tradesman, and being in all things subject to Mary and Joseph. Such is the vision which the Liturgy brings before us during the season of Christmas and Epiphany in order to present us with the examples we are to imitate. At the same time, it invites us to *adore* profoundly the Infant-God Who abases Himself for us, and it bids us offer our *thanks* and our *love* to "Him Who has loved us so much."

1584. 3^o But before we can taste the joys of divine union, a *new purification* more painful and far-reaching than the former is required. This purification is to take place during the seasons of *Septuagesima* and *Lent*.

Septuagesima is a prelude, as it were, to Lent. The Church, placing before us in the Bible-lessons of the Divine Office the fall of man and the sins which followed in its wake, the deluge which came as a punishment for these sins, and the holy lives of the Patriarchs which were to expiate them, urges us to consider in the bitterness of our soul all our personal sins, to detest them sincerely and to expiate them through a whole-hearted penance. The means which the Church proposes towards this end are: 1) *work*, or the faithful accomplishment of all our duties of state for the love of God: "Go you also into my vineyard;"² 2) *struggle against the passions*: in the Epistle of the Mass the Church compares us to athletes taking part in a race or a wrestling contest in order to win the prize, and she urges us to chastise our body even as these men do in order to bring it into subjection; 3) *voluntary acceptance of sufferings and trials*, our just punishment, together with a *humble prayer*

¹ *John*, I, II. — ² *Matth.*, XX, 4.

that we may profit thereby: "The sorrows of death encompassed me... and in my affliction I called upon the Lord." ¹

1585. *Lent* offers us some additional means whereby to purify our hearts still more and to triumph over temptation: *fasting, abstinence and almsgiving.* We shall use these means in *union with Jesus,* Who for forty days withdrew into the desert, there to do penance in our stead, and Who consented to be tempted in order to teach us how to overcome Satan. The Preface of the Mass will remind us that fasting curbs our evil tendencies, elevates our heart to God and obtains for us an increase of virtue and of merit.

The scene on Mount Thabor described in the Gospel for the Second Sunday of Lent will show us that penance has its joys, once we have learned to perform it in a spirit of prayer, and to raise up our eyes to God in search of help: "My eyes are towards the Lord, for he shall pluck my feet out of the snare."² The Introit for the Fourth Sunday, "Rejoice, O Jerusalem," will sustain our courage by enabling us to discern the joys of heaven, joys of which Holy Communion, symbolized by the multiplication of the loaves, gives us a foretaste.

1586. On Passion Sunday the standard of the Cross is raised: "Abroad the Royal Banners fly." It is the Cross alone that appears, for the image of the Savior is veiled as a sign of mourning and sorrow, in order to remind us that moments will come when we must suffer without consolations. But the Epistle of the day will bring us comfort by showing us our High priest, Who by the shedding of His blood enters into the Holy of Holies, and by telling us again that the Cross, the symbol of death, has become a source of life: "That whence came death, thence also life might arise."³

Palm Sunday, soon to be followed by the sorrowful mysteries, will teach us how ephemeral are earthly triumphs, and how the deepest humiliations follow close upon them. Then out of the depths of a soul in anguish will rise the cry: "My God, my God, look upon me: why hast thou forsaken me?"⁴ It is the cry of Jesus in the Garden of Olives and on Calvary. It is the cry of the Christian soul when visited by interior sufferings or exposed to calumny. The Epistle however will bring us consolation by urging us to make our own the interior sentiments of Jesus obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, but soon after rewarded by such an exaltation that every knee bends before Him. If therefore we share in His suffering, we shall

¹ Introit, Septuagesima Sunday. — ² Introit, Third Sunday of Lent.
³ Preface of the Cross. — ⁴ Introit, Palm Sunday.

likewise share in His victory: "Yet so if we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him."¹

1587. ⁴ The Feast of the **Resurrection** and the season of **Easter** recall to us Christ's glorious *risen life*, the model of the *unitive* way. This life is heavenly rather than earthly. During the time of His ministry Our Lord dwelt constantly upon earth; He labored, conversed with men and exercised His apostolate. After His resurrection He lives more than ever apart from external things, appearing but rarely to His Apostles to give them His last instructions, and then He returns to His Father: "Appearing to them and speaking of the kingdom of God."²

This is the model for souls in the unitive way, henceforth seeking solitude in order to converse intimately with God. If their duties of state oblige them to deal with others, they do so with the hope of sanctifying them. They strive in all things to approach the ideal of Christ described by St. Paul: "Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon earth. For you are dead: and your life is hid with Christ in God."³

The *Ascension* symbolizes a still higher degree of union with God. Henceforth Jesus lives in heavenly places, at the right hand of the Father, making intercession for us without ceasing. His apostolate becomes only the more fruitful, because He sends His Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, Who transforms the Apostles, and through them, millions of souls. In like manner contemplatives who in heart and mind already live in heaven, do not cease to pray and to sacrifice themselves for the salvation of their brethren, and thus their apostolate becomes all the more fruitful.

1588. *Pentecost* symbolizes the descent of the Holy Ghost upon individual souls in order to work in a more gradual and hidden manner the wondrous internal transformation which He wrought in the Apostles. The Mystery of the *Holy Trinity* comes to place before our eyes the grand object of our faith and of our religion, the efficient and exemplary cause of our sanctification. The feasts of *Corpus Christi* and of the *Sacred Heart* tell us once more that Our Lord, Who in the Holy Eucharist manifests the riches of His Sacred Heart, has a strict right to our adoration and our love, and that He is at the same time the great Worshipper of the Father through Whom and in Whom we can render due homage to the Most Adorable Trinity.

The various Sundays which follow upon Pentecost represent the full development of the work of the Holy Ghost, not only in the Church of God, but also in every Christian soul, and they invite us to produce under the action of this Holy Spirit abundant fruits of salvation, even

¹ *Romans*, VIII, 17. — ² *Acts*, I, 3. — ³ *Coloss.*, III, 1-3.

until the day when we shall go to heaven to join with Him Who has gone before us to prepare a place for us.

1589. Within this liturgical cycle occur the *feasts of the Saints*. The examples of these persons, members of Christ like ourselves, who reproduced His virtues in spite of all kinds of temptations and obstacles, serve as a powerful stimulus. We hear them saying to us with St. Paul: "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ;"¹ and while reading in the Breviary the story of their heroic virtues, we repeat to ourselves the words of St. Augustine: "Could you not also do what these men and women have done?"

It is above all from the feasts of Our Lady that we draw inspiration, from that Queen of the Angels and the Saints, from that Mother of the world's Savior, who is constantly associated with her Son in the Liturgy of the Church, the Son whom we cannot honor without at the same time honoring, loving and imitating His Blessed Mother.

Thus, sustained and helped by the Blessed Virgin and the Saints, and incorporated into the Word Made flesh, we draw nearer to God while we follow the liturgical cycle each succeeding year.

1590. But in order to profit well by the abundant means of sanctification which the Church offers us, we must draw unto ourselves the *interior dispositions of Jesus*. To accomplish this end we can avail ourselves of the beautiful and highly efficacious prayer, "*O Jesus Living in Mary*." We cannot bring this compendium to a close in a more fitting manner than by giving a brief explanation of this prayer.

PRAYER : TO JESUS LIVING IN MARY.

O Jesu vivens in Maria
veni et vive in famulis tuis,
in spiritu sanctitatis tuæ,
in plenitudine virtutis tuæ,
in perfectione viarum tuarum,
in veritate virtutum tuarum,
in communiōne mysteriorum tuorum;
dominare omni adversæ potestati,
in Spiritu tuo ad gloriam Patris.

O Jesus living in Mary,
come and live in Thy servants,
in the spirit of Thy holiness,
in the fulness of Thy power,
in the perfection of Thy ways,
in the truth of Thy virtues,
in the fellowship of Thy mysteries,
rule Thou over every adverse
power,
in Thy Spirit, for the glory of the
Father.

¹ *1. Cor.*, IV, 16.

² This prayer, composed by FATHER DE CONDREN and completed by FATHER OLIER, is recited daily at the end of meditation in all Sulpician Seminaries. The VEN. FATHER LIBERMANN has written a pious commentary on it. cf. *Lettres*, t. II, p. 506-522.

The prayer is obviously made up of three parts of unequal length: the first part indicates the *person addressed*; the second, the *object of the prayer*; the third, the *final aim of the prayer*.

1591. ¹⁰ The **Person addressed** is *Jesus*, living in Mary, that is to say, the Incarnate Word, the God-Man, Who in the oneness of His Person possesses at once the divine and the human natures and Who is the *meritorious*, the *exemplary* and the *vital cause* of our sanctification (n. 132). We address ourselves to Him as *living in Mary*. For nine months He dwelt *physically* in her virginal womb: our prayer does not allude to this indwelling in Mary which ended with Our Savior's birth. He also lived in *Mary sacramentally* through Holy Communion, but this sacramental presence came to an end with Mary's last Communion on earth. He lived, and still lives in her *mystically*, as the Head of a mystical body of which all Christians are indeed members, but Mary in the most exalted of all, since she occupies the place of honor in that body (n. 155-162). He lives in *Mary through His Divine Spirit*, that is to say, through the Holy Ghost, Whom He imparts to His Holy Mother in order that this Spirit may produce in her dispositions similar to those which He wrought in His own holy soul. By virtue of the merits and prayers of the Savior, the Holy Ghost comes then to sanctify and glorify Mary, to make her more and more like Jesus until she becomes the *most perfect living image of Christ*.

Father Olier¹ explains this well: "What Our Lord is to the Church, that He is preëminently to His Holy Mother. Thus He constitutes her interior and divine plenitude of grace, and as He sacrificed Himself more particularly for her than for the whole Church, He imparts to her God's life more abundantly than to the entire Church. This He does from a sense of gratitude, in return for the life which He received from her; for just as He promised to render to all His members a hundredfold for what they give Him here on earth, so He wills to render to His Mother a hundredfold for that human life which He received from her love and devotion. This hundredfold is the Divine Life of infinite value... We must then regard Jesus as Our All, living in the Most Blessed Virgin in the plenitude of Divine Life, of that Life which He received from the Father, and of that other life which He acquired and merited for men through the mediation of His Mother. It is in her that we must see all the treasures of His riches, the glory of His beauty and the bliss of the Divine Life... There He dwells in all His fulness; there He works with all the power of His Divine Spirit; He is but one heart, one soul, one life with her."²

1592. Jesus lives *fully* in Mary in order to sanctify not only her, but through her, the other members of His mystical-

¹ *Lettre CCCLXXXIII*, t. II, p. 468, ed. 1885.
² OLIER, *Journé chrét.*, p. 395-396.

cal body. She is, as St. Bernard says, the aqueduct through which all the graces merited by her Son reach us: "He willed us to have all things through Mary." It is therefore most pleasing to Jesus and most profitable to our soul that we address ourselves to Jesus living in Mary.

1593. *2°* The object of this prayer is the *interior life* with all its constituent elements, which is nothing less than a participation in that life which Jesus communicates to His Mother and which we beg Him to deign to communicate to us as well.

A) Since Jesus living in Mary is the *source of this life*, we humbly beg Him to *come and live in us*, and we promise Him to submit in all docility to His influence: COME AND LIVE IN THY SERVANTS.

a) He comes to us as He comes to Mary, *through His Divine Spirit through habitual grace*. Every time sanctifying grace is increased, the Spirit of Jesus likewise grows in our soul, and consequently each time we perform a supernatural, meritorious act, this Divine Spirit comes to us and makes our soul still more like the soul of Jesus and that of Mary. What a powerful motive for multiplying and intensifying our meritorious actions by animating them with divine love!

b) He acts in us through *actual grace* which He merited for us and which He imparts to us through His Divine Spirit: "He worketh in us both to will and to accomplish."¹ He becomes the mainspring of our interior movements, of our interior dispositions, so much so that our acts proceed only from Jesus communicating to us His Own Life, His sentiments, His affections, His desires. Then we can say with St. Paul: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."²

c) That this be so, we must let ourselves be led by Him as *faithful servants* and we must co-operate with His grace. Like the humble Virgin we must say in all sincerity: "Behold the servant of our Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word." Conscience of our misery and our helplessness, we must obey promptly the least inspirations of His grace. This means for us honorable servitude, for to serve Him is to reign. It means a service of love that subjects us to Him Who is indeed Our Master, but also Our Father, Our Friend, and Who commands nothing that is not profitable to our own soul. Let us then open our hearts to Christ Jesus and to His Divine Spirit that He may reign therein as He reigned in the heart of His Blessed Mother!

1594. **B)** Because Jesus is the *source of all holiness*, we ask Him to live and to act in us, in order that He may communicate to us His Own sanctity: **In the spirit of thy holiness.**

There is in Him a twofold holiness: *substantial* holiness which flows from the hypostatic union, and *participated* holiness which is nothing else but created grace (n. 105). It is this latter holiness that we beg Him to communicate to us. It consists first of all in a *horror of sin* and in the severance from whatever may lead thereto, in a thorough

detachment from creatures and from all self-seeking; but it consists also in a participation in the Divine Life; in an *intimate union* with the Three Divine Persons; in a love for God which controls every other affection; in a word, in positive sanctity.

1595. Since we are unable to acquire such an exalted sanctity through our own efforts, we beg Him to come to us **in the fulness of his power**. Nay, since we fear lest we turn traitors to God, we pray with the Church that He "deign to subject to His sway our rebellious faculties."

It is an *efficacious grace* therefore that we beg for, which, while it respects our liberty, knows how to touch the secret springs of the will and to procure its free consent; a grace which is not rendered powerless by our instinctive repugnance or our irrational opposition, but which sweetly and firmly works in us to will and to accomplish.

1596. **C)** Since holiness cannot be attained without the *imitation of Our Divine Model*, we beg Him to make us walk **in the perfection of his ways**, that is to say, to make us able to imitate His conduct. His exterior and interior actions, in all their perfection. In other words, we ask to become living images of Jesus, other Christs, that like St. Paul we may be able to say to those who would learn of us: "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ." So perfect is this ideal that, of ourselves, we can not realize it. But Jesus becomes our way: "I am the way," a shining and living way, a moving way, so to speak, which draws us in its wake: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself."¹ We shall willingly allow ourselves to be drawn by Thee, O Divine Model, and we shall strive to reproduce Thy virtues!

1597. **D)** Hence we add: **in the truth of thy virtues.** The virtues we ask for are real virtues. There are persons who, under a veneer of exterior righteousness, conceal a pagan pride and sensuality. External manners do not constitute holiness. What Jesus comes to bring us therefore are interior virtues, *crucifying* virtues: humility, poverty, mortification, perfect chastity of mind, heart and body; and *unifying* virtues: the spirit of faith, of confidence and of love. This is what makes the Christian and this is what transforms him into another Christ.

1598. **E)** Jesus practised all these virtues especially in His mysteries, and on this account we pray Him to make us partake in the grace of His mysteries: **in the fellowship of thy mysteries.** No doubt, all the principal actions of Our Lord are called mysteries, but more especially those

¹ *Philipp.*, II, 13. — ² *Galat.*, II, 20.

¹ *John.*, XII, 32.

six great mysteries described by Father Olier in his Christian Catechism : the Incarnation, which invites us to put off all self-love in order to consecrate ourselves entirely to the Father in union with Jesus : " Behold I come to do thy will, O God ; " the Crucifixion, Death and Burial, which express so many degrees of that total immolation of self by which we crucify our disordered nature and seek to put off and bury our evil inclinations ; the Resurrection and the Ascension, which are the symbols of a perfect detachment from creatures and of the altogether heavenly life which we desire to lead in order to reach heaven.

1599. F) We can not assuredly attain such perfection unless Jesus comes to vanquish our *powerful enemies*, the world, the flesh and the devil : **to rule over every adverse power.** These three enemies will never cease their bitter onslaughts, nor will they be completely annihilated as long as we live upon this earth. But Jesus, Who triumphed over them, can thwart them and subjugate them by giving us efficacious graces wherewith to resist their attacks. It is this for which we humbly pray.

³⁰ Lastly, in order to obtain this grace more readily, we proclaim that with Him we have but *one end* in view, to procure the glory of the Father under the action of the Holy Ghost : **by thy spirit unto the glory of the Father.** Since He is come to earth to seek His Father's glory, " I glorify the Father, " we beg Him to fulfil His work in us and to impart to us His own interior holiness, so that with Him and through Him we may be enabled to give glory to that same Father, and that we may have Him glorified by those about us. Then shall we be truly members of His mystical body, true worshippers of God, and He will live and reign in our hearts for the greater glory of the Most Adorable Trinity.

This prayer therefore constitutes a synthesis of the spiritual life and a summary of our Compendium.

In bringing our work to a close, we cannot but bless, and invite our readers to bless with us, that God of love, that loving Father, Who in making us partakers of His Own Life, has filled us with all manner of blessings in His Son.

BLESSED BE THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD
JESUS CHRIST, WHO HATH BLESSED US WITH SPIRITUAL
BLESSINGS IN HEAVENLY PLACES, IN CHRIST.

THE END.

APPENDICES

I. *The spirituality of the New Testament*¹

In order to help our readers to understand better and to systematize the spiritual treasures found in the New Testament, we shall give a short synthesis of the spirituality of the *Synoptics*, of *St. Paul* and of *St. John*.

1° THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE SYNOPTICS

The central idea of Christ's teaching as recorded by the Synoptics is that of the *Kingdom of God*. In order that we may see the spirituality implied in this idea, we shall explain the *nature* and the *constitution* of this kingdom together with the *conditions of admission*.

A) Its nature. The kingdom of God preached by Our Lord is not an earthly one, but, contrary to the prejudices of the Jews, a spiritual kingdom opposed to that of Satan and his rebel angels. **a)** It is presented under a threefold form : 1) At times it is the Kingdom of Heaven or the place reserved for the Elect : " Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. " ² 2) At other times it is the *interior* kingdom as already established upon earth, that is to say, grace, friendship, sonship bestowed by God and received by men of good-will. 3) Lastly, it is the *external* kingdom which God establishes in order to perpetuate His work in the world. **b)** These three forms constitute but one and the same kingdom ; for the visible Church was founded only to enable the interior kingdom to expand peacefully, and the latter is, so to speak, the sum-total of the conditions that open to us the kingdom of heaven.

B) Its constitution. This interior kingdom has a King, Who is none other than God Himself. ⁴ Now, this God is the *Father* of His subjects, not merely collectively as in the Old Dispensation, but of each individual in particular. His goodness is so great that it embraces even evil-doers ⁵ as long as they live upon earth ; still, His justice is visited upon hardened sinners, for they shall be cast into hell. ⁶

This kingdom was established upon earth by Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of man, Who is also our King by *right of birth*, since He is the Son, the natural heir, the one Who alone knows the Father even as the Father knows Himself ; Who is our King by *right of conquest*, since He came to save that which was lost, and since He shed His blood for the remission of our sins. ⁷ He is a King utterly devoted to His subjects, a King Who loves the lowly, the poor, the forsaken ; a King Who goes after the lost sheep to bring it back to the fold ; a King Who upon the Cross pardons His very executioners. ⁸

¹ POURRAT, *Christian Spirituality*, P. I. — ² *Matth.*, XXV, 34.

³ TANQUEREY, *Synop. Theol. Fundam.*, n. 608-611, in which many texts are quoted in support of this assertion.

⁴ *Matth.*, VI, 9-10 ; XXVI, 29.

⁵ *Matth.*, V, 16, 45. — ⁶ *Matth.*, XXV, 41.

⁷ *Matth.*, XI, 27 ; XIV, 33 ; XXI, 16 ; XX, 28 ; XXV, 31, 34, 40 ; *Luke*, X, 22 ; XIX, 10 ; XXII, 20 ; XXIII, 2, 3.

⁸ *Matth.*, IX, 13, 36 ; X, 6 ; XVIII, 12-24 ; XIX, 14 ; *Mark*, II, 16 ; *Luke*, XI,

But He is also the Judge of the living and the dead. On the Last Day He will separate the good from the bad; the just He will receive into His abiding kingdom, but the wicked He will condemn to the eternal fires of hell.¹ Hence, there is nothing in this world of greater value than this kingdom. This is indeed the pearl of great price, the hidden treasure to be obtained at any cost.

C) Conditions of admission. Admittance to the kingdom is gained through penance,² baptism, belief in the Gospel, and observance of the commandments.³

But the ideal proposed to the members of the kingdom is the imitation, as far as this is possible, of God's Own perfection. Since we have been made His children, we must strive to live up to our dignity and to model our conduct on the divine perfections: "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect."⁴

In order to reach so high an ideal, two essential conditions must be fulfilled. We must *renounce* self and creatures and thus detach ourselves from whatever constitutes an obstacle to union with God. Moreover, we must *love* God and give ourselves entirely to Him by imitating Our Lord: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."⁵

a) Renunciation has its degrees. In every case it must exclude that disordered love of self and of creatures which constitutes sin, and it must above all rule out grievous sin, which is an absolute obstacle to the attainment of our destiny. So true is this, that should our right eye be a source of scandal to us, we must not hesitate to pluck it out: "And if thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee."⁶ For those who would become *perfect*, renouncement must be still more absolute. It must embrace the practice of the evangelical counsels, *real* poverty, the giving up of family ties, and perfect chastity or continence.⁷ Those who are unwilling or unable to carry their renouncement so far as this will content themselves with an *interior* renunciation of family ties and of worldly goods; they will live in the spirit of poverty and of interior detachment from whatever militates against the reign of God in their soul. They can even thus attain to a high degree of holiness.⁸

These manifold degrees of renunciation are grounded in the distinction between precepts and counsels: to enter into life it suffices for us to keep the commandments; but to be perfect one must sell one's goods and bestow them on the poor: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments... if thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor."⁹

Perfect renunciation goes as far as the *love of the Cross*: "Let him take up his cross." One comes to love the cross, not indeed in and for itself, but because of the Crucified Christ Whom one would follow unto the end: "And follow me." Nay more, one finally finds joy in the Cross: "Blessed are the poor in spirit... Blessed are the meek... Blessed are those who suffer persecution... Blessed are ye when they shall revile you."¹⁰

¹ *Matth.*, XXV, 31-46.

² *Matth.*, IV, 17; *Mark.*, I, 15; *Luke.*, V, 32.

³ *Mark.*, XVI, 16; *Matth.*, XXVIII, 19-20.

⁴ *Matth.*, V, 48. — ⁵ *Luke.*, IX, 23. — ⁶ *Matth.*, V, 29.

⁷ *Matth.*, XIX, 16-22; *Luke.*, XIV, 25-27; *Matth.*, XIX, 11-12.

⁸ *Matth.*, V, 1-12. — ⁹ *Matth.*, XIX, 16-22. — ¹⁰ *Matth.*, V, 3-12.

b) However, renunciation is only a means of attaining to the *love of God and the love of the neighbor* for God's sake. In truth, love sums up the whole law: "In these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets."¹ It is love that makes us yield ourselves to God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind... And the second is like to this: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."² This is the greatest of all the commandments, the one which embodies all perfection.

1) This love must be a *filial* love. It moves us to glorify first of all our Heavenly Father: "Our Father... hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come."³ And in order that we give Him glory in a more perfect way, it prompts us to keep His commandments: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven... Not everyone that saith to me, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father."⁴

2) It must be a *confiding* love for the Heavenly Father cares for His children far more than He does for the birds of the air and the lilies of the field: "Are not you of much more value than they? For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things."⁵ This confidence is shown by prayer, which, according to the promises of the Divine Mediator, obtains all that is properly asked for: "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."⁶

3) This love begets *love of the neighbor*. Since we are all children of the same Heavenly Father, we are all brethren: "For one is your master: and all you are brethren."⁷ In order to impart to this virtue the greatest possible motivating power, Our Lord declares that on the day of judgment He shall consider as done unto Himself every service rendered to the least of His brethren.⁸ He identifies Himself with His members, and so in loving the neighbor, it is Christ Himself Whom we love. This love includes even our *enemies*, with whom we must patiently bear, for whom we must pray, and to whom we must do good.⁹ It must therefore be accompanied by meekness and humility, even as was the love of Our Divine Model: "Learn of me because I am meek and humble of heart."¹⁰

Renunciation and love, then, are the two essential conditions of admittance into the Kingdom of God and of attaining to perfection. We have seen elsewhere (n. 309 and foll.) how they include all the virtues.

2° THE SPIRITUALITY OF ST. PAUL.¹¹

By a different procedure St. Paul arrives at the same conclusions as the Synoptics. The central idea with him is not indeed the Kingdom, but the *saving plan of God* Who desires to save and to sanctify all men, Jews and Gentiles, through His Son, Jesus Christ, made the Head of the human race and into Whom we must all be incorporated:

¹ *Matth.*, XXII, 46. — ² *Matth.*, XXII, 36-40. — ³ *Matth.*, VI, 9.

⁴ *Matth.*, VII, 21. — ⁵ *Matth.*, VI, 26-33. — ⁶ *Matth.*, VII, 7-8.

⁷ *Matth.*, XXIII, 8. — ⁸ *Matth.*, XXV, 40. — ⁹ *Matth.*, V, 44.

¹⁰ *Matth.*, XI, 29.

¹¹ PRAT, *Theology of St. Paul; FOURRAT, Christian Spirituality; DUPERRAY, Christ in the Christian Life.*

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ... in Whom we have redemption through his blood... and he hath subjected all things under his feet and hath made him head over all the church."

Thus from all eternity God wills to sanctify us and to adopt us as His children. But an obstacle stands in the way — *sin, original sin*, committed by Adam, the first head of the human race and transmitted to his descendants together with concupiscence, that law of the flesh that holds us captive under the law of sin. God however takes pity on man. He sends him a Redeemer, a Savior, Who will be the new Head of the race and Who will reclaim us through His obedience unto death, even the death of the Cross. Jesus then will be the center of our lives; "For to me, to live is Christ."² His merits and His satisfactions are applied to us especially through *Baptism* and the *Holy Eucharist*. Baptism regenerates us, incorporates us into Christ and makes us new men, who under the guidance of the Holy Ghost must fight relentlessly against the flesh, the Old Adam.³ The Holy Eucharist makes us share more abundantly in the death and in the life of Our Lord, in His inner sentiments and in His virtues.⁴

But in order to receive these Sacraments with profit, in order to foster the Divine Life which they impart, we must live a life of faith: "The just man liveth by faith."⁵ We must place all our confidence in God and in Our Lord, and we must above all practise that most excellent of all virtues, charity, which will indeed be one of our joys in heaven,⁶ but which now in this valley of tears exacts the crucifixion of nature.⁷

All these ascetical practices are summed up in a formula recurring again and again in the writings of the Apostle: we must incorporate ourselves more and more into Christ Jesus and therefore put off the Old Man with all his tendencies to evil, and *put on the New Man with all His virtues*: "Stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new, him who is renewed unto knowledge, according to the image of him that created him."⁸

A) First of all, *we must put off the Old Adam*. a) This Old Adam, which is also called the *flesh*, is our nature, not indeed as it is in itself, but as vitiated by the threefold concupiscence. Consequently, the works of the flesh are the sins man commits, not only those of sensuality and lust, but those also of pride in its various forms.⁹

b) We are under a *strict obligation* of mortifying or crucifying the flesh, an obligation based on two chief reasons: 1) The danger of consenting to sin and of being damned; for the flesh, or concupiscence which has not been destroyed by Baptism, urges us on with violence to sin, and it will enslave us under the law of sin if we do not combat it relentlessly with the help of God's grace: "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God, by Jesus Christ our Lord."¹⁰ The second reason for mortification of the flesh is to be found in our *baptismal promises*.

We are dead to sin and have been buried with Jesus Christ through Baptism, and in order to live with Him of a new life, we pro-

¹ Ephes., I, 3, 7, 22.

The entire chapter should be read in order to obtain an idea of the basic notions of St. Paul's spirituality.

² Phil., I, 21. — ³ Rom., VI, 4; Ephes., VI, 11-17.

⁴ I Cor., X, 14-22; XI, 17-22. — ⁵ Rom., I, 17.

⁶ I Cor., XIII, 1-13. — ⁷ Galat., V, 24. — ⁸ Colos., III, 10.

⁹ Rom., VIII, 1-16; Galat., V, 16-25. — ¹⁰ Rom., VII, 24-25.

mised to avoid sin and thereby to carry on a vigorous campaign against the *flesh* and the *devil*.¹ Life then, must be a combat, a struggle, the victor's reward being the crown of glory reserved unto us by the God of all justice and love.²

e) What sustains us in this struggle and what renders the victory relatively easy despite our weakness and our helplessness, is the grace of God merited by Jesus Christ. If we co-operate with it, we are sure of victory: "And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able: but will make also with temptation issue."³ I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me.⁴

d) This mortification has two degrees: 1) There is the mortification necessary for the avoidance of mortal sin and reprobation: "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection: lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway."⁵ 2) But there is also the mortification, which is profitable unto perfection, such as virginity, perfect humility, absolute disinterestedness.⁶ From another point of view St. Paul distinguishes three degrees of mortification: *crucifixion* of the still recalcitrant flesh, then a species of *spiritual death*, and lastly, *burial*.⁶

B) By putting off the Old Adam we *incorporate* ourselves into Jesus Christ, we put on the *New Man*. This New Man is the Christian regenerated through Baptism, united to the Holy Ghost and incorporated into Christ, transforming himself under the influence of grace into Christ Jesus. In order to understand this doctrine thoroughly, it is necessary to explain the rôle of the Holy Ghost, of Christ, and of the soul itself in this new supernatural life.

a) The Holy Ghost, that is to say, the Most Blessed Trinity, dwells in the soul of the just and transforms it into a holy temple: "For the temple of God is holy, which you are."⁷ b) He operates in the soul, moves it by actual grace, gives it a filial trust in God the Father, and enables it to pray with singular efficacy: "God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish... Whereby we cry: Abba (Father). The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity... Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings."⁸

e) Christ is the Head of a mystical body whose members we are, and He imparts to us motion, direction and life. By *Baptism* we are incorporated into Him, and in *Holy Communion* we are associated with Him in His passion, which we commemorate, in His sacrifice, and in His risen life in which He makes us share while we await our entrance into heaven where we already dwell to some extent through hope: "For we are saved by hope."⁹ This communion is prolonged by a sort of spiritual communion whereby all through the day we make our own the thoughts and the affections of Our Lord: "For let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus... And I live, now not I, but

¹ Rom., VI, 11-23.

² I Cor., II, 12; IX, 25; Ephes., VI, 11-17; II Tim., IV, 7; I Tim., VI, 12.

³ I Cor., X, 13; Phil., IV, 13. — ⁴ I Cor., IX, 27.

⁵ I Cor., VII, 25-34; Phil., II, 5-11; I Tim., VI, 8.

⁶ They that are Christ's have crucified their flesh... For you are dead: and your life is hid with Christ in God... For we are buried together with him in baptism into death... (Galat., V, 24; Colos., III, 3; Rom., VI, 4). — The spiritual meaning of these texts is very well explained by Father Olier in his Christian Catechism, I, C. XXI-XXIII.

⁷ I Cor., III, 17. — ⁸ Philipp., II, 13; Rom., VIII, 15, 26. — ⁹ Rom., VIII, VIII, 24.

Christ liveth in me." ² Thus, nothing can separate us from Him Who is our All: "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ?" ³

d) From this arises the duty of remaining closely united to Jesus, our Head, our Source of life, the perfect Model, whom we must constantly imitate until we be transformed into Him. 1) We must first of all imitate His *inner dispositions*, His *humility* and His *obedience*: "For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God... emptied himself... becoming obedient unto death." ³ We must imitate His *charity* which prompted Him to sacrifice Himself for us: "Christ also hath loved us and hath delivered himself for us." ⁴ We must imitate His *exterior conduct* by practising modesty, bodily mortification, mortification of our vices and passions, in order thus to submit ourselves more completely to Jesus and His Holy Spirit: "Let your modesty be known to all men." ⁵

This imitation of Christ admits of many degrees. At first we are like children, thinking, speaking and acting as such. Then we begin to grow to perfect manhood, "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ," ⁶ until we are completely transformed into Christ: "For to me, to live is Christ... But Christ liveth in me." ⁷ It is then that we can say to the faithful: "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ." ⁸

There is therefore no essential difference between the spirituality of St. Paul and that of the Synoptics. To put off the Old Adam is to practise renunciation, and to put on the New Man, the New Adam, is to unite oneself to Jesus Christ and through Him to God; it is to love God and the neighbor.

3° THE SPIRITUALITY OF ST. JOHN

In the writings of St. John, the dominant idea is not that of the Kingdom, nor that of God's plan of sanctification for man. It is the *spiritual life*. He acquaints us with the *interior life of God*, of the *Incarnate Word*, of the *Christian soul*.

A) God is *life*, that is to say, light and love. He is a Father, and from all eternity He begets a Son, Who is none other than His Word. ⁹ Together with His Son, He is the source whence proceeds the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth and of love, Who completes the mission of the Incarnate Word by abiding with Christians until the end of time in order to enlighten and to strengthen them. ¹⁰

B) God wills to communicate this life to men. Hence, He sends into the world His Own Son, Who by taking flesh becomes man, and by imparting to us His life makes us the adopted children of God. ¹¹ Equal to the Father by nature, He openly proclaims His inferiority to Him as man and His utter dependence upon Him. He judges not, He speaks not, He acts not of Himself, but He conforms His judgments, His words and His actions to the good pleasure of the Father and thus manifests His love for Him. ¹² He is obedient unto death in order to glorify His Father and to procure the salvation of men. ¹³

² *Philipp.*, II, 5; *Galat.*, II, 20. — ³ *Rom.*, VIII, 35. — ⁴ *Phil.*, II, 5-11.

⁵ *Ephes.*, V, 2. — ⁶ *Phil.*, IV, 5. — ⁷ *Ephes.*, IV, 13.

⁸ *Phil.*, I, 21; *Galat.*, II, 20. — ⁹ *I Cor.*, IV, 16.

¹⁰ *John.*, I, 1-5. — ¹¹ *John.*, XIV, 26; XV, 26; XVI, 7-15. — ¹² *John.*, I, 9-14.

¹³ *John.*, V, 19, 30. — ¹⁴ *John.*, X, 18.

With regard to us, He is: 1) the *light* that enlightens us and leads us unto life; ¹ 2) the *Good Shepherd* Who feeds His sheep, protects them from the hungry wolf and lays down His life for them; ² 3) the indispensable *Mediator* without Whom no one can go to the Father; ³ 4) the *Vine* whose branches we are, receiving from Him as we do our supernatural life. ⁴

C) From Him, then, must flow our interior life, which consists in an intimate, affectionate union with Him, and through Him with God; ⁵ for He is the Way that leads to the Father. ⁶

a) This union begins with *Baptism*, which gives us new birth, spiritual life, ⁷ which incorporates us into Christ, and enables us to bring forth fruit unto salvation. ⁸

b) This union is strengthened by the reception of *Holy Communion*, which nourishes our soul with the Body and Blood of Christ, with His Divinity, with His whole Person, so that we live His very life, and live for Him even as He lives for His Father. ⁹

c) This union is made abiding by a kind of *spiritual communion*, which causes Jesus to dwell in us and us in Him. ¹⁰ So close is this union, that Our Lord compares it with that existing between Himself and the Father: "I in them, and thou in me." ¹¹

D) This union enables us to share in the virtues of the Divine Master, above all in His *love for God* and *for men* carried to the point of *self-immolation*.

a) God loves us as His children. We love Him as Our Father. And because we love Him, we keep His commandments. ¹² Thus, the Three Divine Persons come to dwell in our soul: "We will come to him and make our abode with him." ¹³ We must therefore love God because He is love — *God is charity* — and because He has loved us first, sacrificing even His Own Son for us. ¹⁴

b) *Fraternal love* flows from the love of God. We must love our brethren not only as we love ourselves, but as Jesus has loved them. We must therefore be ready to sacrifice ourselves for them: "A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another as I have loved you." ¹⁵ Because he hath laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. ¹⁶ In truth, we are all but one spiritual family whose father is God and whose savior is Jesus Christ. So close must our union be that it is likened to that existing between the Three Divine Persons: "That they may be one, as we also are one." ¹⁷ This virtue of the love of the neighbor is so necessary that to pretend to love God without loving the neighbor is a lie, ¹⁸ whereas fraternal charity is the surest guarantee of eternal life. ¹⁹

St. John then, is the Apostle of *love*, the love he practised so well himself. But this love has its foundation in *faith*, particularly in belief in Christ, belief in His Divinity as well as in His Humanity. It presupposes the struggle against the threefold concupiscence, and hence, mortification. In this St. John agrees with the Synoptics and St. Paul, though he emphasizes *divine charity* more than they do.

¹ *John.*, I, 9; VIII, 12. — ² *John.*, X, 11. — ³ *John.*, XIV, 6.

⁴ *John.*, XV, 1-5. — ⁵ *John.*, XV, 5-10. — ⁶ *John.*, XIV, 6. — ⁷ *John.*, III, 3.

⁸ *John.*, XV, 1-10. — ⁹ *John.*, VI, 55-59. — ¹⁰ *John.*, VI, 57. — ¹¹ *John.*, XVII, 23.

¹² *John.*, XIV, 21. — ¹³ *John.*, XIV, 23. — ¹⁴ *I John.*, IV, 19.

¹⁵ *John.*, XIII, 34. — ¹⁶ *I John.*, III, 16. — ¹⁷ *John.*, XVII, 22.

¹⁸ *I John.*, IV, 20-21. — ¹⁹ *I John.*, IV, 12-17.

According to the Synoptics, then, perfection consists in *renunciation*; according to St. Paul, in *incorporation into Christ*, which implies the putting off of the Old Adam and the putting on of the New; according to St. John, in *love* carried to the point of *sacrifice*. We have here fundamentally one and the same doctrine, but expressed in various terms and under different aspects, so that it can be easily adapted to the character and the training of each individual soul.

II. The study of characters. 1

When speaking of self-knowledge, (n. 452) we said that a study of temperaments and characters would contribute greatly to our knowledge of self.

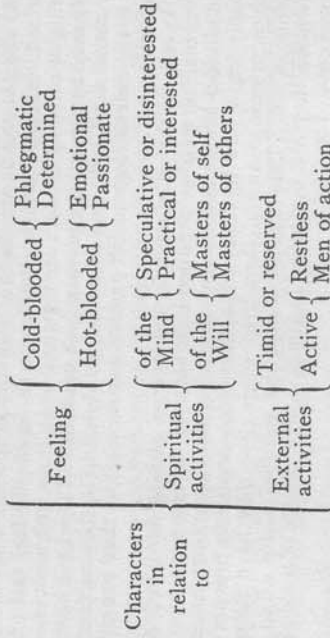
Frequently the two terms, temperament and character, are taken as synonymous. The distinction between them lies in this, that the former is the sum-total of those fundamental tendencies which flow from the *physiological* constitution of individuals, and the latter the sum-total of the *psychological* dispositions, based on temperament as modified by education and will-power, and made lasting by habit.

It will therefore prove more profitable to study characters than temperaments, for the important thing from the spiritual point of view is not so much physical temperament as the character of the soul. This fact was well understood in olden times, for in the description of various temperaments, the psychological rather than the physiological differences were stressed.

We shall limit ourselves here to the question of characters, and shall make use mainly of the admirable work of Father Malapert, *Les Éléments du Caractère*, simplifying, and at times correcting, his classifications. We shall give a brief explanation of the basis of our classification, and of the various characters that may be distinguished in relation to the three great activities of man.

1° BASIS OF OUR CLASSIFICATION OF CHARACTERS

A) When we wish to specify the principal tendencies which differentiate characters, the most reliable means is to study characters in relation to man's different activities. We shall not touch on the question of the purely *vegetative* activities of man, since they are of little importance from our point of view, and shall study the main characters in relation to *feeling*, to the *spiritual activities* of mind and will, and to *external activities*. A brief synoptic table will make clear our purpose.



B) Before we explain this classification, a few preliminary remarks are necessary:

a) The characters we are about to describe do not exist as so many pure types; rather, they possess characteristics of several types, and this in varying degrees. Thus, cold-blooded persons have not only the traits common to this type, but they experience also a certain amount of emotional activity. They are classified as cold-blooded, because this is their characteristic or *predominant* trait. The same is to be said of every other type; it is the predominance of one certain element which marks off the type from all others. Moreover, this predominant element admits of many degrees.

b) Again, each individual must be studied from the threefold point of view outlined above in the schematic chart. For instance, a cold-blooded person may be intellectual or volitional, just as an intellectual may be interested or disinterested in his pursuit of knowledge. One must therefore learn to take these different points of view into consideration before attempting to place a man in this or that category.

c) The characters we describe are not rigidly fixed types, but rather indications which may enable the spiritual director to observe and to understand better the peculiarities of each of his penitents. Final judgment must not be passed on a man's character after but a few conversations with him. Such snap judgments are generally faulty and must be revised. The process by which we really come to know a person's character must necessarily be slow, for it must be one of careful and studied observation of unnumbered actions and reactions.

d) Lastly, we must not forget to beg humbly, frequently and perseveringly for the lights of the Holy Ghost, for we need them in order to acquire a true knowledge of self and of others.

2° DIFFERENT TYPES OF CHARACTER IN RELATION TO FEELING.

Feeling is of course common to all human beings, but some persons have so little of it that they are called *cold-blooded*, while others, on the contrary, are called *hot-blooded*, precisely because in them feeling is so highly developed.

A) Cold-blooded persons have an abnormally low sensibility and little emotionalism. They have few desires, show little enthusiasm for anything, and are seldom aroused to passion. We can divide them into two classes: the phlegmatic and the determined.

a) The *phlegmatic* are slow and awkward in action. They are selfish, but not malicious, and so indifferent as to hardly feel the need of loving or of being loved. As a general rule, their judgment is sound, precisely because their passions lack intensity. They have little taste for active work, but when they must get down to it, they succeed best in those undertakings which demand patience rather than imagination and feeling.

As regards the *spiritual life*, they are not attracted to a high degree of virtue, but neither are they held back by violent passions. They are virtuous when not forced to contend against great temptations, but hardly know how to resist when dangerous occasions present themselves, or how to amend their lives when once they have fallen into habits of sin. They readily accept the spiritual advice given them, provided they are not asked to aim at a high degree of perfection, or urged onward too fast.

It is not among these that vocations to the priesthood or the religious life are to be sought. Such persons are fitted only for quiet professions which are not too exacting and which are compatible with the enjoyment of legitimate and moderate pleasure.

b) Persons who are cold-blooded but *determined* are indeed slow to action, but steady and methodical in their efforts. By dint of patient work they obtain notable results.

From the point of view of *intellect*, these persons possess little imagination or brilliancy, but they succeed in serious work which demands reflection, patience and methodical investigation.

From the *moral* point of view, they entertain no grand dreams, but they act from conviction, with steadiness of purpose, and are therefore capable of attaining to a high degree of virtue. Hence, they offer excellent material for the priesthood or the religious life once they have been imbued with profound convictions, love of duty for God's sake, and of the need of making constant and methodical efforts towards perfection. They proceed slowly, but surely: "Persistent labor overcomes all things."

B) Hot-blooded natures, on the other hand, are characterized by a *predominance of feeling*. They sense keenly the need of loving and of being loved. In them it is the heart that rules. We may divide them into two classes: the *emotional* and the *passionate*.

a) Emotional persons are quick of movement; they have an engaging smile and a sprightly appearance. They love art in most of its forms. They are light-hearted and extremely changeable, giving themselves over readily to the most contrary emotions, and acting on the spur of the moment.

Gifted with a lively imagination and an ardent heart, they attain success in literary work, speak with great facility, and charm all with whom they come in contact.

From the *moral* point of view, they are easily drawn to sensual pleasure, to gluttony and to voluptuousness; but they quickly and sincerely repent of their faults, and just as quickly fall back into these same sins at the first opportunity. They have a good heart; they are quick to love and become very much attached to those who love them. They are frank and open in confession and spiritual direction, are readily convinced, and form good resolutions which they soon forget. It is by appealing to their heart that they are to be conquered and brought to God. If one succeeds in implanting in them an ardent love of Our Lord, one can turn them to good account. Through love

they will make many sacrifices which at first seemed repugnant to their nature; through love they will pray, frequently receive Holy Communion, visit the Blessed Sacrament and practise works of zeal. But they must be taught to love. God in dryness of soul and in suffering as well as in times of consolation. Little by little, under the influence of divine grace and of their own reflection, their emotions will yield to convictions, and while preserving all their former spirit, they will bring to their endeavors greater perseverance and constancy. If they can not acquire this energy and steadiness of purpose, they must not be encouraged to choose a state of life such as that of the priesthood, which requires a well-grounded and tried virtue.

b) *Passionate* natures are those in which deep and ardent passions hold sway. They may be reduced to three different types: the *melancholic*, the *sanguine* and the *choleric*.

1) Melancholic persons have a natural tendency to see the dark side of things, to dwell particularly on the difficulties and the unpleasant features of situations, and to exaggerate them. Hence, they are prone to sadness, to diffidence, to a kind of misanthropy. They suffer very much, and without intending it, make others suffer also.

Unless they seek consolation in God, Who alone can console them, and unless they dispel their gloomy thoughts, they fall an easy prey to weariness, discouragement and scrupulosity.

St. Teresa¹ maintained that persons who are highly predisposed to melancholy are not fit subjects for the religious life. Indeed, since melancholy implies a rather marked predominance of the imagination and the emotions over reason, it may after a time devolve into a sort of madness. At all events, in order to weaken such an unwholesome disposition, one must know how to treat such persons with great sympathy, but always with authority and firmness, not allowing them to follow their whims or act upon their suspicions. Since their judgment is not sufficiently clear, they must submit to the decisions of a spiritual director or some prudent friend.

2) *Sanguine* or *impulsive* persons are the ready prey of the first vivid impression that makes itself felt. They are expansive, volatile and spasmodic, passing quickly from gaiety to sadness, from hope to anxiety, from enthusiasm to discouragement. If contradicted or humiliated, they fly into a fit of passion and give vent to their spleen in violent words and gestures. In brief, they frequently lose their self-control and use harshly those about them.

In order to combat this defect, one must make constant and energetic use of the power of *inhibition*, check from the outset the first inordinate impulses, and reflect before acting; in a word, one must regain, little by little, control over self.

Unless a man succeeds in attaining mastery over nerves and emotions, he must not think of entering the priesthood, since violent anger, as St. Paul remarks, constitutes an insuperable impediment: "For a bishop must be without crime... not subject to anger... no striker."²

3) *Choleric* persons are those in whom passion is not only violent, as in sanguine natures, but also enduring. They are energetic, long-suffering and tenacious. Generally they are ambitious, and seek leadership and glory. They are destined to work a great deal of good

¹ *Foundations*, C. VII. — ² *Titus*, I, 7.

b) There is the other type of wilful characters which aims rather at *dominating others* than at mastering self. Persons of this type want to force their will on others and to rule over their equals. They keep their eyes constantly fixed on their objective; they do not allow obstacles to discourage them, and they never give up until they have had their way.

Such persons are evidently energetic and persevering and can be made to render great service. But they must master themselves before they attempt to master others; they must devote their energies to the service of God and the good of souls, and learn how to unite mildness with firmness in the exercise of their authority.

4° DIFFERENT TYPES OF CHARACTERS IN RELATION TO EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Here we meet with two types: the *timid* or reserved, and the *active*.

A) The *timid* are over-diffident, have little initiative, and seem paralyzed in their undertakings by the fear of failure. They succeed well only when given proper direction and when supported and encouraged by superiors or friends who can inspire them with confidence and help them to acquire a certain amount of assurance.

From the supernatural point of view, they must be drilled in the virtue of trust in God and reminded constantly that God makes use of even the poorest instruments, provided only that, conscious of their insufficiency, they seek support in Him Who alone can strengthen them: "The weak things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the strong... I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me."²

B) The *active* have a natural penchant for action. They are enterprising, bold, courageous and energetic, and must of necessity find an outlet for their surplus energy. Among these latter, the *restless* expend their forces in feverish activity, the *men of action* in well-planned efforts.

a) The *restless* are so strongly attracted to activity in some form or other that they cannot remain quiet. They want to act at all costs, even before they have formulated or matured a plan of action. Forever in quest of new projects, they lack the time to accomplish any one of them. They rush about here and there, and never really settle down anywhere. They make a good deal of noise and accomplish rather little. They are at the service of everybody, but soon forget the promises they have made.

In order that they may benefit by their tremendous store of energy and their desire for activity, they must learn to reflect before acting, to allow their plans to ripen before putting them into execution, to seek competent counsel from those wiser and more experienced than themselves. Once the stage has been set, they must apply themselves to their task, and until this has been accomplished, to no other enterprise. Reflection and constancy are for them the essential conditions of success.

b) *Men of action* meditate a long time on their projects before putting them into execution. They weigh carefully the reasons for and against; they think not only of the means to be used, but also of

² 1 Cor., I, 27. — ² Phil., IV, 13.

or a great deal of harm. It all depends on whether they use their passions for their own selfish ends or for the glory of God and the good of souls. It is from their ranks that great conquerors and apostles come. Richly endowed as they are, one can make them render great service by keeping their eyes fixed on the glory of God and the conquest of souls, as was done for St. Francis Xavier by St. Ignatius of Loyola.

3° DIFFERENT TYPES OF CHARACTERS IN RELATION TO THE SPIRITUAL FACULTIES OF MIND AND WILL

Those in whom the higher faculties of intellect and will predominate are naturally divided into two classes: the *intellectual* and the *wilful*, accordingly as it is the intellect or the will that has control.

A) The *intellectual* are those who are absorbed in the pursuit of knowledge. Among these however there are some of a *purely speculative* turn of mind, and others who are *less disinterested* and who are goaded on by *active hopes* and *practical ambitions*.

a) Those of the *purely speculative* type spend their lives in the construction of systems of thought. Such were, for example, Kant, Cuvier and Ampere. Some of them engage in thought for the sheer pleasure of thinking — art for art's sake — and thus fall into a dangerous form of *dilettantism* which may end in scepticism, as it did with Montaigne and Bayle.

b) The more *practical* and *ambitious* among the intellectuals are motivated by some *ardent passion*. There are those who while engaged in stirring up ideas within themselves also wish to stir up men, and consequently become passionately intent upon the triumph of some idea or some system of thought. With either of these types, the purely speculative and disinterested, or the more practical and ambitious, we are dealing with men of great resources. The former however are liable to become too systematic, too abstract, and thus neglect the ordinary duties of life. The latter have need to place their knowledge and their activity at the service of God and truth, otherwise they may fall and cause others to fall into fearful excesses.

B) *Wilful* natures are endowed with a firm, tenacious, unbending will to which they subordinate all things. They divide into two groups: those who are *masters of self* and those who, being *men of action*, are *masters of others*.

a) The former bend their efforts especially on *mastering themselves*, and with this in view, on overcoming their passions. Hence, they strive with relentless energy to bring their feelings under control, and no one with a little power of observation can fail to notice the efforts they are making to hold themselves in check. This preoccupation creates in them a certain reserve, and at times even a certain rigidity accompanied by distrust of whatever might tend to make them lose their control over self. But once they have by dint of constant work gained complete victory, they become wonderfully even-tempered, and know how to harmonize firmness with gentleness.

From the *spiritual* point of view, their one great aim is to subject that strong and disciplined will to the will of God. Thus they acquire something of that perfect poise, that perfect subordination of faculties which man possessed in the state of original justice.

the obstacles to be encountered; they organize everything in the light of the end to be attained, no matter what may be the difficulties.

Such a disposition is a priceless asset to social workers and to priests, and should be cultivated by them. But in order that their well-planned undertakings be productive of good results, they must make sure, through prayer and the practice of the interior life, that they have God on their side. To be *Christian* men of action, they must become men of prayer. God and man, grace and human endeavor, will thus unite harmoniously in them unto the accomplishment of excellent results: "For we are God's coadjutors."¹

In concluding, let us bear in mind that in reality most characters are the product of the combination of many different types, and that it is by striving to acquire those qualities which one has not received as a heritage that one succeeds in overcoming natural defects, in acquiring proper balance and in producing the best results. The cold-blooded, for instance, should force themselves to acquire a little more of feeling; the intellectual should cultivate will-power and action; the wilful should reflect before acting, and employ gentleness in the exercise of their power. Through effort and the grace of God we can do much to perfect our temperament and develop a well-balanced character. This will become clear from the study of the Spiritual Ways.

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