

THE TREASURY OF
CATHOLIC
WISDOM



EDITED AND WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

JOHN A. HARDON, S.J.

IGNATIUS



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The Treasury of
Catholic Wisdom

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Edited, with an Introduction and Notes, by

JOHN A. HARDON, S.J.

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surrounded by prophets, Kings, and ancestors of Christ
and high priests of Israel.

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Introduction

The *Treasury of Catholic Wisdom* is a comprehensive anthology of the outstanding Catholic literature from the first century to modern times. Mystics and martyrs, philosophers and theologians, poets and prose writers are quoted at length and in depth. They are truly representative of the spirit and substance of Catholicism in its paradox of phenomenal stability and versatility over the centuries.

Unlike ordinary anthologies, this is no mere collection of quotations, or even merely an omnibus of great religious thinkers. It is a Catholic library in miniature, or a one-volume microcosm of what the Church's great minds have thought and said since the apostolic age.

The editor of this volume had a definite plan or purpose in mind and a corresponding set of themes to fulfill the plan. Certain authors were then chosen to express these master themes, and always in view were the intended readers in what is certainly the age of martyrs today.

The plan of this volume is to offer a clear understanding of Catholic Christianity as

—a divinely established society of believers who are loyal to the Vicar of Christ, the Bishop of Rome, as their visible head.

—a coherent system of belief that not only is rationally credible but has also produced the most profound and convincing body of religious knowledge in the history of human thought.

—a way of life that satisfies our deepest desire for happiness, while reminding us to deny ourselves, take up our daily cross, and follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

—a promise of eternal beatitude in the life to come, provided we are faithful to the inspirations of grace that we receive from God.

Certain themes were carefully selected to achieve the foregoing plan. They are at once basic to all true literature and distinctive of authentic Catholic writers since the rise of Christianity.

There is a God who exists from all eternity and by whom everything else has come into being.

He created man to know, love, and serve Him in this life, and by this means to reach heaven and thus return to the God from whom we came.

Everything else in the world has been made by God to help us attain our heavenly destiny.

We are therefore to use creatures according to this loving will of God knowing that nothing that enters our lives is ever meaningless or apart from this divinely ordained purpose. Everything, no matter how painful or apparently trivial, is part of God's mysterious providence. We make mistakes, but God never does. In His divine plan, even our sins are meant to lead us closer to Him by making us more aware of our weakness, more humble in asking for His help, and more grateful for His patient love.

We are not naturally prone to choose what God knows is good for us, or avoid what hinders our way to heaven. It is a constant struggle with our sinful inclinations. That is why Christ gave us the Mass and the sacraments, told us to pray, and provided the Church's guidance on the "hard road that leads to life" (Matt 7:14).

The authors chosen for the *Treasury* represent every period of the Church's passage through time, from the age of the Apostles to the present day. They are men and women, bishops, priests, religious, and the laity. They are persons whose native talents were elevated by the supernatural light that God reserves for those who are most submissive to His will.

They are also persons who discovered the reality of Christ's promise: "You will learn the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32). They have much to teach us about the meaning of true liberty. This is especially needed in our day, when everyone is searching for freedom and yet so many are living in slavery.

Not on principle, but as a matter of policy, no papal documentation is cited in these pages. One reason was the obvious fact that the Bishops of Rome are in a category of their own, with supreme teaching authority in the Church of God. It seemed more appropriate not to put them on a par with the rest of the faithful, even with the intellectual giants of Catholic history.

This volume was written for all who wish to know what is true Catholicism, not only in the Church's official teaching but in the literature of her outstanding members.

Ours is the age of heroic Christianity. Some would say there have been more Christian martyrs since 1900 than in all the preceding centuries. It was not rhetoric but plain realism that inspired the Second Vatican Council to tell the faithful they should be ready to suffer for Christ, by a bloody martyrdom if they receive this precious grace, and certainly by a bloodless martyrdom in the secularized culture of the modern world.

On the way to the Mount of Ascension, Christ promised His followers: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and then you will

be my witnesses”—literally *my martyrs* —“to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). So it was in the early Church, and so it has been ever since. Those who wish to proclaim the true Christ by word and example must expect to pay dearly for their profession of faith. Who would doubt that today there are “places where Catholic Christians are thrown to whatever is the equivalent of lions in the Roman arena”?

But such courage of will is born only from deep conviction of mind, when a Catholic knows that the Church founded by Christ and built upon Peter is true. In order for the mind to be so convinced it needs to be enlightened, which the editor hopes will be the case for readers of *The Treasury of Catholic Wisdom*.

The index at the end of the book is meant to serve two purposes: to show the breadth of religious wisdom covered in the *Treasury*, and to help locate the exact words of an author on some important aspect of Catholic belief and practice.

The editor wishes to thank especially the following for their gracious assistance in the production of *The Treasury of Catholic Wisdom*:

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The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles

This earliest known work of Christian antiquity outside the New Testament is called The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles or, in its original Greek, Didache ton Dodeka Apostolon. It is an abstract of the Apostles' teaching rather than a summary composed by the Apostles themselves. The complete text of the Didache was discovered in 1873 by Bryennios, Greek Orthodox Metropolitan of Nicomedia. But its existence and much of the contents were known in the early Church. St. Athanasius recommended it to catechumens preparing for baptism.

In all probability the Didache was written between A.D. 70 and 90. The author, who is unknown, divides the book of sixteen short chapters into four parts. The moral catechism (Chapters 1–6) reduces all the duties of a Christian to two ways, the Way of Life and the Way of Death; the liturgical instruction treats of baptism, fasting, prayer, and the Eucharist (7–10); disciplinary regulations concern the duties of the community toward teachers, traveling apostles, and prophets; also identified are the Sunday obligation of participating in the Eucharistic sacrifice, the duty of electing worthy leaders in the Church, and the need to maintain peace in the community (11–15); finally, the epilogue foretells the Second Coming of Christ (16).

The Didache is the earliest manual of the Christian liturgy. Although incomplete, it is most revealing. The new offertory prayers for Mass, revised since the Second Vatican Council, are taken almost verbatim from the Didache (10:3). Here, too, we have the first explicit Christian condemnation of abortion, which is equated with infanticide (2:1–2).

The Didache

AN INSTRUCTION OF THE LORD

GIVEN TO THE HEATHEN

BY THE TWELVE APOSTLES

1. Two Ways there are, one of Life and one of Death, and there is a great difference between the Two Ways.

Now, the Way of Life is this: *first, love the God who made you; secondly, your neighbor as yourself*: do not do to another *what you do not wish* to be done to yourself.

The lesson of these words is as follows: *bless those that curse you, and pray for your enemies*; besides, *fast for those that persecute you*. For *what thanks do you deserve when you love those that love you? Do not the heathen do as much?* For your part, *love those that hate you*; in fact, have no enemy. *Abstain from gratifying the carnal [and bodily] impulses*. When anyone gives you a blow *on the right cheek, turn to him the other as well, and be perfect*; when *anyone forces you to go one mile with him, go two with him*; when anyone takes *your cloak away, give him your coat also*; when anyone robs you of *your property, demand no return*. You really cannot do it. *Give to anyone that asks you, and demand no return*; the Father wants His own bounties to be shared with all. Happy the giver who complies with the commandment, for he goes unpunished. Trouble is in store for the receiver: if someone who is in need receives, he will go unpunished; but he who is not in need will have to stand trial as to why and for what purpose he received; and, if he is thrown into prison, he will be questioned about his conduct, and *will not be released from that place until he has paid the last penny*. However, in this regard, there is also a word of Scripture: *Let your alms sweat in your hands until you find out to whom to give*.

2. A further commandment of the Teaching: *Do not murder; do not commit adultery*; do not practice pederasty; do not fornicate; *do not steal*; do not deal in magic; do not practice sorcery; do not kill a fetus by abortion, or commit infanticide. *Do not covet your neighbor's goods. Do not perjure yourself; do not bear false witness*; do not calumniate; do not bear malice. Do not be double-minded or double-tongued, for a double tongue is *a deadly snare*. Your speech must not be false or meaningless, but made good by action. Do not be covetous, or rapacious, or hypocritical, or malicious, or arrogant. Do not have designs upon

your neighbor. Hate no man; but correct some, pray for others, for still others sacrifice your life as a proof of your love.

3. My child, shun evil of any kind and everything resembling it. Do not be prone to anger, for anger leads to murder. Do not be fanatical, not quarrelsome, not hot-tempered; for all these things beget murder. My child, do not be lustful, for lust leads to fornication. Do not be foul-mouthed or give free rein to your eyes; for all these things beget adultery. My child, do not be an augur, because it leads to idolatry. Do not be an enchanter, not an astrologer, not an expiator, and do not wish to see (and hear) these things; for they all beget idolatry. My child, do not be a liar, for lying leads to theft. Do not be a lover of money, or a vain pretender. All these things beget thievery. My child, do not be a grumbler, because it leads to blasphemy; or self-willed, or evil-minded. All these things beget blasphemy.

On the contrary, be gentle, for *the gentle will inherit the land*. Be long-suffering, and merciful, and guileless, and quiet, and good, and *with trembling treasure forever the instructions* you have received. Do not carry your head high, or open your heart to presumption. Do not be on intimate terms with the mighty, but associate with holy and lowly folk. Accept as blessings the casualties that befall you, assured that nothing happens without God.

4. My child, day and night *remember him who preaches God's word to you*, and honor him as the Lord, for where His lordship is spoken of, there is the Lord. Seek daily contact with the saints to be refreshed by their discourses. Do not start a schism, but pacify contending parties. *Be just in your judgment*: make no distinction between man and man when correcting transgressions. Do not waver in your decision.

Do not be one that opens his hands to receive, but shuts them when it comes to giving. If you have means at your disposal, pay a ransom for your sins. Do not hesitate to give, and do not give in a grumbling mood. You will find out who is the good Rewarder. Do not turn away from the needy; rather, share everything with your brother, and do not say: "It is private property." If you are sharers in what is imperishable, how much more so in the things that perish!

Do not withdraw your hand from your son or your daughter, but from their youth teach them the fear of God. Do not, when embittered, give orders to your slave, male or female, for they hope in the same God; otherwise, they might lose the fear of God, who is the Master of both of you. He surely is not coming to call with an eye to rank and station in life; no, He comes to those whom the Spirit has prepared. But you, slaves, be submissive to your masters as to God's image in reverence and fear.

Abhor all sham and whatever is not pleasing to the Lord. Do not by any means neglect the *commandments of the Lord*, but *hold fast* to the traditions,

neither adding nor subtracting anything. In church confess your sins, and do not come to your prayer with a guilty conscience.

Such is the Way of Life.

5. The Way of Death is this. First of all, it is wicked and altogether accursed: *murders, adulteries, lustful desires, fornications, thefts, idolatries, magical arts, sorceries, robberies, false testimonies, hypocrisy, duplicity, fraud, pride, malice, surliness, covetousness, foul talk, jealousy, rashness, haughtiness, false pretensions,* (the lack of the fear of God). It is the way of persecutors of the good, haters of the truth, lovers of falsehood; of men ignorant of the reward for right living, not *devoted to what is good* or to just judgment, intent upon not what is good but what is evil; of strangers to gentleness and patient endurance; of *men who love vanities, and fee hunters;* of men that have no heart for the poor, are not concerned about the oppressed, do not know their Maker; *of murderers of children,* destroyers of God's image; of men that turn away from the needy, oppress the afflicted, act as counsels for the rich, are unjust judges of the poor—in a word, of men steeped in sin. Children, may you be preserved from all this!

6. See that *no man leads you astray* from this Way of the Teaching, since any other teaching takes you away from God. Surely, if you are able to bear the Lord's yoke in its entirety, you will be perfect; if you are not able, then do what you can. And in the matter of food, do what you can stand; but be scrupulously on your guard against meat offered to idols; for that is a worship of dead gods.

7. Regarding baptism. Baptize as follows: after first explaining all these points, *baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,* in running water. But if you have no running water, baptize in other water; and if you cannot in cold, then in warm. But if you have neither, pour water on the head three times *in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.* Before the baptism, let the baptizer and the candidate for baptism fast, as well as any others that are able. Require the candidate to fast one or two days previously.

8. Your *fasts* should not coincide with those of *the hypocrites.* They fast on Mondays and Tuesdays; you should fast on Wednesdays and Fridays. And do not *pray as the hypocrites do,* but pray as the Lord has commanded in the Gospel:

Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the power and the glory for evermore.

Say this prayer three times a day.

9. Regarding the Eucharist. Give thanks as follows: First, concerning the cup:

“We give Thee thanks, Our Father,
for the Holy Vine of David Thy servant,
which Thou hast made known to us
through Jesus, Thy Servant.”

“To Thee be the glory for evermore.”

Next, concerning the broken bread:

“We give Thee thanks, Our Father,
for the life and knowledge
which Thou hast made known to us
through Jesus, Thy Servant.”

“To Thee be the glory for evermore.”

“As this broken bread was scattered over the hills
and then, when gathered, became one mass,
so may Thy Church be gathered
from the ends of the earth into Thy Kingdom.”

“For Thine is the glory and the power
through Jesus Christ for evermore.”

Let no one eat and drink of your Eucharist but those baptized in the name of the Lord; to this, too, the saying of the Lord is applicable: *Do not give to dogs what is sacred.*

10. After you have taken your fill of food, give thanks as follows:

“We give Thee thanks, O Holy Father,
for Thy holy name
which Thou hast enshrined in our hearts,
and for the knowledge and faith and immortality
which Thou hast made known to us
through Jesus, Thy Servant.”

“To Thee be the glory for evermore.”

“Thou, Lord Almighty,
hast created all things for the sake of Thy name
and hast given food and drink for men to enjoy,
that they may give thanks to Thee;
but to us Thou hast vouchsafed spiritual food and
drink and eternal life
through (Jesus), Thy Servant.”

“Above all, we give Thee thanks
because Thou art mighty.”

“To Thee be the glory for evermore.”

“Remember, O Lord, Thy Church:
 deliver her from all evil,
 perfect her in Thy love,
 and *from the four winds assemble* her, the sanctified,
 in Thy kingdom
 which Thou hast prepared for her.”

“For Thine is the power and the glory for evermore.”

“May Grace come, and this world pass away!”

“*Hosanna to the God of David!*”

“If anyone is holy, let him advance; if anyone is
 not, let him be converted. *Marana tha!*”

“Amen.”

But permit the prophets to give thanks as much as they desire.

11. Accordingly, when an itinerant teaches you all that has just been said, welcome him. But should the teacher himself be a turncoat and teach a different doctrine so as to undermine (this teaching), do not listen to him. But if he promotes holiness and knowledge of the Lord, welcome him as the Lord.

Now, as regards the apostles and prophets, act strictly according to the precept of the Gospel. Upon his arrival every apostle must be welcomed as the Lord; but he must not stay except one day. In case of necessity, however, he may stay the next day also; but if he stays three days, he is a false prophet. At his departure the apostle must receive nothing except food to last till the next night's lodging; but if he asks for money, he is a false prophet.

Moreover, if any prophet speaks in ecstasy, do not test him or entertain any doubts; for *any sin may be forgiven*, but this sin *cannot be forgiven*. However, not everyone speaking in ecstasy is a prophet, except he has the ways of the Lord about him. So by their ways must the true and the false prophet be distinguished. No prophet who in an ecstasy orders the table spread, must partake of it; otherwise, he is a false prophet. Any prophet that teaches the truth, yet does not live up to his teaching, is a false prophet. When a prophet, once approved as genuine, does something by way of symbolizing the Church in an earthly manner, yet does not instruct others to do all that he himself is doing, he is not liable to your judgment, for his judgment rests with God. After all, the Prophets of old acted in the same manner. But if anyone says in ecstasy, “Give me money,” or something else, you must not listen to him. However, should he tell you to give something for others who are in need, let no one condemn him.

12. Anyone *coming in the name of the Lord* must be welcomed; but, after that, test him and find out—you will of course use your discretion either for or

against him. If the arrival is a transient visitor, assist him as much as you can, but he may not stay with you more than two days, or, if necessary, three. But if he intends to settle among you, then, in case he is a craftsman, let him work for his living; if he has no trade or craft, use your judgment in providing for him, so that a follower of Christ will not live idle in your midst. But if he is not satisfied with this arrangement, he is a Christmonger. Be on your guard against such people.

13. Every genuine prophet who is willing to settle among you *is entitled to his support*. Likewise, every genuine teacher is, like *a laborer, entitled to his support*. Therefore, take all first fruits of vintage and harvest, of cattle and sheep, and give these first fruits to the prophets; for they are your high priests. But if you have no prophet, give them to the poor. When you bake bread, take the first loaf and give it according to the commandment. Likewise, when you open a fresh jar of wine or oil, take the first draught and give it to the prophets. Of money and cloth and any other possession, first set aside a portion according to your discretion and give it according to the commandment.

14. On the Lord's own day, assemble in common to break bread and offer thanks; but first confess your sins, so that your sacrifice may be pure. However, no one quarreling with his brother may join your meeting until they are reconciled; your sacrifice must not be defiled. For here we have the saying of the Lord: *In every place and time offer me a pure sacrifice; for I am a mighty King, says the Lord; and my name spreads terror among the nations.*

15. Accordingly, elect for yourselves bishops and deacons, men who are an honor to the Lord, of gentle disposition, not attached to money, honest and well-trying; for they, too, render you the sacred service of the prophets and teachers. Do not, then, despise them; after all, they are your dignitaries together with the prophets and teachers.

Furthermore, correct one another, not in anger, but in composure, as you have it in the Gospel; and when anyone offends his neighbor, let no one speak with him—in fact, he should not even be talked about by you—until he has made amends. As regards your prayers and alms and your whole conduct, do exactly as you have it in the Gospel of Our Lord.

16. *Watch over your life; your lamps must not go out, nor your loins be ungirded; on the contrary, be ready. You do not know the hour in which Our Lord is coming.* Assemble in great numbers, intent upon what concerns your souls. Surely, of no use will your lifelong faith be to you if you are not perfected at the end of time. For in the last days the false prophets and corrupters will come in swarms; the sheep will turn into wolves, and love will turn into hate. When lawlessness is on the increase, men will hate and persecute and betray one another; and then the Deceiver of this world will appear, claiming to be the

Son of God, and give *striking exhibitions of power*; the earth will be given over into his hands, and he will perpetrate outrages such as have never taken place since the world began. Then humankind will undergo the fiery test, and *many will lose their faith* and perish; but *those who stand firm* in their faith will be saved by none other than the Accursed. *And then the proofs of the truth will appear*; the first proof, an opening in the heavens; the next proof, *the sounding of the trumpet*; and the third, the resurrection of the dead—not of all indeed, but in accordance with the saying: *The Lord will come and all the saints with Him. Finally, the world will behold the Lord riding the clouds in the sky.*

St. Ignatius of Antioch

St. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, was the second successor of St. Peter as bishop of that city. The ancient historian Eusebius relates that Ignatius began his episcopate in A.D. 69. He was martyred in Rome in A.D. 107.

The only authentic writings of St. Ignatius are his seven letters, written on his way to martyrdom. Six of these were addressed to the Christian communities of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, Philadelphia, and Smyrna. The seventh letter was sent to St. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna.

While all seven letters are a precious monument in writing of the early Church, the four here chosen are outstanding. St. Ignatius is the first to have used the expression "Catholic Church" (Smyrnaeans 8:2). In his introduction to the Romans, he tells them that the Church of Rome "presides in the chief place of the Roman territory," that it is "presiding in love." He tells the Philadelphians to "partake of one Eucharist, for one is the Flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one the cup to unite us with His blood" (4). And his letter to Polycarp spells out the duties of a bishop—for example, to make sure that those who contemplate marriage "enter the union with the sanction of the bishop; thus their marriage will be acceptable to the Lord and not just gratify lust" (5:2).

Jesus Christ is the central theme of St. Ignatius' thought. But the Christ for whom he is so eager to die is the Christ of history, who "suffered really, as He also really raised Himself from the dead" (Smyrnaeans 2).

Ignatius to the Romans

Ignatius, also called Theophorus, to the Church that has found mercy in the transcendent Majesty of the Most High Father and of Jesus Christ, His only Son; the Church by the will of Him who willed all things that exist, beloved and illuminated through the faith and love of Jesus Christ our God; which also presides in the chief place of the Roman territory; a Church worthy of God, worthy of honor, worthy of felicitation, worthy of praise, worthy of success, worthy of sanctification, and presiding in love, maintaining the law of Christ, and bearer of the Father's name: her do I therefore salute in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father. Heartiest good wishes for unimpaired joy in Jesus Christ our God, to those who are united in flesh and spirit by every commandment of His; who imperturbably enjoy the full measure of God's grace and have every foreign stain filtered out of them.

1. By prayer to God I have obtained the favor of seeing your venerable faces; in fact, I have been pleading for an even greater favor: as a prisoner in Christ Jesus I hope to embrace you, provided it is His will that I should be privileged to reach the goal. An auspicious beginning has certainly been made—if only I obtain the grace of taking due possession of my inheritance without hindrance. The truth is, I am afraid it is your love that will do me wrong. For you, of course, it is easy to achieve your object; but for me it is difficult to win my way to God, should you be wanting in consideration for me.

2. Surely, I do not want you *to court the good pleasure of men*, but to please God, as indeed you do please Him. Yes, I shall never again have such an opportunity of winning my way to God, nor can you, if you remain quiet, ever have your name inscribed on a more glorious achievement. For, if you quietly ignore me, I am the word of God; but if you fall in love with my human nature, I shall, on the contrary, be a mere sound. Grant me no more than that you let my blood be spilled in sacrifice to God, while yet there is an altar ready. You should form a choir of love and sing a song to the Father through Jesus Christ, because God has graciously summoned the bishop of Syria to come from the rising of the sun to the setting. How glorious to be a setting sun—away from the world, on to God! May I rise in His presence!

3. You have never grudged any man. You have taught others. All I want is that the lessons you inculcate in initiating disciples remain in force. Only beg for me strength within and without, that I may be a man not merely of words, but also of resolution. In this way I shall not only be called a Christian, but also prove to be one. For if I prove to be one, I can also be called a true believer even then when I am no longer seen by the world. Nothing that is seen is good. Our God Jesus Christ certainly is the more clearly seen now that He is in the Father. Whenever Christianity is hated by the world, what counts is not power of persuasion, but greatness.

4. I am writing to all the Churches and state emphatically to all that I die willingly for God, provided you do not interfere. I beg you, do not show me unseasonable kindness. Suffer me to be the food of wild beasts, which are the means of my making my way to God. God's wheat I am, and by the teeth of wild beasts I am to be ground that I may prove Christ's pure bread. Better still, coax the wild beasts to become my tomb and to leave no part of my person behind: once I have fallen asleep, I do not wish to be a burden to anyone. Then only shall I be a genuine disciple of Jesus Christ when the world will not see even my body. Petition Christ in my behalf that through these instruments I may prove God's sacrifice. Not like Peter and Paul do I issue any orders to you. They were Apostles, I am a convict; they were free, I am until this moment a slave. But once I have suffered, I shall become a freedman of Jesus Christ, and, united with Him, I shall rise a free man. Just now I learn, being in chains, to desire nothing.

5. All the way from Syria to Rome I am fighting wild beasts, on land and sea, by day and night, chained as I am to ten leopards, that is, a detachment of soldiers, who prove themselves the more malevolent for kindnesses shown them. Yet in the school of this abuse I am more and more trained in discipleship, *although I am not therefore justified*. Oh, may the beasts prepared for me be my joy! And I pray that they may be found to be ready for me. I will even coax them to make short work of me, not as has happened to some whom they were too timid to touch. And should they be unwilling to attack me who am willing, I will myself compel them. Pardon me—I know very well where my advantage lies. At last I am well on the way to being a disciple. May nothing *seen or unseen*, fascinate me, so that I may happily make my way to Jesus Christ! Fire, cross, struggles with wild beasts, wrenching of bones, mangling of limbs, crunching of the whole body, cruel tortures inflicted by the devil—let them come upon me, provided only I make my way to Jesus Christ.

6. Of no use to me will be the farthest reaches of the universe or the kingdoms of this world. *I would rather die* and come to Jesus Christ than be king over the entire earth. Him I seek who died for us; Him I love who rose again because of us. The birth pangs are upon me. Forgive me, brethren; do not

obstruct my coming to life—do not wish me to die; do not make a gift to the world of one who wants to be God's. Beware of seducing me with matter; suffer me to receive pure light. Once arrived there, I shall be a man. Permit me to be an imitator of my suffering God. If anyone holds Him in his heart, let him understand what I am aspiring to; and then let him sympathize with me, knowing in what distress I am.

7. The Prince of this world is resolved to abduct me, and to corrupt my Godward aspirations. Let none of you, therefore, who will then be present, assist him. Rather, side with me, that is, with God. Do not have Jesus Christ on your lips, and the world in your hearts. Give envy no place among you. And should I upon my arrival plead for your intervention, do not listen to me. Rather, give heed to what I write to you. I am writing while still alive, but my yearning is for death. My Love has been crucified, and I am not on fire with the love of earthly things. But there is in me a *Living Water*, which is eloquent and within me says: "Come to the Father." I have no taste for corruptible food or for the delights of this life. *Bread of God* is what I desire; that is, the Flesh of Jesus Christ, *who was of the seed of David*; and for my drink I desire His Blood, that is, incorruptible love.

8. No longer do I wish to live after the manner of men; and this is what will happen if you wish it so. Wish it, that your own wishes, too, may be fulfilled. By this short letter I beseech you: do believe me! Jesus Christ will make it clear to you that I speak the truth—He on whose lips there are no lies, through whom the Father has spoken truthfully. Pray for me that I may succeed. What I write to you does not please the appetites of the flesh, but it pleases the mind of God. If I suffer, you have loved me; if I am rejected, you have hated me!

9. Remember in your prayers the Church in Syria, which now has God for her Shepherd in my stead. Jesus Christ alone will be her Bishop, together with your love. For myself, I am ashamed to be counted as one of her members. I certainly do not deserve to be one, being the least of them and one that came to birth unexpectedly. However, if I but make my way to God, then by His mercy I shall be someone. My spirit salutes you, and so does the affection of the Churches that offered their hospitality to me, not as to a chance visitor, but in deference to Jesus Christ. Why, even those not adjoining my route—the route by which my body travelled—hastened in advance from town after town to meet me.

10. I am sending you this letter from Smyrna through the kindness of the Ephesians, who deserve so much praise. Among many others Crocus is here with me—a dearly beloved name to me! As to the men from Syria who for the glory of God have gone to Rome to meet you there, you have, I trust, made their acquaintance. Please, inform them also that I am near. One and all they are

men of God and will be an honor to you. You will do well to give them every comfort. I am writing this to you on the 24th of August. Farewell to the end in the patient endurance of Jesus Christ.

Ignatius to the Philadelphians

Ignatius, also called Theophorus, to the Church of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, which is at Philadelphia in Asia; a Church which has found mercy and is irrevocably of one mind with God; which unwaveringly exults in the Passion of Our Lord, and firmly believes in His Resurrection through sheer mercy. This Church I salute in the Blood of Jesus Christ. She is a source of everlasting joy, especially when the members are at one with the bishop and his assistants, the presbyters and deacons, that have been appointed in accordance with the wish of Jesus Christ, and whom He has, by His own will, through the operation of His Holy Spirit, confirmed in loyalty.

1. Regarding this bishop I am informed that he holds the supreme office in the community not by his own efforts, or by men's doing, or for personal glory. No, he holds it by the love of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I am charmed with his sweetness of manner. He accomplishes more by his silence than others that talk to no purpose. No wonder; he is as perfectly in accord with the commandments as strings are with a harp. With all my heart, therefore, I laud his disposition to please God, a disposition virtuous and perfect, as I am very well aware; his unshaken constancy, too, and his passionless temper, modelled on the transcendent gentleness of the living God.

2. *Being born, then, of the light of truth, shun division and bad doctrines.* Where the shepherd is, there you, being sheep, must follow. For, many wolves there are, apparently worthy of confidence, who with the bait of baneful pleasure seek to capture the runners in God's race; but if you stand united, they will have no success.

3. Avoid the noxious weeds. Their gardener is not Jesus Christ, because they are not the planting of the Father. Not that I found any division in your midst; but I did find that there had been a purge. Surely, all those that belong to God and Jesus Christ are the very ones that side with the bishop; and all those that may yet change their mind and return to the unity of the Church, will likewise belong to God, and thus lead a life acceptable to Jesus Christ. *Do not be deceived, my brethren: if a man runs after a schismatic, he will not inherit the Kingdom of God; if a man chooses to be a dissenter, he severs all connection with the Passion.*

4. Take care, then, to partake of one Eucharist; for, one is the Flesh of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and one the cup to unite us with His Blood, and one altar, just as there is one bishop assisted by the presbytery and the deacons, my fellow servants. Thus you will conform in all your actions to the will of God.

5. My brethren, my love for you overflows all bounds, and it is my supreme delight to provide you with safeguards, though it is really not I that do it, but Jesus Christ. Being in chains for His sake, I am all the more apprehensive, since I am not yet perfected. But then, your prayer will make me perfect in the sight of God, so that I may win the lot which, through mercy, has fallen to me. I take refuge in the Gospel, which to me is Jesus in the flesh, and in the Apostles, as represented by the presbytery of the Church. But let us also cherish the Prophets, because they, for their part, foreshadowed the Gospel; and they hoped in Him and waited for Him and were saved by their belief in Him; for thus they were one with Jesus Christ. O those lovable and wonderful saints! Their merits are attested by Jesus Christ, and their message is part and parcel of the Gospel of our common hope.

6. But should anyone expound Judaism, do not listen to him. It is preferable, surely, to listen to a circumcised man preaching Christianity than to an uncircumcised man preaching Judaism. But if neither of them preaches Jesus Christ, they are to me tombstones and graves of the dead, on which only the names of the dead are inscribed. Shun, then, the base artifices and snares of the Prince of this world, for fear you may be harassed by his scheming and grow weak in your love. Rather, come together, all of you, with undivided heart. I thank my God that I have a good conscience as concerning you, and that no one has occasion to boast that I was a burden to anyone either secretly or openly, in great matters or in small. But I also pray for all those in whose midst I spoke, that they may not find in my words any testimony against them.

7. For, even though some were willing enough to lead my human spirit into error, yet the Spirit is not led into error, since He proceeds from God. Indeed, *He knows where He comes from and whither He goes*, and lays bare what is secret. I cried out, while in your midst, and said in a ringing voice—God's voice: "Give heed to the bishop and to the presbytery and to the deacons." Some, however, suspected I was saying this because I had previous knowledge of the division caused by some; but He for whose sake I am in chains is my witness, that I had not learned it from any human source. No, it was the Spirit who kept preaching in these words: "Apart from the bishop do nothing; preserve your persons as shrines of God; cherish unity, shun divisions; do as Jesus Christ did, for He, too, did as the Father did."

8. I was doing my part, therefore, acting as a man trained to cherish unity. Where there is division and passion, there is no place for God. Now, the Lord

forgives all if they change their mind and by this change of mind return to union with God and the council of the bishop. I trust in the grace of Jesus Christ, who will free you from all enslavement. I exhort you never to act in a spirit of factiousness, but according to what you learnt in the school of Christ. When I heard some say, "Unless I find it in the official records—in the Gospel I do not believe"; and when I answered them, "It is in the Scriptures," they retorted: "That is just the point at issue." But to me the official record is Jesus Christ; the inviolable record is His Cross and His death and His Resurrection and the faith of which He is the Author. These are the things which, thanks to your prayer, I want to be my justification.

9. Good, too, are priests; but better is the High Priest who was entrusted with the Holy of Holies, who alone was entrusted with the hidden designs of God. He is *the door* of the Father, through which enter Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and the Prophets and the Apostles and the Church. All these are means of being united with God. But the Gospel contains something special—the Advent of the Savior Our Lord Jesus Christ, His Passion and His Resurrection. The beloved Prophets announced His coming, whereas the Gospel is the imperishable fulfillment. All things alike are good, provided your faith is rooted in love.

10. Since it was reported to me that—thanks to your prayer and kindly interest, inspired by Jesus Christ—the Church at Antioch in Syria is at peace, it is proper that you, as a church of God, should appoint a deacon to go there as God's ambassador, and congratulate the people in a public meeting, and give glory to the Name. Blessed in Jesus Christ is he who is to discharge this office; and you, too, will reap glory. If only you are determined, it is not impossible to do this for God's name, just as the neighboring Churches have, some of them, delegated bishops—others, presbyters and deacons.

11. Now, as to Philo, the deacon from Cilicia, a man of attested merit, who even now assists me in the ministry of the word of God together with Rheus Agathopus, an exquisite character, who has been accompanying me from Syria after turning his back upon this life—well, both these men testify (and I, too, thank God on your behalf) that you received them kindly. May the Lord do so to you! As for those who treated them with disrespect, may they be redeemed by the grace of Jesus Christ! In their love the brethren of Troas wish to be remembered. It is from here that I send this letter through the kindness of Burrus, who, as a testimonial of honor, was sent by the Ephesians and Smyrnaeans to accompany me. These men will be honored by the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom they hope with body and soul and spirit and faith and love and concord. Farewell in Jesus Christ, *our common Hope*.

Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans

Ignatius, also called Theophorus, to the Church of God the Father and the beloved Jesus Christ; a Church mercifully endowed with every gift; overflowing with faith and love; lacking in no gift; radiant with God's splendor, and fruitful mother of saints. To the Church at Smyrna in Asia I send best wishes for irrepugnableness of sentiment and loyalty to the word of God.

1. I extol Jesus Christ, the God who has granted you such wisdom. For I have observed that you are thoroughly trained in unshaken faith, being nailed, as it were, to the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ both in body and in soul, and that you are well established in love through the Blood of Christ and firmly believe in Our Lord: He is really *of the line of David according to the flesh*, and the Son of God by the will and power of God; was really born of a virgin, and baptized by John *in order to comply with every ordinance*. Under Pontius Pilate and the tetrarch Herod He was really nailed to the cross in the flesh for our sake—of whose fruit we are, in virtue of His most blessed Passion. And thus, through the Resurrection, *He raised a banner* for all times for His saints and faithful followers, whether among the Jews or the Gentiles, that they might be united in a single body, that is, His Church.

2. All these sufferings, assuredly, He underwent for our sake, that we might be saved. And He suffered really, as He also really raised Himself from the dead. It is not as some unbelievers say, who maintain that His suffering was a make-believe. In reality, it is they that are make-believes: and, as their notion, so their end: they will be bodiless and ghost-like shapes!

3. For myself, I know and believe that He was in the flesh even after the Resurrection. And when He came to Peter and Peter's companions, He said to them: "*Here; feel me and see that I am not a bodiless ghost.*" Immediately they touched Him and, through this contact with His Flesh and Spirit, believed. For the same reason they despised death and, in fact, proved stronger than death. Again, after the Resurrection, He ate and drank with them like a being of flesh and blood, though spiritually one with the Father.

4. I am urging these things on you, beloved, although I know that you are of the same mind. I am cautioning you betimes, however, against wild beasts in human form, whom you ought not only not to receive, but, if possible, even

avoid meeting. Only pray for them, if somehow they may change their mind—a difficult thing! But that is in the power of Jesus Christ, our true Life. Surely, if those things were done by Our Lord as a mere make-believe, then I in my chains, too, am a make-believe! Why, moreover, did I surrender myself to death, to fire, to the sword, to wild beasts? Well, to be near the sword is to be near God; to be in the claws of wild beasts is to be in the hands of God. Only let it be done in the name of Jesus Christ! To suffer with Him I endure all things, if He, who became perfect man, gives me the strength.

5. Some disown Him through ignorance, or, rather, were disowned by Him, being advocates of death rather than the truth. They were not convinced by the prophecies or by the Law of Moses; no, not even to this day by the Gospel or the sufferings of our own people; for they entertain the same view of us. Really, what good does anyone do me if he praises me, but blasphemes my Lord by not admitting that He carried living flesh about Him? He who does not admit this, has absolutely disowned Him, and what he carries about him is a corpse. Their names—names of unbelievers they are!—I do not think advisable to write down. In fact, I even wish I did not remember them, until they change their mind concerning the Passion, which is our resurrection.

6. Let no one be deceived! Even the heavenly powers and the angels in their splendor and the principalities, both *visible and invisible*, must either believe in the Blood of Christ, or else face damnation. *Let him grasp it who can.* Let no rank puff up anyone; for faith and love are paramount—the greatest blessings in the world. Observe those who hold erroneous opinions concerning the grace of Jesus Christ which has come to us, and see how they run counter to the mind of God! They concern themselves with neither works of charity, nor widows, nor orphans, nor the distressed, nor those in prison or out of it, nor the hungry or thirsty.

7. From Eucharist and prayer they hold aloof, because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the Flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father in His loving-kindness raised from the dead. And so, those who question *the gift of God* perish in their contentiousness. It would be better for them to have love, so as to share in the resurrection. It is proper, therefore, to avoid associating with such people and not to speak about them either in private or in public, but to study the Prophets attentively and, especially, the Gospel, in which the Passion is revealed to us and the Resurrection shown in its fulfillment. Shun division as the beginning of evil.

8. You must all follow the lead of the bishop, as Jesus Christ followed that of the Father; follow the presbytery as you would the Apostles; reverence the deacons as you would God's commandment. Let no one do anything touching the Church, apart from the bishop. Let that celebration of the Eucharist be

considered valid which is held under the bishop or anyone to whom he has committed it. Where the bishop appears, there let the people be, just as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not permitted without authorization from the bishop either to baptize or to hold an agape; but whatever he approves is also pleasing to God. Thus everything you do will be *proof against danger and valid*.

9. It is consonant with reason, therefore, that we should come to our senses, while we still have time to change our ways and turn to God. It is well to revere God and bishop. He who honors a bishop is honored by God. He who does anything without the knowledge of the bishop worships the devil. May all things, then, be yours in abundance through grace, for you deserve it. You have brought relief to me in every respect, and may Jesus Christ do so to you! Whether I was absent or present, you have shown me love. Your reward is God, to whom you will come if you endure all things for His sake.

10. As to Philo and Rheus Agathopus, who accompanied me in the name of God, it was good of you to give them a warm reception as to servants of Christ God. For their part, they thank the Lord on your behalf, because you offered them every comfort. In no respect—that is certain!—will you be losers. A ransom for you are my life and my chains, which you did not despise and of which you were not ashamed. Neither will Jesus Christ, our consummate hope, be ashamed of you.

11. Your prayer made its way to the Church at Antioch in Syria. Coming from there in chains radiant with divine splendor, I send greetings to all. Not that I deserve to belong to that community, being the least of its members; but by the will (of God) I was granted this favor—no, not because of any conscious deed, but because of the grace of God. Would that this grace were given me in perfection, that through your prayer I may make my way to God! Now, that your own work may be made perfect both on earth and in heaven, it is proper, for the honor of God, that your Church should send a God-empowered delegate to go to Syria and congratulate the people on enjoying peace, having recovered their normal greatness, and having their full status restored to them. It therefore appears to me to be a God-inspired undertaking to send one of your number with a letter for the purpose of joining in the celebration of their God-given tranquillity, and because they have, thanks to your prayer, at last made port. Be perfect, therefore, and devise a perfect method. You need only be willing to do well, and God is ready to assist you.

12. In their affection the brethren at Troas wish to be remembered to you. It is from here that I send this letter through the kindness of Burrus, whom you conjointly with your brethren, the Ephesians, commissioned to accompany me. He has given me every possible comfort. And would that all might imitate him,

for he is a pattern of what a minister of God should be. God's grace will reward him in every way. Greetings to the bishop, that man of God, to the God-minded presbytery, to the deacons my fellow servants, to the whole community, individually and collectively, in the name of Jesus Christ, in His Flesh and Blood, in His Passion and Resurrection, both corporal and spiritual, in unity with God and with you. Grace be to you and mercy and peace and patient endurance forever.

13. Greetings to the families of my brethren, including their wives and children, and to the virgins who are enrolled among the widows. Farewell in the power of the Father! Philo, who is with me, wishes to be remembered to you. Offer my respects to the household of Tavia, and I pray that she may be firmly rooted in faith and love, both carnal and spiritual. Give my regards to Alce, that most dear friend of mine, and to the incomparable Daphnus, and to Eutecnus, and to all the rest by name. Farewell in the grace of God!

Ignatius to Polycarp

Ignatius, also called Theophorus, sends heartiest greetings to Polycarp, who is bishop of the Church of Smyrna, or rather has for his bishop God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. I am so well pleased with your God-mindedness, firmly built, as it were, upon an immovable rock, that I am exceedingly grateful for the privilege I had of seeing your saintly face. May it, please God, be a constant joy to me! I exhort you, clothed as you are with the garment of grace, to speed on your course and exhort all others to attend to their salvation. Do justice to your office with the utmost solicitude, both physical and spiritual. Be concerned about unity, the greatest blessing. Bear with all, just as the Lord does with you. *Have patience with all in charity*, as indeed you do. To prayer give yourself unceasingly; beg for an increase in understanding; watch without letting your spirit flag. Speak to each one singly in imitation of God's way. Bear the infirmities of all, like a master athlete. The greater the toil, the greater the reward.

2. If you love good disciples, you can expect no thanks. Rather, reduce to subjection, by gentleness, the more pestiferous. Not every hurt is healed by the same plaster. Allay fits of fever by means of poultices. *Be wary like a serpent, yet always guileless like a dove*. You consist of body and soul for the reason that you may deal graciously with whatever meets your eye; but pray that what is kept secret may be revealed to you. In this way you will be lacking in nothing and abound in every gift. As a pilot calls on winds and a storm-tossed mariner looks havenward, so the times call on you to win your way to God. As God's athlete, be sober; the stake is immortality and eternal life. Of this you are firmly convinced. For your sake I sacrifice myself—chains and all, which are your delight.

3. Men that seem worthy of confidence, yet teach strange doctrines, must not upset you. Stand firm, like an anvil under the hammer. It is like a great athlete to take blows and yet win the fight. For God's sake above all we must endure everything, so that God, in turn, may endure us. Increase your zeal. Read the signs of the times. Look for Him who is above all time—the Timeless, the Invisible, who for our sake became visible, the Impassible, who became subject to suffering on our account and for our sake endured everything.

4. Widows must not be neglected. After the Lord, you must be their guardian. Nothing must be done without your approval; nor must you do anything without God's approval, as indeed you do not. Be calm. Let meetings be held as frequently as possible. Seek out all by name. Do not treat slaves, male or female, with a haughty air, but neither must they give themselves airs; on the contrary, for the glory of God they should render all the better service so as to obtain a better freedom from God. They should not pine for release at the expense of the community; otherwise, they turn out to be slaves of unruly appetites.

5. Pay no attention to their wily stratagems; and do more preaching on this subject. Tell my sisters to love the Lord and to be content with their husbands in body and soul. In like manner, exhort my brethren in the name of Jesus Christ *to love their wives as the Lord loves the Church*. If anyone is able to remain continent, to the honor of the Flesh of the Lord, let him persistently avoid boasting. The moment he boasts, he is lost, and if he is more highly esteemed than the bishop, he is undone. For those of both sexes who contemplate marriage it is proper to enter the union with the sanction of the bishop; thus their marriage will be acceptable to the Lord and not just gratify lust. Let all things be done to the honor of God.

6. Heed the bishop, that God may heed you, too. My life is a ransom for those who are obedient to the bishop, presbyters, and deacons; and in their company may I obtain my portion! Toil together, wrestle together, run together, suffer together, rest together, rise together, since you are stewards in God's house, members of His household, and His servants. Win the approval of Him whose soldiers you are, from whom you also draw your pay. Let none of you turn deserter. Let your baptism be your armor; your faith, your helmet; your love, your spear; your patient endurance, your panoply. Your deposits should be your works, that you may receive your savings to the exact amount. To sum up: be long-suffering toward one another and gentle, as God is with you. May you be my joy always!

7. Since, as I was informed, the Church at Antioch in Syria enjoys peace through your prayer, I, too, gather fresh courage, carefree and confident in God. If only I win my way to God, for at the resurrection I want to be found your disciple! It is fitting, my dear God-blessed Polycarp, to convene a council invested with all the splendor of God and to appoint someone who is dear to you and untiring in his zeal, one qualified for the part of God's courier; then confer on him the distinction of going to Syria and extolling, for the glory of God, the untiring charity of your community. A Christian is not his own master; his time belongs to God. This is God's work; and it will be yours, too, once you have accomplished it. Yes, I trust in the grace of God that you are

ready for a noble work which concerns God. Knowing your intense zeal for the truth, I confine my exhortation to these few words.

8. To conclude. Because of my sudden embarkation from Troas for Neapolis—for such is the order of the day—I cannot personally write to all the Churches. Therefore, God-minded as you are, you will please write to the principal Churches and tell them to do the same thing: those that can afford it should send messengers; the rest should send letters through the kindness of your personal delegates. You are qualified for this task. In this way you all will reap honor from a work destined to live forever. Remember me to all by name, especially to the widow of Epitropus, with her whole family and those of her children. Remember me to my dear Attalus. Remember me to the man who will have the honor of going to Syria. God's grace will forever be with him, as also with Polycarp who sends him. I say good-bye to you all forever in Jesus Christ our God, through whom I wish you to be united with God and under His watchful eye. Farewell in the Lord!

St. Cyprian

St. Cyprian was a pagan rhetorician who converted to Christianity in A.D. 246 and two years later was elected bishop of Carthage in North Africa. A few months after he became bishop, a severe persecution of the Christians began under the emperor Decius. Cyprian was driven into exile, from which he ruled his diocese by correspondence. He returned to Carthage in 251, but in the meantime many Christians had denied their faith under pressure, and then wished to be reconciled.

It was in this context that Cyprian wrote his famous treatise on the unity of the Church, which follows. The basic purpose of the treatise was to prove that the unity of the universal Church, founded on Peter, was incompatible with a competitive hierarchy. What happened was that some bishops had become rigorists in their demands for repentance of those who had apostatized during persecution, even to requiring lifelong excommunication or rebaptism. One of these rigorists became the antipope Novatian.

Cyprian wrote The Unity of the Catholic Church in A.D. 251. It is filled with quotable passages, including the statement that "You cannot have God for your Father if you have not the Church for your mother" (6). Two versions of Chapter 4 have come down to us. Both are authentic. The version which lays special stress on the privilege of Peter was probably the one that Cyprian sent to Rome, to defend the unity of the Church against the Novatian schismatics.

St. Cyprian was martyred for the faith in A.D. 258, after he gave himself up to the persecutors under Valerian. His name is commemorated in the Roman Canon of the Mass.

The Unity of the Catholic Church

The devil's wiles must be unmasked and overcome by obedience to Christ's commands (1–2).

1. Our Lord solemnly warns us: *You are the salt of the earth*, and bids us in our love of good to be not only simple but prudent as well. Accordingly, dearest brethren, what else ought we to do but be on our guard and watch vigilantly, in order to know the snares of our crafty foe and to avoid them? Otherwise, after putting on Christ who is the Wisdom of God the Father, we may be found to have failed in wisdom for the care of our souls. It is not persecution alone that we ought to fear, nor those forces that in open warfare range abroad to overthrow and defeat the servants of God. It is easy enough to be on one's guard when the danger is obvious; one can stir up one's courage for the fight when the Enemy shows himself in his true colours. There is more need to fear and beware of the Enemy when he creeps up secretly, when he beguiles us by a show of peace and steals forward by those hidden approaches which have earned him the name of the 'Serpent.' Such is ever his craft: lurking in the dark, he ensnares men by trickery. That was how at the very beginning of the world he deceived and by lying words of flattery beguiled the unguarded credulity of a simple soul; that was how he tried to tempt Our Lord Himself, approaching Him in disguise, as though he could once more creep upon his victim and deceive Him. But he was recognized and beaten back, and he was defeated precisely through being detected and unmasked.

2. Here we are given an example how to break company with the 'old man,' how to follow in the steps of Christ to victory, so that we may not carelessly stumble again into the snare of death, but being alive to the danger, hold fast to the immortality given us. And how can we hold fast to immortality unless we observe those commandments of Christ by which death is defeated and conquered? He Himself assures us: *If thou wilt attain to life, keep the commandments*; and again: *If ye do what I command you, I call you no longer servants but friends*. He says that it is those who so act that are strong and firm; it is they that are founded in massive security upon a rock, they that are established in unshakable solidity, proof against all the storms and hurricanes of the world. *Him that heareth my words and doeth them*, He says, *I will liken to the wise man who built his house upon the rock. The rain fell, the floods rose, the*

winds came and they crashed against that house: but it fell not. For it was founded upon the rock.

We must therefore carry out His words: whatsoever He taught and did, that must we learn and do ourselves. Indeed how can a man say he believes in Christ if he does not do what Christ commanded him to do? Or how shall a man who when under command will not keep faith, hope to receive the reward of faith? He who does not keep to the true way of salvation will inevitably falter and stray; caught up by some gust of error, he will be tossed about like windswept dust; walk as he may, he will make no advance towards his salvation.

In face of heresy and schism, we must recognize that Christ founded the Church on Peter. Expansion no detriment to oneness (3–5).

3. However, we must not only beware of all that is obvious and unmistakable, but also of all that can deceive by fraud and cunning. What could be more clever and cunning than the Enemy's moves after being unmasked and worsted by Christ's coming? Light had come to the gentiles and the lamp of salvation was shining for the deliverance of mankind, so that the deaf began to hearken to the Spirit's call of grace, the blind to open their eyes upon the Lord, the sick to recover their health unto eternity, the lame to make speed to the Church, and the dumb to raise their voice aloud in prayer. Thereupon the Enemy, seeing his idols abandoned and his temples and haunts deserted by the ever growing numbers of the faithful, devised a fresh deceit, using the Christian name itself to mislead the unwary. He invented heresies and schisms so as to undermine the faith, to corrupt the truth, to sunder our unity. Those whom he has failed to keep in the blindness of their old ways he beguiles, and leads them up a new road of illusion. He snatches away people from within the Church herself, and while they think that coming close to the light they have now done with the night of the world, he plunges them unexpectedly into darkness of another kind. They still call themselves Christians after abandoning the Gospel of Christ and the observance of His law; though walking in darkness they think they still enjoy the light. The Enemy cajoles and deceives them; as the Apostle says, he transforms himself into an angel of light, and primes his servants to act as the servants of justice, to call the night day, and damnation salvation, to teach recklessness under the pretext of hope, disbelief under colour of the faith, Antichrist under the name of Christ, so that by lies that have all the appearance of truth, they undermine the truth with trickery. All this has come about, dearest brethren, because men do not go back to the origin of (the Christian) realities, because they do not look for their source, nor keep to the teaching of their heavenly Master.

4. But if anyone considers those things carefully, he will need no long discourse or arguments. The proof is simple and convincing, being summed up in a

matter of fact. The Lord says to Peter: *I say to thee, that thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not overcome it. I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And what thou shalt bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven.*

(1st edition)

And He says to him again after the resurrection: *Feed my sheep.* It is on him that He builds the Church, and to him that He entrusts the sheep to feed. And although He assigns a like power to all the Apostles, yet He founded a single Chair, thus establishing by His own authority the source and hallmark of the (Church's) oneness. No doubt the others were all that Peter was, but a primacy is given to Peter, and it is (thus) made clear that there is but one Church and one Chair. So too, even if they are all shepherds, we are shown but one flock which is to be fed by all the Apostles in common accord. If a man does not hold fast to this oneness of Peter, does he imagine that he still holds the faith? If he deserts the Chair of Peter upon whom the Church was built, has he still confidence that he is in the Church?

(2nd edition)

It is on one man that He builds the Church, and although He assigns a like power to all the Apostles after His resurrection, saying: *As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. . . . Receive ye the Holy Spirit: if you forgive any man his sins, they shall be forgiven him; if you retain any man's, they shall be retained,* yet, in order that the oneness might be unmistakable, He established by His own authority a source for that oneness having its origin in one man alone. No doubt the other Apostles were all that Peter was, endowed with equal dignity and power, but the start comes from him alone, in order to show that the Church of Christ is unique. Indeed this oneness of the Church is figured in the Canticle of Canticles when the Holy Spirit, speaking in Our Lord's name, says: *One is my dove, my perfect one: to her mother she is the only one, the darling of her womb.* If a man does not hold fast to this oneness of the Church, does he imagine that he still holds the faith? If he resists and withstands the Church, has he still confidence that he is in the Church, when the blessed Apostle Paul gives us this very teaching and points to the mystery of Oneness saying: *One body and one Spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God?*

5. Now this oneness we must hold to firmly and insist on—especially we who are bishops and exercise author-

ity in the Church—so as to demonstrate that the episcopal power is one and undivided too. Let none mislead the brethren with a lie, let none corrupt the true content of the faith by a faithless perversion of the truth.

The authority of the bishops forms a unity of which each holds his part in its totality. And the Church forms a unity, however far she spreads and multiplies by the progeny of her fecundity; just as the sun's rays are many, yet the light is one, and a tree's branches are many, yet the strength deriving from its sturdy root is one. So too, though many streams flow from a single spring, though its multiplicity seems scattered abroad by the copiousness of its welling waters, yet their oneness abides by reason of their starting point. Cut off one of the sun's rays—the unity of that body permits no (such) division of its light; break off a branch from the tree, it can bud no more; dam off a stream from its source, it dries up below the cut. So too Our Lord's Church is radiant with light and pours her rays over the whole world; but it is one and the same light which is spread everywhere, and the unity of her body suffers no division. She spreads her branches in generous growth over all the earth, she extends her abundant streams ever further; yet one is the head-spring, one the source, one the mother who is prolific in her offspring, generation after generation: of her womb are we born, of her milk are we fed, of her Spirit our souls draw their life-breath.

Scriptural types of the oneness and indivisibility of the Church (6–9).

6. The spouse of Christ cannot be defiled, she is inviolate and chaste; she knows one home alone, in all modesty she keeps faithfully to one only couch. It is she who rescues us for God, she who seals for the kingdom the sons whom she has borne. Whoever breaks with the Church and enters on an adulterous union, cuts himself off from the promises made to the Church; and he who has turned his back on the Church of Christ shall not come to the rewards of Christ: he is an alien, a worldling, an enemy. You cannot have God for your Father if you have not the Church for your mother. If there was escape for anyone who was outside the ark of Noe, there is escape too for one who is found to be outside the Church. Our Lord warns us when He says: *He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth.* Whoever breaks the peace and harmony of Christ acts against Christ; whoever gathers elsewhere than in the Church, scatters the Church of Christ. Our Lord says: *I and the Father are One;* and again, of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit it is written: *And the three are One.* Does anyone think then that this oneness, which derives from the stability of God and is welded together after the celestial pattern, can be sundered in the Church and divided by the clash of discordant wills? If a man

does not keep this unity, he is not keeping the law of God; he has lost his faith about Father and Son, he has lost his life and his soul.

7. This holy mystery of oneness, this unbreakable bond of close-knit harmony is portrayed in the Gospel by Our Lord Jesus Christ's coat, which was not divided or cut at all, but when they drew lots for the vesture of Christ to see which of them should put on Christ, it was the whole coat that was won, the garment was acquired unspoiled and undivided. These are the words of Holy Scripture: *Now as to His coat, because it was from the upper part woven throughout without a seam, they said to one another: Let us not divide it, but let us cast lots for it, whose it shall be.* The "oneness" with which He was clothed came "from the upper part," that is, from His Father in heaven, and could in no way be divided by any who came to acquire it: it retained its well-knit wholeness indivisibly. That man cannot possess the garment of Christ who rends and divides the Church of Christ. For this reason, by contrast, when Solomon was dying and his kingdom and people were to be divided, Achias the prophet on meeting king Jeroboam in the field tore his own garment into twelve pieces saying: *Take to thyself ten pieces, for thus saith the Lord: "Behold I rend the kingdom of Solomon and I will give thee ten sceptres, and two sceptres shall be his for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem the city which I have chosen, . . . that I may place there my name."* When the twelve tribes of Israel were being divided, Achias the prophet divided his own garment. But because Christ's people cannot be divided, His coat, woven compactly as it was throughout, is not divided by those who acquire it; indivisible, woven all of a piece, compact, it shows that we, who have put on Christ, form a people knit together in harmony. By the sacred symbolism of His garment was proclaimed the oneness of the Church.

8. Can anyone then be so criminal and faithless, so mad in his passion for quarrelling, as to believe it possible that the oneness of God, the garment of the Lord, the Church of Christ should be divided, or dare to divide it himself? Christ admonishes and teaches us in His Gospel: *And they shall be one flock and one shepherd.* And does anyone think that in any one place there can be more than one shepherd or more than one flock? The Apostle Paul too commends this same oneness when he begs and exhorts us: *I beseech you brethren by the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no schisms among you; but that you be knit together, having the same mind and the same judgment.* And again he says: *Supporting one another with love, striving to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* Do you think a man can hold his own or survive, when he leaves the Church and sets up a new place and a separate home for himself? Whereas it was said to Rahab, in whom the Church was prefigured: *Gather to thyself in thy house thy father and thy mother and thy brethren and all thy father's household, and whosoever shall pass outside through the door of thy house, his blood shall be on his own head.* So too the sacred meaning of the Pasch lies

essentially in the fact, laid down in Exodus, that the lamb—slain as a type of Christ—should be eaten in one single home. God says the words: *In one house shall it be eaten, ye shall not cast its flesh outside the house.* The flesh of Christ and the Lord's sacred body cannot be cast outside, nor have believers any other home but the one Church. This home, this dwelling of concord is indicated and foretold by the Holy Spirit when He says in the Psalms: *God who maketh those who are of one mind to dwell in a house.* In God's house, in the Church of Christ do those of one mind dwell, there they abide in concord and simplicity.

9. That is also the reason why the Holy Spirit comes in the form of a dove: it is a simple joyous creature, not bitter with gall, not biting savagely, without vicious tearing claws; it loves to dwell with humankind, it keeps to one house for assembling; when they mate they hatch their young together, when they fly anywhere they keep their formation, the resorts they live in are shared in common, by their billing too they pay tribute to concord and peace, in all things they fulfill the law of unanimity. The same is the simplicity of the Church which we need to learn, this is the charity we must acquire, that we may imitate the doves in our love for the brethren, and rival lambs and sheep in their meekness and gentleness. How can a Christian breast harbour the fierceness of wolves and the madness of dogs and the deadly venom of snakes and the blood-lust of wild beasts? It is a blessing when such men break away from the Church: it prevents their preying upon the doves and sheep of Christ with their savage and poisonous influence. It is impossible to join and combine the bitter with the sweet, darkness with the light, rain with fair weather, war with peace; nor with fertility, sterility; with springs of water, aridity; with calm, the storm.

Let no one think that good men can leave the Church; it is not the grain that the wind carries away, nor the solidly rooted tree that the storm blows down: it is the empty chaff that is swept away by the storm, the weakling trees that are overturned by the blast of the whirlwind. On these men fall the curse and the rod of John the Apostle when he says: *They went out from us, but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would have stayed with us.*

Discord and ambition lead to schism. Beware of false prophets (10–11).

10. Heresies have often arisen and still arise because of this, that disgruntled minds will quarrel, or disloyal trouble-makers will not keep the unity. But these things the Lord allows and endures, leaving man's freedom unimpaired, so that when our minds and hearts are tested by the touchstone of truth, the unswerving faith of those who are approved may appear in the clearest light. This is foretold by the Holy Spirit through the Apostle when he says: *There must be also heresies, that those approved may be manifest among you.* Thus are the faithful proved, thus the faithless discovered; thus too even before the day of judgment, already here below, the souls of the just and unjust are distinguished, and the wheat is

separated from the chaff. This explains why certain people, backed by their hot-headed associates, seize authority for themselves without any divine sanction, making themselves into prelates regardless of the rules of appointment, and, having no one to confer the episcopate upon them, assume the title of Bishop on their own authority. In the Psalms the Holy Spirit describes these men as sitting in the chair of pestilence; they are pests and plagues to the faith, snake-tongued deceivers, skilled corruptors of the truth, spewing deadly venom from their poisonous fangs; whose speech spreads like a canker; whose preaching injects a fatal virus in the hearts and breasts of all.

11. Against such men as these the Lord cries out, from these He curbs and recalls His erring people, saying: *Hearken not to the talk of the false prophets, for the visions of their heart deceive them. They speak, but not out of the mouth of the Lord. They say to those who reject the word of the Lord: "You shall have peace"; and to all who walk according to their own desires, and to him who walks in the error of his heart: "No evil shall befall thee." I did not speak to them, and they prophesied of themselves. Had they taken their stand on my support and listened to my words, had they taught them to my people, I should have converted them from their evil thoughts.* It is these same men whom the Lord indicates and censures when He says: *They have forsaken me, the fountain of the water of life, and they have digged out for themselves crumbling cisterns, which cannot hold the water.* Whereas there can be but the one baptism, they think they can baptize; they have abandoned the fountain of life, yet promise the life and grace of the waters of salvation. It is not cleansing that men find there, but soiling; their sins are not washed away but only added to. That "new birth" does not bring forth sons unto God, but to the devil. Born of a lie, they cannot inherit what the truth has promised; begotten by the faithless, they are deprived of the grace of faith. The reward for those 'in peace' can never come to men who have broken the peace of the Lord by the frenzy of dissent.

"Two or three gathered in my name": unity recommended, not sectarianism (12–13).

12. Nor let certain people deceive themselves by a foolish interpretation of Our Lord's words: *Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, I am with them.* Corruptors and false interpreters of the Gospel, they quote the end and ignore what has gone before, repeating part of it and dishonestly suppressing the rest; just as they have cut themselves off from the Church, so they cut up the sense of a single passage. For Our Lord was urging His disciples to unanimity and peace when He said: *I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything whatsoever you shall ask, it shall be done for you by my Father who is in heaven. For wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, I am with them.* — showing that it was not the number but the unanimity of those praying that counted most. *If two of you, He said, agree on earth:* He put unanimity first, He gave the precedence to peace and concord; we must agree together loyally

and sincerely—that was what He taught. But what sort of agreement will a man make with another if he is out of agreement with the body of the Church itself and with the brethren as a whole? How can two or three gather together in Christ's name, if they have obviously cut themselves off from Christ and His Gospel? For it is not we who have left them, but they who have left us, and by setting up conventicles in opposition and thus creating new sects and schisms, they have cut themselves off from the source and origin of (the Christian) realities.

No, Our Lord is speaking of His Church; He is telling those who are in the Church, that if they are of one mind, if, as He commanded and bade, even two or three gather and pray in unison, they shall, though but two or three, obtain from God's majesty what they ask for. *Wherever two or three shall be*, He says, *I am with them*, that is, with those who are without guile and peaceable, with those who fear God and obey His commands. He said that He would be with a mere "two or three," just as once He was with the three youths in the fiery furnace, and because they were guileless before God and persevered in harmony with one another, He refreshed them with a dew-laden breeze in the midst of the encircling flames. So too was He with His two imprisoned Apostles because they were guileless and in harmony; He Himself opened the bars of their prison and set His faithful preachers in the market place once more, to announce the word to the crowds. Therefore when He lays down in His commands: *Wherever two or three shall be, I am with them*, He does not mean to take men away from the Church which He founded and built Himself, but He condemns the discord of the faithless; and with His own lips He commends concord to His faithful, by making clear that He is with two or three who pray in harmony, rather than with any number of dissenters, and that more can be obtained by the united prayers of a few than by the petitioning of many who are in disagreement.

13. For the same reason, when He was legislating for prayer, He added: *And when you shall stand for prayer, forgive if you have aught against any man, that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your sins*. And so, if a man comes to the sacrifice with strife in his heart, He calls him back from the altar and bids him be reconciled to his brother first, and then in peace of soul return and make his offering to God. For neither did God have respect to the gifts of Cain: such a man could not have God at peace with him when he was torn with jealousy towards his brother and at war with him. What sort of peace then do the enemies of the brethren promise themselves? What sort of sacrifice do they think they offer as opponents of the priests? Do they think that Christ is with them in their gatherings, when those gatherings are outside the Church of Christ?

To leave the Church, a breach of charity—thereafter even martyrdom unavailing for salvation (14–15).

14. Nay, though they should suffer death for the confession of the Name, the guilt of such men is not removed even by their blood; the grievous irremissible sin of schism is not purged even by martyrdom. No martyr can be who is not in the Church: the kingdom shall be closed to him who has deserted her who is destined to be its queen. Peace is what Christ gave us; He bade us be united in heart and mind: He enjoined on us to keep intact and unimpaired the pledges of our love and charity; no one can claim the martyr's name who has broken off his love for the brethren. This is the Apostle Paul's teaching and witness: *And if I should have faith so that I could remove mountains and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods in food, and if I should deliver my body to be burned and have not charity, I profit nothing. Charity is great-hearted, charity is kind, charity envieth not, is not puffed up, is not provoked to anger, dealeth not perversely, thinketh no evil, loveth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, beareth all things. Charity shall never fall away.*

"Never," he says, "shall charity fall away." It will persist in the kingdom for ever, it will continue for all eternity in the close union of the brethren together. Disunion cannot lead to the kingdom of heaven; and Christ, who said: *This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you*, cannot reward him who has violated the love of Christ by disloyal dissension. He who has not charity, has not God. Hear the voice of the blessed Apostle John: *God, he says, is love; and he that abideth in God abideth in love, and God abideth in him.* Those who have refused to be of one mind in the Church of God cannot therefore be abiding with God. Though they be cast in the fire and burnt in the flames, though they be exposed to the wild beasts and lay down their lives, this will not win them the crown of faith, but will be the penalty for their unfaithfulness; not the glorious consummation of holy valour, but an end put to recklessness. Such a man may be put to death; crowned he cannot be. If he calls himself a Christian, the devil too often calls himself the Christ, and is a liar; Our Lord Himself foretelling it: *Many will come in my name, saying, "I am Christ," and will deceive many.* Just as the devil is not Christ though he tricks people by the name, so a man cannot be taken for a Christian who does not abide in Christ's Gospel and in the true faith.

15. No doubt, prophesying and casting out devils and working great miracles on earth are sublime and wonderful achievements, and yet not everyone who does them comes to the kingdom of heaven, unless he keeps carefully to the straight path of justice. So does Our Lord announce it: *Many will say to me in that day: "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name and turned out devils in Thy name and done great miracles in Thy name?" And then I will say to them: "I never knew you. Begone from me, you that work iniquity!"* Justice of life is needed if

one is to conciliate God who is our Judge; His commands and warnings must be obeyed if our merits are to receive their reward. Our Lord in the Gospel, when giving us in summary the direction for our hope and faith, said: *The Lord thy God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole strength.* This comes first, and the second is like to it: *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets. Unity and love together He taught with the weight of His authority; He embraced all the prophets and the law in the two commandments. But what unity is maintained, what love practised or even imagined by one who, mad with the frenzy of discord, splits the Church, destroys the faith, disturbs the peace, casts charity to the winds, desecrates the Sacrament?

Revolts against the priests of God: His judgments in the Old Testament. Such rebels worse than the lapsed (16–19).

16. This evil, my faithful brethren, first showed itself long since, but now the disastrous malignity of the same evil has increased, and the poisonous bane of obstinate heresies and schisms is growing and multiplying, for so it was to be in the decline of the world, as the Holy Spirit foretold and warned us through the Apostle: *In the last days, he says, shall there be troublous times. Men shall be self-centred, proud, haughty, covetous, blasphemers; heedless of their parents' word, ungrateful, wicked, without affection, covenant-breakers, informers, incontinent, unmerciful, no lovers of good, traitors, insolent, puffed up with conceit, lovers of pleasures more than of God, presenting a façade of religion, but denying the power thereof. . . . Of this sort are those who creep into houses and ravish silly women laden with sins, who are led away with diverse desires, ever learning and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth. And as James and Mambres resisted Moses, so these also resist the truth. . . . but they shall not proceed any further. For their ineptitude shall be manifest to all men, as theirs also was.* Whatever was foretold is being realized, and as the end of the world approaches, men and times alike are being tested by it. As the Enemy rages more and more, error misleads, conceit puffs up, jealousy inflames, covetousness blinds, wickedness depraves, pride inflates, discord exacerbates, anger begets recklessness.

17. We must not, however, be troubled or dismayed by the gross and sudden faithlessness of many; rather should it strengthen our own faith because of the fulfilment of its prediction. As some people have begun to turn out like this because it was foretold, so must the rest of the brethren take heed against them, because this too was predicted when Our Lord instructed us: *But do ye take heed: behold I have foretold you all things.* I implore you to avoid men of that stamp, and to protect your persons, nay your very ears, from their baleful conversation as from some deadly plague, according to the Scripture: *Hedge in thy ears with thorns, and hear not a wicked tongue;* and again: *Wicked conversations*

corrupt good characters. Our Lord's teaching warns us to withdraw from such men: *They are blind leaders of the blind, He says. The blind man leading the blind, they will both fall into the pit.* Whoever is separated from the Church must be avoided and fled from; such a man is wrong-headed, he is a sinner and self-condemned. Does a man think he is with Christ when he acts in opposition to the bishops of Christ, when he cuts himself off from the society of His clergy and people? He is bearing arms against the Church, he is waging war upon God's institutions. An enemy of the altar, a rebel against the sacrifice of Christ; giving up faith for perfidy, religion for sacrilege; an unruly servant, an undutiful son and hostile brother, despising the bishops and deserting the priests of God, he presumes to set up a new altar, to raise unauthorized voices in a rival liturgy, to profane the reality of the divine Victim by pseudo-sacrifices, forgetting that whoever opposes God's institution is punished for his reckless insolence by divine retribution.

18. Thus it was that Core, Dathan, and Abiron, who wanted to establish their claim to sacrifice in opposition to Moses and to Aaron the priest, immediately paid the penalty for their attempt. The solid earth split and yawned in a deep abyss; as the ground parted, the gap swallowed them alive where they stood. Not only were the principal agents struck by the fury of God's anger, but their two hundred and fifty associates and followers who had joined them in the same wild outrage, were summarily punished: they were consumed by the fire that was evoked by the Lord. This was to warn us and show that any attempt made by the wicked deliberately to frustrate the appointment of God, is done against God Himself. Thus it was, too, that when king Ozias, taking up the thurible, insisted on offering sacrifice contrary to God's law, and refused to desist or obey Azarias the priest when he tried to restrain him, the wrath of God put him to confusion by striking him with the stain of leprosy on his forehead—that part of his body being marked for offending the Lord where those who win the Lord's favour are sealed. And the children of Aaron who placed *strange fire* on the altar, such as the Lord had not commanded, were immediately destroyed in the sight of the Lord by His vengeance.

19. Now these are imitated and followed closely by those men who, disregarding God's teaching, crave for strange doctrines and introduce authorities of human origin; Our Lord rebukes and castigates them in His Gospel: *You reject the commandment of God that you may establish your own tradition.* This crime is a greater one than that which the lapsed, no doubt, have committed; but these, becoming penitents for their crime, are at least calling upon God's mercy by making satisfaction for it to the full. In their case the Church is being sought and appealed to, in the other the Church is repudiated; in the first there may have been a yielding to pressure, in the second the will persists in its guilt; in the first the man who fell hurt only himself, in the second the instigator of heresy

and schism has deceived many by dragging them after him; in the first case harm is done to a single soul, in the second many are imperilled. Manifestly, the former recognizes that he has sinned, and he grieves and sorrows for it, but the latter is not only puffed up with his sin and self-satisfied in his crimes, but he separates the sons from their Mother, entices the sheep from their shepherd, upsets the holy ordinances of God. And whereas the lapsed has only sinned once, the other continues to sin each day. Lastly, the lapsed can by subsequent martyrdom obtain the promises of the kingdom; but the other, if he be out of the Church when put to death, cannot come to the rewards which are prepared for the Church.

Bad example of a few "confessors." Their confession no guarantee. Disowned by their fellows (20–22).

20. Nor should anyone be surprised, dearest brethren, that even from among the confessors certain men should stoop to this, and then that some of them should also commit such grievous, such unspeakable sins. For confession does not make a man immune from the snares of the devil, nor, living in the world as he still does, is he thereby guaranteed permanent security against its temptations and dangers, or against its surprise attacks; otherwise we should never see in confessors the dishonesties, and the rapes, and the adulteries which we now witness to our sorrow and distress in some of them. Whoever the confessor may be, he is not greater nor better than Solomon, nor dearer to God than he; and yet Solomon only retained the favour which the Lord had granted him so long as he walked in the ways of the Lord, but when he departed from the way of the Lord, he also lost the favour of the Lord. That is why it is written: *Hold fast that which thou hast, lest another take thy crown.* For the Lord would never have threatened that the crown would be taken, unless the loss of justice necessarily means that its crown is lost too.

21. Confession is a first step towards glory, not the final crown of merit; it is not the ultimate achievement but a beginning of greatness, and since it is written: *He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved,* whatever comes before the end is only a step in the climb to the heights of salvation, not the goal, which is the conquest of the peak's summit.

He is a confessor, no doubt; but after his confession he is in all the greater danger, because the Adversary has been the more provoked.

He is a confessor: that only calls for the greater loyalty to Our Lord's Gospel, since it was by means of the Gospel that he came to deserve such an honour from Our Lord. *To whom much is given, much is required of him; and on whom the more dignity is bestowed, of him the more service is demanded.* Let none be lost through the example of a confessor; let none learn to be unjust, or arrogant, or unfaithful because of a confessor's behaviour.

He is a confessor: let him be humble and peaceful, let his actions show modesty and self-control, so that, as he is named a confessor of Christ, he may imitate the Christ whom he confesses. For if Christ said: *He that extolleth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*, and if He Himself, the Word and the power and the wisdom of God His Father, was exalted by the Father because He humbled Himself on earth, how can ostentation appeal to Him who not only enjoined on us humility in His law, but was Himself rewarded for His humility by His Father with the most glorious of all names?

He is a confessor of Christ; yes, provided that he does not later cause the majesty and good name of Christ to be blasphemed. Let not the tongue which has confessed Christ be spiteful or mischievous; let it not be clamorous with altercations and quarrels; after its glorious confession let it not hiss with serpent's venom against the brethren and the priests of God. If nevertheless he does afterwards become guilty and odious, if he fritters away his reputation as a confessor by the evil of his ways, if he stains his life with filth and infamy, and if, in consequence, he leaves the Church to which he owes his becoming a confessor, if he breaks up its harmony and unity, and so in place of loyalty to his first faith adopts unfaithfulness, he cannot flatter himself that his confession has predestined him to the reward of glory; on the contrary, it will only increase the retribution that awaits him.

22. For example, Judas was himself one of the Apostles chosen by Our Lord, and yet afterwards Judas betrayed his Lord. But the faith and loyalty of the Apostles was not destroyed because Judas the traitor left their company. So too, now, the holiness and good name of the confessors is not straightway impaired because some of their number have broken faith. The blessed Apostle says in one of his epistles: *For what if some of them have fallen away from the faith? Has their unfaithfulness made the faith of God without effect? God forbid! For God is true, but every man a liar.* The majority of the confessors, and the better ones, stand strong in their faith and true to Our Lord's law and discipline, and, remembering that it was in the Church that by God's goodness the grace was given them, they are not such as to break from the Church's unity. Indeed their faith has acquired the greater lustre by this, that, refusing to join in the unfaithfulness of those who had been united to them by their confession together, they have kept free from an infection of that crime; shining with the bright truth of the Gospel, radiant with Our Lord's own pure and spotless light, the praise which they deserve for maintaining the unity of Christ is as great as the victory which they won in their engagement with the devil.

Ignore the mischief-makers; return to unity, in the peace of Christ (23–24).

23. For my part I hope, dearest brethren, and I urge and press it upon you, that, if possible, not one of the brethren should perish, but that our Mother

should have the happiness of clasping to her bosom all our people in one like-minded body. But if some of the leaders of schism who are responsible for our divisions persist in their blind and obstinate folly, if advice for their own good fails to bring them back to the way of salvation, let the rest of you—whether you followed them in sheer simplicity and under misapprehension, or were led astray by their deceitful cunning—break away from their ensnaring falsehood, set yourselves free from the errors into which you have strayed, find once more the straight path of the way to heaven. Hear the Apostle's message: *We bid you in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ to withdraw from all the brethren who walk disorderly and not according to the tradition which they have received from us.* And again he says: *Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of that cometh the anger of God upon the children of insolence. Be ye not therefore partakers with them.* One must withdraw from those engaged in sin—rather, one must fly from them, lest by joining in their evil course and so taking the wrong road of crime, one should, on leaving the true way, become involved in the same guilt oneself. God is one, and Christ is one, and His Church is one; one is the faith, and one the people cemented together by harmony into the strong unity of a body. That unity cannot be split; that one body cannot be divided by any cleavage of its structure, nor cut up in fragments with its vitals torn apart. Nothing that is separated from the parent stock can ever live or breathe apart; all hope of its salvation is lost.

24. We are admonished by the Holy Spirit: *Who is the man that desireth life, and loveth to see most blessed days? Restrain thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking deceitfully. Turn away from evil and do good, seek after peace and pursue it.* A son of peace must seek after peace and pursue it; whoever knows and loves the bond of charity, must restrain his tongue from the evil of dissension. Among the divine commands and instructions for salvation which Our Lord gave on the very eve of His passion He included this: *Peace I commit to you, my peace I give you.* This is the inheritance which He has left us: with the maintenance of peace, He was assuring us of all the gifts and rewards which He had promised. If we are the heirs of Christ, let us abide in the peace of Christ; if we are the sons of God, we must be lovers of peace. *Blessed are the peacemakers,* He said, *for they shall be called the sons of God.* Sons of God must be makers of peace, gentle of heart, guileless of tongue, harmonious of sentiment, sincerely attached to one another by the bond of a common mind.

Imitate the generosity of the apostolic Church; such care for unity a safeguard from the devil (25–27).

25. This common mind prevailed once, in the time of the Apostles; this was the spirit in which the new community of the believers obeyed Our Lord's command and maintained charity with one another. The Scriptures are witness

to it: *But the crowd of those who had come to believe acted with one mind and soul. And again: They were all persevering with one mind in prayer with the women and Mary who had been the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.* And that was the reason why their prayers were efficacious, that was why they could be confident of obtaining whatever they asked of God's mercy.

26. But amongst us, that unity of mind has weakened in proportion as the generosity of our charity has crumbled away. In those days, they would sell their houses and estates and lay up to themselves treasure in heaven by giving the money to the Apostles for distribution to those in need. But now, we do not even give tithes on our patrimony, and whereas Our Lord tells us to sell, we buy instead and accumulate. To such an extent has active faith withered among us, to such an extent have our people lost their old steadfastness in belief. That is why Our Lord says in His Gospel, with an eye on our times: *The Son of man, when He cometh, shall He find, think you, faith on earth?* We see what He foretold happening before our eyes. As to fear of God, or sense of justice, or charity, or good works—faith inspires us to none of them. No one thinks of the fears that the future holds in store: the day of the Lord and the wrath of God, the punishments that await unbelievers, the eternal torments appointed for the betrayers of their faith—no one gives them a thought. Whatever a believing conscience should fear, our conscience, because it no longer believes, fears not at all. If only it believed, it would take heed; if it took heed, it would escape.

27. Let us do our utmost, dearest brethren, to rouse ourselves, and breaking off the sleep of our past inertia, give our minds to the observance and fulfilment of Our Lord's commands. Let us be such as He told us to be: *Let your loins be girt and your lamps burning, and you yourselves like to men who wait for their lord when he shall come from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh they may open to him. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching.* Our loins must be girt, lest when the day comes for the campaign, it find us encumbered with trappings. Let our light shine brightly in good works, so that it may lead us from the darkness of this world into the splendor of eternal light. Let us await the sudden coming of Our Lord, ever attentive and on the alert, so that when He shall knock, our faith may be watching, ready to receive from Our Lord the reward of its vigil. Were but these commands obeyed, were but these warnings and precepts observed—it is impossible that we should be tricked and overcome by the devil in our sleep; from being watchful servants we shall, under Christ's lordship, come to reign ourselves.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (315–386) was bishop of that diocese from about A.D. 349. He was banished several times for his defense of the Council of Nicea. His most important work was the Catecheses, or religious instructions, in twenty-four lessons. The first eighteen were originally preached during Lent in A.D. 348, and addressed to those preparing for baptism. The rest were preached to the same persons after baptism, and they deal exclusively with the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist. They provide a supplement to the instructions on baptism and penance already given in the first three lessons, and to the methodical explanation of the Creed in lessons four through eighteen. The Catecheses conclude with a moral exhortation.

Over the centuries, the Catecheses have set a pattern for the religious education of the faithful. To this day the book of St. Cyril of Jerusalem is the most celebrated catechism that has come down to us from the early Church.

On the Doctrines

See to it that no man deceive you by philosophy and vain deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elements of the world [and not according to Christ].¹

Vice mimics virtue and cockle works to pass for wheat, which it resembles, though a discriminating palate is not thereby deceived. So the devil “disguises himself as an angel of light,”² not to mount up again where he was before (with a heart as inflexible as an anvil, his will is forever impenitent), but to envelop in blinding mist and the poisonous air of scepticism those leading an angelic life. Many a wolf goes about in sheep’s clothing;³ their fleece is that of sheep, not so their claws and fangs. Clad in the gentle wool, and beguiling the innocent by their appearance, they pour forth from their fangs the deadly poison of impiety. We have need therefore of divine grace, and a sober mind, and eyes that see clearly, lest, eating cockle for wheat, we take hurt out of our ignorance; or, mistaking the wolf for a sheep, we become his prey, or, supposing the baleful devil to be a good angel, we shall be devoured. For, “as a roaring lion, he goes about seeking whom he may devour,” as Scripture says.⁴ This is the reason for the Church’s admonitions; this is the reason for the present instructions and for the lessons that are read.

True religion consists of these two elements: pious doctrines and virtuous actions. Neither does God accept doctrines apart from good works, nor are works, when divorced from godly doctrine, accepted by God. What does it profit a man to be an expert theologian if he is a shameless fornicator; or to be nobly temperate, but an impious blasphemer? The knowledge of doctrines is a precious possession; there is need of a vigilant soul, since many there are who would deceive you by philosophy and vain deceit.⁵ The Greeks, indeed, by their smooth tongue lead men astray, for honey drops from the lips of a harlot.⁶ Those of the Circumcision deceive their disciples by the divine Scripture, which they twist by false interpretations, though they study them from childhood to old age and grow old in ignorance. The children of heretics “by smooth words and flattery deceive the hearts of the

¹ Col 2:8.

² 2 Cor 11:14.

³ Matt 7:15.

⁴ Cf. 1 Pet 5:8.

⁵ Cf. Col 2:8.

⁶ Cf. Prov 5:3.

simple,"⁷ disguising with the honey of Christ's name the poisoned shafts of their impious doctrines. Concerning all these alike the Lord says: "Take care that no one lead you astray."⁸ This is the reason for the teaching of the Faith, and for the expositions of it.

Before delivering to you the Creed, I think it well at this time to present a short compendium of the necessary doctrines, that the multitude of things to be said, and the intervening period of the entire season of holy Lent may not cause forgetfulness in the minds of the more simple among you, but that scattering seeds of doctrines now in summary fashion, we may not forget the same when they are more widely tilled later. But let those present who are of more mature understanding and "have their faculties trained to discern good and evil,"⁹ be patient as they listen to an introductory course suited to children, milk for sucklings. In this way, those who need catechetical instruction will profit and those who have the knowledge will revive the memory of what they already know.

Of God

First, then, let there be laid as a firm foundation in your souls the doctrine concerning God: That God is One alone, unbegotten, without beginning, immutable, unchangeable; neither begotten by another, nor having any successor to His life; who neither began to live in time, nor shall ever have an end. He is both good and just, and so if ever you hear a heretic saying that the just God is one and the good God another, you may at once be warned and recognize the poisoned shaft of heresy. For some have impiously dared to divide the One God in their teaching; and some have said that the Creator and Master of the soul was one, and that of the body another—a doctrine at once absurd and impious. For how could the same man be the servant of two masters, when the Lord says in the Gospel: "No man can serve two masters"?¹⁰ There is, then, One God alone, the Maker of souls and bodies; there is One, the Creator of heaven and earth, the Maker of angels and archangels, who is the Creator of many things, but the Father of One only before all ages, of One only, His Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom He made all things visible and invisible.

This Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is not circumscribed in any place nor is

⁷ Rom 16:18.

⁸ Matt 24:4.

⁹ Heb 5:14.

¹⁰ Matt 6:24.

He less than the heavens; but the heavens are the works of His fingers,¹¹ and the whole earth is held in His palm.¹² He is in all things and about all. Consider not that He is less than the sun or equal to it, for He who fashioned the sun ought Himself, first, be far more surpassing, greater and brighter. He foreknows all future things and is mightier than all. He knows all things and does as He wills, not being subject to any sequence of events or nativity or chance or fate, perfect in all things and possessing in equal measure every form of virtue. He neither diminishes nor increases, but is ever and in every way the same; who has prepared chastisement for sinners and a crown for the just.

Since, then, many have gone astray in diverse ways from the One God—and some have deified the sun (so that after sunset, for the space of the night, they are godless); others, the moon, so they have no God during the day; still others, the other parts of the world; some have deified the arts, others food, others pleasures; and some, mad after women, have set up on high the image of a naked woman and, calling it Aphrodite, have bowed down before their passions in visible form. Others, again, dazzled by the splendor of gold, have deified that, and other substances as well. If a man first fixes as a foundation in his heart the doctrine of the One God and firmly believes it, he cuts away at once all the corruption of the evils of idolatry and of the error of the heretics. By faith, therefore, lay as a foundation in your soul this first doctrine of religion.

Of Christ

Believe also in the One and Only Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, begotten God of God, begotten Life of Life, begotten Light of Light, like in all things to Him who begot Him; who received not His being in time, but before all ages was eternally and incomprehensibly begotten of the Father; who is the Wisdom and Power of God and co-essential Justice; who before all ages sits at the right hand of the Father. For it was not, as some have held, after His Passion, as though crowned by God for His patient suffering, that He received the throne on God's right hand, but for as long as He has existed—and He is begotten eternally—He has the kingly dignity, sitting together with the Father, since He is God, and Wisdom and Power, as has been said; reigning together with the Father, and Creator of all things through the Father; lacking nothing for the dignity of Godhead, and knowing Him who begot Him, as He is known by Him. To speak briefly, remember what is written in the Gospels:

¹¹ Cf. Ps 8:4.

¹² Cf. Isa 40:12.

“No one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son.”¹³

Do not separate the Son from the Father, nor yet by blending them, believe in the Son-Fatherhood, but believe that of One God there is one Only-begotten Son, who is before all the ages God the Word; the Word, not uttered externally and dispersed into the air, nor like words without substance, but the Word, the Son, the Maker of intelligible beings, the Word who listens to the Father and who speaks Himself. And on these points, if God grant it, we will speak more fully at the proper time, for we do not forget our purpose, to give at present only a summary introduction to the Faith.

His Virgin Birth

Believe, too, that this Only-begotten Son of God came down from heaven to earth for our sins, taking on this passible human nature of ours, and being born of the holy Virgin and the Holy Spirit, His incarnation taking place, not in appearance or fantasy but in truth. He did not pass through the Virgin as through a channel, but was truly made flesh from her, and truly nourished with her milk. For, if the Incarnation was a fantasy, salvation is also a fantasy. Christ was twofold in nature: man in what was seen, but God in what was not seen. As man He ate truly as we do—for He had like feelings of the flesh with us—but as God, He fed the five thousands from five loaves. He died truly as man, but raised him who was four days dead, as God. He truly slept in the ship as man, and walked upon the waters as God.

His Cross

He was truly crucified for our sins. And should you wish to deny this, the visible place itself, this blessed Golgotha, refutes you, where, in the name of Him who was here crucified, we are gathered together. Besides, the whole world has now been filled with pieces of the wood of the Cross. He was crucified not for His own sins, but that we might be freed from ours. He was despised and buffeted by men at that time as man, but was acknowledged as God by creation. For the sun, seeing its Master dishonored, was darkened and trembled, not enduring the sight.

¹³ Matt 11:27.

His Burial

He was truly laid as man in a rock tomb, but the rocks were rent for fear because of Him. He descended to the regions beneath the earth, that thence also He might redeem the just. For tell me, would you wish the living to enjoy His grace, and that too when most of them are unholy, and have those who from Adam on had been long imprisoned not at length obtain deliverance? The Prophet Isaiah heralded with loud voice so many things concerning Him; would you not wish the King to descend and deliver His herald? David was there, and Samuel, and all the prophets, and John himself, who said by his messengers: "Art thou he who is to come, or shall we look for another?"¹⁴ Would you not wish Him to descend and deliver such men?

His Resurrection

He who descended to the regions beneath the earth ascended again, and the Jesus who was buried rose again truly on the third day. And if the Jews ever trouble you, meet them at once by thus questioning them: Can it be that Jonah came forth from the whale after three days and Christ had not risen from the earth on the third day? If a dead man, by touching the bones of Eliseus, was raised to life, will not the Maker of men be raised far more easily by the power of the Father? He did, then, truly rise, and after He had risen, was seen again by His disciples; and the twelve disciples were witnesses of His resurrection, testifying, not with words meant to please, but contending for the truth of the resurrection even unto torture and death. Further: "On the word of two or three witnesses every word may be confirmed," according to Scripture.¹⁵ There are twelve witnesses to the resurrection of Christ, and do you still disbelieve in the resurrection?

His Ascension

When Jesus had completed the course of His patient endurance and had redeemed men from their sins, He ascended again into heaven, a cloud taking Him up; and angels stood by as He ascended and Apostles looked on. But if any man doubt what we say, let him believe the power of the things seen now. All kings, when they die, lose, along with their life, their power. But Christ,

¹⁴ Matt 11:3.

¹⁵ Matt 18:16.

though He was crucified, is worshiped by the whole world. We proclaim the Crucified and the demons tremble; many at diverse times have been crucified, but has the invocation of any other ever put the demons to flight?

Let us not be ashamed of the Cross of Christ. But even though another hide it, do you seal it openly on your brow, that the demons, seeing the royal sign, may tremble and flee far away. Make this sign when eating and drinking, when sitting, lying down, rising, speaking, or walking; in a word, on every occasion. For He who was here crucified is in heaven above. For if, when He had been crucified and buried, He had remained in the tomb, we should perhaps have cause for shame, but He who was crucified here on Golgotha ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives on the east. For having gone down hence into the nether world, and returned to us again, He ascended again from us into heaven, His Father addressing Him and saying "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool."¹⁶

Of Judgment to Come

This Jesus Christ who ascended will come again from heaven, not from the earth. And I have said, "not from the earth," because many Antichrists at this time are to come from the earth. For already, as you have seen, many have begun to say: "I am the Christ,"¹⁷ and afterwards there is to come "the abomination of desolation,"¹⁸ assuming for himself the false title of Christ. But do you look for the true Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, coming henceforth no more from the earth, but from heaven, appearing to all as lightning and splendor of light above all, attended by a guard of angels, that He may judge the living and the dead, reigning over a kingdom, heavenly, eternal, and without end. For on this point also, make yourself sure, I pray you, since there are many who say there is an end to Christ's kingdom.

Of the Holy Spirit

Believe also in the Holy Spirit and cherish the right knowledge concerning Him; since there are many strangers to the Holy Spirit and they teach blasphemous things about Him. Learn then that this Holy Spirit is one and indivisible,

¹⁶ Ps 109:1.

¹⁷ Matt 24:5.

¹⁸ Matt 24:15.

His powers manifold; various as are the effects He produces, He is not Himself divided. He knows the mysteries, and “searches all things, even the deep things of God.”¹⁹ It is He who descended upon the Lord Jesus Christ in the form of a dove, who wrought in the Law and the Prophets, yes, who even now, at the time of baptism, puts a seal upon your soul; of His holiness every intellectual nature stands in need. If any man dare to blaspheme against Him, “It will not be forgiven him, either in this world or in the world to come”;²⁰ who is ranked in honor of dignity with Father and Son, of whom also Thrones, Dominations, Principalities, and Powers have need. For there is one God, the Father of Christ, and One Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of the One God, and One Holy Spirit who sanctifies and deifies all, who spoke in the Law and the Prophets, both in the Old and the New Testaments.

Keep this seal in mind at all times. I have spoken of it summarily, touching the main points, but if the Lord grant, I shall discuss it more fully later, to the best of my power, with proof from the Scriptures. For in regard to the divine and holy mysteries of the faith, not even a casual statement should be delivered without the Scriptures, and we must not be drawn aside merely by probabilities and artificial arguments. Do not believe even me merely because I tell you these things, unless you receive from the inspired Scriptures the proof of the assertions. For this saving faith of ours depends not on ingenious reasonings but on proof from the inspired Scriptures.

Of the Soul

After the knowledge of this august and glorious and all-holy faith, next know yourself for what you are, that you are a man, twofold in nature, composed of soul and body, and that, as was said a short time ago, the same God is the creator of the soul and the body. Know also that this soul of yours is free, self-determining, the fairest work of God, made according to the image of its Creator, immortal because of God who makes it immortal, a living being, rational, imperishable, because of Him who has conferred these gifts; having power to do as it will. For it is not according to your nativity that you sin, nor is it according to fortune that you fornicate, nor, as some foolishly say, do the conjunctions of the stars compel you to cleave to wantonness. Why, to avoid confessing your own evil deeds, do you ascribe the blame to the guiltless stars? Pay no attention henceforth to astrologers, for concerning them Holy Scripture says: “Let the astrologers stand forth to save you”;²¹ and further on: “Behold,

¹⁹ 1 Cor 2:10.

²⁰ Matt 12:32.

²¹ Isa 47:13.

they all shall be consumed by fire as stubble and they shall not deliver their soul from flame."²²

Learn this also, that before the soul comes into the world, it has committed no sin; but though we came thus into the world, we now of our own choice commit sin. Listen not, I pray you, to anyone who gives a perverse interpretation of the words: "If I do what I do not wish,"²³ but remember Him who says: "If you are willing, and obey, you shall eat the good things of the land; but if you refuse and resist, the sword shall consume you",²⁴ and again: "As you have yielded your members as slaves of uncleanness and iniquity unto iniquity, so now yield your members as slaves of justice, unto sanctification."²⁵ Remember also the Scripture which says: "As they have resolved against possessing the knowledge of God",²⁶ and: "Seeing that what may be known about God is manifest to them",²⁷ and again: "Their eyes they have closed."²⁸ Remember also how God again accuses them and says: "I had planted you, a choice vine of fully tested stock; how could you turn out obnoxious to me, a spurious vine?"²⁹

The soul is immortal, and all souls are alike, both of men and women; only their bodily members are differentiated. There is not a class of souls sinning by nature and a class of souls acting justly by nature. But both act from choice, since the substance of souls is of one kind and alike in all. I realize that I am talking at length and much time has already elapsed; but what is to be put above salvation? Are you unwilling to take the trouble to receive provision for the way against the heretics? Are you unwilling to learn the turnings of the road, to avoid falling down the precipice through ignorance? If your teachers count it no little gain for you to learn these things, ought not you, the learner, gladly receive the multitude of the things that are told you?

The soul possesses freedom; and though the devil can make suggestions, he has not the power to compel against the will. He brings to your mind the thought of fornication; if you will, you accept it; if you will not, you do not accept it. For, if you committed fornication by necessity, then why did God prepare Gehenna? If you acted justly by nature and not by choice, why did God prepare ineffable crowns? The sheep is meek, but it has never been crowned for its meekness; for its meekness comes not from choice but from nature.

²² Cf. Isa 47:14.

²³ Rom 7:16.

²⁴ Isa 1:19, 20.

²⁵ Rom 6:19.

²⁶ Rom 1:28.

²⁷ Ibid. 19.

²⁸ Matt 13:15.

²⁹ Jer 2:21.

Of the Body

You have been taught, beloved, the lore of the soul, as far as time allows at present. Now receive as best you can the doctrine concerning the body also. Let no one tell you that this body of ours is a stranger to God; for those who believe that the body is something alien readily abuse it to fornication. Yet what is it that they complain of in this wonderful body? For what does it lack in comeliness? What is there in its structure that is not wrought skillfully? Ought they not to have considered the brilliant conformation of the eyes? And how the ears are set obliquely to receive the sound without hindrance? And how the sense of smell can distinguish and perceive odorous exhalations? And how the tongue ministers to two things, the sense of taste and the power of speech? And how the lungs, placed out of sight, are equipped for the unceasing respiration of air? Who gave the heart its incessant beating? Who made the division into so many veins and arteries? Who interwove the bones with the sinews so skillfully? Who assigned a part of our food for our substance, and separated a part for seemly excretion, and hid our uncomely members in more fitting places? Who, when the human race was likely to fail, made it perpetual by a simple conjunction?

Tell me not that the body is the cause of sin; for, if the body is the cause of sin, how is it that a corpse does not sin? Put a sword in the right hand of one just dead and no murder takes place. Let beauties of all kinds pass before a young man just dead and no desire of fornication arises. Why? Because the body of itself does not sin, but the soul through the body. The body is the soul's instrument, its cloak and garment. If then it is given up to fornication by the soul, it becomes unclean; but if it dwells with a holy soul, it becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit. It is not I who say these things, no, it is the Apostle Paul who has said: "Do you not know that your members are the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you?"³⁰ Defile not, then, your flesh in fornication; stain not your fairest garment. But if you have stained it, now cleanse it by repentance; for it is the time for purification.

Let this doctrine of chastity be heeded above all by the order of solitaries and virgins, who are establishing in the world an angelic mode of life, and after them, by the rest of the people of the Church. A great crown is laid up for you, brethren; barter not a great dignity for a petty pleasure. Listen to the Apostle saying: "Lest there be any immoral, or profane person, such as Esau, who for one meal sold his birthright."³¹ Once enrolled in the angelic books for your profession of chastity, take care that you are not blotted out thereafter for practicing fornication.

Again, because you practice chastity, do not be puffed up with conceit

³⁰ 1 Cor 6:19.

³¹ Heb 12:16.

against those who live in the humbler state of matrimony. "For let marriage be held in honor, and let the marriage bed be undefiled,"³² as the Apostle says. For have not you who keep your purity been born of married persons? Do not, therefore, because you possess gold, condemn the silver. But let those be of good cheer also, who, being married, use marriage rightfully; who order their marriage according to law, not making it wanton by uncontrolled license; who recognize times of abstinence, that they may give themselves to prayer; who, at the assemblies, bring into the Church clean bodies as well as clean garments; who have entered into marriage for the sake of begetting children, not for self-indulgence.

Let not those who have been married only once find fault with those who have indulged in a second marriage. For, while continence is a noble and admirable thing, it is also allowable to enter upon a second marriage, that the weak may not commit fornication. For, "it is good for them if they so remain, even as I," says the Apostle. "But if they do not have self-control, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn."³³ But let all other things be put far away, fornication, adultery, and every kind of licentiousness; and let the body be kept pure for the Lord, that the Lord also may respect the body.

Let the body eat to live and be a ready servant; not, however, that it may be given up to luxuries. Concerning food, let these be your ordinances, since with regard to meats many also stumble. For some, without discrimination, partake of the things offered to idols; others, while they practice an ascetic life, condemn those who eat; and so, in various ways, the soul of some is defiled in the question of meats, out of ignorance of the useful reasons for eating or abstaining. For we fast by abstaining from wine and flesh, not because we abhor them as abominations, but because we expect the reward, that by scorning sensible things, we may enjoy a spiritual and invisible table, and that, though we now "sow in tears, we shall reap rejoicing"³⁴ in the world to come. Do not despise, then, those who eat and take food because of bodily weakness. Do not censure those who "use a little wine for their stomach's sake, and frequent infirmities."³⁵ And do not condemn them as sinners. Do not abhor flesh meats as something strange; for the Apostle knows some such men when he says: "They will forbid marriage, and will enjoin abstinence from foods which God has created to be partaken of with thanksgiving by the faithful."³⁶ When you abstain from these things, do not, then, abstain from them as though they were abominable, else

³² Heb 13:4.

³³ 1 Cor 7:8, 9.

³⁴ Cf. Ps 125:5.

³⁵ Cf. 1 Tim 5:23.

³⁶ 1 Tim 4:3.

you receive no reward. Rather, while recognizing that they are good, yet prefer the better, spiritual things set before you.

Safeguard your soul, never eating of the things offered to idols. For, in regard to the meats, not only I, at this time, but before now, the Apostle also, and James, once the Bishop of this Church, have shown concern. For the Apostles and the ancients wrote a Catholic epistle to all the Gentiles that they should abstain first of all from things sacrificed to idols, and then from blood and things strangled. For many men, being of savage nature and living like dogs, lap up the blood after the manner of the fiercest wild beasts, and eat their fill unsparingly of things strangled. But do you, the servant of Christ, see to it that when you eat you eat with reverence. But of meats enough.

Apparel

Let your dress be plain, not serving for adornment, but for necessary covering. The purpose of clothes is not to minister to your vanity, but to keep warm in winter and cover your nakedness. Take care lest, under pretense of hiding your unseemliness, by your extravagant apparel, you fall into another sort of unseemliness.

Of the Resurrection

Treat this body with care, I pray you, and understand that with this body you will rise from the dead to be judged. But, if any thought of doubt should steal into your mind, as though the thing were impossible, judge the things unseen from your own experience. For tell me—just think where you were, you, yourself, a hundred or more years ago. From what an extremely small and mean substance have you come to such magnitude of stature and to such dignity of form! Cannot He, who brought what was not into being, raise up again that already in existence which has decayed? Will He, who raises up the corn for us when it dies, year by year, have difficulty in raising up us, for whose sake the corn has been raised? You see how the trees have stood now for so many months without fruit or foliage. But with the passing of winter they return wholly to life again, as though from the dead. Shall not we much more and far more easily live again? The rod of Moses, by the will of God, was transformed into the quite dissimilar nature of a serpent; and shall not man, who has fallen into death, be restored anew?

Attend not to those who say that this body does not rise; for rise it does. Isaiah is a witness of this when he says: "The dead shall rise, and those in the tombs shall be raised",³⁷ and according to Daniel: "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some unto life everlasting and some unto shame everlasting."³⁸ Now, while the resurrection is common to all men, it will not be alike for all; for we shall all, indeed, receive everlasting bodies, but not all like bodies. For the just receive them that through eternity they may join the chorus of angels, but the sinners that they may endure the torment due to their sins forever.

For this reason, the Lord, beforehand in His loving-kindness, has granted us the repentance of the laver of baptism, that, by casting off the chief, nay, rather the whole burden of our sins, and receiving the seal of the Holy Spirit, we may be made heirs of eternal life. But since we have already spoken sufficiently of the laver of baptism, let us proceed to the remaining topics of our introductory teachings.

³⁷ Isa 26:19.

³⁸ Cf. Dan 12:2.

St. Gregory of Nyssa

The brother of St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nyssa (330–95) was a thinker and theologian of great originality, acquainted especially with Platonism. He wrote extensively, after becoming bishop of Nyssa, defending the Council of Nicea, writing against the heresies of his day and producing numerous commentaries on the Scriptures. His sermons and letters are extensive.

Among his ascetical writings, the short letter On What It Means to Call Oneself a Christian (De Professione Christiana) is outstanding. It lays the groundwork for the attainment of sanctity by stressing the importance of following in the footsteps of Christ. Since He is the Incarnate Son of God in human form, the virtues He practiced on earth were the attributes of God lived out in recordable history. If we imitate Him as man, we shall become like Him who is God.

Gregory shows how important is sound doctrine in the faith, especially faith in Christ as true God and true man, as the precondition for achieving holiness.

On What It Means to Call Oneself a Christian

In sending this letter to your Reverence, I am behaving like those debtors who happen upon some good fortune and pay the entire amount owed at one fell swoop. For after being constantly in your debt in the matter of letter writing (because for Christians a promise is a debt), I now wish to pay in full the past debt, which I contracted unwillingly, by extending this letter to such a length that it will count as many when it is judged by the customary length of letters. But, in order that I may not go on idly writing at length, I think that it will be good for me to imitate in my epistolary style the conversations we used to have when we were face to face. Indeed, I remember very well that the starting point of our discussions on every occasion was a concern for virtue and exercise related to the service of God. You always reacted attentively to what was said, although you did not accept it without examining it, while I, on account of our having anticipated it, came to a final solution to what we were seeking on each occasion as a consequence of our discussion. Surely, if it were possible, even now, for the impetus to argument to be derived from your presence, it would be better in every way; there would be a mutual benefit from our seeing each other (what in life is sweeter to me than this?) and, under the plectrum of your intelligence, our old lyre would reawaken. But, since the necessity of life causes us to be separated in body, even if our souls are always united, I shall be forced to assume your role also, if some logical conclusion is to develop for us. First of all, however, it would be best to propose a hypothesis profitable to the soul for the scope of our letter, and, then, to direct our argument to what lies before us. Therefore, let us ask as in a logical problem: What is meant by the term “Christian”?

For surely, a look at this question will not be without profit, since, if what is indicated by this name is determined accurately, we shall have much assistance for a life in accordance with virtue, provided, of course, that we are eager through a lofty discipline to be truly what the name signifies. For just as a person who longs to be called a doctor or an orator or a geometrician is not worthy of a title until he has some education as to what it means, that is, until he discovers from experience what he is being called, and just as the person wishing to be thus addressed in accordance with truth, so that the form of

address will not be a misnomer, will want the use of the title to depend on the practice itself; in the same way, if we seek the true meaning of the word "Christian" and find it, we will not choose not to conform to what the name implies when it is used of us, in order that the story about the monkey in secular literature may not also be applicable to us.

They say that a certain showman in the city of Alexandria, having trained a monkey to dance with some grace, and having dressed him in a dancer's mask and a costume suitable for the occasion, and having surrounded him with a chorus, gained fame by the monkey's twisting himself in time with the music and concealing his nature in every way by what he was doing and what he appeared to be. While the audience was enthralled by the novelty of the spectacle, one of the clever persons present, by means of a trick, showed those watching the performance that the dancer was a monkey. When everyone was crying out and applauding the gesticulations of the monkey, who was moving rhythmically with the music, they say that he threw onto the dancing place some of the sweetmeats which arouse the greediness of such animals; whereupon the monkey, without a moment's delay, when he saw the almonds scattered in front of the chorus, forgetting the dancing and the applause and the elaborate costume, ran after them and grabbed what he found in the palms of his hands. And in order that the mask would not get in the way of his mouth, he energetically thrust aside the disguise with his nails and immediately evoked a laugh from the spectators in place of the praise and admiration, as he emerged ugly and ridiculous from the shreds of the mask. Therefore, just as the assumed form was not sufficient for that creature to be considered a man, once his nature was disclosed in the incident of the almonds, so those individuals not truly shaping their own natures by faith will easily be disclosed in the toils of the devil as being something other than what they are called. For, instead of a fig or an almond or some such thing, vanity and love of honor and love of gain and love of pleasure, and whatever else the evil assembly of the devil places before greedy men instead of sweetmeats, easily bring to light the ape-like souls who, through pretense and imitation, play the role of the Christian and then remove the mask of moderation or meekness or some other virtue in a moment of personal crisis. It is necessary, therefore, for us to understand what the name "Christian" means, for then, perhaps, we will become what the term implies and not be shown up by the one who perceives what is hidden, namely, that we have disguised ourselves by mere assent and by the pretense of the name alone when we are actually something contrary to what we appear to be.

Let us, then, consider, first of all, from the term itself what Christianity is. From those who are wiser it is, of course, possible for us to discover a meaning more profound and more noble in every way, and more in keeping with the dignity of the word. However, what we begin with is this: the word "Christ," exchanged for a clearer and more familiar word, means "the king," and Holy

Scripture, in accordance with proper usage, indicates royal dignity with such a word. But since, as Scripture says, the divine is inexpressible, incomprehensible, exceeding all comprehensive thought the prophets, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and the apostles necessarily contribute with many words and ideas to our understanding of Christ's incorruptible nature, one setting us right about one divine idea and another about another. His dominion over all is suggested by reference to his kingship, and his purity and freedom from every passion and every evil is indicated by the names of the virtues, each being understood as referring to the Almighty. Such expressions are used as "justice itself" and "wisdom and power" and "truth" and "goodness" and "life" and "salvation" and "incorruptibility" and "permanence" and "lack of change" and whatever elevated concept there is, and Christ is and is said to be all of them. If, therefore, every lofty idea is conceived of in the name of Christ (for the other qualities mentioned are included under the higher designation, each of them being implied in the notion of royal power), perhaps some understanding of our interpretation of the term "Christian" will follow. If we, who are united to Him by faith in Him, are synonymous with Him whose incorruptible nature is beyond verbal interpretation, it is entirely necessary for us to become what is contemplated in connection with that incorruptible nature and to achieve an identity with the secondary elements which follow along with it. For just as by participating in Christ we are given the title "Christian," so also are we drawn into a share in the lofty ideas which it implies. Just as in a chain, what draws the loop at the top also draws the next loops, in like manner, since the rest of the words interpreting His ineffable and multiform blessedness are joined to the word "Christ," it would be necessary for the person drawn along with Him to share these qualities with Him.

If, therefore, someone puts on the name of Christ, but does not exhibit in his life what is indicated by the term, such a person belies the name and puts on a lifeless mask in accordance with the model proposed to us. For it is not possible for Christ not to be justice and purity and truth and estrangement from all evil, nor is it possible to be a Christian (that is, truly a Christian) without displaying in oneself a participation in these virtues. If one can give a definition of Christianity, we shall define it as follows: Christianity is an imitation of the divine nature. Now, let no one object to the definition as being immoderate and exceeding the lowliness of our nature; it does not go beyond our nature. Indeed, if anyone considers the first condition of man, he will find through the Scriptural teachings that the definition does not exceed the measure of our nature. The first man was constituted as an imitation of the likeness of God. So Moses, in philosophizing about man, where he says that God made man, states that "He created him in the image of God," and the word "Christianity," therefore, brings man back to his original good fortune.

But, if man was originally a likeness of God, perhaps we have not gone

beyond the limit in declaring that Christianity is an imitation of the divine nature. Great, indeed, is the promise of this title. Perhaps it would be fitting to investigate also whether not conforming to the definition in one's life is without danger for one who makes use of the word. What is meant might become clear from examples. Assume that a professional painter is given a commission to paint a picture of the king for those living far away. If he draws a ridiculous and ugly shape on the wood and calls this ungracious figure an image of the king, would it not be likely that the powers that be would be annoyed, on the grounds that the handsome original had been insulted through this bad painting among those who had never seen the king? For people will necessarily think that the original is what the form on the icon shows him to be. If, then, the definition says that Christianity is an imitation of God, the person who has never been given an explanation of this mystery will think that the divine is such as he sees life among us to be, accepting it as a valid imitation of God, so that, if he sees models of complete goodness, he will believe that the divine revered by us is good; but, if someone is emotional and brutal, changing from one passion to another, and reflecting many forms of animals in his character (for it is easily possible to see how the changes in our nature correspond to animals) when such a one calls himself a Christian and it is clear to all that the promise of the name proclaims an imitation of God, then, that person makes the divine, which is believed to be reflected in our private life, an object of blame among unbelievers. Scripture, therefore, utters a kind of fearful threat to such persons, crying: "Woe to those on account of whom my name is blasphemed among the nations." and our Lord seems to me to be guiding our thoughts in this direction when He says to those able to hear: "You are to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect." For, in naming the true Father of the faithful, He wishes the Father and those born through Him to be the same in the perfection of the goods contemplated in the Father.

Then you will ask me: "How could it come about that human lowliness could be extended to the blessedness seen in God, since the implausibility in the command is immediately evident? How could it be possible for the earthly to be like the One in heaven, the very difference in nature proving the unattainableness of the imitation? For it is as difficult to make oneself equal in appearance to the heavenly greatness and the beauties in it as it is for man on earth to make himself like the God of heaven." But the explanation of this is clear. The Gospel does not order nature to be compounded with nature, I mean the human with the divine, but it does order the good actions to be imitated in our life as much as possible. But what actions of ours are like the actions of God? Those that are free from all evil, purifying themselves as far as possible in deed and word and thought from all vileness. This is truly the imitation of the divine and the perfection connected with the God of heaven.

It does not seem to me that the Gospel is speaking of the firmament of

heaven as some remote habitation of God when it advises us to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect, because the divine is equally present in all things, and, in like manner, it pervades all creation and it does not exist separated from being, but the divine nature touches each element of being with equal honor, encompassing all things within itself. And the prophet teaches this, saying, "even if I am in heaven in my thought, even if I examine what is below the earth in my calculation you are present, even if I extend the intellectual part of my soul to the boundaries of being, I see all things in the power of your right hand," for the text is as follows: "If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I sink to the nether world, you are present there. If I take the wings of the dawn, or settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall guide me, and your right hand hold me fast."¹ It is possible to learn from these words that not being separated by choice from God is the same as living in heaven. Since the world above is known to be free from evil, Holy Scripture often mentions this to us symbolically, and since experiences connected with evil take place in this more material life below, the inventor of evil, the serpent, crawls and creeps through life on earth, as is said of it in the symbolic statement: "On your belly shall you crawl and dust shall you eat, all the days of your life."² This kind of movement and this type of food explain to us that this refers to the life on earth which accepts the serpent of manifold evil and nurtures this creature that creeps upon it. Therefore, the One who orders us to imitate our Father orders us to separate ourselves from earthly passions, and this is a separation which does not come about through a change of place, but is achieved only through choice. If, then, estrangement from evil is accomplished only in the impetus of thought, the word of the Gospel enjoins nothing difficult upon us. There is no trouble connected with the onrush of thought, since it is possible for us without exertion to be present through thought wherever we wish to be, so that a heavenly sojourn is easy for anyone who wants it even on earth, as the Gospel suggests, by our thinking heavenly thoughts and depositing in the treasury there a wealth of virtue. "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth," it says, "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes nor thieves break in and steal."³ In these words, Scripture indicates the incorruptible power that governs blessedness above. For in the midst of the moral filth of life here, we produce many different kinds of evil for ourselves, either we beget through our thoughts a moth, which, because of its corroding and destroying power, renders useless anything it grows upon unless it is shaken off, and creeps toward whatever is lying about, suggesting through its movement a path of destruction for those it comes near; or, if all is secure within,

¹ Ps 138:8–11.

² Gen 3:14.

³ Matt 6:19; cf. Luke 12:33.

there is a conspiracy of external circumstances. Either the treasure of the heart is shut off through pleasure or the receptacle of the soul is rendered empty of virtue through some other experience, being distracted by desire or grief or some such emotion. But since the Lord says that in the treasures above neither moth nor rust is present, nor evil from theft which teaches us to be suspicious, we must transfer our activities to a region where what is stored is not only safe and undiminished forever, but where it also produces many kinds of interest. Because of the nature of the One receiving the deposit, it is altogether necessary that the return be amplified. For just as we, in accordance with our nature, accomplish little in making our deposit because we are what we are, so, also, it is likely that the One who is rich in every way will give to the depositor a return which reflects His nature. So let no one be discouraged when he brings into the divine treasury what is in keeping with his own power, assuming that he will go off with what corresponds to the amount he has given, but let him anticipate, according to the Gospel which says he will receive in exchange large for small, the heavenly for the earthly, the eternal for the temporal, such things as are not able to be grasped by thought or explained by word, concerning which: "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love him."⁴

Thus, O cherished friend, we have given you payment in full, not only for the letters not sent before, but also in advance for the ones which may not be written hereafter. May you fare well in the Lord and may what is pleasing to God be always in your mind and heart and in mine.

⁴ 1 Cor 2:9.

St. Basil

St. Basil the Great (330–70), Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, is one of the three Cappadocian Fathers of the Church, along with St. Gregory of Nazianzen and St. Gregory of Nyssa. They were three brilliant leaders of philosophical Christian orthodoxy whose influence led to the final defeat of Arianism which denied the divinity of Christ.

Basil was the brother of St. Gregory of Nyssa and of St. Macrina, who persuaded Basil to leave a promising secular career and go on for the priesthood. Following his sister's example as a nun, Basil gave all his possessions to the poor and went to live in solitude near Neo-Caesarea. During this time he composed two major works on the spiritual life: the Longer and Shorter Rules for monastic living, and the Moralia (or Morals) for all Christians.

The Morals are a simple collection of Scripture texts, drawn for the most part from the Gospels and Epistles. They are arranged in the form of chapters (capita) and preceded by a short synopsis which serves as both an introduction and a commentary. The chapters themselves are grouped as a series of Rules. There are eighty Rules in all.

In the history of Christian spirituality, St. Basil is considered the lawgiver of Eastern monasticism. He added study to prayer and manual labor for those seeking Christian perfection, and placed a renewed emphasis on the importance of internal dispositions in the pursuit of sanctity.

Herewith Begins the *Morals*

RULE 1

That they who believe in the Lord must first do penance according to the preaching of John and of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself; for they who do not penance now will receive a harsher sentence than those who were condemned before the time of the Gospel.

Cap. 1: Matt 4:17; Matt 11:20–22.

That this present life is the time for penance and for the remission of sins; in the life to come, the just judgment of retribution will take place.

Cap. 2: Mark 2:10; Matt 18:18; John 5:28,29; Rom 2:4–6; Acts 17:30,31.

That penitents should weep bitterly and show forth from their heart all the other appropriate works of penance.

Cap. 3: Matt 26:75; 2 Cor 7:6,7–11; Acts 19:18,19.

That mere renouncement of sin is not sufficient for the salvation of penitents, but fruits worthy of penance are also required of them.

Cap. 4: Matt 3:7–10.

That after departure from this life there is no opportunity for good deeds, since God in his forbearance has provided the present life for doing those things that please Him.

Cap. 5: Matt 25:1–12; Luke 13:24,25; 2 Cor 6:2–4; Gal 6:10.

RULE 2

That he who entangles himself in matters foreign to piety cannot serve God.

Cap. 1: Matt 6:24; 2 Cor 6:14–16.

That he who would obey the Gospel must first be purged of all defilement of the flesh and the spirit that so he may be acceptable to God in the good works of holiness.

Cap. 2: Matt 23:25,26; 2 Cor 7:1.

That he who has affection for anything in this life or allows anything to draw him away from God even slightly cannot become the Lord's disciple.

Cap. 3: Matt 10:37,38; Matt 16:24,25.

RULE 3

That to love God with the whole heart has been declared by the Lord to be the first and the greatest commandment of the Law; and the second, to love one's neighbor as oneself.

Cap. 1: Matt 22:37-39.

That, if anyone does not keep His commandments, it is proof that he does not love God and His Christ; but the observance of the commandments of Christ in bearing the tribulations sent by Him, even unto death, is proof of love.

Cap. 2: John 14:21,24; John 15:10; Rom 8:35-37.

RULE 4

That he who does His will gives honor and glory to God, but whoever transgresses His law dishonors Him.

Cap. 1: John 17:4; Matt 5:16; Phil 1:10,11; Rom 2:23.

RULE 5

That we must be free from all enmity toward all men and love our enemies; and, when necessity requires, lay down our life for our friends with a love like that which God and His Christ had for us.

Cap. 1: Matt 5:43,44-48; John 3:16; John 15:12,13; Luke 6:35,36; Rom 5:8,9; Eph 5:1,2.

That the mark of the disciples of Christ is their love for one another in Him.

Cap. 2: John 13:35.

That to wrong one's neighbor in any way or to cause him such disedification that his faith is destroyed is a sure sign that one does not possess the love of Christ for one's neighbor, even if what is done is allowed by the Scripture for a special reason.

Cap. 3: Rom 14:13-15.

That the Christian must serve even one who is vexed with him, in every way, at least in so far as he is able.

Cap. 4: Matt 5:23,24; I Cor 4:12,13.

That he who has the charity of Christ sometimes causes pain, even to one whom he loves, for his good.

Cap. 5: John 16:5-7; 2 Cor 7:7-9.

RULE 6

That we must speak fearlessly and without shame in the confession of our Lord Jesus and His doctrine.

Cap. 1: Matt 10:27,28-32; Luke 9:26; 2 Tim 1:8.

RULE 7

That even if a man seem to confess the Lord and hear His words, but does not obey His commands, he is condemned, even though, by some divine concession, he be vouchsafed an endowment of spiritual gifts.

Cap. 1: Matt 7:21-23; Luke 6:46; Titus 1:16.

RULE 8

That we must neither doubt nor hesitate respecting the words of the Lord, but be fully persuaded that every word of God is true and possible even if nature rebel; for therein is the test of faith.

Cap. 1: Matt 14:25-31; John 6:53,54; Luke 1:13; Luke 1:18-20; Rom 4:19-22.

That he who in small matters does not trust in the Lord is far more manifestly an unbeliever in things of greater moment.

Cap. 2: John 3:12; Luke 16:10.

That we should not rely on our own reasoning to the point of rejecting the words of the Lord; but we must be convinced that the Lord's words are more worthy of credence than our own fullest knowledge.

Cap. 3: Matt 26:31,33-34; Matt 26:20-22; Acts 10:13-15; 2 Cor 10:4,5.

RULE 9

That no one should be remiss in learning what pertains to his duty but should listen attentively and understand the words of the Lord and do His will.

Cap. 1: Matt 15:15-18; Matt 13:19-23; Mark 7:14; Eph 5:15-17.

That we should not busy ourselves with matters which do not concern us.

Cap. 2: John 13:27,28; Acts 1:6,7.

That it is the duty of those who are zealous for God's good pleasure to make inquiry as to what is right for them to do.

Cap. 3: Matt 13:36; Matt 19:16; Luke 3:7; Luke 3:10; Acts 2:37.

That he who is questioned must take care to give a worthy answer.

Cap. 4: Luke 10:25-28; Col 4:6.

That the condemnation of those who know and do not apply their knowledge is the more severe; but even sin committed in ignorance is not without risk.

Cap. 5: Luke 12:47,48.

RULE 10

That the end of sin is death.

Cap. 1: John 3:36; Rom 6:20,21; Rom 6:23; I Cor 15:56.

That the fulfillment of the commandment of God is life everlasting.

Cap. 2: John 8:51; John 12:49,50; Rom 6:22.

RULE 11

That the judgments of God ought not be lightly regarded, but feared even though retribution is not immediate.

Cap. 1: Matt 10:28; Luke 12:45-47; John 5:14; Eph 5:6.

That he who has been chastised for his past sins and has obtained pardon prepares for himself a judgment of wrath more severe than the former judgment if he sin again.

Cap. 2: John 5:14.

That when any incur the judgment of the wrath of God, the rest should amend their ways in fear.

Cap. 3: Luke 13:1-5; Acts 5:5; I Cor 10:10,11.

That frequently a man is even delivered up to evil works as punishment for past impiety.

Cap. 4: Rom 1:28; 2 Thess 2:10,11.

That the multitude of sinners does not arouse the solicitude of God, but he who is acceptable to Him, whether man or woman.

Cap. 5: Luke 4:25,26; I Cor 10:1-5.

RULE 12

That every contradiction, even if it arise from a pious and amicable spirit, estranges the one dissenting from the Lord; but every word of the Lord ought to be received with complete assent.

Cap. 1: John 13:5-8.

That we should not conform with human traditions to the extent of setting aside the command of God.

Cap. 2: Mark 7:5-8.

That we should observe everything without exception which has been handed down by the Lord through the Gospel and the Apostles.

Cap. 3: Matt 28:19,20; Luke 1:6; Luke 10:16; 2 Thess 2:14.

That no one may prefer his own will to the will of God, but in everything we must seek and do the will of God.

Cap. 4: John 5:30; Luke 22:41,42; Eph 2:3.

RULE 13

That we must always be sober and ready in our zeal for the works of God, being aware of the danger of a dilatory spirit.

Cap. 1: Luke 12:35-40; 1 Thess 5:1-3; 1 Thess 5:6.

That we should consider every season opportune for exercising zeal in that which is pleasing to God.

Cap. 2: John 9:4; Phil 2:12.

RULE 14

That we should avoid unseasonable intrusions and discover the appropriate time for each word and deed.

Cap. 1: Matt 9:14,15; Gal 4:31-5:1.

RULE 15

That it is not right to neglect one's duty, relying on the good works of others.

Cap. 1: Matt 3:8,9.

RULE 16

That they who live with persons who are pleasing to God are in no way benefited if they are not perfecting their own will, even though in appearance they maintain a likeness to these.

Cap. 1: Matt 25:1-4; Matt 25:11-13; Luke 17:34-37.

RULE 17

That, having recognized the nature of this present time from the signs revealed to us by the Scriptures, we should dispose our affairs accordingly.

Cap. 1: Matt 24:32; Luke 12:54-56; 1 Cor 7:29-31.

RULE 18

That the commands of God should be carried out as the Lord enjoined; for he who is at fault in his manner of executing them is reprobate in the sight of God, even though he may seem to be complying with the command.

Cap. 1: Luke 14:12-14.

That we should not perform the command of God with a view to pleasing men or from any other earthly motive but in everything we should have as our aim the good pleasure and the glory of God.

Cap. 2: Matt 6:1,2; 1 Cor 10:31; 1 Thess 2:4-6.

That the commands of the Lord should be carried out with an attentive mind and with good dispositions before God and men; for he who does not so is condemned.

Cap. 3: Matt 23:25-27; Rom 12:8; Phil 2:14; 1 Tim 1:5,19.

That requital for the more important works is based on the prudent management of lesser ones.

Cap. 4: Matt 25:23; Matt 25:29; Luke 16:11,12.

That we should fulfill the commands of the Lord with insatiable desire, ever pressing onward toward greater achievement.

Cap. 5: Matt 5:6; Phil 3:13,14.

That the commands of God should be executed, insofar as it is possible for the doer, in such a way as to give glory to God and to enlighten all men.

Cap. 6: Matt 5:14-16; Luke 8:16; Phil 1:10,11.

RULE 19

That one who does the will of God should not be impeded whether he obeys in consideration of a divine command or of human reason, nor ought he permit any to hinder him even though they be his relatives, but he should abide by his decision.

Cap. 1: Matt 3:13-15; Matt 16:21-23; Mark 10:13,14; Acts 21:10-14; 1 Thess 2:15,16.

That he should not be prevented who carries out a command of God

without sincerity and yet maintains in appearance the full integrity of the Lord's teaching; because no one is wronged insofar as the act itself is concerned and sometimes certain persons may be benefited by it; yet such a one should be exhorted to have dispositions worthy of his good action.

Cap. 2: Matt 6:2-4; Mark 9:37-39; Phil 1:15-18.

RULE 20

That they who believe in the Lord should be baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Cap. 1: Matt 28:19; John 3:3; John 3:5.

What is the nature or the function of baptism? The changing of the person baptized in thought and word and action and his transformation according to the power bestowed on him into that of which he has been born.

Cap. 2: John 3:6-8; Rom 6:11; Rom 6:3-7; Col 2:11,12; Gal 3:27-29; Col 3:9-12.

RULE 21

That the receiving of the Body and Blood of Christ is also necessary for life everlasting.

Cap. 1: John 6:54,55.

That he who undertakes to receive Communion, without observing the manner in which participation in the Body and Blood of Christ has been granted, derives no benefit therefrom; and he who communicates unworthily is condemned.

Cap. 2: John 6:54,55; John 6:62-64; I Cor 11:27-29.

The manner in which we should eat the Body and drink the Blood of the Lord, for a commemoration of the obedience of the Lord even unto death, that they who live may no longer live for themselves but unto Him who dies for them and rose again.

Cap. 3: Luke 22:19-20; I Cor 11:23-26; 2 Cor 5:14,15; I Cor 10:16,17.

That he who partakes of the Sacred Species should praise the Lord with hymns.

Cap. 4: Matt 26:26; Matt 26:30.

RULE 22

That committing sin estranges us from the Lord and leagues us with the Devil.

Cap. 1: John 8:34; John 8:44; Rom 6:20.

That intimacy with the Lord is not to be explained in terms of kinship according to the flesh but it is achieved by alacrity in doing the will of God.

Cap. 2: John 8:47; Luke 8:20–22; John 15:14; Rom 7:14–20; Rom 8:14.

RULE 23

That he who is drawn into sin against his will should understand that, because he was voluntarily mastered by another sin committed previously, he is now, as a consequence of this first sin, led into another against his will.

RULE 24

That we must not lie, but in all things tell the truth.

Cap. 1: Matt 5:37; Eph 4:25; Col 3:9.

RULE 25

That we should not engage in fruitless or controversial discussions.

Cap. 1: 2 Tim 2:14; 2 Tim 2:23.

That idle words in which there is nothing beneficial ought not be spoken; for to speak or to perform even a good action without aiming to give edification is to grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

Cap. 2: Matt 12:36; Eph 4:29,30.

RULE 26

That every word and deed should be ratified by the testimony of the Holy Scripture to confirm the good and cause shame to the wicked.

Cap. 1: Matt 4:3,4; Acts 2:4; Acts 2:12–17.

That appeals to what is natural or customary should also be employed for the ratification of what we do or say.

Cap. 2: Matt 7:15–17; Luke 5:30,31; 2 Tim 2:4,5.

RULE 27

That we should not be like those who are hostile to the Lord's teaching, but imitate God and His saints according to the power given us by Him.

Cap. 1: Matt 20:25–28; Rom 12:2; 1 Cor 11:1.

RULE 28

That we should not be readily and thoughtlessly carried away by those who make pretense of the truth, but we should recognize each from the sign given us by the Scriptures.

Cap. 1: Matt 7:15,16; John 13:35; 1 Cor 12:3.

RULE 29

That everyone should give evidence of his calling by his own works.

Cap. 1: John 5:36; John 10:37,38; 2 Cor 6:3,4.

RULE 30

That we should not profane holy things by mingling them with those meant for ordinary use.

Cap. 1: Matt 21:12,13; 1 Cor 11:22; 1 Cor 11:34.

That which is consecrated to God should be honored as holy as long as the will of God is fulfilled in it.

Cap. 2: Matt 23:37,38.

RULE 31

That objects set aside for those consecrated to God should not be usurped for others' use unless there be something superfluous.

Cap. 1: Mark 7:26-29.

RULE 32

That to everyone should be rendered what is reasonably and fairly due him.

Cap. 1: Luke 20:21-25; Rom 13:7,8.

RULE 33

That we should not give scandal.

Cap. 1: Matt 18:6; Matt 18:7; Rom 14:13.

That whatever is opposed to the will of the Lord is scandal.

Cap. 2: Matt 16:21-23.

That even a deed or word countenanced by the Scripture should be avoided whenever others would be emboldened thereby to commit sin by a similar act, or to relax their zeal for virtue.

Cap. 3: 1 Cor 8:4-13; 1 Cor 9:4-7.

That to avoid scandal even that which is not of necessity should be done.

Cap. 4: Matt 17:23-26.

That as regards the will of the Lord, even if some take scandal, we must not let this hamper our freedom of action.

Cap. 5: Matt 15:11-15; John 6:54; John 6:67,68; 2 Cor 2:15,16.

RULE 34

That each in his own degree should be as a pattern of good to others.

Cap. 1: Matt 11:29; 2 Cor 9:2; 1 Thess 1:6,7.

RULE 35

That they who behold the fruit of the Holy Spirit in a man, who on every occasion maintains in his life a consistency with true piety, and do not ascribe this to the Holy Spirit but attribute it to the Adversary, commit blasphemy against the Holy Spirit Himself.

Cap. 1: Matt 12:22-24,28; Matt 12:31,32.

RULE 36

That they who follow the Lord's teaching as their model should be received with all honor and carefulness for the glory of the Lord Himself; and he who neither hearkens to them nor receives them is condemned.

Cap. 1: Matt 10:40; Matt 10:14,15; John 13:20; Phil 2:25; Phil 2:29.

RULE 37

That ready service according to our ability, even in very small things and even if it be rendered by a woman, is acceptable to God.

Cap. 1: Matt 10:42; Luke 21:1-4; Matt 26:6-10; Acts 16:15.

RULE 38

That the Christian should offer his brethren simple and unpretentious hospitality.

Cap. 1: John 6:8-11; Luke 10:38-42.

RULE 39

That we should not be vacillating but steadfast in the faith and staunch in cleaving to the good things which are in the Lord.

Cap. 1: Matt 13:20-21; 1 Cor 15:58; Gal 1:6.

RULE 40

That they who introduce erroneous doctrines, however subtly, to delude or confound the unstable should not be tolerated.

Cap. 1: Matt 24:4,5; Luke 20:46,47; Gal 1:8,9.

RULE 41

That whatsoever gives scandal must be eradicated, no matter how essential and indispensable it may seem to be.

Cap. 1: Matt 18:7-9.

That we should be indulgent to those who are somewhat weak in faith and carefully lead them on to perfection; but our indulgence, of course, should not cause us to fail in the observance of God's command.

Cap. 2: Matt 12:20,21; Rom 14:1; Gal 6:1,2.

RULE 42

That it is not to be thought that the Lord came to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfill them and to add that which is more perfect.

Cap. 1: Matt 5:17; Rom 3:31.

RULE 43

That as the law prohibits wicked deeds, so the Gospel forbids harboring the vices themselves concealed in the soul.

Cap. 1: Matt 5:21,22; Rom 2:28,29.

That as the law requires a partial, so the Gospel demands a full integrity for every good deed.

Cap. 2: Luke 18:22; Col 2:11.

That they who do not show forth a righteousness according to the Gospel greater than that prescribed by the Law cannot be accounted worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Cap. 3: Matt 5:20; Phil 3:4-9.

RULE 44

That the yoke of Christ is sweet and His burden light unto refreshment for those who submit to it; but all things alien to the teaching of the Gospel are heavy and burdensome.

Cap. 1: Matt 11:28-30.

RULE 45

That they cannot be deemed worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven who do not imitate in their relations with one another the equality which is observed by children among themselves.

Cap. 1: Matt 18:3.

That he who desires to be deemed worthy of greater glory in the kingdom of heaven ought to love here on earth that which is lowly and meanest of all.

Cap. 2: Matt 18:4; Matt 20:26; Mark 10:44; Phil 2:3.

RULE 46

That we are obliged to show in more important matters a great zeal, proportioned to that displayed in lesser ones.

Cap. 1: Luke 13:15-17; Luke 18:1-7; 2 Tim 2:4,5.

That relatively to those who manifest in lesser matters a fear born of faith and an alacrity proceeding from laudable desire, they who show themselves negligent or disdainful in concerns of greater moment shall be the more rigorously condemned.

Cap. 2: Luke 11:31; Matt 12:41.

That he who exercises zeal in lesser matters should not regard lightly the more important ones; but he ought to observe the greater precepts in a preeminent manner and accomplish the lesser ones as well.

Cap. 3: Matt 23:23,24.

RULE 47

That one ought not lay up for himself on earth but in heaven; and the method to be followed in laying up treasure in heaven.

Cap. 1: Matt 6:19,20; Luke 12:33; Luke 18:22; 1 Tim 6:18,19.

RULE 48

That we should be compassionate and generous; for they who are not such are denounced.

Cap. 1: Matt 5:7; Luke 6:30; Rom 1:31,32; 1 Tim 6:18.

That whatever a man may possess over and above what is necessary for life, he is obliged to do good with, according to the command of the Lord who has bestowed on us the things we possess.

Cap. 2: Luke 3:11; 1 Cor 4:7; 2 Cor 8:14,15.

That we should not be rich but poor according to the word of the Lord.

Cap. 3: Luke 6:20; Luke 6:24; 2 Cor 8:2; 1 Tim 6:9,10.

That we should not be eager to have the necessities of life in abundance, nor seek after luxury or satiety; but we should be free from every form of avarice and ostentation.

Cap. 4: Luke 12:15; 1 Tim 2:9; 1 Tim 6:8.

That no one should be anxious on account of his own need, nor place his hope in the appurtenances of this life, but commend his affairs to God.

Cap. 5: Matt 6:24-34; Luke 12:16-19; 1 Tim 6:17.

That we must be careful and solicitous regarding the needs of the brethren in accordance with the will of God.

Cap. 6: Matt 25:34-36; Matt 25:40; John 6:5; 1 Cor 16:1,2.

That he who is able should work and give to those in need; for he who was unwilling to work was judged unworthy even to eat.

Cap. 7: Matt 10:10; Acts 20:35; Eph 4:28; 2 Thess 3:10.

RULE 49

That we should not resort to legal disputes with regard to the things of the body, even where its necessary covering is concerned.

Cap. 1: Luke 6:29,30; 1 Cor 6:1; 1 Cor 6:7,8.

That we should not contend with another nor take revenge, but, if possible, live in peace with all men, as the Lord commands.

Cap. 2: Matt 5:38,39; Mark 9:49; Rom 12:17-19; 1 Tim 2:8.

That we ought not exact vengeance even for wrong done to another from him who does the injury.

Cap. 3: Matt 26:50-52; Luke 9:52-56.

RULE 50

That we should lead others along with ourselves to the peace that is in Christ.

Cap. 1: Matt 5:9; John 14:27.

RULE 51

That it is necessary to correct every fault in ourselves before we bring charges against another.

Cap. 1: Matt 7:3-5; Rom 2:1-3.

RULE 52

That we should not be indifferent to sinners, but mourn and grieve over them.

Cap. 1: Luke 19:41-43; 1 Cor 5:1-2; 2 Cor 12:21.

That we should not bear with sinners in silence.

Cap. 2: Luke 17:3; Eph 5:11.

That we should tolerate association with sinners only for the purpose of recalling them to penitence, by every means short of sin.

Cap. 3: Matt 9:10-13; Luke 15:1-4; 2 Thess 3:14,15; 2 Cor 2:5-7.

That, when every form of solicitude has been applied in their regard, we should avoid those who persist in their evil ways.

Cap. 4: Matt 18:15-17.

RULE 53

That a Christian should not bear a grudge, but from his heart should forgive those who have offended him.

Cap. 1: Matt 6:14,15.

RULE 54

That it is not right for us to judge one another in matters which are countenanced by the Scripture.

Cap. 1: Matt 7:1,2; Luke 6:37; Rom 14:2-6; Rom 14:12,13; Col 2:16,17.

That we should not quibble with regard to what is permitted by Scripture.

Cap. 2: Rom 14:22,23; Col 2:20-22.

That we must not make judgments where doubtful matters are concerned.
Cap. 3: 1 Cor 4:5.

That we should not judge out of consideration of persons.
Cap. 4: John 7:23,24.

That we ought not condemn anyone, even if his accusers be many, before making a careful study of his case in his presence.
Cap. 5: John 7:50,51; Acts 25:14-16.

RULE 55

That we must recognize and acknowledge every good as a gift and that even the patient endurance of suffering for Christ's sake is of God.
Cap. 1: John 3:27; 1 Cor 4:7; Eph 2:8,9; Phil 1:28-30.

That we should not accept in silence the benefactions of God, but return thanks for them.
Cap. 2: Luke 8:38,39; Luke 17:12-19; 1 Cor 15:10; 1 Tim 4:4.

RULE 56

That we should persevere in watching and prayer.
Cap. 1: Matt 7:7,8; Luke 18:1,2; Luke 21:34-36; Col 4:2; 1 Thess 5:16,17.

That we should give thanks to God even for the daily sustenance required by the body, before we partake of it.
Cap. 2: Matt 14:19; Acts 27:35; 1 Tim 4:4.

That we should not recite long and repetitious prayers for things that are perishable and unworthy of the Lord.
Cap. 3: Matt 6:7,8; Luke 12:29,30.

That we should pray, and with what dispositions of soul.
Cap. 4: Matt 6:9,10; Matt 6:33; Mark 11:25; 1 Tim 2:8.

That we should pray for one another and for those who are preachers of the Word of Truth.
Cap. 5: Luke 22:31,32; Eph 6:18-20; 2 Thess 3:1.

That we should pray even for our enemies.
Cap. 6: 1 Cor 11:4-10.

That no man ought to pray or prophesy with his head covered; and no woman, with uncovered head.
Cap. 7: 1 Cor 11:3-5.

RULE 57

That no one should entertain exalted notions of himself because of his own good deeds and hold others in disdain.

Cap. 1: Luke 18:9-14.

RULE 58

That it must not be thought that the gift of God is purchased by money or by any other device.

Cap. 1: Acts 8:18-23.

That according to the rule of faith God bestows gifts upon each man unto profit.

Cap. 2: Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:7-10.

That, since the gift of God is received as a free gift, it is our duty to share it freely and not make it a means of profit for self-gratification.

Cap. 3: Matt 10:8,9; Acts 3:6,7; 1 Thess 2:5-8.

That he who has received the first gift of God in a prudent manner and has diligently fostered it for the glory of God is deserving of other gifts also; but one who does not so is both deprived of the original gift and is not deemed worthy of that which has been prepared, and is delivered up to punishment.

Cap. 4: Matt 13:10-14; Matt 25:14-17; Matt 25:29,30.

RULE 59

That the Christian should not be attached to that glory which comes from men, nor claim for himself special honor, but should correct those who accord him such honor or who think too highly of him.

Cap. 1: Matt 19:16,17; John 5:41; John 5:44; Luke 11:43; 1 Thess 2:5,6; Acts 10:25,26; Acts 12:21-23.

RULE 60

That, inasmuch as the gifts of the Spirit are varied and one individual cannot receive them all, not all receive the same gift, everyone should soberly and thankfully remain content with the gift granted to him and all should be in accord with one another in the charity of Christ, as are the members of the body. Thus, he who is less richly endowed with gifts will not suffer discouragement by comparison with his superior in this regard; nor, indeed, should the

more gifted be disdainful of his inferior. For they who are divided and at variance with one another are worthy of destruction.

Cap. 1: Matt 12:25; Gal 5:15; John 17:20,21; Acts 4:32; Rom 12:3-6; 1 Cor 1:10; 1 Cor 12:12,13; Phil 2:2-4.

RULE 61

That we should not be disdainful of those who administer the Lord's bounty, having regard to their lowliness, for with these especially God is well pleased.

Cap. 1: Matt 11:25,26; Matt 13:54-58; 1 Cor 1:26-29.

RULE 62

That they who believe in God and are baptized should straightway prepare themselves for temptation even from their own relatives and friends and even unto death, for one who is not thus prepared is easily shaken in a sudden crisis.

Cap. 1: Matt 3:16-4:1; Matt 10:16-18; Matt 10:21,22; Matt 10:38; John 16:1-3; Luke 8:13; 2 Cor 1:8,9; 2 Tim 3:12.

That no one should place himself in the way of temptation before God permits, but we should pray not to fall into temptation.

Cap. 2: Matt 6:9,10; Matt 6:13; John 7:1-10; Luke 22:46.

That we should retreat in good time before those who seek to ensnare us; yet, if anyone be permitted to fall into temptation, he should pray for issue that he may be able to bear it and that the will of God may be done.

Cap. 3: Matt 10:23; Matt 12:14,15; John 11:53,54; Luke 22:41,42; 1 Cor 10:13.

That, in every temptation which assails him, the Christian should remember what is said in Holy Scripture regarding the evil which confronts him and so keep himself unharmed and set his adversaries at naught.

Cap. 4: Matt 4:1-4.

RULE 63

That the Christian should not fear nor be distressed in difficult circumstances, and thus be distracted from his trust in God; but he should take courage as if the Lord were at hand directing his affairs and strengthening him against all his adversaries and as if the Holy Spirit were instructing him even as to the very replies he should make to his foes.

Cap. 1: Matt 10:28-31; Luke 12:11,12; Mark 4:37-40; Acts 5:17-21; 2 Cor 1:8, 2 Cor 1:10.

RULE 64

That we should rejoice to suffer all things even unto death for the name of the Lord and for His commandments.

Cap. 1: Matt 5:10-12; Luke 6:22,23; Acts 5:40-42; Col 1:23-25.

RULE 65

That it behooves us to make suitable requests in prayer, even if we are at the very point of death.

Cap. 1: Matt 27:46; Luke 23:46; Acts 7:58,59.

RULE 66

That we must not fail those who fight in behalf of religion.

Cap. 1: John 16:31,32; 2 Tim 1:15-18; 2 Tim 4:16.

That we must pray for those who are tried by temptation.

Cap. 2: Luke 22:31,32; Acts 12:5.

RULE 67

That to grieve for them that sleep, ill befits those who have the assurance of the resurrection from the dead.

Cap. 1: Luke 23:27-28; 1 Thess 4:12,13.

RULE 68

That we should not expect the needs peculiar to this life to continue after the resurrection; but we should realize that life in the next world is angelic and free from want.

Cap. 1: Luke 20:34-36; 1 Cor 15:35-38; 1 Cor 15:42-44.

That we must not expect the coming of the Lord to be in a certain place or in a manner according to the flesh, but suddenly throughout the whole world in the glory of the Father.

Cap. 2: Matt 24:23,24; Mark 13:23-26; 1 Thess 4:14,15.

RULE 69

A list of acts which are forbidden and have a threat attached to them.

Cap. 1: Matt 15:19,20; Matt 25:41-43; Luke 6:24-26; Luke 21:34; Rom 1:28-30; Rom 13:9; 1 Cor 6:9,10; 2 Cor 12:20; Gal 5:19-21; Gal 5:26; Eph 4:31;

Eph 5:3,4; Col 3:5,6,8,9; 1 Tim 1:9-11; 1 Tim 4:1-3; 1 Tim 6:3-5; 2 Tim 3:1-5; Titus 3:3.

A list of acts that are approved and carry with them certain promise of blessing.

Cap. 2: Matt 5:3-12; Matt 25:34-36; Rom 12:7-21; 2 Cor 6:3-10; 2 Cor 13:11; Gal 5:22,23; Eph 4:1-4; Eph 4:32; Eph 5:1,2; Phil 2:1-3; Phil 4:8,9; Col 3:1-3; 1 Thess 5:14-22; Titus 2:2-5; Titus 3:1,2; Heb 13:1-5.

RULE 70

They who are entrusted with the preaching of the Gospel ought, after prayer and supplication, to appoint as deacons or priests blameless men whose past life has been investigated and found worthy.

Cap. 1: Matt 9:37,38; Luke 6:13-16; Luke 10:1,2; Acts 1:1,2; Acts 1:23-26; 1 Tim 3:1-10; Titus 1:5-9.

That we should not be careless with regard to ordinations and that they should not be held without careful deliberation; for that which has not been put to the test involves risk; also, that it is necessary to expose one who is detected in any misdemeanor so that he who has discovered this may not be an accomplice to the sin and that others may not be scandalized but may rather learn to fear.

Cap. 2: 1 Tim 5:22; 1 Tim 5:19,20.

That he who has been chosen should not of his own accord undertake the preaching of the Gospel, but wait for the time acceptable to God and begin his preaching when he has been assigned this duty; that, furthermore, he should preach to those to whom he has been sent.

Cap. 3: Matt 10:5,6; Matt 15:22-24; John 8:42; Acts 11:19; Rom 1:1; Rom 10:14,15; 1 Tim 1:1.

That he who has been called to the preaching of the Gospel should obey instantly and without delay.

Cap. 4: Luke 9:59-60; Gal 1:15-17.

That heterodoxy is forbidden.

Cap. 5: John 10:1,2; John 10:7,8; Gal 1:8,9; 1 Tim 6:3,4.

That the faithful should be instructed in all the precepts of the Lord in the Gospel and also those transmitted to us through the Apostles as well as all that are to be inferred therefrom.

Cap. 6: Matt 28:19,20; Acts 16:4; 1 Tim 6:2.

That, if he who has been appointed to preach the doctrine of the Lord keep silence respecting anything which is necessary in order to please God,

he is guilty of the blood of those who are thus endangered, whether by reason of their doing what is forbidden or of omitting the good they are obliged to do.

Cap. 7: Luke 11:52; Acts 18:5,6; Acts 20:26,27.

That, when there is question of something not expressly commanded in the Scripture, each should be exhorted to follow the better course.

Cap. 8: Matt 19:12; 1 Cor 7:25-27.

That no one is permitted to force others to do what he himself has not succeeded in accomplishing.

Cap. 9: Luke 11:46.

That he who is a preacher of the Word should be proposed to the rest as a model of every virtue by first practicing what he teaches.

Cap. 10: Matt 11:28,29; John 13:12-15; Acts 20:35; 1 Cor 11:1; 1 Tim 4:12.

That he who is a preacher of the Word should not feel secure in his own righteousness, but should realize that the moral improvement of the faithful is the specific and preeminent function of the office committed to him.

Cap. 11: Matt 5:13; John 6:37-40; 1 Thess 2:19,20.

That the preacher of the Word should visit all the towns and cities in his charge.

Cap. 12: Matt 4:23; Luke 8:1.

That all should be summoned to the hearing of the Gospel, that the Word must be preached with all candor, that the truth must be upheld even at the cost of opposition and persecution of whatever sort, unto death.

Cap. 13: Matt 10:27,28; Matt 22:8,9; John 18:20; Acts 5:27-29; Acts 20:23,24; 1 Thess 2:1,2.

That we should pray for the spiritual advancement of the faithful and also return thanks for this favor.

Cap. 14: John 17:20,21; John 17:24; Luke 10:21; Rom 1:8,9; Phil 1:8-11.

That good actions performed with the grace of God ought to be made known also to others for His glory.

Cap. 15: Luke 9:10; Acts 14:26; Eph 6:21,22.

That we must be solicitous not only for those who are present but also for the absent and do all things as the work of edification may require.

Cap. 16: John 10:16; 1 Thess 3:1,2.

That we should hearken to those who ask us to confer a benefit.

Cap. 17: Matt 9:18,19; Acts 9:38,39.

That they who accept the doctrine of truth should be confirmed in it by our visits.

Cap. 18: Acts 15:36; 1 Thess 2:17,18; 1 Thess 3:1-3.

That it behooves him who loves the Lord to be solicitous in all charity and with every manifestation of zeal for those whom he teaches, even though it should be necessary for him to persevere unto death itself in his teaching both public and private.

Cap. 19: John 10:11; John 21:15-17; Acts 20:7; Acts 20:11; Acts 20:20-21; Acts 20:31; 1 Thess 2:9.

That the preacher of the Word should be compassionate and merciful, especially toward those who are suffering distress of soul.

Cap. 20: Matt 9:11-13; Matt 9:36.

That it is right to be kind and solicitous even with regard to the bodily needs of those in our charge.

Cap. 21: Matt 15:32; Mark 1:40,41; Acts 6:1-3.

That the preacher of the Word should not be eager to busy himself with minor matters, relaxing, meanwhile, the zeal he is obliged to show in more important ones.

Cap. 22: Acts 6:2; Acts 6:4.

That we should not be ostentatious nor traffic in the word of doctrine by flattering our hearers in the interest of our own pleasure or convenience; but it benefits us to act as if we were speaking for the glory of God in His very presence.

Cap. 23: Matt 23:5-10; John 7:16-18; 2 Cor 2:17; 1 Thess 2:3-7.

That the preacher of the Word should not abuse his power by insolent or high-minded treatment of those in his care; but he should rather regard his position as a reason for showing humility toward them.

Cap. 24: Matt 24:45-51; John 13:13,14; Luke 22:24-27; Acts 20:17-20; 2 Cor 11:19-21.

That we should not preach the Gospel in a spirit of strife or envy, or rivalry with anyone.

Cap. 25: Matt 12:18,19; Phil 1:15-17.

That human devices for enhancing style should not be employed in preaching the Gospel, lest they conceal the grace of God.

Cap. 26: Matt 11:25; 1 Cor 1:17; 1 Cor 2:1-5.

That we should not think that we achieve success in preaching through our own devices, but we should rely entirely on God.

Cap. 27: 2 Cor 3:4-6; 2 Cor 4:7.

That one who is entrusted with the preaching of the Gospel should possess nothing more than is strictly necessary for him.

Cap. 28: Matt 10:9,10; Luke 9:3; Acts 20:33,34; 2 Tim 2:4.

That we should not lend our mind to worldly affairs in the interest of those who are free to occupy themselves with these matters.

Cap. 29: Luke 12:13,14; 2 Tim 2:4.

That they who, to please their listeners, neglect to give a frank presentation of the will of God become the slaves of those they would please and abandon the service of God.

Cap. 30: John 5:44; Gal 1:10.

That the aim a teacher proposes to himself should be that of forming each one according to his level "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ."

Cap. 31: Matt 5:48; John 17:20,21; Eph 4:11-13.

That we should instruct our adversaries in forbearance and mildness in the hope of their conversion until the full measure of solicitude has been exercised toward them.

Cap. 32: Matt 12:19,20; 2 Tim 2:24-26.

That it is right to yield and not insist obstinately when, through fear or out of caution, some do not tolerate the presence of a preacher of the Word.

Cap. 33: Luke 8:37.

That we should depart from those who through obstinacy do not receive the Gospel, not allowing ourselves to accept even corporeal necessities from them.

Cap. 34: Matt 10:14; Luke 10:10,11; Acts 18:5,6.

That we should abandon the incorrigible when we have exhausted all the resources of our solicitude in their regard.

Cap. 35: Matt 23:37,38; Acts 13:46,47; Titus 3:10,11.

That the integrity of the Lord's words must be maintained unswervingly toward all and in all circumstances, with no concession to our preferences.

Cap. 36: 1 Tim 5:21.

That the preacher of the Word should say and do each thing after deliberation and close examination with a view to pleasing God, so as also to gain the approval and esteem due him from those in his care.

Cap. 37: Acts 20:18,19; Acts 20:33,34; 1 Thess 2:10,11.

RULE 71

Prescriptions which refer jointly to bishops and priests.

Cap. 1: 1 Tim 3:1,2; 1 Tim 5:17-22; 2 Tim 2:22-24; 2 Tim 3:10,11; Titus 1:5,6.

Concerning deacons.

Cap. 2: Acts 6:5,6; 1 Tim 3:8.

RULE 72

Concerning the hearers: that those who are instructed in the Scriptures should examine what is said by the teachers, receiving what is in conformity with the Scriptures and rejecting what is opposed to them; and that those who persist in teaching such doctrines should be strictly avoided.

Cap. 1: Matt 18:7-9; John 10:1; John 10:5; Gal 1:8; 1 Thess 5:20-22.

That they who possess little knowledge of the Scriptures should recognize the distinctive mark of the saints by the fruits of the Spirit, receiving those who bear this mark and avoiding those who do not.

Cap. 2: Matt 7:15,16; Phil 3:17.

That they who teach rightly the Word of Truth should be received even as the Lord, unto the glory of Him who has sent them, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Cap. 3: Matt 10:40; John 13:20; Luke 10:16; Gal 4:13,14.

That they who heed not those who are sent by the Lord bring dishonor not only upon these latter, but upon Him also who sent them, and they draw down upon themselves a harsher judgment than that pronounced upon the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Cap. 4: Matt 10:14,15; Luke 10:16; 1 Thess 4:8.

That the teaching of the Lord's commandments should be received as having the power to procure eternal life and the kingdom of heaven; and also that we should put it into practice with a good will, even though it seems arduous.

Cap. 5: John 5:24; Acts 14:20-22.

That reprimand and censure should be accepted as healing remedies for vice and as conducive to health; whence it is evident that they who feign indulgence in a spirit of flattery and do not upbraid the sinners, cause them to suffer supreme loss and plot the destruction of that life which is their true life.

Cap. 6: Matt 18:15; 1 Cor 5:4,5; 2 Cor 7:8-10; Titus 1:13.

RULE 73

That a husband must not separate from his wife nor a wife from her husband unless one of them be taken in adultery or is a hindrance to the other in the devout service of God.

Cap. 1: Matt 5:31,32; Luke 14:26; Matt 19:9; 1 Cor 7:10,11.

That the husband may not put away his wife and marry another, nor may she who is put away by her husband marry another.

Cap. 2: Matt 19:9.

That husbands should love their wives with the love wherewith Christ has loved the Church, who delivered Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her.

Cap. 3: Eph 5:25,26; Eph 5:28.

That wives should be subject to their husbands, as the church is to Christ, and thus do the will of God.

Cap. 4: Eph 5:22-24; Titus 2:4,5.

That women should not adorn themselves for beauty's sake, but they should be full of zeal and solicitude for good works, regarding this as the true and appropriate adornment for Christian women.

Cap. 5: 1 Tim 2:9,10.

That women should keep silence in church, but be zealous at home to inquire about the manner of pleasing God.

Cap. 6: 1 Cor 14:34,35; 1 Tim 2:11-15.

RULE 74

That a widow who enjoys sufficiently robust health should spend her life in works of zeal and solicitude, keeping in mind the words of the Apostle and the example of Dorcas.

Cap. 1: Acts 9:36; Acts 9:39; 1 Tim 5:9,10.

That the widow esteemed for the good works mentioned by the Apostle and accounted in the number of true widows should persevere day and night in prayer and supplication, with fasting.

Cap. 2: Luke 2:36,37; 1 Tim 5:5,6.

RULE 75

That bond-servants should obey their masters according to the flesh with a right good will for the glory of God in whatever does not violate a commandment of God.

Cap. 1: Eph 6:5-8; 1 Tim 6:1,2; Titus 2:9,10.

That masters, mindful of the true Master, should, after the Lord's example, give in return to their bond-servants, insofar as they can, in the fear of God and out of clemency, whatever benefits they may receive from them.

Cap. 2: John 13:3-5; John 13:13-15; Eph 6:9.

RULE 76

That children should honor and obey their parents in all things wherein the command of God would not be violated.

Cap. 1: Luke 2:48; Luke 2:51; Eph 6:1-3.

That parents should rear their children with mildness and forbearance "in the discipline and correction of the Lord," and, insofar as may be, give them no occasion for anger or grief.

Cap. 2: Eph 6:4; Col 3:21.

RULE 77

That virgins should be free from all solicitude for this world so that they may be able to give thanks to God without distraction of mind or body, in expectation of the kingdom of heaven.

Cap. 1: Matt 19:12; 1 Cor 7:32-35.

RULE 78

That soldiers may not perform deeds of violence nor make false accusations.

Cap. 1: Luke 3:14.

RULE 79

That rulers are custodians of the decrees of God.

Cap. 1: Rom 13:3,4.

That it is right to submit to higher authority wherever a command of God would not be violated.

Cap. 2: Rom 13:1-3; Acts 5:29; Titus 3:1.

RULE 80

The qualities which the Scripture would have Christians possess as disciples of Christ, conformed only to the pattern of what they behold in Him or hear from Him.

Cap. 1: Matt 11:29; John 13:13-15.

As sheep of Christ who hear the voice of their own Shepherd only and follow Him.

Cap. 2: John 10:27; John 10:5.

As vine branches of Christ rooted in Him and in Him bringing forth fruit, doing and possessing only what is conformable to Him and worthy of Him.

Cap. 3: John 15:5.

As members of Christ, perfect in every observance of the Lord's commandments or in showing forth the gifts of the Holy Spirit in conformity with the dignity of their Head which is Christ.

Cap. 4: 1 Cor 6:15; Eph 4:15,16.

As a spouse of Christ, guarding their purity and walking according to the will of the Bridegroom alone.

Cap. 5: John 3:29; 2 Cor 11:2.

As temples of God, holy, pure, and filled only with what pertains to the worship of God.

Cap. 6: John 14:23; 2 Cor 6:16.

As a sacrifice unto God, blameless and unspotted, in every member and part maintaining the integrity of divine worship.

Cap. 7: Rom 12:1.

As sons of God formed to the image of God according to the measure vouchsafed to men.

Cap. 8: John 13:33; Gal 4:19.

As light in the world, both so as to be non-receptive of evil and to illuminate those who come to them to receive knowledge of the truth, that they may become what they ought to be or give proof of what they are.

Cap. 9: Matt 5:14; Phil 2:15.

As salt in the earth, so that they may renew in spirit unto incorruption those who associate with them.

Cap. 10: Matt 5:13.

As the word of life, confirming the hope of the true life by their mortification in the things of this life.

Cap. 11: Phil 2:15,16.

What the Scripture would have those be who are entrusted with the preaching of the Gospel, as apostles and ministers of Christ and faithful dispensers of the mysteries of God, fulfilling to the letter in word and work the precepts of the Lord alone.

Cap. 12: Matt 10:16; Matt 28:19; 1 Cor 4:1,2.

As heralds of the kingdom of heaven unto the ruin of him who wields empire over one who dies in sin.

Cap. 13: Matt 10:7; 2 Tim 4:1,2.

As the model or rule of piety unto the perfecting of all righteousness in the followers of the Lord and unto proof of iniquity in those who are guilty of the slightest disobedience.

Cap. 14: Phil 3:13-16; 1 Tim 4:12; 2 Tim 2:15.

As the eye in the body, discerning good and evil, guiding the members of Christ as circumstances require with regard to each one.

Cap. 15: Matt 6:22.

As shepherds of the sheep of Christ, not refusing to lay down their life for them if occasion require it, to the end that they may communicate to these the Gospel of God.

Cap. 16: John 10:11; Acts 20:28.

As physicians who care for the maladies of the soul with great compassion, according to their knowledge of the doctrine of the Lord, to bring about health in Christ and perseverance.

Cap. 17: Matt 9:12; Rom 15:1.

As fathers and nurses of children they themselves have begotten, who with fervent dispositions of love in Christ would not only impart the Gospel of God to them, but even give their lives for them.

Cap. 18: John 13:33; 1 Cor 4:15; 1 Thess 2:7,8.

As co-workers with God, devoting themselves completely and solely in behalf of the Church to those works only that are worthy of God.

Cap. 19: 1 Cor 3:9.

As husbandmen of the vines of God, who plant nothing alien to the vine which is Christ, nothing unfertile, but with all diligence foster that which is congenial and fruitful.

Cap. 20: John 15:1,2; 1 Cor 3:6.

As builders of the temple of God, shaping each soul to be framed together upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets.

Cap. 21: 1 Cor 3:10,11; Eph 2:19-22.

Cap. 22

What is the mark of a Christian?

Faith working by charity.

What is the mark of faith?

A sure conviction of the truth of the inspired words, not to be shaken by any process of reasoning, nor by the alleging of natural requirements, nor by the pretenses of false piety.

What is the mark of a faithful soul?

To be in these dispositions of full acceptance on the authority of the words [of the Scripture], not venturing to reject anything nor making additions. For, if "all that is not of faith is sin," as the Apostle says (Rom 14:23), and "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom 10:17), everything outside Holy Scripture, not being of faith, is sin.

What is the mark of charity toward God?

To observe His commandments with a view to His glory.

What is the mark of charity toward one's neighbor?

Not to seek what is one's own but that which is to the advantage of the loved one both in body and soul.

What is the mark of a Christian?

To be born anew through baptism of water and the Spirit.

What is the mark of one born of water?

That he be dead and immovable with regard to all sin, as Christ died once and for all because of sin, as it is written: "All we who are baptized in Christ Jesus are baptized in his death. For we are buried together with him by baptism unto death; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him that the body of sin may be destroyed, to the end that we may serve sin no longer" (Rom 6:3,4,6).

What is the mark of one born of the Spirit?

That he become in the measure granted him that of which he has been born, as it is written: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6).

What is the mark of him who has been born anew?

That he strip off the old man with his deeds and cupidities and put on the new man, "who is renewed unto knowledge, according to the image of him

that created him" (Col 3:10). As it is written: "As many of you as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ" (Gal 3:27).

What is the mark of a Christian?

That he be purified of all defilement of the flesh and of the spirit in the Blood of Christ, perfecting sanctification in the fear of God and the love of Christ, (2 Cor 7:1) and that he have no blemish nor spot nor any such thing; that he be holy and blameless (Eph 5:27) and so eat the Body of Christ and drink His Blood; for "he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks judgment to himself" (1 Cor 11:29).

What is the mark of those who eat the Bread and drink the Cup of Christ?

That they keep in perpetual remembrance Him who died for us and rose again.

What is the mark of those who keep such remembrance?

That they live not for themselves but for Him who died for them and rose again (2 Cor 5:15).

What is the mark of a Christian?

That his justice abound in all things more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, according to the rule of the doctrine which has been handed down in the Lord's Gospel (Matt 5:20).

What is the mark of Christians?

That they love one another as Christ has loved us (Eph 5:2).

What is the mark of a Christian?

To set the Lord always in his sight (Ps 15:8).

What is the mark of a Christian?

To watch daily and hourly and stand prepared in that state of perfection which is pleasing to God, knowing that at what hour he thinks not, the Lord will come (Luke 12:40).

St. John Chrysostom

Bishop of Constantinople and Doctor of the Church, St. John Chrysostom (347–407) was one of the greatest orators of Christian history. His name, Chrysostomos, is the Greek for “golden-mouthed,” and was given him because of his phenomenal ability in preaching.

As a monk, he wrote several treatises, notably one On the Priesthood, and was ordained to the priesthood at the age of forty. During the years 386 to 398, he directed his great powers of oratory to the instruction and moral reformation of the nominally Christian city of Antioch. It was at this time that he delivered no less than eighty-eight homilies on the Gospel of St. John, of which the following selection is a part.

Nominated Bishop of Constantinople in 398, Chrysostom’s short episcopacy was a series of crises, mainly occasioned by his outspoken denunciation of the lax morals of the people, including the Empress Eudoxia. John was several times driven from his see, and died in exile. Pope Innocent I was almost alone in defending John against his traducers in high places.

The title “Doctor of the Eucharist” is given to St. John Chrysostom because of his clear and extensive witness to the Real Presence. The selection here chosen from his homily on the sixth chapter of St. John is a fair sample of both Chrysostom’s style of preaching and his unqualified defense of the Holy Eucharist as the sacrament in which Christ allows us “actually to eat His Body.”

St. John Chrysostom Homily 46 (John 6:41–53)

The Jews therefore murmured about him because he had said: “I am the bread that has come down from heaven.” And they kept saying: “Is this not the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How, then, does he say: ‘I have come down from heaven?’”¹

“Their god is the belly, their glory is in their shame.”² said Paul, writing to the Philippians about certain men. Now, it is clear from what had gone before that the Jews were just like these men, and this is likewise clear from the words they addressed to Christ as they approached Him. When, indeed, He gave them bread and satisfied their hunger, they kept calling Him a prophet and sought to make Him king. But when He taught them about their spiritual food, about life everlasting, when He led them away from things of sense, when He spoke to them of the resurrection, and elevated their thoughts, when, in short, they ought most of all to have admired Him, then they murmured and went away.

Now, if He was in truth the Prophet, as they had just said, “This is indeed he about whom Moses said, ‘The Lord thy God will raise up to thee a prophet of thy brethren like unto me: him shalt thou hear,’”³ they ought to have listened to Him when He said: “I have come down from heaven.” On the contrary, they did not listen to Him, but murmured. Of course, they still held Him in awe because of the recent miracle of the loaves. That is why they did not oppose Him openly, but by murmuring they showed that they resented it, because He did not give them the table which they desired. And as they murmured, they kept saying: “Is this not the son of Joseph?”

From this it is clear that they did not yet know His marvelous and strange generation. That is why they still called Him the son of Joseph. Yet, He did not reprove them or say to them: “I am not the son of Joseph.” This was not, to be sure, because He was the son of Joseph, but because they were not yet able to hear of His wonderful Incarnation. And if they were not ready for a clear revelation of His birth according to the flesh, much more was that the case with

¹ John 6:41,42.

² Phil 3:19.

³ Deut 18:15.

that ineffable one from above. If He did not reveal the humble one, much less would He have treated of the other. And though it scandalized them very much to think that He was of a lowly and ordinary father, He nevertheless did not reveal His true parentage, in order that, in removing one scandal, He might not cause another.

What, then, did He reply when they murmured? "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him." The Manichaeans pounce on this and say that no action lies within our power, though the statement actually proves conclusively that we are in possession of free will. "If a man has the power to come to Him," they say, "what need has he of being drawn?" In reality, Christ's words do not dispense with free will, but underline our need for assistance [in exercising our free will], because He here was pointing out that it is not anyone who happens to do so that comes to Him, but that it is a person enjoying the benefit of much assistance who comes.

In the next place, He also pointed out the manner by which He draws him. In order that they might not suspect of God some purely material operation, He added: "Not that anyone has seen the Father except him who is from God, he has seen the Father."

"How, then, does He draw him?" you will ask. The Prophet foretold this of old, prophesying in the words: "They all shall be taught of God." Do you see the high dignity of faith? And do you see how he predicted that they were going to learn, not from men, nor through a man, but through God Himself? Indeed, that is why He despatched them to the Prophets, namely, to corroborate His words.

"But," you say, "if he says, 'They all shall be taught of God,' how is it that not all men are believers?" Because his words were spoken of the majority of men. Besides, even apart from this, the prophecy refers not to all men in general, but to all who will to be taught. For, as a teacher, He is at the disposal of all men, ready to give them His teachings, pouring out His teaching in abundance unto all.

"And I will raise him up on the last day." In this text the Son has no inconsiderable dignity, for if, to be sure, the Father draws men, the Son it is who raises them up, not, of course, separating His works from those of the Father (for how could that be?), but showing that Their power is the same. Therefore, just as in the place where He said: "And the Father, who has sent me, bears witness to me," in order that none might contend against His words, He thereupon referred them to the Scriptures; so also in this text, in order that they might not conceive the same suspicion, He referred them to the Prophets, to whom He repeatedly turned to prove that He was not in opposition to the Father.

"But," you will say, "what of those before this time? Were they not 'taught of God'? Then, what is better here?" The fact is that, before this, people learned

the things of God through men, while now they learn them through the only-begotten Son of God and through the Holy Spirit. Next He added: "Not that anyone has seen the Father except him who is from God," not saying this here in the sense of causality, but of the mode of His existence. Because, if He had said it in the sense of causality, we are all, likewise, "from God." Where then would be the superiority and preeminence of the Son? "But why," you will say, "did He not make it clearer?" Because of their weakness. If they were scandalized to such a degree when He said: "I have come down from heaven," what scandal would they not have taken if He added this?

He called Himself "living bread" because He welds together for us this life and the life to come. Therefore, He added: "If anyone eat of this bread he shall live forever." Surely, "bread" here means the teachings of salvation, and faith in Him, or else His Body, for both strengthen the soul. Yet, when He said elsewhere: "If anyone hear my word, he will not taste death,"⁴ they were scandalized, while here they did not have any such reaction, perhaps because they still were in awe of Him on account of the loaves He had [miraculously] brought into being.

Moreover, notice what a distinction He made between the living bread and the manna, by telling them the kind of effect that each of these foods produces. To show that the manna had no unusual effect He added: "Your fathers ate the manna in the desert and have died." Next, He placed before them very convincing evidence that they themselves were deemed worthy of much greater blessings than their fathers, by referring indirectly to those well-known and wonderful men who lived at the time of Moses. Therefore, when He had said that they who had eaten the manna had died, He added: "If anyone eat of this bread, he will live forever." And He did not use the words "in the desert" without design, but to imply that the manna was not provided for a long period of time and did not accompany them into the Promised Land.

This Bread, however, is not such. "And the bread that I will give is my flesh that I will give for the life of the world." With good reason at this point someone might inquire in perplexity whether that was a good time for Him to say these words, which were not then constructive or profitable, but rather were even injurious to what had already been built up. "From this time," Scripture says, "many of his disciples turned back, saying, 'This is a hard saying. Who can listen to it?'" It seems that these teachings ought to have been given to the disciples alone, as Matthew⁵ has said: "He explained privately to them."

What reply, then, shall we make to this objection? That even now these teachings were both very profitable and very necessary. Since they were urgently asking for food, but bodily food—and in recalling to Him the nourishment

⁴ John 8:52.

⁵ Actually, Mark 4:34; but cf. Matt 13:36.

provided for their forefathers were stressing the greatness of the manna—in order to prove that all this was type and figure, while the reality thus foreshadowed was actually present, He made mention of spiritual nourishment.

“But,” you will say, “He ought to have said: ‘Your fathers ate the manna in the desert, and I have provided bread for you.’” However, there was a great difference between the two. The latter, indeed, seemed inferior to the former, because this was brought from above, while the other, the miracle of the loaves, took place on earth. Therefore, since they were seeking for food brought down from heaven, for this reason He kept saying repeatedly: “I have come down from heaven.”

Now, if someone should inquire: “Why in the world did He shroud the explanation in mystery?” we should say this in reply to him: It was just the right time for such words, for the obscurity of the meaning of what is said always attracts the attention of the listener and makes him listen more carefully.

They ought not, therefore, to have been scandalized, but they should have asked questions and made inquiries. Instead, they went away. If, indeed, they thought He was a prophet, they ought to have believed His words. The scandal, then, consisted in their perversity, not in the doubtful meaning of His words. And notice, too, how He had gradually bound His disciples to Himself, for it was they who said: “Thou hast words of life; where else shall we go?” This was notwithstanding the fact that He here represented Himself as the giver, not His Father: “The bread that I will give is my flesh.” However, the crowd did not react as His disciples did, but quite the contrary: “This is a hard saying.” And they therefore went away.

Yet, the teaching was not strange and new. John, in truth, had implied it when he addressed Him as “Lamb.” “Even so, they did not know,” you will say. I am fully aware they did not, but even the disciples did not completely understand. If they did not know anything clearly about the resurrection, and for that reason were ignorant of the meaning of the words: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,”⁶ much more would they not understand the words said here, for the former were less obscure than these. They did, indeed, know that Prophets had raised people from the dead, even if the Scriptures did not say this clearly, but no Scripture had ever said that someone ate flesh. Nevertheless, they believed and followed Him and confessed that He had the words of eternal life. It is the part of a disciple not to inquire impertinently into the teachings of his master, but to listen and believe and await the proper time for explanation.

“Why is it, then,” you will say, “that the contrary also happened and [the others] turned back and went away?” This was because of their perversity. When the question “how” comes in, unbelief also accompanies it. Nicodemus

⁶ John 2:19.

likewise was disturbed in this way when he said: "How can a man enter into his mother's womb?"⁷ And these men were similarly perturbed when they said: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Now, if you really are looking for the "how," why did you not say this in the case of the loaves: "How has He multiplied the five into so many?" Because then they were concerned only with being filled, not with witnessing the miracle. "But on that occasion," you will say, "experience taught them." Well, then, as a result of that, these words also ought to have been readily accepted. It was for this reason that He first worked that wonder, so that, having been instructed by it, they might no longer fail to believe what was said afterwards.

At that time, then, they actually derived no profit from His words, but we have enjoyed the benefit of the very realities. Therefore, we must learn the wondrousness of the mystery, what it is, why it was given, and what is the benefit to be derived from it. "We are one body," Scripture says, "and members made from his flesh and from his bones."⁸ Let the initiated attend studiously to these words.

Therefore, in order that we may become of His Body, not in desire only, but also in very fact, let us become commingled with that Body. This, in truth, takes place by means of the food which He has given us as a gift, because He desired to prove the love which He has for us. It is for this reason that He has shared Himself with us and has brought His Body down to our level, namely, that we might be one with Him as the body is joined with the head. This, in truth, is characteristic of those who greatly love. Job, indeed, was implying this when he said of his servants—by whom he was loved with such an excess of love—that they desired to cleave to his flesh. In giving expression to the great love which they possessed, they said: "Who will give us of his flesh that we may be filled?"⁹ Moreover, Christ has done even this to spur us on to greater love. And to show the love He has for us He has made it possible for those who desire, not merely to look upon Him, but even to touch Him and to consume Him and to fix their teeth in His Flesh and to be commingled with Him; in short, to fulfill all their love. Let us, then, come back from that table like lions breathing out fire, thus becoming terrifying to the Devil, and remaining mindful of our Head and of the love which He has shown for us.

"Parents, it is true, often entrust their children to others to be fed, but I do not do so," He says; "I nourish Mine on My own flesh. I give Myself to you, since I desire all of you to be of noble birth, and I hold out to you fair hopes for the future. He who gives Himself to you here will do so much more in the life to come. I wished to become your brother. When for your sake I had assumed

⁷ Cf. John 3:4.

⁸ Eph 5:30.

⁹ Job 31:31.

flesh and blood, I gave back again to you the very Flesh and Blood through which I had become your kinsman." This Blood makes the seal of our King bright in us; it produces an inconceivable beauty; it does not permit the nobility of the soul to become corrupt, since it refreshes and nourishes it without ceasing.

The blood which we receive by way of food is not immediately a source of nourishment, but goes through some other stage first; this is not so with this Blood, for it at once refreshes the soul and instills a certain great power in it. This Blood, when worthily received, drives away demons and puts them at a distance from us, and even summons to us angels and the Lord of angels. Where they see the Blood of the Lord, demons flee, while angels gather. This Blood, poured out in abundance, has washed the whole world clean. The blessed Paul has uttered many truths about this Blood in the Epistle to the Hebrews.¹⁰ This Blood has purified the sanctuary and the Holy of Holies.

Now, if its type had so much power, both in the Temple of the Hebrews and in the midst of the Egyptians, when sprinkled on the doorposts,¹¹ much more power does the reality have. In its types this Blood sanctified the golden altar; without it, the High Priest did not dare to enter the sanctuary. This Blood has ordained priests; in its types it has washed away sins. And if it had such great power in its types, if death shuddered so much at the figure, how would it not be in terror of the reality itself, pray tell? This Blood is the salvation of our souls; by it the soul is cleansed; by it, beautified; by it, inflamed. It makes our intellect brighter than fire; it renders our soul more radiant than gold. This Blood has been poured forth and has opened the way to heaven.

Awe-inspiring, in truth, are the mysteries of the Church; awesome, in truth, her altar. A fountain sprang up out of paradise, sending forth sensible streams; a fountain arises from this table, sending forth spiritual streams.¹² Beside this fountain there have grown, not willows without fruit, but trees reaching to heaven itself, with fruit ever in season and incorrupt. If someone is intensely hot, let him come to this fountain and cool down the feverish heat. It dispels parching heat and gently cools all things that are very hot; not those inflamed by the sun's heat, but those set on fire by burning arrows. It does so because it takes its beginning from above, and has its source from there, and from there it is fed. Many are the streams of this fountain, streams which the Paraclete sends forth; and the Son becomes its Custodian, not keeping its channel open with a mattock, but making our hearts receptive.

This fountain is a fountain of light, shedding abundant rays of truth. And beside it the Powers from on high have taken their stand, gazing on the beauty

¹⁰ Cf. Heb 9.

¹¹ Cf. Exod 12:7,13.

¹² Cf. Gen 2:10. Rev 22:1,2.

of its streams, since they perceive more clearly than we the power of what lies before us and its unapproachable flashing rays. Just as if one were to put one's hand or tongue into molten gold—if that were possible—he would at once make the object golden, the mystery lying before us here affects the soul, but much more so. The stream gushes up more vigorously than fire; it does not burn, however, but only cleanses what it touches.

This Blood was formerly foreshadowed continually in altars, in sacrifices of the Law. This is the price of the world; by it Christ purchased the Church; by it He adorned her entirely. Just as a man in buying slaves gives gold and, if he desires to beautify them, does this with gold, so also Christ has both purchased us with His Blood and adorned us with His Blood. Those who share in this Blood have taken their stand with angels, and archangels, and the Powers from on high, clad in the royal livery of Christ and grasping spiritual weapons. But I have not yet mentioned anything great, for they are wearing the King Himself.

However, since it is a great and wonderful thing, if you approach with purity you come unto salvation, but if with conscious unworthiness, unto punishment and dishonor. "For he that eats and drinks the Lord unworthily," Scripture says, "eats and drinks judgment to himself."¹³ If, then, those who defile the royal purple are punished in the same way as those who have rent it, why is it unfitting that those who receive the [sacred] Body with unworthy dispositions have in store for them the same punishment as those who pierced it through with nails? Indeed, see how Paul has described the fearful punishment in the words: "A man making void the law of Moses dies without any mercy on the word of two or three witnesses; how much worse punishments do you think he deserves who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant through which he was sanctified."¹⁴

Let us who enjoy such blessings, beloved, take heed to ourselves, and when we are tempted to utter a sinful word, or when we find ourselves being carried away by anger or some other such passion, let us reflect on what privileges we have been granted, what Spirit it is whose presence we enjoy, and this thought will check in us the unruly passions. How long, in truth, shall we be attached to present things? How long shall we remain asleep? How long shall we not take thought for our own salvation? Let us remember what privileges God has bestowed on us, let us give thanks, let us glorify Him, not only by faith, but also by our very works, in order that we may obtain blessings also in the world to come, by the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ with whom glory be to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, now and always, and forever and ever. Amen.

¹³ 1 Cor 11:29.

¹⁴ Heb 10:28, 29.

St. Augustine

St. Augustine (354–450), the greatest Doctor of the Church, was born at Tagaste in North Africa of a pagan father, Patricius, and a Christian mother, St. Monica. While attending the University of Carthage, he lost what little Christianity he had learned, took a mistress, and became for nine years a Manichaean. Having gone to Rome, where he opened a school of rhetoric, he became disgusted by the conduct of his pupils and went to Milan to teach. While there, he came under the influence of St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, by whom he was baptized on Easter Eve, 387.

A year after his baptism he returned to Africa and established a monastery at Tagaste. While visiting the town of Hippo Regius, he was suddenly seized by the people and presented to the aged bishop, Valerius, for ordination. While still a monk, he became a priest in 391, and four years later was made coadjutor bishop to Valerius. From 396 until his death he was the sole Bishop of Hippo. He died just as the Vandals were besieging the city.

The writings of St. Augustine are prodigious in number and range of thinking. He spoke and wrote especially in defense of the Faith against three principal adversaries: the Donatists, who claimed that only holy people belong to the Church; the Manichaeans, who said there were two ultimate deities, a good one who is the source of everything good in the world, and an evil deity from whom comes everything evil; and the Pelagians, who denied the necessity of supernatural grace for salvation.

The selection which follows is from his Confessions, written about A.D. 400. Shortly before his death, St. Augustine wrote: "The thirteen books of my Confessions praise the just and good God for all the blessings and all the misfortunes that have befallen me; they raise up to Him the mind and heart of man. I myself have found this profit in composing them, and I still find it when I read them again. What advantage will others find in them? They will see for themselves" (Retractions, II, 6, 1). Posterity has confirmed this judgment. The Confessions are the most widely read and admired of St. Augustine's works.

The Confessions of St. Augustine

THE GRACE OF FAITH

I

Let me, O my God, remember with thanks to Thee and confess Thy mercies upon me. Let my bones be pierced through with Thy love, and let them say: *Who is like unto Thee, O Lord? Thou hast broken my bonds, I will sacrifice to Thee the sacrifice of praise.* How Thou hast broken them I shall tell and all who adore Thee will say as they listen: Blessed be the Lord in heaven and on earth, great and wonderful is His name.

Your words had rooted deep in my heart and I was fenced about on all sides by You. Of Your eternal life I was now certain, though I saw it *in a dark manner and as through a glass.* All my former doubt about an incorruptible substance from which every substance has its being was taken from me. My desire now was not to be more sure of You but more steadfast in You.

But in my temporal life all was uncertain; my heart had to be purged of the old leaven. The way, our Saviour Himself, delighted me; but I still shrank from actually walking a way so strait. Then by You it came into my mind, and the idea appealed strongly to me, to go to Simplicianus whom I knew to be Your good servant, for Your grace shone in him. I had heard that from his youth he had lived in great love of You. He was now grown old, and it seemed to me that from a long lifetime spent in so firm a following of Your way he must have experienced much and learned much. And truly so it was. I hoped that if I conferred with him about my problems he might from that experience and learning show me the best way for one affected as I was to walk in Your path.

For I saw the Church full; and one went this way, and one that. But I was unhappy at the life I led in the world, and it was indeed a heavy burden, for the hope of honour and profit no longer inflamed my desire, as formerly, to help me bear so exacting a servitude. These things delighted me no longer in comparison with Your sweetness and the beauty of Your house which I loved. But what still held me tight bound was my need of woman: nor indeed did the Apostle forbid me to marry, though he exhorted to a better state, wishing all men to be as he was himself. But I in my weakness was for choosing the softer

place, and this one thing kept me from taking a sure line upon others. I was weary and wasted with the cares that were eating into me, all because there were many things which I was unwilling to suffer but had to put up with for the sake of living with a wife, a way of life to which I was utterly bound. I had heard from the mouth of Truth itself that *there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven*; but Christ had said, *He that can take it, let him take it*. Certainly *all men are vain in whom there is not the knowledge of God and who cannot, by these good things that are seen, find Him Who is*. Now I was no longer in that sort of vanity; I had gone beyond it and in the testimony of the whole creation I had found You, our Creator, and Your Word Who is with You and one God with You, by Whom You created all things. But there is another sort of godlessness, that of the men who *knowing God have not glorified Him as God or given thanks*. Into this also I had fallen, but Your right hand upheld me and, taking me out of it, placed me where I might find health. For You have said to man: *Behold, the fear of the Lord is wisdom*; and again: *Be not desirous to seem wise, for those who affirm themselves to be wise become fools*. I had now found the pearl of great price, and I ought to have sold all I had and bought it. But I hesitated still.

2

So I went to Simplicianus, who had begotten Ambrose, now bishop, into Your grace, and whom indeed Ambrose loved as a father. I told him all the wanderings of my error. But when I told him that I had read certain books of the Platonists which had been translated into Latin by Victorinus, onetime professor of rhetoric in Rome—who had, so I heard, died a Christian—he congratulated me for not having fallen upon the writings of other philosophers which are full of vain deceits, according to the elements of this world, whereas in the Platonists God and His Word are everywhere implied. Then to draw me on to the humility of Christ, hidden from the wise and revealed to little ones, he began to speak of Victorinus himself whom he had known intimately when he was in Rome. Of Victorinus he told me what I shall now set down, for the story glorifies Your grace and it should be told to Your glory. For here was an old man deeply learned, trained in all the liberal sciences, a man who had read and weighed so many of the philosophers' writings, the teacher of so many distinguished senators, a man who on account of the brilliance of his teaching had earned and been granted a statue in the Roman forum—an honour the citizens of this world think so great. He had grown old in the worship of idols, had taken part in their sacrilegious rites, for almost all the Roman nobility at that time was enthusiastic for them and was ever talking of "prodigies and the

monster gods of every kind, and of the jackal-headed Anubis—who all had once fought against the Roman deities Neptune and Venus and Minerva” and had been beaten: yet Rome was on its knees before these gods it had conquered. All this Victorinus with his thunder of eloquence had gone on championing for so many years even into old age: yet he thought it no shame to be the child of Your Christ, an infant at Your font, bending his neck under the yoke of humility and his forehead to the ignominy of the Cross.

O Lord, Lord, who dost *bow down Thy heavens and descend, dost touch the mountains and they smoke*, by what means didst Thou find Thy way into that breast? He read, so Simplicianus said, Holy Scripture; he investigated all the Christian writings most carefully and minutely. And he said not publicly but to Simplicianus privately and as one friend to another: “I would have you know that I am now a Christian.” Simplicianus answered: “I shall not believe it nor count you among Christians unless I see you in the Church of Christ.” Victorinus asked with some faint mockery: “Then is it the walls that make Christians?” He went on saying that he was a Christian, and Simplicianus went on with the same denial, and Victorinus always repeated his retort about the walls. The fact was that he feared to offend his friends, important people and worshippers of these demons; he feared that their enmity might fall heavily upon him from the height of their Babylonian dignity as from the tops of the cedars of Lebanon which the Lord had not yet brought down. But when by reading in all earnestness he had drawn strength, he grew afraid that Christ might deny him before His angels if he were ashamed to confess Christ before men. He felt that he was guilty of a great crime in being ashamed of the sacraments of the lowliness of Your Word, when he had not been ashamed of the sacrilegious rites of those demons of pride whom in his pride he had worshipped. So he grew proud towards vanity and humble towards truth. Quite suddenly and without warning he said to Simplicianus, as Simplicianus told me: “Let us go to the Church. I wish to be made a Christian.” Simplicianus, unable to control his joy, went with him. He was instructed in the first mysteries of the faith, and not long after gave in his name that he might be regenerated by baptism, to the astonishment of Rome and the joy of the Church. The proud saw it and were enraged, ground their teeth and were livid with envy: but the Lord God was the hope of His servant, so that he had no regard for vanities and lying follies.

Finally when the hour had come for his profession of faith—which at Rome was usually made by those who were about to enter into Your grace in a set form of words learned and memorized and spoken from a platform in the sight of the faithful—Simplicianus told me that the priests offered Victorinus to let him make the profession in private, as the custom was with such as seemed likely to find the ordeal embarrassing. But he preferred to make profession of salvation in the sight of the congregation in church. For there had been no salvation in the rhetoric he had taught, yet he had professed it publicly.

Obviously therefore he should be in less fear of Your meek flock when he was uttering Your word, since he had had no fear of the throng of the deluded when uttering his own. When therefore he had gone up to make his profession all those who knew him began whispering his name to one another with congratulatory murmurs. And indeed who there did not know him? And from the lips of the rejoicing congregation sounded the whisper, "Victorinus, Victorinus." They were quick to utter their exultation at seeing him and as quickly fell silent to hear him. He uttered the true faith with glorious confidence, and they would gladly have snatched him to their very heart. Indeed, they did take him to their heart in their love and their joy: with those hands they took him.

3

O loving God, what is it in men that makes them rejoice more for the salvation of a soul that was despaired of or one delivered from a major peril, than if there had always been hope or the peril had been less? Even You, O Merciful Father, rejoice more *upon one sinner doing penance than upon ninety and nine just who need not penance*. It is with special joy that we hear how the lost sheep is brought home upon the exultant shoulders of the shepherd and how the coin is put back into Your treasury while the neighbours rejoice with the woman who found it. And the joy we feel at Mass in Your church brings tears as we hear of that younger son who was dead and made alive again, who had been lost and was found. You rejoice in us and in Your angels who stand fast in holy charity. For You are ever the same because You ever know, and in the one way of knowing, all those things which are not always existent nor always the same.

What is it in the soul, I ask again, that makes it delight more to have found or regained the things it loves than if it had always had them? Creatures other than man bear the same witness, and all things are filled with testimonies acclaiming that it is so. The victorious general has his triumph; but he would not have been victorious if he had not fought; and the greater danger there was in the battle, the greater rejoicing in the triumph. The storm tosses the sailors and threatens to wreck the ship; all are pale with the threat of death. But the sky grows clear, the sea calm, and now they are as wild with exultation as before with fear. A friend is sick and his pulse threatens danger; all who want him well feel as if they shared his sickness. He begins to recover, though he cannot yet walk as strongly as of old: and there is more joy than there was before, when he was still well and could walk properly. Note too that men procure the actual pleasures of human life by way of pain—I mean not only the pain that comes upon us

unlooked for and beyond our will, but unpleasantness planned and willingly accepted. There is no pleasure in eating or drinking, unless the discomfort of hunger and thirst come before. Drunkards eat salty things to develop a thirst so great as to be painful, and pleasure arises when the liquor quenches the pain of the thirst. And it is the custom that promised brides do not give themselves at once lest the husband should hold the gift cheap unless delay had set him craving.

We see this in base and dishonourable pleasure, but also in the pleasure that is licit and permitted, and again in the purest and most honourable friendship. We have seen it in the case of him who had been dead and was brought back to life, who had been lost and was found. Universally the greater joy is heralded by greater pain. What does this mean, O Lord my God, when Thou art an eternal joy to Thyself, Thou Thyself art joy itself, and things about Thee ever rejoice in Thee? What does it mean that this part of creation thus alternates between need felt and need met, between discord and harmony? Is this their mode of being, this what Thou didst give them, when from the heights of heaven to the lowest earth, from the beginning of time to the end, from the angel to the worm, from the first movement to the last, Thou didst set all kinds of good things and all Thy just works each in its place, each in its season? Alas for me, how high art Thou in the highest, how deep in the deepest! And Thou dost never depart from us, yet with difficulty do we return to Thee.

4

Come, Lord, work upon us, call us back, set us on fire and clasp us close, be fragrant to us, draw us to Thy loveliness: let us love, let us run to Thee. Do not many from a deeper pit of blindness than Victorinus come back to Thee, enlightened by that light in which they receive from Thee the power to be made Thy sons? But because they are not so well known, there is less rejoicing over them even by those who do know them. For when many rejoice together, the joy of each one is richer: they warm themselves at each other's flame. Further, in so far as they are known widely, they guide many to salvation and are bound to be followed by many. So that even those who have gone before rejoice much on their account, because the rejoicing is not only on their account. It would be shameful if in Your tabernacle the persons of the rich should be welcome before the poor, or the nobly born before the rest: since *Thou hast rather chosen the weak things of the world to confound the strong, and hast chosen the base things of the world and the things that are contemptible, and things that are not, in order to bring to naught things that are.* It was by Paul's tongue that You uttered these words. Yet when Paulus the proconsul came under the light yoke

of Christ and became a simple subject of the great King, his pride brought low by the Apostle's spiritual might, even that least of Your Apostles now desired to be called Paul, in place of his former name of Saul, for the glory of so great a victory. Victory over the enemy is greater when we win from him a man whom he holds more strongly and through whom he holds more people. He has a firmer hold on the eminent by reason of their noble rank, and through them he holds very many people by reason of their authority. Therefore the heart of Victorinus was all the more welcome because the devil had held it as an impregnable fortress; and the tongue of Victorinus because it was a strong sharp weapon with which the devil had slain many. It was right for Your sons to rejoice with more abounding joy because our King had bound the strong man, and they saw his vessels taken from him and cleansed and made available unto Your honour and *profitable to the Lord unto every good work.*

5

Now when this man of Yours, Simplicianus, had told me the story of Victorinus, I was on fire to imitate him: which indeed was why he had told me. He added that in the time of the emperor Julian, when a law was made prohibiting Christians from teaching literature and rhetoric, Victorinus had obeyed the law, preferring to give up his own school of words rather than Your word, by which You make eloquent the tongues of babes. In this he seemed to me not only courageous but actually fortunate, because it gave him the chance to devote himself wholly to You. I longed for the same chance, but I was bound not with the iron of another's chains, but by my own iron will. The enemy held my will; and of it he made a chain and bound me. Because my will was perverse it changed to lust, and lust yielded to became habit, and habit not resisted became necessity. These were like links hanging one on another—which is why I have called it a chain—and their hard bondage held me bound hand and foot. The new will which I now began to have, by which I willed to worship You freely and to enjoy You, O God, the only certain Joy, was not yet strong enough to overcome that earlier will rooted deep through the years. My two wills, one old, one new, one carnal, one spiritual, were in conflict and in their conflict wasted my soul.

Thus, with myself as object of the experiment, I came to understand what I had read, how the *flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh.* I indeed was in both camps, but more in that which I approved in myself than in that which I disapproved. For in a sense it was now no longer I that was in this second camp, because in large part I rather suffered it unwillingly than did it with my will. Yet habit had grown stronger against me by my own act, since I

had come willingly where I did not now will to be. Who can justly complain when just punishment overtakes the sinner? I no longer had the excuse which I used to think I had for not yet forsaking the world and serving You, the excuse namely that I had no certain knowledge of the truth. By now I was quite certain; but I was still bound to earth and refused to take service in Your army; I feared to be freed of all the things that impeded me, as strongly as I ought to have feared the being impeded by them. I was held down as agreeably by this world's baggage as one often is by sleep; and indeed the thoughts with which I meditated upon You were like the efforts of a man who wants to get up but is so heavy with sleep that he simply sinks back into it again. There is no one who wants to be asleep always—for every sound judgement holds that it is best to be awake—yet a man often postpones the effort of shaking himself awake when he feels a sluggish heaviness in the limbs, and settles pleasantly into another doze though he knows he should not, because it is time to get up. Similarly I regarded it as settled that it would be better to give myself to Your love rather than go on yielding to my own lust; but the first course delighted and convinced my mind, the second delighted my body and held it in bondage. For there was nothing I could reply when You called me: *Rise, thou that sleepest and arise from the dead: and Christ shall enlighten thee*; and whereas You showed me by every evidence that Your words were true, there was simply nothing I could answer save only laggard lazy words: “Soon,” “Quite soon,” “Give me just a little while.” But “soon” and “quite soon” did not mean any particular time; and “just a little while” went on for a long while. It was in vain that *I delighted in Thy law according to the inner man, when that other law in my members rebelled against the law of my mind and led me captive in the law of sin that was in my members*. For the law of sin is the fierce force of habit, by which the mind is drawn and held even against its will, and yet deservedly because it had fallen wilfully into the habit. *Who then should deliver me from the body of this death, but Thy grace only, through Jesus Christ our Lord?*

6

Now, O Lord, my Helper and my Redeemer, I shall tell and confess to Your name how You delivered me from the chain of that desire of the flesh which held me so bound, and the servitude of worldly things. I went my usual way with a mind ever more anxious, and day after day I sighed for You. I would be off to Your church as often as my business, under the weight of which I groaned, left me free. Alypius was with me, at liberty from his legal office after a third term as assessor and waiting for private clients, to whom he might sell his legal advice—just as I sold skill in speaking, if indeed this can be bought.

Nebridius had yielded to our friendship so far as to teach under Verecundus, a great friend of all of us, a citizen and elementary school teacher of Milan, who had earnestly asked and indeed by right of friendship demanded from our company the help he badly needed. Nebridius was not influenced in the matter by any desire for profit, for he could have done better had he chosen, in a more advanced school; but he was a good and gracious friend and too kindly a man to refuse our requests. But he did it all very quietly, for he did not want to draw the attention of those persons whom the world holds great; he thus avoided distraction of mind, for he wanted to have his mind free and at leisure for as many hours as possible to seek or read or hear truths concerning wisdom.

On a certain day—Nebridius was away for some reason I cannot recall—there came to Alypius and me at our house one Ponticianus, a fellow countryman of ours, being from Africa, holder of an important post in the emperor's court. There was something or other he wanted of us and we sat down to discuss the matter. As it happened he noticed a book on a gaming table by which we were sitting. He picked it up, opened it, and found that it was the apostle Paul, which surprised him because he had expected that it would be one of the books I wore myself out teaching. Then he smiled a little and looked at me, and expressed pleasure but surprise too at having come suddenly upon that book, and only that book, lying before me. For he was a Christian and a devout Christian; he knelt before You in church, O our God, in daily prayer and many times daily. I told him that I had given much care to these writings. Whereupon he began to tell the story of the Egyptian monk Antony, whose name was held in high honour among Your servants, although Alypius and I had never heard it before that time. When he learned this, he was the more intent upon telling the story, anxious to introduce so great a man to men ignorant of him, and very much marvelling at our ignorance. But Alypius and I stood amazed to hear of Your wonderful works, done in the true faith and in the Catholic Church so recently, practically in our own times, and with such numbers of witnesses. All three of us were filled with wonder, we because the deeds we were now hearing were so great, and he because we had never heard them before.

From this story he went on to the great groups in the monasteries, and their ways all redolent of You, and the fertile deserts of the wilderness, of all of which we knew nothing. There was actually a monastery at Milan, outside the city walls. It was full of worthy brethren and under the care of Ambrose. And we had not heard of it. He continued with his discourse and we listened in absolute silence. It chanced that he told how on one occasion he and three of his companions—it was at Trèves, when the emperor was at the chariot races in the Circus—had gone one afternoon to walk in the gardens close by the city walls. As it happened, they fell into two groups, one of the others staying with him, and the other two likewise walking their own way. But as those other two strolled on they came into a certain house, the dwelling of some servants of

Yours, poor in spirit, of whom is the kingdom of God. There they found a small book in which was written the life of Antony. One of them began to read it, marvelled at it, was inflamed by it. While he was actually reading he had begun to think how he might embrace such a life, and give up his worldly employment to serve You alone. For the two men were both state officials. Suddenly the man who was doing the reading was filled with a love of holiness and angry at himself with righteous shame. He looked at his friend and said to him: "Tell me, please, what is the goal of our ambition in all these labours of ours? What are we aiming at? What is our motive in being in the public service? Have we any higher hope at court than to be friends of the emperor? And at that level, is not everything uncertain and full of perils? And how many perils must we meet on the way to this greater peril? And how long before we are there? But if I should choose to be a friend of God, I can become one now." He said this, and all troubled with the pain of the new life coming to birth in him, he turned back his eyes to the book. He read on and was changed inwardly, where You alone could see; and the world dropped away from his mind, as soon appeared outwardly. For while he was reading and his heart thus tossing on its own flood, at length he broke out in heavy weeping, saw the better way and chose it for his own. Being now Your servant he said to his friend, "Now I have broken from that hope we had and have decided to serve God; and I enter upon that service from this hour, in this place. If you have no will to imitate me, at least do not try to dissuade me."

The other replied that he would remain his companion in so great a service for so great a prize. So the two of them, now Your servants, built a spiritual tower at the only cost that is adequate, the cost of leaving all things and following You. Then Ponticianus and the man who had gone walking with him in another part of the garden came looking for them in the same place, and when they found them suggested that they should return home, as the day was now declining. But they told their decision and their purpose, and how that will had arisen in them and was now settled in them; and asked them not to try to argue them out of their decision, even if they would not also join them. Ponticianus and his friend, though not changed from their former state, yet wept for themselves, as he told us, and congratulated them in God and commended themselves to their prayers. Then with their own hearts trailing in the dust they went off to the palace, while the other two, with their hearts fixed upon heaven, remained in the hut. Both these men, as it happened, were betrothed, and when the two women heard of it they likewise dedicated their virginity to You.

7

This was the story Ponticianus told. But You, Lord, while he was speaking, turned me back towards myself, taking me from behind my own back where I had put myself all the time that I preferred not to see myself. And You set me there before my own face that I might see how vile I was, how twisted and unclean and spotted and ulcerous. I saw myself and was horrified; but there was no way to flee from myself. If I tried to turn my gaze from myself, there was Ponticianus telling what he was telling; and again You were setting me face to face with myself, forcing me upon my own sight, that I might see my iniquity and loathe it. I had known it, but I had pretended not to see it, had deliberately looked the other way and let it go from my mind.

But this time, the more ardently I approved those two as I heard of their determination to win health for their souls by giving themselves up wholly to Your healing, the more detestable did I find myself in comparison with them. For many years had flowed by—a dozen or more—from the time when I was nineteen and was stirred by the reading of Cicero's *Hortensius* to the study of wisdom; and here was I still postponing the giving up of this world's happiness to devote myself to the search for that of which not the finding only but the mere seeking is better than to find all the treasures and kingdoms of men, better than all the body's pleasures though they were to be had merely for a nod. But I in my great worthlessness—for it was greater thus early—had begged You for chastity, saying: "Grant me chastity and continence, but not yet." For I was afraid that You would hear my prayer too soon, and too soon would heal me from the disease of lust which I wanted satisfied rather than extinguished. So I had gone wandering in my sacrilegious superstition through the base ways of the Manichaeans: not indeed that I was sure they were right but that I preferred them to the Christians, whom I did not inquire about in the spirit of religion but simply opposed through malice.

I had thought that my reason for putting off from day to day the following of You alone to the contempt of earthly hopes was that I did not see any certain goal towards which to direct my course. But now the day was come when I stood naked in my own sight and my conscience accused me: "Why is my voice not heard? Surely you are the man who used to say that you could not cast off vanity's baggage for an uncertain truth. Very well: now the truth is certain, yet you are still carrying the load. Here are men who have been given wings to free their shoulders from the load, though they did not wear themselves out in searching nor spend ten years or more thinking about it."

Thus was I inwardly gnawed at. And I was in the grip of the most horrible and confounding shame while Ponticianus was telling his story. He finished the

tale and the business for which he had come; and he went his way, and I to myself. What did I not say against myself, with what lashes of condemnation did I not scourge my soul to make it follow me now that I wanted to follow You! My soul hung back. It would not follow, yet found no excuse for not following. All its arguments had already been used and refuted. There remained only trembling silence: for it feared as very death the cessation of that habit of which in truth it was dying.

8

In the midst of that great tumult of my inner dwelling place, the tumult I had stirred up against my own soul in the chamber of my heart, I turned upon Alypius, wild in look and troubled in mind, crying out: "What is wrong with us? What is this that you heard? The unlearned arise and take heaven by force, and here are we with all our learning, stuck fast in flesh and blood! Is there any shame in following because they have gone before us, would it not be a worse shame not to follow at once?" These words and more of the same sort I uttered, then the violence of my feeling tore me from him while he stood staring at me thunderstruck. For I did not sound like myself. My brow, cheeks, eyes, flush, the pitch of my voice, spoke my mind more powerfully than the words I uttered. There was a garden attached to our lodging, of which we had the use, as indeed we had of the whole house: for our host, the master of the house, did not live there. To this garden the storm in my breast somehow brought me, for there no one could intervene in the fierce suit I had brought against myself, until it should reach its issue: though what the issue was to be, You knew, not I: but there I was, going mad on my way to sanity, dying on my way to life, aware how evil I was, unaware that I was to grow better in a little while. So I went off to the garden, and Alypius close on my heels: for it was still privacy for me to have him near, and how could he leave me to myself in that state? We found a seat as far as possible from the house. I was frantic in mind, in a frenzy of indignation at myself for not going over to Your law and Your covenant, O my God, where all my bones cried out that I should be, extolling it to the skies. The way was not by ship or chariot or on foot: it was not as far as I had gone when I went from the house to the place where we sat. For I had but to will to go, in order not merely to go but to arrive: I had only to will to go—but to will powerfully and wholly, not to turn and twist a will half-wounded this way and that, with the part that would rise struggling against the part that would keep to the earth.

In the torment of my irresolution, I did many bodily acts. Now men sometimes will to do bodily acts but cannot, whether because they have not the limbs, or because their limbs are bound or weakened with illness or in some other way unable to act. If I tore my hair, if I beat my forehead, if I locked my

fingers and clasped my knees, I did it because I willed to. But I might have willed and yet not done it, if my limbs had not had the pliability to do what I willed. Thus I did so many things where the will to do them was not at all the same thing as the power to do them: and I did not do what would have pleased me incomparably more to do—a thing too which I could have done as soon as I willed to, given that willing means willing *wholly*. For in that matter, the power was the same thing as the will, and the willing *was* the doing. Yet it was not done, and the body more readily obeyed the slightest wish of the mind, more readily moved its limbs at the mind's mere nod, than the mind obeyed itself in carrying out its own great will which could be achieved simply by willing.

9

Why this monstrousness? And what is the root of it? Let Your mercy enlighten me, that I may put the question: whether perhaps the answer lies in the mysterious punishment that has come upon men and some deeply hidden damage in the sons of Adam. Why this monstrousness? And what is the root of it? The mind gives the body an order, and is obeyed at once: the mind gives itself an order and is resisted. The mind commands the hand to move and there is such readiness that you can hardly distinguish the command from its execution. Yet the mind is mind, whereas the hand is body. The mind commands the mind to will, the mind is itself, but it does not do it. Why this monstrousness? And what is the root of it? The mind I say commands itself to will: it would not give the command unless it willed: yet it does not do what it commands. The trouble is that it does not totally will: therefore it does not totally command. It commands in so far as it wills; and it disobeys the command in so far as it does not will. The will is commanding itself to be a will—commanding itself, not some other. But it does not in its fullness give the command, so that what it commands is not done. For if the will were so in its fullness, it would not command itself to will, for it would already will. It is therefore no monstrousness, partly to will, partly not to will, but a sickness of the soul to be so weighted down by custom that it cannot wholly rise even with the support of truth. Thus there are two wills in us, because neither of them is entire: and what is lacking to the one is present in the other.

IO

Let them perish from Thy presence, O God, as perish vain talkers and seducers of the soul, who observing that there are two wills at issue in our coming to a decision proceed to assert [as the Manichees do] that there are two minds in us of different natures, one good, one evil. For they are evil themselves in holding such evil opinions; and they will become good only if they perceive truth and come to it as Your Apostle says to them: *You were heretofore darkness but now light in the Lord*. But these men though they want to be light, want to be light in themselves and not in the Lord, imagining the nature of the soul to be the same as God. Thus they become not light but deeper darkness, since in their abominable arrogance they have gone further from You, *the true Light that enlightens every man that comes into this world*. Take heed what you say and blush for shame: *draw near unto Him and be enlightened, and your faces shall not be ashamed*. When I was deliberating about serving the Lord my God, as I had long meant to do, it was I who willed to do it, I who was unwilling. It was I. I did not wholly will, I was not wholly unwilling. Therefore I strove with myself and was distracted by myself. This distraction happened to me though I did not want it, and it showed me not the presence of some second mind, but the punishment of my own mind. Thus it was not I who caused it but *the sin that dwells in me*, the punishment of a sin freely committed by Adam, whose son I am.

For if there be as many contrary natures in man as there are wills in conflict with one another, then there are not two natures in us but several. Take the case of a man trying to make up his mind whether he would go to the Manichees' meeting-house or to the theatre. The Manichees would say: "Here you have two natures, one good, bringing him to the meeting-house, the other evil, taking him away. How else could you have this wavering between two wills pulling against each other?" Now I say that both are bad, the will that would take him to the Manichees and the will that would take him to the theatre. But they hold that the will by which one comes to them is good. Very well! Supposing one of us is trying to decide and wavering between two wills in conflict, whether to go to the theatre or to *our* church, will not the Manichees be in some trouble about an answer? For either they must admit, which they do not want to, that a good will would take a man to our church as they think it is a good will that brings those who are receivers of their sacrament and belong to them to their church; or they must hold that there are two evil natures and two evil wills at conflict in one man, and what they are always saying will not be true—namely that there is one good will and one evil will. Otherwise, they must be converted to the truth and not deny that when a man is taking a decision there is one soul drawn this way and that by diverse wills.

Therefore, when they perceive that there are two wills in conflict in man, they must not say that there are two opposing minds in conflict, one good, one bad, from two opposing substances and two opposing principles. For You, O God of truth, refute them and disprove them and convict them of error: as in the case where both wills are bad, when, for instance, a man is deliberating whether he shall kill another man by poison or by dagger; whether he should seize this or that part of another man's property, when he cannot seize both; whether he should spend his money on lust or hoard his money through avarice; whether he should go to the games or the theatre if they happen both to come on the same day. Let us add a third possibility to this last man, whether he should go and commit a theft from someone else's house, if the occasion should arise: and indeed a fourth, whether he should go and commit adultery, if the chance occurs at the same time. If all four things come together at the same point of time, and all are equally desired, yet all cannot be done, then they tear the mind by the conflicting pull of four wills—or even more, given the great mass of things which can be desired. Yet the Manichees do not hold such a multitude of different substances.

The same reasoning applies to wills that are good. For I ask them whether it is good to find delight in the reading of the Apostle, and good to find delight in the serenity of a Psalm, and good to discuss the Gospel. To each of these they answer that it is good: but, if all these things attract us at the same moment, are not different wills tugging at the heart of man while we deliberate which we should choose? Thus they are all good, yet they are all in conflict until one is chosen, and then the whole will is at rest and at one, whereas it had been divided into many. Or again, when eternity attracts the higher faculties and the pleasure of some temporal good holds the lower, it is one same soul that wills both, but not either with its whole will; and it is therefore torn both ways and deeply troubled while truth shows the one way as better but habit keeps it to the other.

II

Thus I was sick at heart and in torment, accusing myself with a new intensity of bitterness, twisting and turning in my chain in the hope that it might be utterly broken, for what held me was so small a thing! But it still held me. And You stood in the secret places of my soul, O Lord, in the harshness of Your mercy redoubling the scourges of fear and shame lest I should give way again and that small slight tie which remained should not be broken but should grow again to full strength and bind me closer even than before. For I kept saying within myself: "Let it be now, let it be now," and by the mere words I had begun to move towards the resolution. I almost made it, yet I did not quite

make it. But I did not fall back into my original state, but as it were stood near to get my breath. And I tried again and I was almost there, and now I could all but touch it and hold it: yet I was not quite there, I did not touch it or hold it. I still shrank from dying unto death and living unto life. The lower condition which had grown habitual was more powerful than the better condition which I had not tried. The nearer the point of time came in which I was to become different, the more it struck me with horror; but it did not force me utterly back nor turn me utterly away, but held me there between the two.

Those trifles of all trifles, and vanities of vanities, my onetime mistresses, held me back, plucking at my garment of flesh and murmuring softly: "Are you sending us away?" And "From this moment shall we not be with you, now or forever?" And "From this moment shall this or that not be allowed you, now or forever?" What were they suggesting to me in the phrase I have written "this or that," what were they suggesting to me, O my God? Do You in Your mercy keep from the soul of Your servant the vileness and uncleanness they were suggesting. And now I began to hear them not half so loud; they no longer stood against me face to face, but were softly muttering behind my back and, as I tried to depart, plucking stealthily at me to make me look behind. Yet even that was enough, so hesitating was I, to keep me from snatching myself free, from shaking them off and leaping upwards on the way I was called: for the strong force of habit said to me: "Do you think you can live without them?"

But by this time its voice was growing fainter. In the direction towards which I had turned my face and was quivering in fear of going, I could see the austere beauty of Continnence, serene and indeed joyous but not evilly, honourably soliciting me to come to her and not linger, stretching forth loving hands to receive and embrace me, hands full of multitudes of good examples. With her I saw such hosts of young men and maidens, a multitude of youth and of every age, grey widows and women grown old in virginity, and in them all Continnence herself, not barren but the fruitful mother of children, her joys, by You, Lord, her Spouse. And she smiled upon me and her smile gave courage as if she were saying: "Can you not do what these men have done, what these women have done? Or could men or women have done such in themselves, and not in the Lord their God? The Lord their God gave me to them. Why do you stand upon yourself and so not stand at all? Cast yourself upon Him and be not afraid; He will not draw away and let you fall. Cast yourself without fear, He will receive you and heal you."

Yet I was still ashamed, for I could still hear the murmuring of those vanities, and I still hung hesitant. And again it was as if she said: "Stop your ears against your unclean members, that they may be mortified. They tell you of delights, but not of such delights as the law of the Lord your God tells." This was the controversy raging in my heart, a controversy about myself against myself. And Alypius stayed by my side and awaited in silence the issue of such agitation as he had never seen in me.

I2

When my most searching scrutiny had drawn up all my vileness from the secret depths of my soul and heaped it in my heart's sight, a mighty storm arose in me, bringing a mighty rain of tears. That I might give way to my tears and lamentations, I rose from Alypius: for it struck me that solitude was more suited to the business of weeping. I went far enough from him to prevent his presence from being an embarrassment to me. So I felt, and he realized it. I suppose I had said something and the sound of my voice was heavy with tears. I arose, but he remained where we had been sitting, still in utter amazement. I flung myself down somehow under a certain fig tree and no longer tried to check my tears, which poured forth from my eyes in a flood, *an acceptable sacrifice to Thee*. And much I said not in these words but to this effect: *And Thou, O, Lord, how long? How long, Lord: wilt Thou be angry forever? Remember not our former iniquities*. For I felt that I was still bound by them. And I continued my miserable complaining: "How long, how long shall I go on saying tomorrow and again tomorrow? Why not now, why not have an end to my uncleanness this very hour?"

Such things I said, weeping in the most bitter sorrow of my heart. And suddenly I heard a voice from some nearby house, a boy's voice or a girl's voice, I do not know: but it was a sort of sing-song, repeated again and again, "Take and read, take and read." I ceased weeping and immediately began to search my mind most carefully as to whether children were accustomed to chant these words in any kind of game, and I could not remember that I had ever heard any such thing. Damming back the flood of my tears I arose, interpreting the incident as quite certainly a divine command to open my book of Scripture and read the passage at which I should open. For it was part of what I had been told about Antony, that from the Gospel which he happened to be reading he had felt that he was being admonished as though what he read was spoken directly to himself: *Go, sell what thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come follow Me*. By this experience he had been in that instant converted to You. So I was moved to return to the place where Alypius was sitting, for I had put down the Apostle's book there when I arose. I snatched it up, opened it and in silence read the passage upon which my eyes first fell: *Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences* (Rom 13:13). I had no wish to read further, and no need. For in that instant, with the very ending of the sentence, it was as though a light of utter confidence shone in all my heart, and all the darkness of uncertainty vanished away. Then leaving my finger in the place or marking it by some

other sign, I closed the book and in complete calm told the whole thing to Alypius and he similarly told me what had been going on in himself, of which I knew nothing. He asked to see what I had read. I showed him, and he looked further than I had read. I had not known what followed. And this is what followed: *Now him that is weak in faith, take unto you.* He applied this to himself and told me so. And he was confirmed by this message, and with no troubled wavering gave himself to God's will and purpose—a purpose indeed most suited to his character, for in these matters he had been immeasurably better than I.

Then we went in to my mother and told her, to her great joy. We related how it had come about: she was filled with triumphant exultation, and praised You Who are mighty beyond what we ask or conceive: for she saw that You had given her more than with all her pitiful weeping she had ever asked. For You converted me to Yourself so that I no longer sought a wife nor any of this world's promises, but stood upon that same rule of faith in which You had shown me to her so many years before. Thus You changed her mourning into joy, a joy far richer than she had thought to wish, a joy much dearer and purer than she had thought to find in grandchildren of my flesh.

THE NEW CATHOLIC

I

O Lord, *I am Thy servant: I am Thy servant and the son of Thy handmaid. Thou hast broken my bonds. I will sacrifice to Thee the sacrifice of praise.* Let my heart and my tongue praise Thee, and *let all my bones say, O Lord, who is like to Thee?* Let them say and do Thou answer me and say to my soul: *I am thy salvation.* Who am I and what kind of man am I? What evil has there not been in my deeds, or if not in my deeds, in my words, or if not in my words, then in my will? But You, Lord, are good and merciful, and Your right hand had regard to the profundity of my death and drew out the abyss of corruption that was in the bottom of my heart. By Your gift I had come totally not to will what I willed but to will what You willed. But where in all that long time was my free will, and from what deep sunken hiding-place was it suddenly summoned forth in the moment in which I bowed my neck to Your easy yoke and my shoulders to Your light burden, Christ Jesus, my Helper and my Redeemer? How lovely I suddenly found it to be free from the loveliness of those vanities, so that now it was a joy to renounce what I had been so afraid to lose. For You cast them out of me, O true and supreme Loveliness, You cast them out of me and took their place in me, You who are sweeter than all pleasure, yet not to flesh and blood; brighter than all light, yet deeper within than any secret; loftier than all honour, but not to those who are lofty to themselves. Now my mind was free from the cares that had gnawed it, from aspiring and getting and weltering in filth and rubbing the scab of lust. And I talked with You as friends talk, my glory and my riches and my salvation, my Lord God.

2

And I thought it would be good in Your sight if I did not dramatically snatch my tongue's service from the speech market but quietly withdrew; but that in any event withdraw I must, so that youths—not students of Your law or Your peace but of lying follies and the conflicts of the law—should no longer buy at my mouth the tools of their madness. Fortunately it happened that there were only a few days left before the vintage vacation; and I decided to endure

them so that I might leave with due deliberation, seeing that I had been redeemed by You and was not going to put myself up for sale again. Our purpose therefore was known to You, but not to men other than our own friends. We had agreed among ourselves not to spread the news abroad at all, although, in our ascent from *the valley of tears* and our singing of the *song of degrees*, You had given us *sharp arrows* and *burning coals* against *cunning tongues* that might argue against us with pretended care for our interest, might destroy us saying that they loved us: as men consume food saying that they love it.

You had pierced our hearts with the arrow of Your love, and our minds were pierced with the arrows of Your words. To burn away and utterly consume our slothfulness so that we might no more be sunk in its depths, we had the depths of our thought filled with the examples of Your servants whom You had changed from darkness to light and from death to life; and these inflamed us so powerfully that any false tongue of contradiction did not extinguish our flame but set us blazing more fiercely. But because for Your name, which You have sanctified throughout the earth, our decision would find many to praise it, I was afraid that it would look like ostentation if I did not wait for the approaching vacation but immediately resigned from a profession which everyone knew I practiced: for the faces of all about would be turned on my act, in that I had not chosen to wait for the vacation when it was so close, and it would be widely said that I had done it to make myself seem important. And what would it have profited me to have people discussing and arguing about my purpose and to have our good ill-spoken of?

Furthermore, that very summer, under the too heavy labor of teaching, my lungs had begun to give way and I breathed with difficulty; the pain in my breast showed that they were affected and they no longer let me talk with any strength for too long at a time. At first this had disturbed me, because it made it practically a matter of necessity that I should lay down the burden of teaching, or at least give it up for the time if I was to be cured and grow well again. But when the full purpose of giving myself leisure to meditate on how You are the Lord arose in me and became a settled resolve—as You know, O my God—I actually found myself glad to have this perfectly truthful excuse to offer parents who might be offended and for their children's sake would never willingly have let me give up teaching. So I was full of joy, and I put up with the space of time that still had to run—I fancy it was about twenty days. But to bear the time took considerable fortitude. Desire for money, which formerly had helped me to bear the heavy labor of teaching, was quite gone; so that I should have [had nothing to help me bear it and so] found it altogether crushing if patience had not taken the place of covetousness. Some of Your servants, my brethren, may think that I sinned in this, since having enrolled with all my heart in Your service, I allowed myself to sit for so much as an hour in the chair of untruthfulness.

It may be so. But, most merciful Lord, have You not pardoned and remitted this sin, along with others most horrible and deadly, in the holy water of baptism?

3

Meanwhile Verecundus was worrying himself ill over the good that had come to us. He saw himself losing our company by reason of his own chains, which bound him very tight. He was not yet a Christian, though his wife was, and indeed she was the strongest obstacle of all in the way of his setting out upon that journey on which we had started. For he said that he would not be a Christian in any other way, than the way that was beyond his power. But he very generously offered that as long as we were in the country, we might stay in his house. You will reward him, O Lord, with the reward of the just, for You have already given him the lot of the just. At a time when we were away in Rome he was seized with some bodily illness, and in the course of it became a Christian and was baptized, and so departed this life. Thus you had mercy not only upon him, but upon us too: otherwise, thinking of the wonderful kindness our friend had shown us, we should have been tormented with unbearable sorrow if we had not been able to number him in Your flock. Thanks be to our God! We are Yours, as Your exhortations and consolations prove. You are faithful to Your promises, and You will repay Verecundus for his country house at Cassiciacum, where we rested in You from the world's troubles, with the loveliness and eternal freshness of Your paradise: for You forgave him his sins upon earth in the mountain of abundance, Your mountain, the mountain of richness.

At the time, however, Verecundus was very much perturbed; but Nebridius altogether joyful. For although before he was a Christian he had fallen into that same pit of deadly error and believed the true body of Your Son to be a phantasm, he had emerged from that error; and though he had not yet received any sacraments of Your Church, he was a most zealous seeker of the truth. Not long after our conversion and regeneration by Your baptism, You took him from this life, by then a baptized Catholic and serving You in Africa in perfect chastity among his own people, for he had made his whole family Christian. And now he lives in Abraham's bosom. Whatever is meant by that bosom, there my Nebridius lives, my most beloved friend, Your son by adoption and no longer a freed-man only. There he lives. For what other place is there for such a soul? There he lives, in the place of which he asked me, an ignorant poor creature, so many questions. He no longer puts his bodily ear to my lips, but the lips of his spirit to Your fountain, drinking his fill of wisdom, all that his thirst

requires, happy without end. Nor do I think he is so intoxicated with the draught of that wisdom as to forget me, since You, O Lord, of Whom he drinks are mindful of us.

There then we were, consoling the unhappy Verecundus, for our friendship was not impaired by conversion, and exhorting him to fidelity in his state, namely the married life. As for Nebridius, we were merely waiting for him to follow us. He was so close that he might well follow, and he was indeed on the point of doing so when at last those days of waiting for the vacation came to an end. For they seemed long and many to me, because of the longing I had for that freedom and leisure in which I might sing to You from the depths of my heart: *My heart hath said to Thee: I have sought Thy face. Thy face, O Lord, will I still seek.*

4

And now the day was come on which I was to be set free from the teaching of rhetoric in fact, as I was already free in mind. And so it came about. You delivered my tongue as You had already delivered my heart, and I rejoiced and praised You, and so went off with my friends to the country house. The amount of writing I did there—the writing was now in Your service but during this breathing-space still smacked of the school of pride—my books exist to witness, with the record they give of discussions either with my friends there present or with Yourself when I was alone with You; and there are my letters to show what correspondence I had with Nebridius while he was away. But when shall I have the time to relate all Your great acts of goodness towards me, especially at that time, since I must hasten to tell of matters greater still?

For my memory reminds me, and pleasant it is, O Lord, to confess to You, what inner goads You used to tame me, and how You brought me low, *making low the mountains and hills of my thoughts, making straight what was crooked, and plain what was rough.* And I remember too how You subdued my heart's brother Alypius to the name of Jesus Christ Your only-begotten Son, Our Lord and Saviour, which at first he thought it would be in some sense lowering to put into my writings. For he would have had them redolent of the high cedars of the schools, which the Lord had now broken down, rather than of the health-giving herbs of the Church which are of such avail against the bites of serpents.

When I read the Psalms of David, songs of faithfulness and devotion in which the spirit of pride has no entry, what cries did I utter to You, O my God, I but a novice in Your true love, a catechumen keeping holiday in a country house with that other catechumen Alypius: though my mother also was with

us, a woman in sex, with the faith of a man, with the serenity of great age, the love of a mother, the piety of a Christian. What cries did I utter to You in those Psalms and how was I inflamed towards You by them, and on fire to set them sounding through all the world, if I could, against the pride of man! But in truth they are already sung throughout the world and *there is none who can hide himself from Thy heat*. I thought of the Manichees with indignation and a burning anguish of sorrow. I pitied them because they did not know our sacraments and our healing, but were insanely set against the medicine that would have cured their insanity. I wished that they might be somewhere close at hand—without my knowing that they were there—and could see my face and hear my words, when in that time of leisure I read the Fourth Psalm; and that they could see what that Psalm did in me: *When I called upon Thee, Thou, God of my justice, didst hear me; when I was in distress, Thou hast enlarged me: have mercy on me, O Lord, and hear my prayer*. Would that they could have heard me—without my knowing that they heard me, lest they might think it was on their account I was speaking as I spoke when I recited these words: and indeed I would not have said those things or said them in the same way, if I had realized that I was being heard and seen by them: nor, if I *had* said them, would they have understood how I was speaking with myself and to myself in Your presence from the natural movement of my spirit.

I was in fear and horror, and again I was on fire with hope and exultation in Your mercy, O Father. And all these emotions found expression in my eyes and in my voice when Your Holy Spirit turned to us and said: *O ye sons of men, how long will ye be dull of heart? Why do you love vanity so much and seek after lying?* For I myself had loved vanity and sought after lying. *And Thou, Lord, hadst already made Thy holy one wonderful*, raising Him from the dead and setting Him at Thy right hand, whence He should send from on high His promise, the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth. And He had already sent Him, though I knew it not. He had sent Him because already He was magnified and risen from the dead and ascended into heaven. For till then the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. And the prophet cried aloud: *How long will you be dull of heart? Why do you love vanity and seek after lying? Know ye also that the Lord hath made His holy one wonderful?* He cries out “How long,” he cries out “Know ye.” And I so long was ignorant and loved vanity and sought after lying.

I heard these things and trembled to hear them, for they were spoken to such as I remembered myself to have been. For in those phantasms which I had taken for truth were vanity and lying. And I cried out many things strongly and earnestly in the grief I felt at what I remembered. If only those could have heard me who still loved vanity and sought after lying. Perchance they would have been troubled, and have vomited up their error; and You would have heard them when they cried to You: for He who intercedes with You for us died for us with a true death of the body.

I read, *Be angry and sin not*. And by this I was much moved, O my God, for I had by then learned to be angry with myself for the past, that I might not sin in what remained of life: and to be angry with good reason, because it was not some other nature of the race of darkness that had sinned in me, as the Manichees say: and they are not angry at themselves, but treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath and of the revelation of the just judgement of God.

The good I now sought was not in things outside me, to be seen by the eye of flesh under the sun. For those who find their joy outside them easily fall into emptiness and are spilled out upon the things that are seen and the things of time, and in their starved minds lick shadows. If only they could grow weary of their own hunger and say: *Who shall show us good things?* And we should say and they should hear: *The light of Thy countenance is sealed upon us, O Lord*. For we are not *the Light that enlightens every man* but we are enlightened by Thee that *as we were heretofore darkness we are now light in Thee*. If they could but see the Light interior and eternal: for now that I had known it, I was frantic that I could not make them see it even were they to ask: *Who shall show us good things?* For the heart they would bring me would be in their eyes, eyes that looked everywhere but at You. But there, where I had been angry with myself, in my own room where I had been pierced, where I had offered my sacrifice, slaying the self that I had been, and, in the newly-taken purpose of newness of life, hoping in You—there You began to make me feel Your love and to give *gladness in my heart*. I cried out as I read this aloud and realized it within: and I no longer wished any increase of earthly goods, in which a man wastes time and is wasted by time, since in the simplicity of the Eternal I had other corn and wine and oil.

It was with a deep cry of my heart that I uttered the next verse: *O in peace! O in the selfsame!* O how he has said: *I will sleep and I will rest*. For who shall stand against us *when the saying that is written will come to pass: Death is swallowed up in victory?* You supremely are that selfsame, for You are not changed and in You is that rest in which all cares are forgotten, since there is no other besides You, and we have not to seek other things which are not what You are: but You, Lord, alone have *made me dwell in hope*. All these things I read and was on fire; nor could I find what could be done with those deaf dead, of whom indeed I had myself been one for I had been a scourge, a blind raging snarler against the Scriptures, which are all honeyed with the honey of heaven and all luminous with Your light: and now I was fretting my heart out over the enemies of these same Scriptures.

When shall I recall and set down all that belongs to those days in the country? I have not forgotten, nor shall I pass in silence, the bite of Your scourge and the wonderful swiftness of Your mercy. During those days You sent me the torture of toothache, and when it had grown so agonizing that I could not speak, it came into my heart to ask all my friends there present to pray

for me to You, the God of every kind of health. I wrote this down on my tablet and gave it to them to read. As soon as we had gone on our knees in all simplicity, the pain went. But what was the pain or how did it go? I admit that I was terrified, O my Lord, my God, for as far back as my earliest infancy I had never experienced any such thing. Thus in that depth I recognized the act of Your will, and I gave praise to Your name, rejoicing in faith. But this faith would not let me feel safe about my past sins, since Your baptism had not yet come to remit them.

5

When the vintage vacation was over I gave the people of Milan notice that they must find someone else to sell the art of words to their students, because I had chosen to serve You, and because owing to my difficulty in breathing and the pain in my lungs I could not continue my teaching. And in a letter I told Your bishop, the holy Ambrose, of my past errors and my present purpose, that he might advise me which of Your Scriptures I should especially read to prepare me and make me more fit to receive so great a grace. He told me to read *Isaia*s the prophet, I imagine because he more clearly foretells the gospel and the calling of the gentiles than the other Old Testament writers; but I did not understand the first part of his book, and thinking that it would be all of the same kind, put it aside meaning to return to it when I should be more practised in the Lord's way of speech.

6

When the time had come to give in my name for baptism, we left the country and returned to Milan. *Alypius* had decided to be born again in You at the same time, for he was already endowed with the humility that Your sacraments require, and had brought his body so powerfully under control that he could tread the icy soil of Italy with bare feet, which required unusual fortitude. We also took with us the boy *Adeodatus*, carnally begotten by me in my sin. You had made him well. He was barely fifteen, yet he was more intelligent than many a grave and learned man. In this I am but acknowledging to You Your own gifts, O Lord my God, Creator of all and powerful to reshape our shapelessness: for I had no part in that boy but the sin. That he had been brought up by us in Your way was because You had inspired us, no other. I do

but acknowledge to You Your own gifts. There is a book of mine called *De Magistro*: it is a dialogue between him and me. You know, O God, that all the ideas which are put into the mouth of the other party to the dialogue were truly his, though he was but sixteen. I had experience of many other remarkable qualities in him. His great intelligence filled me with a kind of awe: and who but You could be the maker of things so wonderful? But You took him early from this earth, and I think of him utterly without anxiety, for there is nothing in his boyhood or youth or anywhere in him to cause me to fear. We took him along with us, the same age as ourselves in Your grace, to be brought up in Your discipline: and we were baptized, and all anxiety as to our past life fled away. The days were not long enough as I meditated, and found wonderful delight in meditating, upon the depth of Your design for the salvation of the human race. I wept at the beauty of Your hymns and canticles, and was powerfully moved at the sweet sound of Your Church's singing. Those sounds flowed into my ears, and the truth streamed into my heart: so that my feeling of devotion overflowed, and the tears ran from my eyes, and I was happy in them.

7

It was only a little while before that the church of Milan had begun to practise this kind of consolation and exultation, to the great joy of the brethren singing together with heart and voice. For it was only about a year, or not much more, since Justina, the mother of the boy emperor Valentinian, was persecuting Your servant Ambrose in the interests of her own heresy: for she had been seduced by the Arians. The devoted people had stayed day and night in the church, ready to die with their bishop, Your servant. And my mother, Your handmaid, bearing a great part of the trouble and vigil, had lived in prayer. I also, though still not warmed by the fire of Your Spirit, was stirred to excitement by the disturbed and wrought-up state of the city. It was at this time that the practice was instituted of singing hymns and psalms after the manner of the Eastern churches, to keep the people from being altogether worn out with anxiety and want of sleep. The custom has been retained from that day to this, and has been imitated by many, indeed in almost all congregations throughout the world.

At this time You revealed to Your bishop Ambrose in a vision the place where the bodies of the martyrs Protasius and Gervasius lay hid, which You had for so many years kept incorrupt in the treasury of Your secret knowledge that You might bring them forth at the proper moment to check a woman's fury—the woman being the ruler of the Empire! For when they were discovered

and dug up and with due honour brought to Ambrose's basilica, not only were people cured who had been tormented by evil spirits—and the devils themselves forced to confess it—but also there was a man, a citizen well known to the city, who had been blind for many years: he asked what was the cause of the tumultuous joy of the people, and when he heard, he sprang up and asked his guide to lead him into the place. When he arrived there he asked to be allowed to touch with his handkerchief the place on which lay the saints, whose death is precious in Your sight. He did so, put the handkerchief to his eyes, and immediately they were opened. The news spread abroad, Your praises glowed and shone, and if the mind of that angry woman was not brought to the sanity of belief, it was at least brought back from the madness of persecution. Thanks be to my God! From what and towards what have You led my memory, that it should confess to You these great things which I had altogether forgotten? Yet even then, *when the odor of Thy ointments was so sweet smelling*, I did not *run after Thee*: and for this I wept all the more now when I heard Your hymns and canticles, as one who had then sighed for You and now breathed in You, breathed so far as the air allows in this our house of grass.

8

You, Lord, Who make men of one mind to dwell in one house brought to our company a young man of our own town, Evodius. He had held office in the civil service, had been converted and baptized before us, had resigned from the state's service, and given himself to Yours. We kept together, meaning to live together in our devout purpose. We thought deeply as to the place in which we might serve You most usefully. As a result we started back for Africa. And when we had come as far as Ostia on the Tiber, my mother died. I pass over many things, for I must make haste. Do You, O my God, accept my confessions and my gratitude for countless things of which I say nothing. But I will not omit anything my mind brings forth concerning her, Your servant, who brought me forth—brought me forth in the flesh to this temporal light, and in her heart to light eternal. Not of her gifts do I speak but of Your gifts in her. For she did not bring herself into the world or educate herself in the world: it was You Who created her, nor did her father or mother know what kind of being was to come forth from them. It was the scepter of Your Christ, the discipline of Your Only-Begotten, that brought her up in holy fear, in a Catholic family which was a worthy member of Your church. Yet it was not the devotion of her mother in her upbringing that she talked most of, but of a certain aged servant, who had indeed carried my mother's father on her back when he was a baby, as

little ones are accustomed to be carried on the backs of older girls. Because of this, because also of her age and her admirable character, she was very much respected by her master and mistress in their Christian household. As a result she was given charge of her master's daughters. This charge she fulfilled most conscientiously, checking them sharply when necessary with holy severity and teaching them soberly and prudently. Thus, except at the times when they ate—and that most temperately—at their parents' table, she would not let them even drink water, no matter how tormenting their thirst. By this she prevented the forming of a bad habit, and she used to remark very sensibly: "Now you drink water because you are not allowed to have wine; but when you are married, and thus mistresses of food-stores and wine-cellar, you will despise water, but the habit of drinking will still remain." By this kind of teaching and the authority of her commands she moderated the greediness that goes with childhood and brought the little girls' thirst to such a control that they no longer wanted what they ought not to have.

Yet, as Your servant told me, her son, there did steal upon my mother an inclination to wine. For when, in the usual way, she was sent by her parents, as a well-behaved child, to draw wine from the barrel, she would dip the cup in, but before pouring the wine from the cup into the flagon, she would sip a little with the very tip of her lips, only a little because she did not yet like the taste sufficiently to take more. Indeed, she did it not out of any craving for wine, but rather from the excess of childhood's high spirits, which tend to boil over in absurdities, and are usually kept in check by the authority of elders. And so, adding to that daily drop a little more from day to day—for he that despises small things, falls little by little—she fell into the habit, so that she would drink off greedily cups almost full of wine. Where then was that wise old woman with her forceful prohibitions? Could anything avail against the evil in us, unless Your healing, O Lord, watched over us? When our father and mother and nurses are absent, You are present, Who created us, Who call us, Who can use those placed over us for some good unto the salvation of our souls. What did You do then, O my God? How did You cure her, and bring her to health? From another soul You drew a harsh and cutting sarcasm, as though bringing forth a surgeon's knife from Your secret store, and with one blow amputated that sore place. A maidservant, with whom she was accustomed to go to the cellar, one day fell into a quarrel with her small mistress when no one else chanced to be about, and hurled at her the most biting insult possible, calling her a drunkard. My mother was pierced to the quick, saw her fault in its true wickedness, and instantly condemned it and gave it up. Just as the flattery of a friend can pervert, so the insult of an enemy can sometimes correct. Nor do You, O God, reward men according to what You do by means of them, but according to what they themselves intended. For the girl being in a temper wanted to enrage her young mistress, not to amend her, for she did it when no

one else was there, either because the time and place happened to be thus when the quarrel arose, or because she was afraid that elders would be angry because she had not told it sooner. But You, O Lord, Ruler of heavenly things and earthly, Who turn to Your own purposes the very depths of rivers as they run and order the turbulence of the flow of time, did by the folly of one mind bring sanity to another; thus reminding us not to attribute it to our own power if another is amended by our word, even if we meant to amend him.

9

My mother, then, was modestly and soberly brought up, being rather made obedient to her parents by You than to You by her parents. When she reached the age for marriage, and was bestowed upon a husband, she served him as her lord. She used all her effort to win him to You, preaching You to him by her character, by which You made her beautiful to her husband, respected and loved by him and admirable in his sight. For she bore his acts of unfaithfulness quietly, and never had any jealous scene with her husband about them. She awaited Your mercy upon him, that he might grow chaste through faith in You. And as a matter of fact, though generous beyond measure, he had a very hot temper. But she knew that a woman must not resist a husband in anger, by deed or even by word. Only, when she saw him calm again and quiet, she would take the opportunity to give him an explanation of her actions, if it happened that he had been roused to anger unreasonably. The result was that whereas many matrons with much milder husbands carried the marks of blows to disfigure their faces, and would all get together to complain of the way their husbands behaved, my mother—talking lightly but meaning it seriously—advised them against their tongues: saying that from the day they heard the matrimonial contract read to them they should regard it as an instrument by which they became servants; and from that time they should be mindful of their condition and not set themselves up against their masters. And they often expressed amazement—for they knew how violent a husband she had to live with—that it had never been heard, and there was no mark to show, that Patricius had beaten his wife or that there had been any family quarrel between them for so much as a single day. And when her friends asked her the reason, she taught them her rule, which was as I have just said. Those who followed it, found it good and thanked her; those who did not, went on being bullied and beaten.

Her mother-in-law began by being angry with her because of the whispers of malicious servants. But my mother won her completely by the respect she showed, and her unflinching patience and mildness. She ended by going to her

son, telling him of the tales the servants had bandied about to the destruction of peace in the family between herself and her daughter-in-law, and asking him to punish them for it. So he, out of obedience to his mother and in the interests of order in the household and peace among his womenfolk, had the servants beaten whose names he had been given, as she had asked when giving them. To which she added the promise that anyone must expect a similar reward from her own hands who should think to please her by speaking ill of her daughter-in-law. And as no one had the courage to do so, they lived together with the most notable degree of kindness and harmony.

This great gift also, O my God, my Mercy, You gave to Your good servant, in whose womb You created me, that she showed herself, wherever possible, a peacemaker between people quarreling and minds at discord. For swelling and undigested discord often belches forth bitter words when in the venom of intimate conversation with a present friend hatred at its rawest is breathed out upon an absent enemy. But when my mother heard bitter things said by each of the other, she never said anything to either about the other save what would help to reconcile them. This might seem a small virtue, if I had not had the sorrow of seeing for myself so many people who—as if by some horrible widespreading infection of sin—not only tell angry people the things their enemies said in anger, but even add things that were never said at all. Whereas, on the contrary, ordinary humanity would seem to require not merely that we refrain from exciting or increasing wrath among men by evil speaking, but that we study to extinguish wrath by kind speaking. Such a one was she: and You were the master Who taught her most secretly in the school of her heart.

The upshot was that towards the very end of his life she won her husband to You; and once he was a Christian she no longer had to complain of the things she had had to bear with before he was a Christian. Further, she was a servant of Your servants. Such of them as knew her praised and honoured and loved You, O God, in her; for they felt Your presence in her heart, showing itself in the fruit of her holy conversation. She had been *the wife of one husband, had requited her parents, had governed her house piously, was well reported of for good works*. She had *brought up her children*, being in labour of them as often as she saw them swerving away from You. Finally of all of us Your servants, O Lord—since by Your gift You suffer us to speak—who before her death were living together after receiving the grace of baptism, she took as much care as if she had been the mother of us all, and served us as if she had been the daughter of us all.

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When the day was approaching on which she was to depart this life—a day that You knew though we did not—it came about, as I believe by Your secret arrangement, that she and I stood alone leaning in a window, which looked inwards to the garden within the house where we were staying, at Ostia on the Tiber; for there we were away from everybody, resting for the sea voyage from the weariness of our long journey by land. There we talked together, she and I alone, in deep joy; and *forgetting the things that were behind and looking forward to those that were before*, we were discussing in the presence of Truth, which You are, what the eternal life of the saints could be like, *which eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man*. But with the mouth of our heart we panted for the high waters of Your fountain, the fountain of the life which is with You: that being sprinkled from that fountain according to our capacity, we might in some sense meditate upon so great a matter.

And our conversation had brought us to this point, that any pleasure whatsoever of the bodily senses, in any brightness whatsoever of corporeal light, seemed to us not worthy of comparison with the pleasure of that eternal Light, not worthy even of mention. Rising as our love flamed upward towards that Selfsame, we passed in review the various levels of bodily things, up to the heavens themselves, whence sun and moon and stars shine upon this earth. And higher still we soared, thinking in our minds and speaking and marvelling at Your works: and so we came to our own souls, and went beyond them to come at last to that region of richness unending, where You feed Israel forever with the food of truth: and there life is that Wisdom by which all things are made, both the things that have been and the things that are yet to be. But this Wisdom itself is not made: it is as it has ever been, and so it shall be forever: indeed “has ever been” and “shall be forever” have no place in it, but it simply is, for it is eternal: whereas “to have been” and “to be going to be” are not eternal. And while we were thus talking of His Wisdom and panting for it, with all the effort of our heart we did for one instant attain to touch it; then sighing, and leaving the first fruits of our spirit bound to it, we returned to the sound of our own tongue, in which a word has both beginning and ending. For what is like to Your Word, Our Lord, Who abides in Himself forever, yet grows not old and makes all things new!

So we said: If to any man the tumult of the flesh grew silent, silent the images of earth and sea and air: and if the heavens grew silent, and the very soul grew silent to herself and by not thinking of self mounted beyond self: if all dreams and imagined visions grew silent, and every tongue and every sign and whatsoever is transient—for indeed if any man could hear them, he should hear them

saying with one voice: We did not make ourselves, but He made us Who abides forever: but if, having uttered this and so set us to listening to Him Who made them, they all grew silent, and in their silence He alone spoke to us, not by them but by Himself: so that we should hear His word, not by any tongue of flesh nor the voice of an angel nor the sound of thunder nor in the darkness of a parable, but that we should hear Himself Whom in all these things we love, should hear Himself and not them: just as we two had but now reached forth and in a flash of the mind attained to touch the eternal Wisdom which abides over all: and if this could continue, and all other visions so different be quite taken away, and this one should so ravish and absorb and wrap the beholder in inward joys that his life should eternally be such as that one moment of understanding for which we had been sighing—would not this be: *Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?* But when shall it be? Shall it be when *we shall all rise again and shall not all be changed?*

Such thoughts I uttered, though not in that order or in those actual words; but You know, O Lord, that on that day when we talked of these things the world with all its delights seemed cheap to us in comparison with what we talked of. And my mother said: “Son, for my own part I no longer find joy in anything in this world. What I am still to do here and why I am here I know not, now that I no longer hope for anything from this world. One thing there was, for which I desired to remain still a little longer in this life, that I should see you a Catholic Christian before I died. This God has granted me in superabundance, in that I now see you His servant to the contempt of all worldly happiness. What then am I doing here?”

II

What answer I made, I do not clearly remember; within five days or not much longer she fell into a fever. And in her sickness, she one day fainted away and for the moment lost consciousness. We ran to her but she quickly returned to consciousness, and seeing my brother and me standing by her she said as one wondering: “Where was I?” Then looking closely upon us as we stood wordless in our grief, she said: “Here you will bury your mother.” I stayed silent and checked my weeping. But my brother said something to the effect that he would be happier if she were to die in her own land and not in a strange country. But as she heard this she looked at him anxiously, restraining him with her eye because he savored of earthly things, and then she looked at me and said: “See the way he talks.” And then she said to us both: “Lay this body wherever it may be. Let no care of it disturb you: this only I ask of you that you should remember me at the altar of the Lord wherever you may be.” And when

she had uttered this wish in such words as she could manage, she fell silent as her sickness took hold of her more strongly.

But as I considered Your gifts, O unseen God, which You send into the hearts of Your faithful to the springing up of such wonderful fruits, I was glad and gave thanks to You, remembering what I had previously known of the care as to her burial which had always troubled her: for she had arranged to be buried by the body of her husband. Because they had lived together in such harmony, she had wished—so little is the human mind capable of rising to the divine—that it should be granted her, as an addition to her happiness and as something to be spoken of among men, that after her pilgrimage beyond the sea the earthly part of man and wife should lie together under the same earth. Just when this vain desire had begun to vanish from her heart through the fullness of Your goodness, I did not know; but I was pleased and surprised that it had now so clearly vanished: though indeed in the conversation we had had together at the window, when she said: “What am I still doing here?” there had appeared no desire to die in her own land. Further I heard afterwards that in the time we were at Ostia, she had talked one day to some of my friends, as a mother talking to her children, of the contempt of this life and of the attraction of death. I was not there at the time. They marvelled at such courage in a woman—but it was You Who had given it to her—and asked if she was not afraid to leave her body so far from her own city. But she said: “Nothing is far from God, and I have no fear that He will not know at the end of the world from what place He is to raise me up.” And so on the ninth day of her illness, in the fifty-sixth year of her life and the thirty-third of mine, that devout and holy soul was released from the body.

I2

I closed her eyes; and an immeasurable sorrow flowed into my heart and would have overflowed in tears. But my eyes under the mind’s strong constraint held back their flow and I stood dry-eyed. In that struggle it went very ill with me. As she breathed her last, the child Adeodatus broke out into lamentation and we all checked him and brought him to silence. But in this very fact the childish element in me, which was breaking out into tears, was checked and brought to silence by the manlier voice of my mind. For we felt that it was not fitting that her funeral should be solemnized with moaning and weeping and lamentation, for so it is normal to weep when death is seen as sheer misery or as complete extinction. But she had not died miserably, nor did she wholly die. Of the one thing we were sure by reason of her character, of the other by the reality of our faith.

What then was it that grieved my heart so deeply? Only the newness of the wound, in finding the custom I had so loved of living with her suddenly snapped short. It was a joy to me to have this one testimony from her: when her illness was close to its end, meeting with expressions of endearment such services as I rendered, she called me a dutiful loving son, and said in the great affection of her love that she had never heard from my mouth any harsh or reproachful word addressed to herself. But what possible comparison was there, O my God Who made us, between the honour I showed her and the service she had rendered me?

Because I had now lost the great comfort of her, my soul was wounded and my very life torn asunder, for it had been one life made of hers and mine together. When the boy had been quieted and ceased weeping, Evodius took up the psalter and began to chant—with the whole house making the responses—the psalm *Mercy and judgement I will sing to Thee, O Lord*. And when they heard what was being done, many of the brethren and religious women came to us; those whose office it was were making arrangement for the burial, while, in another part of the house where it could properly be done, I discoursed, with friends who did not wish to leave me by myself, upon matters suitable for that time. Thus I used truth as a kind of fomentation to bring relief to my torment, a torment known to You, but not known to those others: so that listening closely to me they thought that I lacked all feeling of grief. But in Your ears, where none of them could hear, I accused the emotion in me as weakness; and I held in the flood of my grief. It was for the moment a little diminished, but returned with fresh violence, not with any pouring of tears or change of countenance: but I knew what I was crushing down in my heart. I was very much ashamed that these human emotions could have such power over me—though it belongs to the due order and the lot of our earthly condition that they should come to us—and I felt a new grief at my grief and so was afflicted with a twofold sorrow.

When the body was taken to burial, I went and returned without tears. During the prayers which we poured forth to You when the sacrifice of our redemption was offered for her—while the body, as the custom there is, lay by the grave before it was actually buried—during those prayers I did not weep. Yet all that day I was heavy with grief within and in the trouble of my mind I begged of You in my own fashion to heal my pain; but You would not—I imagine because You meant to impress upon my memory by this proof how strongly the bond of habit holds the mind even when it no longer feeds upon deception. The idea came to me to go and bathe, for I had heard that the bath—which the Greeks call *αλανεῖον*—is so called because it drives anxiety from the mind. And this also I acknowledge to Your mercy, O Father of orphans, that I bathed and was the same man after as before. The bitterness of grief had not sweated out of my heart. Then I fell asleep, and woke again to find

my grief not a little relieved. And as I was in bed and no one about, I said over those true verses that Your servant Ambrose wrote of You:

Deus creator omnium
 polique rector vestiens
 diem decoro lumine,
 noctem sopora gratia,

 artus solutos ut quies
 reddat laboris usui
 mentesque fessas allevet
 luctusque solvat anxios.

And then little by little I began to recover my former feeling about Your handmaid, remembering how loving and devout was her conversation with You, how pleasant and considerate her conversation with me, of which I was thus suddenly deprived. And I found solace in weeping in Your sight both about her and for her, about myself and for myself. I no longer tried to check my tears, but let them flow as they would, making them a pillow for my heart: and it rested upon them, for it was Your ears that heard my weeping, and not the ears of a man, who would have misunderstood my tears and despised them. But now, O Lord, I confess it to You in writing, let him read it who will and interpret it as he will: and if he sees it as sin that for so small a portion of an hour I wept for my mother, now dead and departed from my sight, who had wept so many years for me that I should live ever in Your sight—let him not scorn me but rather, if he is a man of great charity, let him weep for my sins to You, the Father of all the brethren of Your Christ.

I3

Now that my heart is healed of that wound, in which there was perhaps too much of earthly affection, I pour forth to You, O our God, tears of a very different sort for Your handmaid—tears that flow from a spirit shaken by the thought of the perils there are for every soul that dies in Adam. For though she had been made alive in Christ, and while still in the body had so lived that Your name was glorified in her faith and her character, yet I dare not say that from the moment of her regeneration in baptism no word issued from her mouth contrary to Your command. Your Son, Who is Truth, has said: *Whosoever shall say to his brother, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire*; and it would go ill with the most praiseworthy life lived by men, if You were to examine it with Your mercy laid aside! But because You do not enquire too fiercely into our sins, we

have hope and confidence of a place with You. Yet if a man reckons up before You the merits he truly has, what is he reckoning except Your own gifts? If only men would know themselves to be but men, so that he that glories would glory in the Lord!

Thus, my Glory and my Life, God of my heart, leaving aside for this time her good deeds, for which I give thanks to Thee in joy, I now pray to Thee for my mother's sins. Grant my prayer through the true Medicine of our wounds, Who hung upon the Cross and Who now sitting at Thy right hand makes intercession for us. I know that she dealt mercifully, and from her heart forgave those who trespassed against her: do Thou also forgive such trespasses as she may have been guilty of in all the years since her baptism, forgive them, Lord, forgive them, I beseech Thee: enter not into judgement with her. Let Thy mercy be exalted above Thy justice for Thy words are true and Thou hast promised that the merciful shall obtain mercy. That they should be merciful is Thy gift *Who hast mercy on whom Thou wilt, and wilt have compassion on whom Thou wilt.*

And I believe that Thou hast already done what I am now asking; but be not offended, Lord, at the things my mouth would utter. For on that day when her death was so close, she was not concerned that her body should be sumptuously wrapped or embalmed with spices, nor with any thought of choosing a monument or even for burial in her own country. Of such things she gave us no command, but only desired to be remembered at Thy altar, which she had served without ever missing so much as a day, on which she knew that the holy Victim was offered, *by Whom the handwriting is blotted out of the decree that was contrary to us*, by which offering too the enemy was overcome who, reckoning our sins and seeking what may be laid to our charge, found nothing in Him, in Whom we are conquerors. Who shall restore to Him His innocent blood? Who shall give Him back the price by which He purchased us and so take us from Him? To this Sacrament of our redemption Thy handmaid had bound her soul by the bond of faith. Let none wrest her from Thy protection; let neither the lion nor the dragon bar her way by force or craft. For she will not answer that she owes nothing, lest she should be contradicted and confuted by that cunning accuser: but she will answer that her debts have been remitted by Him, to Whom no one can hand back the price which He paid for us, though He owed it not.

So let her rest in peace, together with her husband, for she had no other before nor after him, but served him, in patience bringing forth fruit for Thee, and winning him likewise for Thee. And inspire, O my Lord my God, inspire Thy servants my brethren, Thy sons my masters, whom I serve with heart and voice and pen, that as many of them as read this may remember at Thy altar Thy servant Monica, with Patricius, her husband, by whose bodies Thou didst bring me into this life, though how I know not. May they with loving mind

remember these who were my parents in this transitory light, my brethren who serve Thee as our Father in our Catholic mother, and those who are to be fellow citizens with me in the eternal Jerusalem, which Thy people sigh for in their pilgrimage from birth until they come there: so that what my mother at her end asked of me may be fulfilled more richly in the prayers of so many gained for her by my *Confessions* than by my prayers alone.

St. Patrick

St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland (c. 389–c. 461), was born in Roman Britain and sold as a slave in Ireland. After six years, he escaped and returned home, but his slavery as a shepherd convinced him he should return to evangelize the people of Ireland. After studies on the continent, he was ordained priest, then consecrated bishop and sent to Ireland by the Pope.

He concentrated his mission on the west and north, where no one had preached the Gospel before. Though he never mentions his own see, the claim of Armagh as the Church of St. Patrick seems to represent a genuine tradition.

St. Patrick's method was at times severely criticized by the British clergy. The criticism reached a climax when he excommunicated the British prince Coroticus, who then led a raid on Ireland in which some of Patrick's converts were killed and others sold into slavery. St. Patrick replied to his critics in his old age by writing the Confessio. Certainly authentic, the Confessio is an account of the saint's spiritual development and a justification of his mission. Above all, it is an act of gratitude to God for having chosen him, a sinner, for such a noble apostolate.

Confession

I am Patrick, a sinner, most unlearned, the least of all the faithful, and utterly despised by many. My father was Calpornius, a deacon, son of Potitus, a priest, of the village Bannavem Taburniae; he had a country seat nearby, and there I was taken captive.

I was then about sixteen years of age. I did not know the true God. I was taken into captivity to Ireland with many thousands of people—and deservedly so, because we turned away from God, and did not keep His commandments, and did not obey our priests, who used to remind us of our salvation. And the Lord *brought over us the wrath of His anger and scattered us among many nations, even unto the utmost part of the earth*, where now my littleness is placed among strangers.

And there *the Lord opened the sense of my unbelief* that I might at last remember my sins and *be converted with all my heart to the Lord my God, Who had regard for my abjection*, and mercy on my youth and ignorance, and watched over me before I knew Him, and before I was able to distinguish between good and evil, and guarded me, and comforted me as would a father his son.

Hence I cannot be silent—*nor, indeed, is it expedient*—about the great benefits and the great grace which the Lord has deigned to bestow upon me *in the land of my captivity*; for this we can give to God in return after having been chastened by Him, *to exalt and praise His wonders before every nation that is anywhere under the heaven*.

Because there is no other God, nor ever was, nor will be, than God the Father unbegotten, without beginning, from Whom is all beginning, the Lord of the universe, as we have been taught; and His Son Jesus Christ, Whom we declare to have always been with the Father, spiritually and ineffably begotten by the Father before the beginning of the world, before all beginning; and by Him are made all things visible and invisible. He was made man, and, having defeated death, was received into heaven by the Father; *and He hath given Him all power over all names in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue shall confess to Him that Jesus Christ is Lord and God*, in Whom we believe, and Whose advent we expect soon to be, *judge of the living and of the dead*, Who will render to every man according to his deeds; and *He has poured forth upon us abundantly the Holy Spirit, the gift and pledge* of immortality, Who makes those who believe

and obey *sons of God* and *joint heirs with Christ*; and Him do we confess and adore, one God in the Trinity of the Holy Name.

For He Himself has said through the Prophet: *Call upon Me in the day of thy trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.* And again He says: *It is honourable to reveal and confess the works of God.*

Although I am imperfect in many things, I nevertheless wish that my brethren and kinsmen should know what sort of person I am, so that they may understand my heart's desire.

I know well *the testimony of my Lord*, Who in the Psalm declares: *Thou wilt destroy them that speak a lie.* And again He says: *The mouth that belieeth killeth the soul.* And the same Lord says in the Gospel: *Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it on the day of judgement.*

And so I should dread exceedingly, *with fear and trembling*, this sentence on that day when no one will be able to escape or hide, but we all, without exception, shall have to *give an account* even of our smallest sins *before the judgement seat of the Lord Christ.*

For this reason I long had in mind to write, but hesitated until now; I was afraid of exposing myself to the talk of men, because I have not studied like the others, who thoroughly imbibed law and Sacred Scripture, and never had to change from the language of their childhood days, but were able to make it still more perfect. In our case, what I had to say had to be translated into a tongue foreign to me, as can easily be proved from the savour of my writing, which betrays how little instruction and training I have had in the art of words; for, so says Scripture, *by the tongue will be discovered the wise man, and understanding, and knowledge, and the teaching of truth.*

But of what help is an excuse, however true, especially if combined with presumption, since now, in my old age, I strive for something that I did not acquire in youth? It was my sins that prevented me from fixing in my mind what before I had barely read through. But who believes me, though I should repeat what I started out with?

As a youth, nay, almost as a boy not able to speak, I was taken captive, before I knew what to pursue and what to avoid. Hence today I blush and fear exceedingly to reveal my lack of education; for I am unable to tell my story to those versed in the art of concise writing—in such a way, I mean, as my spirit and mind long to do, and so that the sense of my words expresses what I feel.

But if indeed it had been given to me as it was given to others, then I would not be silent *because of my desire of thanksgiving*; and if perhaps some people think me arrogant for doing so in spite of my lack of knowledge and my slow tongue, it is, after all, written: *The stammering tongues shall quickly learn to speak peace.*

How much more should we earnestly strive to do this, we, who are, so Scripture says, *a letter of Christ for salvation unto the utmost part of the earth*, and, though not an eloquent one, yet . . . *written in your hearts, not with ink, but with*

the spirit of the living God! And again the Spirit witnesses that *even rusticity was created by the Highest.*

Whence I, once rustic, exiled, unlearned, who does not know how to provide for the future, this at least I know most certainly that before I was humiliated I was like a stone lying in the deep mire; and He that is mighty came and in His mercy lifted me up, and raised me aloft, and placed me on the top of the wall. And therefore I ought to cry out aloud and so also render something to the Lord for His great benefits here and in eternity—benefits which the mind of men is unable to appraise.

Wherefore, then, be astonished, *ye great and little that fear God*, and you men of letters on your estates, listen and pore over this. Who was it that roused up me, the fool that I am, from the midst of those who in the eyes of men are wise, and expert in law, and powerful in word and in everything? And He inspired me—me, the outcast of this world—before others, to be the man (if only I could!) who, *with fear and reverence and without blame*, should faithfully serve the people to whom the love of Christ conveyed and gave me for the duration of my life, if I should be worthy; yes indeed, to serve them humbly and sincerely.

In the light, therefore, of our faith in the Trinity I must make this choice, regardless of danger I must make known the gift of God and everlasting consolation, without fear and frankly I must spread everywhere the name of God so that after my decease I may leave a bequest to my brethren and sons whom I have baptized in the Lord—so many thousands of people.

And I was not worthy, nor was I such that the Lord should grant this to His servant; that after my misfortunes and so great difficulties, after my captivity, after the lapse of so many years, He should give me so great a grace in behalf of that nation—a thing which once, in my youth, I never expected nor thought of.

But after I came to Ireland—every day I had to tend sheep, and many times a day I prayed—the love of God and His fear came to me more and more, and my faith was strengthened. And my spirit was moved so that in a single day I would say as many as a hundred prayers, and almost as many in the night, and this even when I was staying in the woods and on the mountain; and I used to get up for prayer before daylight, through snow, through frost, through rain, and I felt no harm, and there was no sloth in me—as I now see, because the spirit within me was then fervent.

And there one night I heard in my sleep a voice saying to me: “It is well that you fast, soon you will go to your own country.” And again, after a short while, I heard a voice saying to me: “See, your ship is ready.” And it was not near, but at a distance of perhaps two hundred miles, and I had never been there, nor did I know a living soul there; and then I took to flight, and I left the man with whom I had stayed for six years. And I went in the strength of God Who directed my way to my good, and I feared nothing until I came to that ship.

And the day that I arrived the ship was set afloat, and I said that I was able to pay for my passage with them. But the captain was not pleased, and with indignation he answered harshly: "It is of no use for you to ask us to go along with us." And when I heard this, I left them in order to return to the hut where I was staying. And as I went, I began to pray; and before I had ended my prayer, I heard one of them shouting behind me, "Come, hurry, we shall take you on in good faith; make friends with us in whatever way you like." And so on that day I refused to suck their breasts for fear of God, but rather hoped they would come to the faith of Jesus Christ, because they were pagans. And thus I had my way with them, and we set sail at once.

And after three days we reached land, and for twenty-eight days we travelled through deserted country. And they lacked food, and hunger overcame them; and the next day the captain said to me: "Tell me, Christian: you say that your God is great and all-powerful; why, then, do you not pray for us? As you can see, we are suffering from hunger; it is unlikely indeed that we shall ever see a human being again."

I said to them full of confidence: "*Be truly converted with all your heart to the Lord my God*, because nothing is impossible for Him, that this day He may send you food on your way until you be satisfied; for He has abundance everywhere." And, with the help of God, so it came to pass: suddenly a herd of pigs appeared on the road before our eyes, and they killed many of them; and there they stopped for two nights and fully recovered their strength, and their hounds received their fill, for many of them had grown weak and were half-dead along the way. And from that day they had plenty of food. They also found wild honey, and offered some of it to me, and one of them said: "This we offer in sacrifice." Thanks be to God, I tasted none of it.

That same night, when I was asleep, Satan assailed me violently, a thing I shall remember *as long as I shall be in this body*. And he fell upon me like a huge rock, and I could not stir a limb. But whence came it into my mind, ignorant as I am, to call upon Helias? And meanwhile I saw the sun rise in the sky, and while I was shouting "Helias! Helias!" with all my might, suddenly the splendour of that sun fell on me and immediately freed me of all misery. And I believe that I was sustained by Christ my Lord, and that His Spirit was even then crying out in my behalf, and I hope it will be so *on the day of my tribulation*, as is written in the Gospel: *On that day, the Lord declares, it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.*

And once again, after many years, I fell into captivity. On that first night I stayed with them. I heard a divine message saying to me: "Two months will you be with them." And so it came to pass: on the sixtieth night thereafter *the Lord delivered me out of their hands.*

Also on our way God gave us food and fire and dry weather every day, until, on the tenth day, we met people. As I said above, we travelled twenty-eight

days through deserted country, and the night that we met people we had no food left.

And again after a few years I was in Britain with my people, who received me as their son, and sincerely besought me that now at last, having suffered so many hardships, I should not leave them and go elsewhere.

And there I saw in the night the vision of a man, whose name was Victoricus, coming as it were from Ireland, with countless letters. And he gave me one of them, and I read the opening words of the letter, which were, "The voice of the Irish"; and as I read the beginning of the letter I thought that at the same moment I heard their voice—they were those beside the Wood of Voclut, which is near the Western Sea—and thus did they cry out *as with one mouth*: "We ask thee, boy, come and walk among us once more."

And I was quite broken in heart, and could read no further, and so I woke up. Thanks be to God, after many years the Lord gave to them according to their cry.

And another night—whether within me, or beside me, *I know not, God knoweth*—they called me most unmistakably with words which I heard but could not understand, except that at the end of the prayer He spoke thus: "*He that has laid down His life for thee, it is He that speaketh in thee*"; and so I awoke full of joy.

And again I saw Him praying in me, and I was as it were within my body, and I heard Him above me, that is, over *the inward man*, and there He prayed mightily with groanings. And all the time I was astonished, and wondered, and thought with myself who it could be that prayed in me. But at the end of the prayer He spoke, saying that He was the Spirit; and so I woke up, and remembered the Apostle saying: *The Spirit helpeth the infirmities of our prayer. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings, which cannot be expressed in words; and again: The Lord our advocate asketh for us.*

And when I was attacked by a number of my seniors who came forth and brought up my sins against my laborious episcopate, on that day indeed was I struck so that I might have fallen now and for eternity; but the Lord graciously spared the stranger and sojourner for His name and came mightily to my help in this affliction. Verily, not slight was the shame and blame that fell upon me! I ask God that *it may not be reckoned to them as sin.*

As cause for proceeding against me they found—after thirty years!—a confession I had made before I was a deacon. In the anxiety of my troubled mind I confided to my dearest friend what I had done in my boyhood one day, nay, in one hour, because I was not yet strong. *I know not, God knoweth*—whether I was then fifteen years old; and I did not believe in the living God, nor did I so from my childhood, but lived in death and unbelief until I was severely chastised and really humiliated, by hunger and nakedness, and that daily.

On the other hand, I did not go to Ireland of my own accord, not until I had nearly perished; but this was rather for my good, for thus was I purged by the Lord; and He made me fit so that I might be now what was once far from me—that I should care and labour for the salvation of others, whereas then I did not even care about myself.

On that day, then, when I was rejected by those referred to and mentioned above, in that night I saw a vision of the night. There was a writing without honour against my face, and at the same time I heard God's voice saying to me: "We have seen with displeasure the face of Deisignatus" (thus revealing his name). He did not say, "Thou hast seen," but, "We have seen," as if He included Himself, as He sayeth: *He who toucheth you toucheth as it were the apple of my eye.*

Therefore *I give Him thanks who hath strengthened me* in everything, as He did not frustrate the journey upon which I had decided, and the work which I had learned from Christ my Lord; but I rather felt after this no little strength, and my trust was proved right before God and men.

And so I say boldly, my conscience does not blame me now or in the future: God is my witness that I have not lied in the account which I have given you.

But the more am I sorry for my dearest friend that we had to hear what he said. To him I had confided my very soul! And I was told by some of the brethren before that defence—at which I was not present, nor was I in Britain, nor was it suggested by me—that he would stand up for me in my absence. He had even said to me in person: "Look, you should be raised to the rank of bishop!"—of which I was not worthy. But whence did it come to him afterwards that he let me down before all, good and evil, and publicly, in a matter in which he had favoured me before spontaneously and gladly—and not he alone, but the Lord, who *is greater than all?*

Enough of this. I must not, however, hide God's gift which He bestowed upon me *in the land of my captivity*; because then I earnestly sought Him, and there I found Him, and He saved me from all evil *because*—so I believe—*of His Spirit that dwelleth* in me. Again, boldly said. But God knows it, had this been said to me by a man, I had perhaps remained silent for the love of Christ.

Hence, then, I give unwearied thanks to God, Who kept me faithful *in the day of my temptation*, so that today I can confidently offer Him my soul as a living sacrifice—to Christ my Lord, Who *saved me out of all my troubles*. Thus I can say: "*Who am I, O Lord*, and to what hast Thou called me, Thou who didst assist me with such divine power that today *I constantly exalt* and magnify Thy name *among the heathens* wherever I may be, and not only in good days but also in tribulations? So indeed I must accept with equanimity whatever befalls me, be it good or evil, and always give thanks to God, Who taught me to trust in Him always without hesitation, and Who must have heard my prayer so that I, however ignorant I was, *in the last days* dared to undertake such a holy and

wonderful work—thus imitating somehow those who, as the Lord once foretold, would preach His Gospel *for a testimony to all nations before the end of the world*. So we have seen it, and so it has been fulfilled: indeed, we are witnesses that the Gospel has been preached unto those parts beyond which there lives nobody.

Now, it would be tedious to give a detailed account of all my labours or even a part of them. Let me tell you briefly how the merciful God often freed me from slavery and from twelve dangers in which my life was at stake—not to mention numerous plots, which I cannot express in words; for I do not want to bore my readers. But God is my witness, Who knows all things even before they come to pass, as He used to forewarn even me, poor wretch that I am, of many things by a divine message.

How came I by this wisdom, which was not in me, who neither *knew the number of my days* nor knew what God was? Whence was given to me afterwards the gift so great, so salutary—to know God and to love Him, although at the price of leaving my country and my parents?

And many gifts were offered to me in sorrow and tears, and I offended the donors, much against the wishes of some of my seniors; but, guided by God, in no way did I agree with them or acquiesce. It was not grace of my own, but God, Who is strong in me and resists them all—as He had done when I came to the people of Ireland to preach the Gospel, and to suffer insult from the unbelievers, *hearing the reproach of my going abroad*, and many persecutions even unto bonds, and to give my free birth for the benefit of others; and, should I be worthy, I am prepared to give even my life without hesitation and most gladly for His name, and it is there that I wish to spend it until I die, if the Lord would grant it to me.

For I am very much God's debtor, who gave me such great grace that many people were reborn in God through me and afterwards confirmed, and that clerics were ordained for them everywhere, for a people just coming to the faith, whom the Lord took from the utmost parts of the earth, as He once had promised through His prophets: *To Thee the gentiles shall come from the ends of the earth and shall say: "How false are the idols that our fathers got for themselves, and there is no profit in them";* and again: *I have set Thee as a light among the gentiles, that Thou mayest be for salvation unto the utmost part of the earth.*

And there I wish to wait for His promise Who surely never deceives, as He promises in the Gospel: *They shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob*—as we believe the faithful will come from all the world.

For that reason, therefore, we ought to fish well and diligently, as the Lord exhorts in advance and teaches, saying: *Come ye after Me, and I will make you to be fishers of men*. And again He says through the prophets: *Behold, I send many fishers and hunters, saith God*, and so on. Hence it was most necessary to spread our nets so that a great multitude and throng might be caught for God, and that

there be clerics everywhere to baptize and exhort a people in need and want, as the Lord in the Gospel states, exhorts, and teaches, saying: *Going therefore now, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world.* And again He says: *Go ye therefore into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned.* And again: *This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all nations, and then shall come the end.* And so too the Lord announces through the prophet, and says: *And it shall come to pass, in the last days, saith the Lord, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And upon My servants indeed, and upon My handmaids will I pour out in those days of My Spirit, and they shall prophesy.* And in Osee He saith: *“I will call that which was not My people, My people; . . . and her that had not obtained mercy, one that hath obtained mercy. And it shall be in the place where it was said: ‘You are not My people,’ there they shall be called the sons of the living God.”*

Hence, how did it come to pass in Ireland that those who never had a knowledge of God, but until now always worshipped idols and things impure, have now been made a people of the Lord, and are called sons of God, that the sons and daughters of the kings of the Irish are seen to be monks and virgins of Christ?

Among others, a blessed Irishwoman of noble birth, beautiful, full-grown, whom I had baptized, came to us after some days for a particular reason: she told us that she had received a message from a messenger of God, and he admonished her to be a virgin of Christ and draw near to God. Thanks be to God, on the sixth day after this she most laudably and eagerly chose what all virgins of Christ do. Not that their fathers agree with them; no—they often even suffer persecution and undeserved reproaches from their parents; and yet their number is ever increasing. How many have been reborn there so as to be of our kind, I do not know—not to mention widows and those who practice continence.

But greatest is the suffering of those women who live in slavery. All the time they have to endure terror and threats. But the Lord gave His grace to many of His maidens; for, though they are forbidden to do so, they follow Him bravely.

Wherefore, then, even if I wished to leave them and go to Britain—and how I would have loved to go to my country and my parents, and also to Gaul in order to visit the brethren and to see the face of the saints of my Lord! God knows it that I much desired it; but I am bound by the Spirit, Who gives evidence against me if I do this, telling me that I shall be guilty; and I am afraid of losing the labour which I have begun—nay, not I, but Christ the Lord Who bade me come here and stay with them for the rest of my life, if the

Lord will, and will guard me from every evil way that I may not sin before Him.

This, I presume, I ought to do, but I do not trust myself *as long as I am in this body of death*, for strong is he who daily strives to turn me away from the faith and the purity of true religion to which I have devoted myself to the end of my life to Christ my Lord. But the hostile flesh is ever dragging us unto death, that is, towards the forbidden satisfaction of one's desires; and I know that in part I did not lead a perfect life as did the other faithful; but I acknowledge it to my Lord, and do not blush before Him, because I lie not: from the time I came to know Him in my youth, the love of God and the fear of Him have grown in me, and up to now, thanks to the grace of God, I have kept the faith.

And let those who will, laugh and scorn—I shall not be silent; nor shall I hide the signs and wonders which the Lord has shown me many years before they came to pass, as He knows everything even *before the times of the world*.

Hence I ought unceasingly to give thanks to God Who often pardoned my folly and my carelessness, and on more than one occasion spared His great wrath on me, who was chosen to be His helper and who was slow to do as was shown me and as the Spirit suggested. And the Lord had mercy on me thousands and thousands of times because He saw that I was ready, but that I did not know what to do in the circumstances. For many tried to prevent this my mission; they would even talk to each other behind my back and say: "Why does this fellow throw himself into danger among enemies who have no knowledge of God?" It was not malice, but it did not appeal to them because—and to this I own myself—of my rusticity. And I did not realize at once the grace that was then in me; now I understand that I should have done so before.

Now I have given a simple account to my brethren and fellow servants who have believed me because of what I said and still say in order to strengthen and confirm your faith. Would that you, too, would strive for greater things and do better! This will be my glory, *for a wise son is the glory of his father*.

You know, and so does God, how I have lived among you from my youth in the true faith and in sincerity of heart. Likewise, as regards the heathen among whom I live, I have been faithful to them, and so I shall be. God knows it, I have overreached none of them, nor would I think of doing so, for the sake of God and His Church, for fear of raising persecution against them and all of us, and for fear that through me the name of the Lord be blasphemed; for it is written: *Woe to the man through whom the name of the Lord is blasphemed*.

For although I be rude in all things, nevertheless I have tried somehow to keep myself safe, and that, too, for my Christian brethren, and the virgins of Christ, and the pious women who of their own accord made me gifts and laid on the altar some of their ornaments; and I gave them back to them, and they were offended that I did so. But I did it for the hope of lasting success—in order to preserve myself cautiously in everything so that they might not seize upon me

or the ministry of my service, under the pretext of dishonesty, and that I would not even in the smallest matter give the infidels an opportunity to defame or defile.

When I baptized so many thousands of people, did I perhaps expect from any of them as much as half a screpall? *Tell me, and I will restore it to you.* Or when the Lord ordained clerics everywhere through my unworthy person and I conferred the ministry upon them free, if I asked any of them as much as the price of my shoes, *speak against me and I will return it to you.*

On the contrary, I spent money for you that they might receive me; and I went to you and everywhere for your sake in many dangers, even to the farthest districts, beyond which there lived nobody and where nobody had ever come to baptize, or to ordain clergy, or to confirm the people. With the grace of the Lord, I did everything lovingly and gladly for your salvation.

All the while I used to give presents to the kings, besides the fees I paid to their sons who travel with me. Even so they laid hands on me and my companions, and on that day they eagerly wished to kill me; but my time had not yet come. And everything they found with us they took away, and me they put in irons; and on the fourteenth day the Lord delivered me from their power, and our belongings were returned to us because of God and our dear friends whom we had seen before.

You know how much I paid to those who administered justice in all those districts to which I came frequently. I think I distributed among them not less than the price of fifteen men, so that you might enjoy me, and I might always enjoy you in God. I am not sorry for it—indeed it is not enough for me; I still spend and shall spend more. God has power to grant me afterwards *that I myself may be spent for your souls.*

Indeed, *I call God to witness upon my soul that I lie not; neither, I hope, am I writing to you in order to make this an occasion of flattery or covetousness, nor because I look for honour from any of you. Sufficient is the honour that is not yet seen but is anticipated in the heart. Faithful is He that promised; He never lieth.*

But I see myself exalted even in the present world beyond measure by the Lord, and I was not worthy nor such that He should grant me this. I know perfectly well, though not by my own judgement, that poverty and misfortune becomes me better than riches and pleasures. For Christ the Lord, too, was poor for our sakes; and I, unhappy wretch that I am, have no wealth even if I wished for it. Daily I expect murder, fraud, or captivity, or whatever it may be; *but I fear none of these things* because of the promises of heaven. I have cast myself into the hands of God Almighty, Who rules everywhere, as the prophet says: *Cast thy thought upon God, and He shall sustain thee.*

So, now *I commend my soul to my faithful God, for Whom I am an ambassador* in all my wretchedness; but God *accepteth no person*, and chose me for this office—to be, although among His least, one of His ministers.

Hence let me *render unto Him for all He has done to me.* But what can I say or

what can I promise to my Lord, as I can do nothing that He has not given me? May He *search the hearts and reins*; for greatly and exceedingly do I wish, and ready I was, that He should give me His chalice to drink, as He gave it also to the others who loved Him.

Wherefore may God never permit it to happen to me that I should lose His people which He purchased in the utmost parts of the world. I pray to God to give me perseverance and to deign that I be a faithful witness to Him to the end of my life for my God.

And if ever I have done any good for my God Whom I love, I beg Him to grant me that I may shed my blood with those exiles and captives for His name, even though I should be denied a grave, or my body be woefully torn to pieces limb by limb by hounds or wild beasts, or the fowls of the air devour it. I am firmly convinced that if this should happen to me, I would have gained my soul together with my body, because on that day without doubt we shall rise in the brightness of the sun, that is, in the glory of Christ Jesus our Redeemer, as sons of the living God and *joint heirs with Christ, to be made conformable to His image; for of Him, and by Him, and in Him we shall reign.*

For this sun which we see rises daily for us because He commands so, but it will never reign, nor will its splendour last; what is more, those wretches who adore it will be miserably punished. Not so we, who believe in, and worship, the true sun — Christ — who will never perish, nor will he *who doeth His will*; but he *will abide for ever as Christ abideth for ever*, Who reigns with God the Father Almighty and the Holy Spirit before time, and now, and in all eternity. Amen.

Behold, again and again would I set forth the words of my confession. *I testify in truth and in joy of heart before God and His holy angels* that I never had any reason except the Gospel and its promises why I should ever return to the people from whom once before I barely escaped.

I pray those who believe and fear God, whosoever deigns to look at or receive this writing which Patrick, a sinner, unlearned, has composed in Ireland, that no one should ever say that it was my ignorance if I did or showed forth anything however small according to God's good pleasure; but let this be your conclusion and let it so be thought, that — as is the perfect truth — it was the gift of God. This is my confession before I die.

St. Benedict

St. Benedict (480–550), the patriarch of Western monasticism, was born in the Italian town of Nursia and educated at Rome, where the licentiousness of contemporary society led him to withdraw to a cave at Subiaco (A.D. 500). After living as a hermit for some years, he gradually gathered followers who joined him in a monastic community. After twelve monasteries had been established, local jealousy prompted him to leave Subiaco and move to Monte Cassino, where he remained for the rest of his life.

The Rule of St. Benedict, composed of seventy-three chapters, was not written at one time. The work as a whole, however, dates from the founding of Monte Cassino. While drawing on the rules of other authors before him, St. Benedict produced a masterpiece of spiritual wisdom and practicality. Five qualities are especially noteworthy: its doctrinal clarity, exactness without triviality, comprehensiveness as a way of life, enough severity to overcome nature along with prudent moderation, and stress on prayer as the primary duty of following Christ.

The chapters here quoted are from the first part of the Rule. They highlight the universality of St. Benedict's approach to the spiritual life and the timeless value of his motto, Ora et Labora, "Pray and Labor." We must pray in order to praise God and obtain from Him the graces we so desperately need; we must labor in order to cooperate with the graces received and merit the heavenly glory that awaits those who "persevere to the end" (Matt 24:13).

Rule for Monasteries

PROLOGUE

Listen, my son, to your master's precepts, and incline the ear of your heart. Receive willingly and carry out effectively your loving father's advice, that by the labor of obedience you may return to Him from Whom you had departed by the sloth of disobedience.

To you, therefore, my words are now addressed, whoever you may be, who are renouncing your own will to do battle under the Lord Christ, the true King, and are taking up the strong, bright weapons of obedience.

And first of all, whatever good work you begin to do, beg of Him with most earnest prayer to perfect it, that He Who has now deigned to count us among His sons may not at any time be grieved by our evil deeds. For we must always so serve Him with the good things He has given us, that He will never as an angry Father disinherit His children, nor ever as a dread Lord, provoked by our evil actions, deliver us to everlasting punishment as wicked servants who would not follow Him to glory.

Let us arise, then, at last, for the Scripture stirs us up, saying, "Now is the hour for us to rise from sleep." Let us open our eyes to the deifying light, let us hear with attentive ears the warning which the divine voice cries daily to us, "Today if you hear His voice, harden not your hearts." And again, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." And what does He say? "Come, My children, listen to Me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Run while you have the light of life, lest the darkness of death overtake you."

And the Lord, seeking His laborer in the multitude to whom He thus cries out, says again, "Who is the man who will have life, and desires to see good days?" And if, hearing Him, you answer, "I am he," God says to you, "If you will have true and everlasting life, keep your tongue from evil and your lips that they speak no guile. Turn away from evil and do good; seek after peace and pursue it. And when you have done these things, My eyes shall be upon you and My ears open to your prayers; and before you call upon Me, I will say to you, 'Behold, here I am.'"

What can be sweeter to us, dear brethren, than this voice of the Lord inviting us? Behold, in His loving kindness the Lord shows us the way of life.

Having our loins girded, therefore, with faith and the performance of good

works, let us walk in His paths by the guidance of the Gospel, that we may deserve to see Him who has called us to His kingdom.

For if we wish to dwell in the tent of that kingdom, we must run to it by good deeds or we shall never reach it.

But let us ask the Lord, with the Prophet, "Lord, who shall dwell in Your tent, or who shall rest upon Your holy mountain?"

After this question, brethren, let us listen to the Lord as He answers and shows us the way to that tent, saying, "He who walks without stain and practices justice; he who speaks truth from his heart; he who has not used his tongue for deceit; he who has done no evil to his neighbor; he who has given no place to slander against his neighbor."

It is he who, under any temptation from the malicious devil, has brought him to naught by casting him and his temptation from the sight of his heart; and who has laid hold of his thoughts while they were still young and dashed them against Christ.

It is they who, fearing the Lord, do not pride themselves on their good observance; but, convinced that the good which is in them cannot come from themselves and must be from the Lord, glorify the Lord's work in them, using the words of the Prophet, "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Your name give the glory." Thus also the Apostle Paul attributed nothing of the success of his preaching to himself, but said, "By the grace of God I am what I am." And again he says, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord."

Hence the Lord says in the Gospel, "Whoever listens to these words of Mine and acts upon them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on rock. The floods came, the winds blew and beat against that house, and it did not fall, because it was founded on rock."

Having given us these assurances, the Lord is waiting every day for us to respond by our deeds to His holy admonitions. And the days of this life are lengthened and a truce granted us for this very reason, that we may amend our evil ways. As the Apostle says, "Do you not know that God's patience is inviting you to repent?" For the merciful Lord tells us, "I desire not the death of the sinner, but that he should be converted and live."

So brethren, we have asked the Lord who is to dwell in His tent, and we have heard His commands to anyone who would dwell there; it remains for us to fulfill those duties.

Therefore we must prepare our hearts and our bodies to do battle under the holy obedience of His commands; and let us ask God that He be pleased to give us the help of His grace for anything which our nature finds hardly possible. And if we want to escape the pains of hell and attain life everlasting, then, while there is still time, while we are still in the body and are able to fulfill all these things by the light of this life, we must hasten to do now what will profit us for eternity.

And so we are going to establish a school for the service of the Lord. In founding it we hope to introduce nothing harsh or burdensome. But if a certain strictness results from the dictates of equity for the amendment of vices or the preservation of charity, do not be at once dismayed and fly from the way of salvation, whose entrance cannot but be narrow. For as we advance in the religious life and in faith, our hearts expand and we run the way of God's commandments with unspeakable sweetness of love. Thus, never departing from His school, but persevering in the monastery according to His teaching until death, we may by patience share in the sufferings of Christ and deserve to have a share also in His kingdom.

CHAPTER I

On the Kinds of Monks

It is well known that there are four kinds of monks. The first kind are the Cenobites: those who live in monasteries and serve under a rule and an Abbot.

The second kind are the Anchorites or Hermits: those who, no longer in the first fervor of their reformation, but after long probation in a monastery, having learned by the help of many brethren how to fight against the devil, go out well armed from the ranks of the community to the solitary combat of the desert. They are able now, with no help save from God, to fight singlehanded against the vices of the flesh and their own evil thoughts.

The third kind of monks, a detestable kind, are the Sarabaites. These, not having been tested, as gold in the furnace, by any rule or by the lessons of experience, are as soft as lead. In their works they still keep faith with the world, so that their tonsure marks them as liars before God. They live in twos or threes, or even singly; without a shepherd, in their own sheepfolds and not in the Lord's. Their law is the desire for self-gratification: whatever enters their mind or appeals to them, that they call holy; what they dislike, they regard as unlawful.

The fourth kind of monks are those called Gyrovagues. These spend their whole lives tramping from province to province, staying as guests in different monasteries for three or four days at a time. Always on the move, with no stability, they indulge their own wills and succumb to the allurements of gluttony, and are in every way worse than the Sarabaites. Of the miserable conduct of all such men it is better to be silent than to speak.

Passing these over, therefore, let us proceed, with God's help, to lay down a rule for the strongest kind of monks, the Cenobites.

CHAPTER 2

What Kind of Man the Abbot Ought to Be

An Abbot who is worthy to be over a monastery should always remember what he is called, and live up to the name of Superior. For he is believed to hold the place of Christ in the monastery, being called by a name of His, which is taken from the words of the Apostle: "You have received a Spirit of adoption as sons, by virtue of which we cry, 'Abba—Father!'"

Therefore the Abbot ought not to teach or ordain or command anything which is against the Lord's precepts; on the contrary, his commands and his teaching should be a leaven of divine justice kneaded into the minds of his disciples.

Let the Abbot always bear in mind that at the dread Judgment of God there will be an examination of these two matters: his teaching and the obedience of his disciples. And let the Abbot be sure that any lack of profit the master of the house may find in the sheep will be laid to the blame of the shepherd. On the other hand, if the shepherd has bestowed all his pastoral diligence on a restless, unruly flock and tried every remedy for their unhealthy behavior, then he will be acquitted at the Lord's Judgment and may say to the Lord with the Prophet: "I have not concealed Your justice within my heart; Your truth and Your salvation I have declared. But they have despised and rejected me." And then finally let death itself, irresistible, punish those disobedient sheep under his charge.

Therefore, when anyone receives the name of Abbot, he ought to govern his disciples with a twofold teaching. That is to say, he should show them all that is good and holy by his deeds even more than by his words, expounding the Lord's commandments in words to the intelligent among his disciples, but demonstrating the divine precepts by his actions for those of harder hearts and ruder minds. And whatever he has taught his disciples to be contrary to God's law, let him indicate by his example that it is not to be done, lest, while preaching to others, he himself be found reprobate, and lest God one day say to him in his sin, "Why do you declare My statutes and profess My covenant with your lips, whereas you hate discipline and have cast My words behind you?" And again, "You were looking at the speck in your brother's eye, and did not see the beam in your own."

Let him make no distinction of persons in the monastery. Let him not love one more than another, unless it be one whom he finds better in good works or in obedience. Let him not advance one of noble birth ahead of one who was formerly a slave, unless there be some other reasonable ground for it. But if the Abbot for just reason think fit to do so, let him advance one of any rank

whatever. Otherwise let them keep their due places; because, whether slaves or freemen, we are all one in Christ and bear an equal burden of service in the army of the same Lord. For with God there is no respect of persons. Only for one reason are we preferred in His sight: if we be found better than others in good works and humility. Therefore let the Abbot show equal love to all and impose the same discipline on all according to their deserts.

In his teaching the Abbot should always follow the Apostle's formula: "Reprove, entreat, rebuke"; threatening at one time and coaxing at another as the occasion may require, showing now the stern countenance of a master, now the loving affection of a father. That is to say, it is the undisciplined and restless whom he must reprove rather sharply; it is the obedient, meek, and patient whom he must entreat to advance in virtue; while as for the negligent and disdainful, these we charge him to rebuke and correct.

And let him not shut his eyes to the faults of offenders; but, since he has the authority, let him cut out those faults by the roots as soon as they begin to appear, remembering the fate of Heli, the priest of Silo. The well-disposed and those of good understanding let him correct with verbal admonition the first and second time. But bold, hard, proud, and disobedient characters he should curb at the very beginning of their ill-doing by stripes and other bodily punishments, knowing that it is written, "The fool is not corrected with words," and again, "Beat your son with the rod and you will deliver his soul from death."

The Abbot should always remember what he is and what he is called, and should know that to whom more is committed, from him more is required. Let him understand also what a difficult and arduous task he has undertaken: ruling souls and adapting himself to a variety of characters. One he must coax, another scold, another persuade, according to each one's character and understanding. Thus he must adjust and adapt himself to all in such a way that he may not only suffer no loss in the flock committed to his care, but may even rejoice in the increase of a good flock.

Above all let him not neglect or undervalue the welfare of the souls committed to him, in a greater concern for fleeting, earthly, perishable things; but let him always bear in mind that he has undertaken the government of souls and that he will have to give an account of them.

And if he be tempted to allege a lack of earthly means, let him remember what is written: "First seek the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be given you besides." And again: "Nothing is wanting to those who fear Him."

Let him know, then, that he who has undertaken the government of souls must prepare himself to render an account of them. Whatever number of brethren he knows he has under his care, he may be sure beyond doubt that on Judgment Day he will have to give the Lord an account of all these souls, as well as of his own soul.

Thus the constant apprehension about his coming examination as shepherd concerning the sheep entrusted to him, and his anxiety over the account that must be given for others, make him careful of his own record. And while by his admonitions he is helping others to amend, he himself is cleansed of his faults.

CHAPTER 3

On Calling the Brethren for Counsel

Whenever any important business has to be done in the monastery, let the Abbot call together the whole community and state the matter to be acted upon. Then, having heard the brethren's advice, let him turn the matter over in his own mind and do what he shall judge to be most expedient. The reason we have said that all should be called for counsel is that the Lord often reveals to the younger what is best.

Let the brethren give their advice with all the deference required by humility, and not presume stubbornly to defend their opinions; but let the decision rather depend on the Abbot's judgment, and all submit to whatever he shall decide for their welfare.

However, just as it is proper for the disciples to obey their master, so also it is his function to dispose all things with prudence and justice.

In all things, therefore, let all follow the Rule as guide, and let no one be so rash as to deviate from it. Let no one in the monastery follow his own heart's fancy; and let no one presume to contend with his Abbot in an insolent way or even outside of the monastery. But if anyone should presume to do so, let him undergo the discipline of the Rule. At the same time, the Abbot himself should do all things in the fear of God and in observance of the Rule, knowing that beyond a doubt he will have to render an account of all his decisions to God, the most just Judge.

But if the business to be done in the interests of the monastery be of lesser importance, let him take counsel with the seniors only. It is written, "Do everything with counsel, and you will not repent when you have done it."

CHAPTER 4

What Are the Instruments of Good Works

1. In the first place, to love the Lord God with the whole heart, the whole soul, the whole strength.
2. Then, one's neighbor as oneself.

3. Then not to murder.
4. Not to commit adultery.
5. Not to steal.
6. Not to covet.
7. Not to bear false witness.
8. To respect all men.
9. And not to do to another what one would not have done to oneself.
10. To deny oneself in order to follow Christ.
11. To chastise the body.
12. Not to become attached to pleasures.
13. To love fasting.
14. To relieve the poor.
15. To clothe the naked.
16. To visit the sick.
17. To bury the dead.
18. To help in trouble.
19. To console the sorrowing.
20. To become a stranger to the world's ways.
21. To prefer nothing to the love of Christ.
22. Not to give way to anger.
23. Not to nurse a grudge.
24. Not to entertain deceit in one's heart.
25. Not to give a false peace.
26. Not to forsake charity.
27. Not to swear, for fear of perjuring oneself.
28. To utter truth from heart and mouth.
29. Not to return evil for evil.
30. To do no wrong to anyone, and to bear patiently wrongs done to oneself.
31. To love one's enemies.
32. Not to curse those who curse us, but rather to bless them.
33. To bear persecution for justice's sake.
34. Not to be proud.
35. Not addicted to wine.
36. Not a great eater.
37. Not drowsy.
38. Not lazy.
39. Not a grumbler.
40. Not a detractor.
41. To put one's hope in God.
42. To attribute to God, and not to self, whatever good one sees in oneself.
43. But to recognize always that the evil is one's own doing, and to impute it to oneself.
44. To fear the Day of Judgment.

45. To be in dread of hell.
46. To desire eternal life with all the passion of the spirit.
47. To keep death daily before one's eyes.
48. To keep constant guard over the actions of one's life.
49. To know for certain that God sees one everywhere.
50. When evil thoughts come into one's heart, to dash them against Christ immediately.
51. And to manifest them to one's spiritual father.
52. To guard one's tongue against evil and depraved speech.
53. Not to love much talking.
54. Not to speak useless words or words that move to laughter.
55. Not to love much or boisterous laughter.
56. To listen willingly to holy reading.
57. To devote oneself frequently to prayer.
58. Daily in one's prayers, with tears and sighs, to confess one's past sins to God, and to amend them for the future.
59. Not to fulfill the desires of the flesh; to hate one's own will.
60. To obey in all things the commands of the Abbot, even though he himself (which God forbid) should act otherwise, mindful of the Lord's precept, "Do what they say, but not what they do."
61. Not to wish to be called holy before one is holy; but first to be holy, that one may be truly so called.
62. To fulfill God's commandments daily in one's deeds.
63. To love chastity.
64. To hate no one.
65. Not to be jealous, not to harbor envy.
66. Not to love contention.
67. To beware of haughtiness.
68. And to respect the seniors.
69. To love the juniors.
70. To pray for one's enemies in the love of Christ.
71. To make peace with one's adversary before the sun sets.
72. And never to despair of God's mercy.

These, then, are the tools of the spiritual craft. If we employ them unceasingly day and night, and return them on the Day of Judgment, our compensation from the Lord will be that wage He has promised: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, what God has prepared for those who love Him."

Now the workshop in which we shall diligently execute all these tasks is the enclosure of the monastery and stability in the community.

CHAPTER 5

On Obedience

The first degree of humility is obedience without delay. This is the virtue of those who hold nothing dearer to them than Christ; who, because of the holy service they have professed, and the fear of hell, and the glory of life everlasting, as soon as anything has been ordered by the Superior, receive it as a divine command and cannot suffer any delay in executing it. Of these the Lord says, "As soon as he heard, he obeyed Me." And again to teachers He says, "He who hears you, hears Me."

Such as these, therefore, immediately leaving their own affairs and forsaking their own will, dropping the work they were engaged in and leaving it unfinished, with the ready step of obedience follow up with their deeds the voice of him who commands. And so as it were at the same moment the master's command is given and the disciple's work is completed, the two things being speedily accomplished together in the swiftness of the fear of God by those who are moved with the desire of attaining life everlasting. That desire is their motive for choosing the narrow way, of which the Lord says, "Narrow is the way that leads to life," so that, not living according to their own choice nor obeying their own desires and pleasures but walking by another's judgment and command, they dwell in monasteries and desire to have an Abbot over them. Assuredly such as these are living up to that maxim of the Lord in which He says, "I have come not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

But this very obedience will be acceptable to God and pleasing to men only if what is commanded is done without hesitation, delay, lukewarmness, grumbling, or objection. For the obedience given to Superiors is given to God, since He Himself has said, "He who hears you, hears Me." And the disciples should offer their obedience with a good will, for "God loves a cheerful giver." For if the disciple obeys with an ill will and murmurs, not necessarily with his lips but simply in his heart, then even though he fulfill the command yet his work will not be acceptable to God, who sees that his heart is murmuring. And, far from gaining a reward for such work as this, he will incur the punishment due to murmurers, unless he amend and make satisfaction.

CHAPTER 6

On the Spirit of Silence

Let us do what the Prophet says: "I said, 'I will guard my ways, that I may not sin with my tongue. I have set a guard to my mouth.' I was mute and was humbled, and kept silence even from good things." Here the Prophet shows that if the spirit of silence ought to lead us at times to refrain even from good speech, so much the more ought the punishment for sin make us avoid evil words.

Therefore, since the spirit of silence is so important, permission to speak should rarely be granted even to perfect disciples, even though it be for good, holy, edifying conversation; for it is written, "In much speaking you will not escape sin," and in another place, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue."

For speaking and teaching belong to the master; the disciple's part is to be silent and to listen. And for that reason if anything has to be asked of the Superior, it should be asked with all the humility and submission inspired by reverence.

But as for coarse jests and idle words or words that move to laughter, these we condemn everywhere with a perpetual ban, and for such conversation we do not permit a disciple to open his mouth.

CHAPTER 7

On Humility

Holy Scripture, brethren, cries out to us, saying, "Everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted." In saying this it shows us that all exaltation is a kind of pride, against which the Prophet proves himself to be on guard when he says, "Lord, my heart is not exalted, nor are mine eyes lifted up; neither have I walked in great matters, nor in wonders above me." But how has he acted? "Rather have I been of humble mind than exalting myself; as a weaned child on its mother's breast, so You solace my soul."

Hence, brethren, if we wish to reach the very highest point of humility and to arrive speedily at that heavenly exaltation to which ascent is made through the humility of this present life, we must by our ascending actions erect the

ladder Jacob saw in his dream, on which Angels appeared to him descending and ascending. By that descent and ascent we must surely understand nothing else than this, that we descend by self-exaltation and ascend by humility. And the ladder thus set up is our life in the world, which the Lord raises up to heaven if our heart is humbled. For we call our body and soul the sides of the ladder, and into these sides our divine vocation has inserted the different steps of humility and discipline we must climb.

The first degree of humility, then, is that a person keep the fear of God before his eyes and beware of ever forgetting it. Let him be ever mindful of all that God has commanded; let his thoughts constantly recur to the hellfire which will burn for their sins those who despise God, and to the life everlasting which is prepared for those who fear Him. Let him keep himself at every moment from sins and vices, whether of the mind, the tongue, the hands, the feet, or the self-will, and check also the desires of the flesh.

Let a man consider that God is always looking at him from heaven, that his actions are everywhere visible to the divine eyes and are constantly being reported to God by the angels. This is what the Prophet shows us when he represents God as ever present within our thoughts, in the words "Searcher of minds and hearts is God" and again in the words "The Lord knows the thoughts of men." Again he says, "You have read my thoughts from afar" and "The thoughts of men will confess to You."

In order that he may be careful about his wrongful thoughts, therefore, let the faithful brother say constantly in his heart, "Then shall I be spotless before Him, if I have kept myself from my iniquity."

As for self-will, we are forbidden to do our own will by the Scripture, which says to us, "Turn away from your own will," and likewise by the prayer in which we ask God that His will be done in us. And rightly are we taught not to do our own will when we take heed to the warning of Scripture: "There are ways which to men seem right, but the ends of them plunge into the depths of hell"; and also when we tremble at what is said of the careless: "They are corrupt and have become abominable in their wills."

And as for the desires of the flesh, let us believe with the Prophet that God is ever present to us, when he says to the Lord, "Every desire of mine is before You."

We must be on our guard, therefore, against evil desires, for death lies close by the gate of pleasure. Hence the Scripture gives this command: "Go not after your concupiscences."

So therefore, since the eyes of the Lord observe the good and the evil and the Lord is always looking down from heaven on the children of men "to see if there be anyone who understands and seeks God," and since our deeds are daily, day and night, reported to the Lord by the angels assigned to us, we must constantly beware, brethren, as the Prophet says in the Psalm, lest at any time

God see us falling into evil ways and becoming unprofitable; and lest, having spared us for the present because in His kindness He awaits our reformation, He say to us in the future, "These things you did, and I held My peace."

The second degree of humility is that a person love not his own will nor take pleasure in satisfying his desires, but model his actions on the saying of the Lord, "I have come not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." It is written also, "Self-will has its punishment, but constraint wins a crown."

The third degree of humility is that a person for love of God submit himself to his Superior in all obedience, imitating the Lord, of whom the Apostle says, "He became obedient even unto death."

The fourth degree of humility is that he hold fast to patience with a silent mind when in this obedience he meets with difficulties and contradictions and even any kind of injustice, enduring all without growing weary or running away. For the Scripture says, "He who perseveres to the end, he it is who shall be saved"; and again, "Let your heart take courage, and wait for the Lord!"

And to show how those who are faithful ought to endure all things, however contrary, for the Lord, the Scripture says in the person of the suffering, "For Your sake we are put to death all the day long; we are considered as sheep marked for slaughter." Then, secure in their hope of a divine recompense, they go on with joy to declare, "But in all these trials we conquer, through Him who has granted us His love." Again, in another place the Scripture says, "You have tested us, O God; You have tried us as silver is tried, by fire; You have brought us into a snare; You have laid afflictions on our back." And to show that we ought to be under a Superior, it goes on to say, "You have set men over our heads."

Moreover, by their patience those faithful ones fulfill the Lord's command in adversities and injuries: when struck on one cheek, they offer the other; when deprived of their tunic, they surrender also their cloak; when forced to go a mile, they go two; with the Apostle Paul they bear with false brethren and bless those who curse them.

The fifth degree of humility is that he hide from his Abbot none of the evil thoughts that enter his heart or the sins committed in secret, but that he humbly confess them. The Scripture urges us to this when it says, "Reveal your way to the Lord and hope in Him," and again, "Confess to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever." And the Prophet likewise says, "My offense I have made known to You, and my iniquities I have not covered up. I said: 'I will declare against myself my iniquities to the Lord;' and 'You forgave the wickedness of my heart.'"

The sixth degree of humility is that a monk be content with the poorest and worst of everything, and that in every occupation assigned him he consider himself a bad and worthless workman, saying with the Prophet, "I am brought

to nothing and I am without understanding; I have become as a beast of burden before You, and I am always with You.”

The seventh degree of humility is that he consider himself lower and of less account than anyone else, and this not only in verbal protestation but also with the most heartfelt inner conviction, humbling himself and saying with the Prophet, “But I am a worm and no man, the scorn of men and the outcast of the people. After being exalted, I have been humbled and covered with confusion.” And again, “It is good for me that You have humbled me, that I may learn Your commandments.”

The eighth degree of humility is that a monk do nothing except what is commended by the common Rule of the monastery and the example of the elders.

The ninth degree of humility is that a monk restrain his tongue and keep silence, not speaking until he is questioned. For the Scripture shows that “in much speaking there is no escape from sin” and that “the talkative man is not stable on the earth.”

The tenth degree of humility is that he be not ready and quick to laugh, for it is written, “The fool lifts up his voice in laughter.”

The eleventh degree of humility is that when a monk speaks he do so gently and without laughter, humbly and seriously, in few and sensible words, and that he be not noisy in his speech. It is written, “A wise man is known by the fewness of his words.”

The twelfth degree of humility is that a monk not only have humility in his heart but also by his very appearance make it always manifest to those who see him. That is to say that whether he is at the Work of God, in the oratory, in the monastery, in the garden, on the road, in the fields or anywhere else, and whether sitting, walking, or standing, he should always have his head bowed and his eyes toward the ground. Feeling the guilt of his sins at every moment, he should consider himself already present at the dread Judgment and constantly say in his heart what the publican in the Gospel said with his eyes fixed on the earth: “Lord, I am a sinner and not worthy to lift up my eyes to heaven”; and again with the Prophet: “I am bowed down and humbled everywhere.”

Having climbed all these steps of humility, therefore, the monk will presently come to that perfect love of God which casts out fear. And all those precepts which formerly he had not observed without fear, he will now begin to keep by reason of that love, without any effort, as though naturally and by habit. No longer will his motive be the fear of hell, but rather the love of Christ, good habit, and delight in the virtues which the Lord will deign to show forth by the Holy Spirit in His servant now cleansed from vice and sin.

St. Bernard

St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) Cistercian abbot and Doctor of the Church, is one of the great masters of mystical theology. Unlike other more Scholastic theologians, Bernard was not as closely systematic. Yet his basic teaching is remarkably consistent.

Three of St. Bernard's writings synthesize his teaching.

In Grace and Free Will, he insists on the primacy of the will, whose freedom from sin takes place in Christ and through Christ.

In Degrees of Humility and Pride, he shows the fundamental importance of humility as the basis for charity.

In the Book on the Love of God, Bernard shows that we are to love God solely for Himself. But the reasons for our selfless love of God are the gifts He has given to us His creatures, and the fact that in God alone do we find happiness, perfectly in heaven and yet very deeply already here on earth.

There are two great books in Catholic literature on the love of God: St. Bernard's, which here follows, and St. Francis de Sales' Treatise on Divine Love, written four hundred years later.

On the Love of God

CHAPTER ONE

Why We Should Love God, and How We Ought to Do It

You wish me to tell you why God should be loved, and in what way or measure we should love Him. I answer then: the reason for our loving God is God; and measure of that love there should be none. Is that enough to say about the matter? For a wise man most probably it is, but I am under obligation to the foolish also; and though I may have said enough for those with understanding. I must have due regard for others too. For those less apt, then, I gladly will explain what I have said more fully, if not with greater depth.

I might have said there was a twofold reason for our loving God solely for Himself. First: nothing can be loved more justly. And, second: nothing can be loved with so much profit to ourselves. The question *Why should God be loved?* includes both these, for it may mean either *What is His claim upon our love?* or *What benefit shall we derive from loving Him?* My former answer stands in either case: there is no other worthy cause for loving God except Himself. As to His claim upon our love, He surely merits much from us Who gave Himself to us, unworthy as we were: what better gift *could* He have given than Himself? If, then, it is His claim we have in mind when asking, *Why should God be loved?* the first and foremost answer is, "Because He first loved us." Most plainly is He worthy of our answering love, especially if we consider Who He is Who thus bestows His love on us, who are the objects of it, and how great it is. For Who is He, save He Whom every soul confesses, "Thou art my God, my goods are nothing unto Thee"? His is indeed the sovereign charity, that seeks for nothing for itself. But who are they to whom He shows this selfless love? "When we were enemies," the apostle says, "we were reconciled to God." God, then, has loved us freely, while we were enemies. How much has He loved us? "So," says John, "God loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son." "He that spared not His own Son," says Paul, "but delivered Him up for us all." The Son moreover tells us of Himself, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." This is the claim the Just One has on sinners, the Highest on the lowest, and He Who is Almighty on the weak. You say, perhaps, Yes, this is true of men, but with the angels it is otherwise. That I

admit: the angels had not our human need. For the fact is that He, Who helped man in his misery, kept them from falling into such a plight at all; and He, Whose love gave men the means to leave their lost estate, by a like love preserved the angels from sharing in our fall.

CHAPTER TWO

How Greatly God Merits to Be Loved by Man, Because of His Good Gifts Alike to Soul and Body. How These Benefits Should Be Acknowledged, and Not Used Against the Giver

Those who have followed the arguments that I have just put forward must see quite clearly now why we should love God—that is to say, what the grounds are that make Him worthy to be loved by us. But if there be any unbelieving souls to whom this is not clear, God has the means to confound their ingratitude in the countless sensible blessings with which so patently He benefits our race. Who but He gives *food* and *light* and *air* to every man alive? I give these three merely as examples, for it would be foolish to try to make a comprehensive list of the things which I have just said were numberless. And I put them first, not because they are better than His other gifts, but because, being corporal benefits, they are first in point of actual necessity. For higher gifts we must look at the higher region of our being, that is to say, our soul; and there the three are *dignity*, *knowledge* and *virtue*. When I speak of *dignity* or worthiness in man, I mean free will. It is the possession of the power of choice that renders man superior to all other living creatures on the earth and sets him in dominion over them. By *knowledge* I mean the power by which man recognizes his own dignity, and at the same time knows he does not get it from himself. And *virtue* is the gift that makes a man seek ardently Him from Whom he derives his being, and cleave to Him most steadfastly when found.

These three gifts have each a dual aspect. *Dignity* is both the unique privilege of human nature and the source of its authority over other creatures, in whom the universal fear of man is plainly seen. *Knowledge* is of a double aspect too: it sees the dignity of man, and indeed any other gift that we possess, as something *in* us that yet is not *of* us, for we do not possess it of ourselves. And lastly, *virtue* in its twofold force leads us both to seek the Author of our being and to let nothing part us from Him, once He has been found. [You see, then, how the three gifts hang together.] Dignity is worthless if we have not knowledge; knowledge without virtue only does us harm. For if you possess something and

do not know that you have got it, what glory is it? To know that you have got it, on the other hand, and yet not recognize it as a gift, is to glory in yourself but not in God; and to such a person the apostle says, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received?" He does not merely say, "Why dost thou glory?" but adds "as though thou hadst not received?"—showing that the blameworthy thing is not the glorying in *having* anything but in behaving as though it had not been *received*. This kind of glorying is rightly called vain or empty glory, because it fails to rest upon the solid rock of truth. He distinguishes this from true glory by saying "He that glorieth, let him glory *in the Lord*"—that is, in truth. For God is Truth.

So you see that there are two things that we need to know—first, what we are, then that we are not such of our own selves. The former knowledge will keep us from glorying without any qualification at all, the latter will keep us from glorying without foundation. We read in Solomon's Song, "If thou know not thyself, go forth after the flocks of thy companions." And that is just what happens, for when man, being in honour, has no understanding of that in which his honour consists, he is justly compared (by reason of his ignorance) with the beasts that perish, the creatures that like himself lie under bondage to death and to corruption. Not knowing itself, the creature distinguished by the gift of reason from the beasts confounds itself with them; not recognizing its peculiar glory, which must be formed within, it gets led astray by sensible and outward things as a result of its own curiosity, and thus sinks to the level of the lower creatures. This comes about because it does not understand that it has received a better thing than they. We must guard carefully against this ignorance, which would make us esteem ourselves as less than God has made us; and with even greater care we must steer clear of the opposing error, which leads us to attribute to ourselves more than in fact we have. And that, of course, is just what we *do* do, when we regard God's gifts to us as though they were our own.

But, more than either of these two forms of ignorance, we must avoid and hate the sinful presumption which would lead us deliberately to credit to ourselves the things which we know well are God's good gifts, thus stealing brazenly the honour due to Himself alone. By the first ignorance of which I spoke, we glory not at all; the second makes us glory, only not in God. But the third evil, because it is committed knowingly, is a frank usurpation of the rights of God, an arrogance far graver and more perilous than is the second form of ignorance, in that the arrogance sets God at nought and makes us like the devils, whereas the other consisted only in not knowing God at all and made us like the beasts. Pride is indeed the greatest of all evils, since it leads us to use God's gifts as though they were our own by natural right, and to usurp the glory due to the Bestower for what we have received.

In addition to dignity and knowledge, therefore, we need virtue, which is

the fruit of both. By it we seek and hold the Author and Giver of all, Whom all should glorify; without it, we are as the servant who knew his master's will and did it not, and like him shall be beaten with many stripes. Why so? Because instead of using our intelligence for good, we planned iniquity upon our beds, and tried like wicked servants to capture for ourselves the good Lord's glory for those good things which, by the very gift of knowledge, we knew beyond all doubt to be not ours.

It is clear, then, that dignity without knowledge is entirely useless, and that knowledge without virtue leads to ruin. But to the man of virtue neither is knowledge culpable nor dignity bereft of its true fruit; he calls on God with frank and free confession, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name be the praise." That is to say, Naught of our knowledge is our own, we take no credit to ourselves for our high dignity; we refer all to Thee from Whom it comes.

But we have wandered too far from our theme, in our desire to show that even those who know not Christ receive enough light from the natural law, through recognizing His good gifts to body and to soul, to show them that they should love God for God's own sake. Let us then summarize what we have said above. Even the unbeliever knows quite well that food and light and air and all the things he needs for mortal life proceed from God—that it is God Who gives food to all and makes His sun to rise on good and bad alike and sends the rain to sinners equally with saints. What man is there so godless that he refers the dignity peculiar to our race to any other than to Him Who says in Genesis, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness"? Or who is there that sees the Fount of knowledge in any save in Him Who "teacheth man knowledge"? And from what other hand do any think their virtue given or hope it may be so, if not from the Lord of virtues? God, then, has good title to be loved for Himself, even on the limited knowledge of the unbeliever to whom Christ is unknown; even he, therefore, is without excuse if he loves not the Lord his God with all his heart and soul and strength; justice inborn in him, no stranger to his reason, cries out her witness from his inmost being that he is bound to love Him wholly, from Whom alone he holds all that he has. Yet it is very difficult: indeed it is impossible for us in our own strength or by free will unaided to turn things once received from God to serve His will. As it is written, "All seek their own," and elsewhere, "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth," so we ourselves are certain to wrench away God's gifts to the fulfillment of our own desire, and treat them as our own.

CHAPTER THREE

*The Motives That Christians Have for Loving God,
Which Unbelievers Lack*

Believers, on the other hand, know well their utter need of Jesus and Him crucified; and they, while they embrace and marvel at the love revealed in Him, are overwhelmed with shame because they pay not back, in answer to such love and consolation, even the very little that they are. These easily love God the most, because they understand how greatly they are loved; for he to whom less love is given will himself love less. Neither the pagan nor the Jew, therefore, is so pricked by the darts of love as is the Church, who says, "I am wounded with love," and again, "Stay me with flowers, comfort me with fruits, for I am sick with love." She sees King Solomon in the diadem with which his mother crowned him. She sees the Father's Only Son carrying His cross. She sees the Lord of majesty spat upon and stricken, the Fount of life and glory nailed upon the tree, His side pierced by the spear, and insults heaped upon Him, surrendering for His friends at last His precious life. Seeing these things, she feels the sword of love go through her own heart also and she says, "Stay me with flowers, comfort me with fruits, for I am sick with love." The fruits the Bride gathers from the Tree of Life when she is brought into the Beloved's garden are pomegranates, that take their savour from the Bread of Heaven, their colour from Christ's Blood. She sees the deathblow given to death, and him that had the power of death swelling the triumph of his Conqueror. She sees captivity led captive from hell to earth, from earth to highest heaven, "that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth." She sees the earth, that brought forth thorns and thistles under the ancient curse, break forth with flowers under God's new blessing; and, mindful of the words "Therefore my heart danceth for joy and in my song will I praise Him," she longs to add to those fruits of the Passion she has already plucked from Calvary's Tree some of the flowers of the Resurrection, whose fragrance especially attracts the visits of her Spouse. "Behold, thou art fair, my Beloved, and comely," she says to Him, "our couch is green." The mention of the couch shows well what she desires, and when she calls it green she designates the means by which she looks to realize her hopes—not from her own deserts, that is, but from the flowers of the field which the Lord God has blessed. Christ Who willed to be conceived and reared at Nazareth delights in flowers; and the celestial Bridegroom, drawn by their sweet breath, gladly and often visits the chamber of the heart that He finds decked with fruits and strewn

with flowers. Gladly and lovingly He dwells with souls that have acquired by loving meditation His Passion's grace, His Resurrection's glory. The Passion, you must understand, is as it were a harvest: all time before it led to it, the ages under sin's and death's dominion found in the cross their climax and fruition. But you must see the splendours of the Resurrection rather as flowers of the age of grace but now begun, blossoms of the new springtide of creation which, in the general resurrection at the end of time, will bear their boundless and eternal fruit. "For lo, the winter is past," says the Bride, "the rain is over and gone, the flowers have appeared in our land." By these words she would have us understand, summer has come with Him Who, loosed from out death's winter into the springtide of the risen life, declares, "Behold, I make all things new." For, sown in death, His body has in His resurrection flowered anew; to greet its budding fragrance our life's parched plain grows green, the glaciers melt, the dead return to life.

In the freshness of these fruits and flowers and in the fullness of this field exhaling such exquisite perfume the Father also takes pleasure, even in the Son Who thus makes all things new. "The smell of My Son," He says, "is as the smell of a field that the Lord hath blessed"—a plenteous field indeed, for it is of His fullness that we have all received. But the Bride is on such terms with Him that she may come at will to pick the flowers and to cull the fruits, to dress with them the chamber of her conscience so that the Bridegroom, when He comes, may find a fragrant couch prepared for Him. For we, if we would have our Lord a frequent guest, must always have our minds well fortified with thoughts alike of His great mercy, witnessed by His death, and of the power that His resurrection shows, even as David says, "These two things have I heard, that power belongeth unto God, and that Thou, Lord, art merciful." We have indeed every reason to believe that Christ died for our sins and rose again for our justification; that He ascended into heaven for our protection also, and sent the Holy Spirit for our consolation, and that He will return at last to consummate His work. In His death we have proof of His mercy, in His resurrection of His power, and of the two together in each one of the rest.

These, then, are the fruits and flowers with which the Bride entreats she may be stayed and comforted meanwhile; and I believe she does so because she knows how easily the fervour of her love may wane and languish without such motives to maintain its strength. And yet she needs these aids only until such time as all her longings are fulfilled and the Beloved leads her to His chamber and takes her in His arms and she can say, "His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me." By His left hand she means the tokens of His love that He bestowed on her in His First Coming; the which she then will realize are utterly to be despised compared with the rich sweetness of His right hand's embrace. And then, moreover, she will experience that which before she heard, "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." She will

prove also the truth of what she read, "My memorial is sweeter than honey and mine inheritance than the honeycomb." If it be written further, "My memorial is unto everlasting generations," it is to show that, while this age endures, one generation following on another, God's chosen shall not lack the comfort of remembering Him; albeit they are not fully satisfied as yet with His abiding presence. And when the Psalmist says, "The memorial of Thine abundant kindness shall be showed them," the reference clearly is to those of whom he said, a little earlier in the same Psalm, "One generation shall praise Thy works unto another." His memory and His memorial here on earth; in heaven His perpetual presence. The latter is the glory of those who have already reached their goal; the former is the consolation of pilgrims still upon the way.

CHAPTER FOUR

What Sort of People Take Comfort from the Thought of God; and How These Are More Apt Than Others to Return His Love

It is well to consider what sort of people take comfort in the thought of God. Those who do so are not the faithless and stubborn generation, to whom it is said, "Woe unto you, ye rich, for ye have received your consolation," but rather those who say with truth, "My soul refused comfort," and go on with like sincerity to add, "I remembered God and took delight." Those to whom the present brings no joy do well to fix their gaze upon the future; and the thought of eternity will naturally give delight to those who scorn to find their satisfaction to any great extent in transient things. This is the generation of them that seek the Lord, seeking not their own, but the Face of the God of Jacob. Meanwhile the thought of God is ready to hand, and is sweet indeed to those who seek and languish for His presence. And yet these are not satisfied by that recalling but rather hunger more; which is exactly what the Bread of Life testifies concerning Himself, saying, "They that eat Me shall yet be hungry," and he who has partaken of it says, "When Thy glory shall have appeared, I shall be satisfied." Yet happy are these people even now, because they hunger and thirst after righteousness, and they themselves, not others, in due course shall be filled.

Woe to thee, then, perverse and wicked generation, woe to thee, O foolish people and unwise, who do not love the thought of Him and dread the moment when He shall appear! Good right have you to fear, for neither do you now desire to be set free from the hunter's snare (those toils of the devil that surely catch all those who would be rich with this world's goods), nor will you be able to escape the terrible judgement, the hard, the bitter word, "Depart, ye wicked, into everlasting fire!" Harder and more bitter truly is that word, than is the

saying which we daily hear in church, concerning the memorial of His Passion, "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life"; which means, He who calls My death to mind and after My example mortifies his members that are upon the earth hath eternal life, for if you suffer with Me, so also shall you reign. Nevertheless, even to this day many refuse to hear His voice when He speaks thus and turn away from Him, saying by deeds if not in words, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" Therefore this generation, that set not their heart aright and whose spirit cleaveth not steadfastly unto God, but prefers to set its hope on deceitful riches, cannot abide the gospel of the cross and finds the memory of the Passion burdensome. How will such endure the sentence of the Judge, "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"? Like a great rock, this judgement will crush to powder those on whom it falls. But "the generation of the righteous shall be blessed," who, like the apostle, "whether present or absent," endeavour to please God; their sentence from the Judge will be, "Come, ye blessed of My Father," and so forth. And in that day the generation that set not their heart aright will find, too late, how easy by comparison with what they suffer were the yoke of Christ, how light His burden would have been, which then they deemed too heavy for their proud necks to bear. O wretched slaves of Mammon, you cannot glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and at the same time hope in earthly riches; you cannot seek for gold *and* prove how gracious the Lord is! Very fearful will you find Him one day, the thought of Whom has never been your joy.

But the faithful soul both yearns for His presence and rests her sweetly in the thought of Him; and until such time as she be fit to see God's glory face to face, she glories in the ignominy of the cross. As Christ's own dove and bride, she holds herself in waiting, resting amid the potsherds. Out of the memory of Thine abundant sweetness, Lord, she has before all chosen to herself the silver wings of innocence and virgin purity; she looks moreover for the day when she will be filled with joy in the light of Thy countenance, and all her feathers will shine with purest gold, when she will be received with joy among the saints' bright company, to share the radiance of their happiness. Good reason has she therefore to say now with delight, "His left hand is under my head and His right hand doth embrace me." His left hand is the memory of that love, than which there is none greater, because for His friends' sake He laid down His life. His right hand is the Beatific Vision that He has promised to His friends, even the joy that it will be to see His majesty unveiled. Meetly is that divine and deifying vision, that joy unspeakable in God's own presence, described as His right hand; for does not David sing delightedly, "At Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore"? With equal fitness is the left hand used as symbol for His amazing love shown in the past and ever to be held in memory; for the Bride leans and rests on that, till evil be no more.

Meet, too, it is, that on the left hand of her Spouse the Bride should lay her head; for by her head we are to understand her mind's intention, which she directs upon the thought of Him, lest it should be diverted to temporal and fleshly interests. Do we not know how "the corruptible body presseth down the soul and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things"? And, when you come to think of it, what else would you expect to issue from mercy so great and so unmerited, so proven and so free, from honour so unthinkable, mildness invincible and sweetness past compare? What, I say, should the pondering of such love effect in any soul, except in wondrous wise to wean it from its sin and ardently affect it, making it set at nought for love's dear sake whatever can be sought only in love's despite? Because of the savour of these His good ointments the Bride runs swiftly and loves fervently; knowing herself so greatly loved, it seems to her her own love is too small, even when it absorbs her very life. So great a love, shown by so great a Lord, how can one pay it back? Dust that we are, what recompense is it, even to give our whole poor selves to Him? Was not that majesty the first to love? Do we not see Him wholly bent on our salvation's work? "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten" undoubtedly is spoken of the Father; "He hath poured out His soul unto death" with equal certainty is spoken of the Son. And of the Holy Spirit the Son says, "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things and bring to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." God loves us, then, with His whole Being; it is the Trinity entire that loves—if one dare speak of wholeness in Him Who has no parts, the mystery of Whose Being far transcends our grasp, if one may use the word "entire" of Him Who simply Is.

CHAPTER FIVE

How Great a Debt of Love the Christian Owes to God

What we have said shows clearly why Christians should love God—that is to say, the claim He has upon our love. But with the unbeliever it is different; since he has not the Son, neither has he the Father nor the Holy Spirit. For "he that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him"; and, knowing less of God than we do, it is no wonder he should love Him less. One thing, however, he does know: to Him Who made him he owes himself entire. But *I* have no excuse of ignorance. Do I not know that God created me without any merit on my part, that He provides abundantly for all my needs, consoles me with paternal care and guides my life with loving interest? Beyond all that, do I not know He is Himself my out-and-out Redeemer, my everlasting

Keeper, the Source and Substance of my treasure now and ultimately of my glory too? The Scripture says, "With Him is plenteous redemption"; and, in another place, "He entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." About His keeping too we read, "He forsaketh not His that be godly, but they are preserved for ever"; and about His enriching of our lives, "Good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over, shall men give into your bosom"; and, in another place, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him." Glorification also is foretold. "We look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ," says Paul, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." Elsewhere he says, "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us"; and yet again, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding weight of glory, while we look not at the things that are seen but at the things that are not seen."

What reward shall I give unto the Lord for all these benefits that He has done to me? Both reason and the natural law urge me to give myself entire to Him from Whom I hold all that I am and have, to love Him too with all the strength I have. Because I am a Christian faith goes further: I know that I must love Him more than I love myself because, besides myself, He gives me also *Himself*, a gift of infinitely greater worth. Yet think: before the day of faith had dawned, and before God had been revealed in flesh, uprisen from the tomb, ascended to the Father; before, I say, He had commended thus His mighty love to us, of which already we have said so much—even before all that, man had been bidden to love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his strength—that is, with his entire being as a creature having the gifts of knowledge and free will. God certainly is well within His rights in claiming to Himself the work of His own hands, the gifts Himself has given! How should the thing made fail to love the Maker, provided that it have from Him the power to love at all? How should it not love Him with all its powers, since only by His gift has it got anything? Man, called into being out of nothing by God's free act and raised to such high honour, how patent is his debt of love to God's most just demand! How vastly God has multiplied His mercy too, in saving man and beast in such a way! Why, we had turned our glory into the likeness of a calf that eateth hay; our sin had brought us to the level of the beasts that know not God at all! If, then, I owe myself entire to my Creator, what shall I give my Re-creator more? The means of our re-making, too, think what they cost! It was far easier to make than to redeem; for God had but to speak the word and all things were created, me included; but He Who made me by a word, and made me once for all, spent on the task of my re-making many words and many marvellous deeds, and suffered grievous and humiliating wrongs.

What reward, therefore, shall I give the Lord for all the benefits that He has

done to me? By His first work He gave me to myself; and by the next He gave Himself to me. And when He gave Himself, He gave me back *myself* that I had lost. Myself for myself, given and restored, I doubly owe to Him. What, though, shall I return Him for *Himself*? A thousand of myself would be as nothing in respect of Him.

CHAPTER SIX

A Summary of What Has Gone Before

The first point to consider is, that God deserves exceeding love from us, a love that has no measure. That is the first thing you must understand. The reason is, as I have said before, that He was first to love; He, Who is so great, loves us so much; He loves us freely, little and poor and worthless as we are. That is why I said in the beginning that measure of our love for God there should be none. For since love given to God is given to the Infinite and Measureless, what measure or what limit could it have? And, what is more, our love is not bestowed for nothing, as is His; we render it in payment of a debt. He, the Unmeasured and Eternal God, He Who is Love beyond all human ken, Whose greatness knows no bounds, Whose wisdom has no end, *loves*. Shall we, then, set a limit to our love for Him? I will love Thee, O Lord my Strength, my Stony Rock and my Defence, my Saviour, my one Desire and Love. My God, my Helper, I will love Thee with all the power Thou hast given me; not worthily, for that can never be, but to the full of my capacity. Do what I will, I never can discharge my debt to Thee, and I can love Thee only according to the power that Thou hast given me. But I will love Thee more and more, as Thou seest fit to give the further power; yet never, never, as Thou shouldst be loved. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; yet in Thy book are written all who do the best they can, though they can never pay their debt in full.

I think I now have said enough to show both how we should love God and what the claim He has upon our love. His claim indeed! Who can take in or put in words or understand what is involved in that?

CHAPTER SEVEN

That Loving God Is Not Without Its Fruit and Due Reward; and That the Human Heart Cannot Be Satisfied with Earthly Things

Now let us see what benefit accrues to us from loving God. What we can understand of this is but a fraction of the mystery; and yet it is not right we should refrain from speaking about the very little that we can take in. Just now when we were speaking of the reason and the measure of our love for God, I said the question might be taken in two ways. One, which concerns His title to our love, has been discussed already, not worthily indeed but to the best of my ability. It remains now for me to speak (again as God shall give) about the second sense: *What benefit shall we derive from loving God?*

God is not loved without reward, although He should be loved without reward in view. True Charity is never left with empty hands; and yet she is no hireling, out for pay, but "seeketh not her own." The disposition of the will in love is not a bargain; no stipulation enters into it. It is a voluntary movement of the affective faculty, an action of free will. True love is therefore self-sufficient, self-contented; its Object is Itself its recompense. When you apparently love anything because of something else, what you are really loving is the end, the object of your love; the means you value only in relation to it. Paul does not preach the Gospel for his daily bread; he eats his daily bread that he may preach. It is the Gospel that he loves, not food. True love seeks no reward; and yet it merits one. Nobody ever dreams of offering to pay for love; yet recompense is owed to him who loves, and he will get it if he perseveres. On lower levels, we hold out promise of reward to laggards; we need not so encourage willing men. Who ever thought a person ought to be rewarded for doing what he wanted of his own free will? No one gives money to a hungry man to make him eat, nor to a thirsty one to make him drink; nor does one bribe a mother to suckle her own child. And you would think it just as strange to use entreaty or offer of reward to get a man to fence in his own vineyard or care for his own trees, or build a house for his own dwelling-place. Much more, the soul that loves God seeks for God, and wants no other prize. Where it is otherwise, you may be sure it is some other thing, not God, that really is the object of her love.

It is natural for a rational being always to seek those things which, in his judgement, are better and more useful for his ends; and he is never satisfied until he has acquired the thing that he prefers. A man who has a pretty wife, for instance, looks round with roving eye to find a fairer woman; if he has got a costly suit of clothes, he wants one even better; however rich he is, he will be jealous of anyone who is more wealthy still. You see it happening every day:

landowners still “lay field to field” and seek by all means to extend their property, however much they may possess already; and those who live in spacious palaces and royal habitations are daily joining house to house and ever in a fever building new or taking down or altering the old—rectangular for round or round for square. And men in high position, too, are they not always on the climb, trying to hoist themselves to higher places still? There is no limit to such restlessness, because in all these things the absolute can never be attained. And yet why should we wonder at man’s discontent with what is less and worse, since he can find his peace in nothing save only in the highest and the best? The foolish thing, the rank, the utter madness, is to spend all this energy on trying to get things which, when acquired, can never satisfy or even take the edge off our desires! There is no peace in the possession of such things as these; whatever you have got you still want more; always you are worrying for what you lack. And so it happens that the restless heart, worn out with fruitless toil, is never satisfied however much it gluts; and ceaseless torment of desire for what it has not got kills all its pleasure in the things it has. For after all who can have everything? The little anybody can acquire must be won by toil and is a ceaseless terror to possess. The owner knows moreover that he is bound to lose it in the end, although he does not know just when that grief will come. In this way the perverted will hastens to sate itself with what it deems the best; but its own vanity makes sport of it, its own iniquity deceives it in a maze of winding paths. If the satisfaction of all your desires is what you are looking for, why must you waste time on all these other things? You travel by a long road to your goal, and you may make a fool of yourself long before it brings you where you want to be.

It is on this endless treadmill that the ungodly walk, who try to find their satisfaction on the natural plane and in their folly spurn the means that lead to their true end, the end in which alone they find themselves made whole and not destroyed. They waste their energies in unrewarding efforts; yet they accomplish nothing, for, setting their affections on created things, they try them all in turn before they dream of trying God, from Whom all things proceed. Suppose they did get everything they wanted, what would happen then? One treasure after another would fail to satisfy, and then the only object of desire left would be the Cause of all. It is our nature’s law that makes a man set higher value on the things he has not got than upon those he has, so that he loathes his actual possessions for longing for the things that are not his. And this same law, when all things else in earth and heaven have failed, drives him at last to God, the Lord of all, Whom hitherto alone he has not had. Once God is found the soul has rest; for just as on this side no rest recalls, so beyond the grave no unrest ever troubles any more. So with the Psalmist she cries out, “It is good for me to hold me fast by God. Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee. God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.” In this way, therefore, as I said, a soul would reach its highest Good at last if it could try in sequence first all lesser things than He.

It is, however, a practical impossibility to make such trial of all other things before we turn to God. Life is too short, our strength too limited, the number of competitors for this world's goods too great; so long a journey, such unfruitful toil would wear us out. We want to satisfy all our desires, and find we cannot get possession of all desirable things. Much wiser should we be to make the choice not by experiment but by intelligence; for this we could do easily and not without result. The rational mind is swifter in its action than the carnal sense, and vastly more discerning. Indeed, God gives us reason for that very purpose, that it may guide the senses in their choice and see to it they be not satisfied, except by that which reason has approved: hence the apostle's counsel, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good," that is, let reason so provide for the carnal sense that it may attain its desire only as reason wills. There will be therefore no ascent to God for you, no standing in His Holy Place, the gift of reason will have been bestowed on you in vain if, like the beasts, you let yourself be guided by your senses, while reason just looks on. Isaiah speaks of those who have "no judgement in their goings." They run indeed, whose steps are not controlled by reason, but not along the track; setting at nought the apostolic word, they run without a chance of winning in the race. How can they win, seeing they want the prize only when they have tried all else and failed? Theirs is an endless road, a hopeless maze, who seek for goods before they seek for God.

But with the righteous it is otherwise. Hearing the blasphemy of the multitude thus marking time upon their endless round, (for the broad road to death has many passengers), they choose themselves to tread the Royal Road, and turn not to the right hand nor the left. These are the souls of whom the prophet speaks, "The way of the just is uprightness, a direct path is his to walk upon." They take the timely warning to avoid the irksome and unprofitable maze; their choice is for the short work, cut short in righteousness; they do not grasp at everything they see, but rather sell what they possess and give it to the poor. "Blessed" indeed "are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "They which run in a race run all," but there is difference between the runners. "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish." "A small thing that the righteous hath is better than great riches of the ungodly," for, as the Wise Man says and the fool proves, "He that loveth money shall not be satisfied with money," but "those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, they shall be filled." Righteousness is, for those who use their reason, their spirits' natural and essential food; but money no more satisfies the hunger of the mind than air supplies the body's need in place of bread. Suppose you saw a starving man inhaling great deep breaths, filling his cheeks with wind to stay his hunger, would you not call him mad? And it is just as mad to think that blowing yourself out with earthly goods can satisfy your reasonable soul. They are as powerless to meet its need as spiritual blessings are to satisfy

the body. "Praise the Lord, O my soul, Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things"—yes, satisfies thy longing with the good, incites thee to its quest, is ever first with thee in giving it, sustains thee, fills thee full. He kindles thy desire Himself, Who is Himself its Goal.

I said in the beginning: the reason for our loving God is God. I spoke the truth, for He is both prime mover of our love and final end. He is Himself our human love's occasion; He also gives the power to love, and brings desire to its consummation. He is Himself the Lovable in His essential Being, and gives Himself to be the Object of our love. He wills our love for Him to issue in our bliss, not to be void and vain. His love both opens up the way for ours and is our love's reward. How kindly does He lead us in love's way, how generously He returns the love we give, how sweet He is to those who wait for Him! He is rich unto all that call upon Him, for He can give them nothing better than Himself. He gave Himself to be our Righteousness, and keeps Himself to be our great Reward. He sets Himself to the refreshment of our souls, and spends Himself to free the prisoners. Thou art good, Lord, to the soul that seeks Thee. What, then, art Thou to the soul that finds? The marvel is, no one can seek Thee who has not found already. Thou wiltest us to find that we may seek, to seek that we may find. We can both seek and find Thee, but we can never be before with Thee. For though we say "Early shall my prayer come before Thee," a chilly, loveless thing that prayer would be, were it not warmed by Thine own breath and born of Thine own Spirit.

We have now spoken of the way in which our love for God receives its consummation. We go on to consider how that same love begins.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The First Degree of Love, Which Is the Love of Self for Self

Love is a natural affection, one of four,¹ as everybody knows, so that there is no need to name them here. And, because love is natural, it would indeed be just for nature to give her service first to Him from Whom she takes her being; whence comes, of course, the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." For, though our nature's law directs us thus to love God first of all, our weakness and infirmity require the binding force of the commandment too; because what really takes the first place in our lives is love for self. We have indeed no feeling that is not for self. "First that which is natural and afterward that which is spiritual"—so says Paul. Who ever hated his own flesh?

¹ The Benedictine editor says that Bernard elsewhere gives these four as love, fear, joy and sorrow.

But if this love, according to its wont, run to excess and like a flooded river burst its banks and overflow the plain, it finds its way blocked then by *this* commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Justly should he who shares our nature share our love, and all the more since love is part of the endowment our nature has from God. A man who finds it burdensome to serve his brother's interests and pleasures should discipline his own, if he would keep from sin. Let him show all consideration to himself, indeed, provided only he does not forget to show the same to others! This is the curb imposed on you, O man, by your own nature's law and discipline, lest you go after your own lusts to ruin and put the gifts, that God has given you, at the disposal of your enemy—that is, of wanton, unrestrained desire. It is but just and honest to give of what you have to your own fellow, rather than to a foe. And if you follow the Wise Man's advice and curb your appetites, and if, content with food and raiment as the apostle bids, you shrink not for a while to keep your love detached, abstaining from those "fleshly lusts that war against the soul," you will, I think, have little trouble in bestowing on your fellow-men what you have taken away from your soul's enemy. A love both just and balanced will be yours, if you deny not to your brother's need what you refuse to your own base desires. The love of God extended thus becomes benevolence.

But what if, by giving to our neighbour, we find ourselves in want? What should we do save go with confidence to God, "Who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not," and openeth His hand and all things living are filled with plenteousness? Without a doubt He Who gives most men more than what they need will not deny us bare necessities. Has He not told us, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you"? He has bound Himself to give all things needful to him who disciplines himself and loves his neighbour; and you do seek His kingdom and strive against the tyrant of sin, if you refuse to let sin reign in your mortal body and take the yoke of purity and self-control upon yourself instead. It is moreover (as I said before) but justice that we should share the blessings of this life with other men.

But for our love of others to be wholly right, God must be at its root. No one can love his neighbour perfectly, unless it is *in God* he holds him dear. And nobody can love his fellow-men in God who loves not God Himself. We must begin by loving God; and then we shall be able, *in Him*, to love our neighbour too. God, Author of all good, is Author of our love in this way too, in that, Creator of our nature as He is, He makes Himself its Keeper also, for our nature is so constituted that it needs to be sustained, and He Who made us is the One Who meets that need. We depend on Him for our subsistence, then, no less than for the fact that we exist. That we may grasp this fact and not (which God forbid!) take credit to ourselves for God's good gifts. His fathomless and loving wisdom has ordained we should be subjected to tribulations. We fail in these;

and God comes to our aid. He sets us free; and we, as is most meet, give glory to His Name. "Call upon Me in the time of trouble; so will I hear thee and thou shalt praise Me"—that is what He says. In this way man, by nature animal and carnal, loving himself alone, begins to learn it is to his own profit to love God, because in Him alone (as he has often proved) can he do all things which it profits him to do; he is quite powerless apart from Him.

CHAPTER NINE

The Second Degree of Love, Which Is the Love of God for What He Gives. The Third, Which Is the Love of God for What He Is

Man begins by loving God, not for God's sake but for his own. It is, however, something that he should know his limitations and that he cannot do without God's help. And it is something too, if he knows what he can do by himself and what with God's help only, and if he can keep himself from giving God offence, Who keeps him from all harm. But and if troubles come one after another, and he betake himself to God and find deliverance every time, though his heart be of stone within a breast of iron, he surely must melt down in gratitude at last. The love of God *for what God gives* will thus begin to dawn.

Recurrent troubles throw us back on God, and each occasion proves how kind He is. And this experience of His sweetness provides an urge to the pure love of God, more powerful than the impetus our trouble gave before. We say with the Samaritans, told by the woman that the Lord was there, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard Him for ourselves and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world." We say this to our natural self, our carnal appetites. "It is not because of your demands," we tell them, "that we now love God, but because we have tasted for ourselves and know how gracious the Lord is." In this way our needs of the flesh become a kind of language, proclaiming joyfully the benefits of which they have taught us the value; and, once this has been learnt, we find no difficulty in obeying the command to love our neighbour. The man who loves like this loves truly; and in so doing he loves the things of God. He loves purely and without self-interest, and so will readily obey God's pure command, purifying his heart in love's obedience, as Peter says. He loves justly, and takes this just commandment to his heart. This love, true, pure and just, he does not offer upon terms, and so it is acceptable with God. It is pure love, for it is shown in deed and truth, not merely in vain words. It is just love, because he freely gives who freely has received. Love of the quality of God's own love is this, seeking no more its own

but those things that are Christ's, even as He sought ours—or rather *us*, and never sought His own. “O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is gracious”—that is what this love says, gracious and good, not only to His lovers but in His very Self. It is the love of God *for* God, not merely for oneself. But he of whom the Psalmist says, “He will give thanks to Thee, when Thou hast done him kindness,” loves God as yet but in the second degree. The third degree is that in which the love of God is purely for Himself.

CHAPTER TEN

The Fourth Degree of Love, Which Is the Love Even of Self Only for God's Sake

Happy is he who can attain the fourth degree of love, and love *himself* only for God's sake! “Thy righteousness, O God, is as the mountains of God.” A mountain is this fourth degree of love, God's own “high hill,” a mountain strong, fertile and rich. Who shall go up into this mountain of the Lord? “O that I had wings as a dove, that I might flee away and be at rest,” in that dear place of peace! Woe is me that my sojourn here must be so long! When will this flesh and blood, this mortal clay, this earthly frame, arrive up there? When shall I know this kind of love, when will my soul, inebriated by His love, forget herself, yea, know herself but as a broken vessel, and go clean out to God and cleave to Him, her spirit one with His? When shall I make the Psalmist's words my own, “My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the Strength of my life and my Portion for ever”? Happy is he, and holy too, to whom it has been given, here in this mortal life rarely or even once, for one brief moment only, to taste this kind of love! It is no merely human joy to lose oneself like this, so to be emptied of oneself as though one almost ceased to be at all; it is the bliss of heaven. And yet, if some poor mortal do attain to swift and sudden rapture such as this, forthwith this present evil world must drag him back, the daily ills of life must harass him, the body of this death will weigh him down, his fleshly needs cry out for satisfaction, the weakness of his fallen nature fails. Most violent of all, his brother's need calls on him to return. Alas, he has no choice but to come back, back to himself and to his own affairs; and in his grief he cries, “O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me,” or yet again, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

We read in Scripture that God has made all things for Himself. His creatures must aim, therefore, at conforming themselves perfectly to their Creator and living according to His will. So we must fix our love on Him, bit by bit aligning our own will with His, Who made all for Himself, not wanting either

ourselves or anything else to be or to have been, save as it pleases Him, making His will alone, and not our pleasure, our object of desire. The sating of our own requirements, the happiness that *we* choose for ourselves, will never bring us to the joy that comes from finding His will done in and concerning us, even as every day we ask in prayer, "Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven." O chaste and holy love, affection sweet and lovely! O pure and clean intention of the will, the purer in that now at last it is divested of self-will, the lovelier and the sweeter since its perceptions at last are all divine! To become thus is to be deified. As a small drop of water, mingled in much wine, takes on its taste and colour so completely that it appears no longer to exist apart from it; as molten, white-hot iron is so like the fire, it seems to have renounced its natural form; as air when flooded with the sun's pure light is so transformed as to appear not lit so much as very light itself; so, with the saints, their human love will then ineffably be melted out of them and all poured over, so to speak, into the will of God. It must be so. How otherwise could God be "all in all," if anything of man remained in man? And yet our human substance will remain: we shall still be ourselves, but in another form, another glory and another power. When will that be? Who will be there to see? Who will possess it? "When shall I come to appear before the Presence of God?" O Lord my God, "my heart hath talked of Thee, my face hath sought Thee: Thy Face, Lord, will I seek." Shall I see, thinkest Thou, Thy Holy House?

I think myself that the command to love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and strength will not be perfectly fulfilled until the mind no longer needs to think about the flesh, and the soul ceases having to maintain the body's life and powers. Only when she has been relieved of these encumbering cares will she be fully strengthened by the power of God: she cannot concentrate her faculties on God and fix her gaze upon His Face, while they are being both absorbed and dissipated in caring for this weak, rebellious frame. But in the spiritual and immortal body, the body perfected, at peace and unified, the body made in all things subject to the spirit, there she may hope to reach the fourth degree of love—or, rather, to be taken into it, for it is not attained by human effort but given by the power of God to whom He will. Then she will easily attain this perfect love, when no allurements of the flesh deter her, no bodily vexations can distract her in her willing, eager passage to the joy of Christ her Lord. The question here arises, what of the holy martyrs? Did they attain this love, at any rate in part, while still in their triumphant mortal bodies? Beyond all doubt some mighty power of love possessed those souls who, dying thus to outward things, could so expose their bodies to the foe and set their pains at nought. Yet, even so, their sufferings could hardly fail to mar their peace to some extent, although they could not touch the root of it. But souls loosed from their bodies, we believe, will be immersed completely in that sea of endless light and bright eternity.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

This Fourth Degree of Love Is Not Reached by the Souls of the Blessed Until the General Resurrection

[The last-made statement must be qualified. It is a common error to assume that holy souls attain their final bliss immediately on disembodiment.] But if, as the fact is, they still desire and hope to get their bodies back, is it not clear beyond all doubt that they are not as yet entirely transformed from what they were? Something of their own will remains in them; they still want something for themselves, although it be in very small degree. It follows that, till death be swallowed up in victory and endless light invade and fill the furthest bounds of night, and the celestial glory shine in bodies too, souls cannot wholly set themselves aside and go clean out to God. To some extent, however limited, the fetters of the body bind them still. Though they depend on it no longer for their life and faculties, they have a natural yearning for reunion with it; till that is satisfied, they cannot be complete. Before the General Resurrection, then, that final passage of the soul to God, that perfect "ecstasy," which is its ultimate and perfect state, will not be reached; indeed, the soul would not thus seek the body's company, if without it she could be perfected. Truly without some profit to the soul the body is not laid aside nor taken again. In fine, "right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints"; and if their death be dear, how much more life, and that life above all! No wonder if the body glorified thus confers glory on the soul, since even in its weak and natural state it did it no small service. How truly did he speak who said, "All things work together for good to them that love God!" The body serves the spirit in its weakness first, then in its death, and lastly in its resurrection. In the first state it bears the fruit of penitence; in death it gives the spirit rest; and at the last it brings her to that final bliss which rightly she would not desire without its company, since she knows well that in her every state it has served her for good.

Clearly a good and faithful comrade is the body to a soul well disposed. Even the while it burdens her it also helps; when it no longer helps, it lifts from her her load or, at the least, still helps although less burdensome. The first state is a state of toil, but fruitful too; the second is a state of rest, and yet by no means idle; the third is fruitful, and reposeful, and glorious as well. Listen to the Bridegroom in the Song of Songs, speaking in metaphor about this threefold gain. "Eat," says He, "O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." He calls to *eat*, those who are living in the body; those who have laid the flesh aside and are at rest, He bids to *drink*. He urges them to *drink abundantly* who take

their bodies back. These last He calls "beloved," too, as being now beyond all doubt filled full with love. For those still groaning in the flesh and burdened with the body, those He calls only "friends"; for they are dear to God by reason of the love they bear to Him; but, when the fetters of the flesh are loosed, they become still more dear because their love has now become more ready and more free. Still more, compared with both of these, are those "beloved" who, vested in the glory of the flesh resumed, are borne along into the love of God with all the greater freedom and alacrity since now no taint of selfishness remains to hold them back.

At first, then, the faithful soul eats her bread, but alas, in the sweat of her face. For as long as she remains in the flesh, she walks still by faith; and faith must exercise itself in works of love or it is dead. And that same work, moreover, is her meat, as the Lord says, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." When she puts off the flesh, the soul no longer feeds on sorrow's bread, but is allowed to drink the wine of love and drink her fill, as one does after food; yet it is not pure wine that she drinks now but, as the Bridegroom in another passage says, "I have drunk my wine *with my milk*." For the wine of the Divine love in the soul is mingled with the sweetness of the natural longing wherewith she yearns to have her body back, her body glorified. Since she has drunk the wine of holy charity she is indeed aflame, yet clearly she is not yet inebriate, for the admixture of this milk of natural desire tempers her ardour for the time. Those who are wholly in that state of transport, as we know, forget themselves completely; the soul has not yet come to self-forgetfulness while yet she looks to get her body back. But when she *has* received it, and that, her only lack, has been supplied, what lets her now from going forth from self, as you might say, and passing over into God entire, becoming thus wholly unlike herself in that it now is given her to be supremely like to God? Then at long last is it permitted her to drink that cup of wisdom about which we read, "My cup that doth inebriate, how glorious it is!" What marvel is it if she be inebriated with the riches of God's House when, vexed no more by biting care and safe from all self-seeking, she drinks that pure, new draught with Christ within His Father's realm?

It is the Divine Wisdom who celebrates this triple banquet, and by her unifying love brings it to consummation, for she alone it is who ministers food to the toilers, drink to those at rest, and full inebriation to the souls that reign. Nature demands a like order in an earthly feast: food is set on the table before drink. So, before death, while still in mortal bodies, we eat the labours of our hands laboriously. But after death we drink, as disembodied spirits, and with a certain most delightful ease we quaff what we receive. And at the last, our bodies given back in deathless life, we are inebriated by love's draught, rejoicing in its marvellous plenitude. This is the meaning of the Bridegroom's words, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." Deservedly beloved

are they whom love inebriates; deservedly are they inebriate who merit to be summoned to the Marriage of the Lamb, eating and drinking at His table in His kingdom, when He at last presents "Himself a glorious Church, not having spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing." Then for ever His beloved are made to drink abundantly; then makes He them to drink of His pleasures as out of the river, when in that closest and most pure embrace of Bridegroom and of Bride the rivers of the flood make glad the City of God. And I take that to mean nought else but that the Son of God Himself comes forth to serve, according to His promise, that from henceforth "the righteous" may "feast and rejoice before God," and "may also be merry and joyful." Hence comes that full satiety without excess, that endless yearning to possess that yet has no unquiet, and that eternal longing, never satisfied, that knows no want; hence, finally, that drunkenness that is sobriety, since it is truth and not strong drink, not wine but God, with which we are inflamed. Now from henceforth do we possess for ever that fourth degree of love, when God is loved supremely and alone; for we no longer love ourselves save for His sake, and He Himself becomes His lovers' Recompense, Reward eternal of eternal love.

St. Francis of Assisi

St. Francis of Assisi (1182–1226), seraphic saint and founder of the Order of Friars Minor and the Poor Clares, was born and died at Assisi, in the Umbrian hills of Italy. His meeting with a leper and the voice from the cross at San Damiano resulted in his conversion. Renouncing his possessions, he resolved to follow Christ. By 1209 his original rule was orally approved by Pope Innocent III, and a definitive rule was approved by Pope Honorius III in 1223.

He devoted himself to the spiritual growth of his Order through circular letters and admonitions. Although he preached through the countryside, he regularly interrupted this activity by going to retreat in a solitary hermitage. He received the stigmata in 1224, and became blind in his last years.

In 1228, two years after his death, he was canonized by Pope Gregory IX.

Besides the Rule, the authentic writings of St. Francis include his Testament, Admonitions, Letter to All the Faithful, the Praises of God, the Canticle of Brother Sun, and the Praises of the Virtues. These are all included in the present Treasury of Catholic Wisdom.

Pope Pius XI's designation of St. Francis as alter Christus, "another Christ," reflects the high esteem in which St. Francis is held. His writings, though few, are among the most treasured in Christian literature.

The Rule of 1223

CHAPTER ONE

In the Name of the Lord Begins the Life of the Friars Minor

The Rule and life of the Friars Minor is this, namely, to observe the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, without property, and in chastity. Brother Francis promises obedience and reverence to his holiness Pope Honorius and his lawfully elected successors and to the Church of Rome. The other friars are bound to obey Brother Francis and his successors.

CHAPTER TWO

Of Those Who Wish to Take up This Life and How They Are to Be Received

If anyone wants to profess our Rule and comes to the friars, they must send him to their provincial minister, because he alone, to the exclusion of others, has permission to receive friars into the Order. The ministers must carefully examine all candidates on the Catholic faith and the sacraments of the Church. If they believe all that the Catholic faith teaches and are prepared to profess it loyally, holding by it steadfastly to the end of their lives, and if they are not married; or if they are married and their wives have already entered a convent or after taking a vow of chastity have by the authority of the bishop of the diocese been granted this permission; and the wives are of such an age that no suspicion can arise concerning them: let the ministers tell them what the holy Gospel says, that they should go and sell all that belongs to them and endeavour to give it to the poor.¹ If they cannot do this, their good will is sufficient.

The friars and their ministers must be careful not to become involved in the temporal affairs of newcomers to the Order, so that they may dispose of their goods freely, as God inspires them. If they ask for advice, the ministers may

¹ Matt 19:21.

refer them to some God-fearing persons who can advise them how to distribute their property to the poor.

When this has been done, the ministers should clothe the candidates with the habit of probation, namely, two tunics without a hood, a cord and trousers, and a caperon reaching to the cord, unless the ministers themselves at any time decide that something else is more suitable. After the year of the novitiate, they should be received to obedience, promising to live always according to this life and Rule. It is absolutely forbidden to leave the Order, as his holiness the Pope has laid down. For the Gospel tells us, *No one, having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*²

The friars who have already vowed obedience may have one tunic with a hood and those who wish may have another without a hood. Those who are forced by necessity may wear shoes. All the friars are to wear poor clothes and they can use pieces of sackcloth and other material to mend them, with God's blessing.

I warn all the friars and exhort them not to condemn or look down on people whom they see wearing soft or gaudy clothes and enjoying luxuries in food or drink; each one should rather condemn and despise himself.

CHAPTER THREE

Of the Divine Office and Fasting, and How the Friars Are to Travel about the World

The clerics are to recite the Divine Office according to the rite of the Roman Curia, except the psalter; and so they may have breviaries. The lay brothers are to say twenty-four *Our Fathers* for Matins and five for Lauds; for Prime, Terce, Sext, and None, for each of these, they are to say seven; for Vespers twelve and for Compline seven. They should also say some prayers for the dead.

All the friars are to fast from the feast of All Saints until Christmas. Those who voluntarily fast for forty days after Epiphany have God's blessing, because this is the period our Lord sanctified by his holy fast.³ However, those who do not wish to do so, should not be forced to it. All the friars are bound to keep the Lenten fast before Easter, but they are not bound to fast at other times, except on Fridays. However, in case of manifest necessity, they are not obliged to corporal fasting.

And this is my advice, my counsel, and my earnest plea to my friars in our Lord Jesus Christ that, when they travel about the world, they should not be

² Luke 9:62.

³ Cf. Matt 4:2.

quarrelsome or take part in disputes with words⁴ or criticize others; but they should be gentle, peaceful, and unassuming, courteous and humble, speaking respectfully to everyone, as is expected of them. They are forbidden to ride on horseback, unless they are forced to it by manifest necessity or sickness. *Whatever house they enter, they should first say, "Peace to this house,"* and in the words of the Gospel they *may eat what is set before them.*⁵

CHAPTER FOUR

The Friars Are Forbidden to Accept Money

I strictly forbid all the friars to accept money in any form, either personally or through an intermediary. The ministers and superiors, however, are bound to provide carefully for the needs of the sick and the clothing of the other friars, by having recourse to spiritual friends, while taking into account differences of place, season, or severe climate, as seems best to them in the circumstances. This does not dispense them from the prohibition of receiving money in any form.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Manner of Working

The friars to whom God has given the grace of working should work in a spirit of faith and devotion and avoid idleness, which is the enemy of the soul, without however extinguishing the spirit of prayer and devotion, to which every temporal consideration must be subordinate. As wages for their labour they may accept anything necessary for their temporal needs, for themselves or their brethren, except money in any form. And they should accept it humbly as is expected of those who serve God and strive after the highest poverty.

⁴ Cf. 2 Tim 2:14.

⁵ Luke 10:5,8.

CHAPTER SIX

*That the Friars Are to Appropriate Nothing for Themselves;
on Seeking Alms; and on the Sick Friars*

The friars are to appropriate nothing for themselves, neither a house, nor a place, nor anything else. As *strangers and pilgrims*⁶ in this world, who serve God in poverty and humility, they should beg alms trustingly. And there is no reason why they should be ashamed, because God made himself poor for us in this world. This is the pinnacle of the most exalted poverty, and it is this, my dearest brothers, that has made you heirs and kings of the kingdom of heaven, poor in temporal things, but rich in virtue. This should be your portion, because it leads to the land of the living. And to this poverty, my beloved brothers, you must cling with all your heart, and wish never to have anything else under heaven, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wherever the friars meet one another, they should show that they are members of the same family. And they should have no hesitation in making known their needs to one another. For if a mother loves and cares for her child in the flesh, a friar should certainly love and care for his spiritual brother all the more tenderly. If a friar falls ill, the others are bound to look after him as they would like to be looked after themselves.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Of the Penance to Be Imposed on Friars Who Fall into Sin

If any of the friars, at the instigation of the enemy, fall into mortal sin, they must have recourse as soon as possible, without delay, to their provincial ministers, if it is a sin for which recourse to them has been prescribed for the friars. If the ministers are priests, they should impose a moderate penance on such friars; if they are not priests, they should see that a penance is imposed by some priest of the Order, as seems best to them before God. They must be careful not to be angry or upset because a friar has fallen into sin, because anger or annoyance in themselves or in others makes it difficult to be charitable.

⁶ 1 Pet 2:11.

CHAPTER EIGHT

*The Election of the Minister General of the Order
and the Pentecost Chapter*

The friars are always bound to have a member of the Order as Minister General, who is the servant of the whole fraternity, and they are strictly bound to obey him. At his death the provincial ministers and the custodes are to elect a successor at the Pentecost Chapter, at which the provincial ministers are bound to assemble in the place designated by the Minister General. This chapter should be held once every three years, or at a longer or shorter interval, if the Minister General has so ordained.

If at any time it becomes clear to all the provincial ministers and custodes that the Minister General is incapable of serving the friars and can be of no benefit to them, they who have the power to elect must elect someone else as Minister General.

After the Pentecost Chapter, the provincial ministers and custodes may summon their subjects to a chapter in their own territory once in the same year, if they wish and it seems worthwhile.

CHAPTER NINE

Of Preachers

The friars are forbidden to preach in any diocese, if the bishop objects to it. No friar should dare to preach to the people unless he has been examined and approved by the Minister General of the Order and has received from him the commission to preach.

Moreover, I advise and admonish the friars that in their preaching, their words should be examined and chaste. They should aim only at the advantage and spiritual good of their listeners, telling them briefly about vice and virtue, punishment and glory, because our Lord himself kept his words short on earth.

CHAPTER TEN

On Admonishing and Correcting the Friars

The ministers, who are the servants of the other friars, must visit their subjects and admonish them, correcting them humbly and charitably, without commanding them anything that is against their conscience or our Rule. The subjects, however, should remember that they have renounced their own wills for God's sake. And so I strictly command them to obey their ministers in everything that they have promised God and is not against their conscience and our Rule. The friars who are convinced that they cannot observe the Rule spiritually, wherever they may be, can and must have recourse to their ministers. The ministers, for their part, are bound to receive them kindly and charitably, and be so sympathetic towards them that the friars can speak and deal with them as employers with their servants. That is the way it ought to be; the ministers should be the servants of all the friars.

With all my heart, I beg the friars in our Lord Jesus Christ to be on their guard against pride, boasting, envy, and greed, against the cares and anxieties of this world, against detraction and complaining. Those who are illiterate should not be anxious to study. They should realize instead that the only thing they should desire is to have the spirit of God at work within them, while they pray to him unceasingly with a heart free from self-interest. They must be humble, too, and patient in persecution or illness, loving those who persecute us by blaming us or bringing charges against us, as our Lord tells us, *Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute and calumniate you.*⁷ *Blessed are those who suffer persecution for justice's sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*⁸ He who has persevered to the end will be saved.⁹

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Friars Are Forbidden to Enter the Monasteries of Nuns

I strictly forbid all the friars to have suspicious relationships or conversations with women. No one may enter the monasteries of nuns, except those who have received special permission from the Apostolic See. They are forbidden to

⁷ Matt 5:44.

⁸ Matt 5:10.

⁹ Matt 10:22.

be sponsors of men or women lest scandal arise amongst or concerning the friars.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Of Those Who Wish to Go among the Saracens and Other Unbelievers

If any of the friars is inspired by God to go among the Saracens or other unbelievers, he must ask permission from his provincial minister. The ministers, for their part, are to give permission only to those whom they see are fit to be sent.

The ministers, too, are bound to ask the Pope for one of the cardinals of the holy Roman Church to be governor, protector, and corrector of this fraternity, so that we may be utterly subject and submissive to the Church. And so, firmly established in the Catholic faith, we may live always according to the poverty, and the humility, and the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we have solemnly promised.

The Testament of St. Francis

This is how God inspired me, Brother Francis, to embark upon a life of penance. When I was in sin, the sight of lepers nauseated me beyond measure; but then God himself led me into their company, and I had pity on them. When I had once become acquainted with them, what had previously nauseated me became a source of spiritual and physical consolation for me. After that I did not wait long before leaving the world.

And God inspired me with such faith in his churches that I used to pray with all simplicity, saying, "We adore you, Lord Jesus Christ, here and in all your churches in the whole world, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world."

God inspired me, too, and still inspires me with such great faith in priests who live according to the laws of the holy Church of Rome, because of their dignity, that if they persecuted me, I should still be ready to turn to them for aid. And if I were as wise as Solomon and met the poorest priests of the world, I would still refuse to preach against their will in the parishes in which they live. I am determined to reverence, love and honour priests and all others as my superiors. I refuse to consider their sins, because I can see the Son of God in them and they are better than I. I do this because in this world I cannot see the most high Son of God with my own eyes, except for his most holy Body and Blood which they receive and they alone administer to others.

Above everything else, I want this most holy Sacrament to be honoured and venerated and reserved in places which are richly ornamented. Whenever I find his most holy name or writings containing his words in an improper place, I make a point of picking them up, and I ask that they be picked up and put aside in a suitable place. We should honour and venerate theologians, too, and the ministers of God's word, because it is they who give us spirit and life.

When God gave me some friars, there was no one to tell me what I should do; but the Most High himself made it clear to me that I must live the life of the Gospel. I had this written down briefly and simply and his holiness the Pope confirmed it for me. Those who embraced this life gave everything they had to the poor. They were satisfied with one habit which was patched inside and outside, and a cord, and trousers. We refused to have anything more.

Those of us who were clerics said the Office like other clerics, while the lay brothers said the *Our Father*, and we were only too glad to find shelter in

abandoned churches. We made no claim to learning and we were submissive to everyone. I worked with my own hands and I am still determined to work; and with all my heart I want all the other friars to be busy with some kind of work that can be carried on without scandal. Those who do not know how to work should learn, not because they want to get something for their efforts, but to give good example and to avoid idleness. When we receive no recompense for our work, we can turn to God's table and beg alms from door to door. God revealed a form of greeting to me, telling me that we should say, "God give you peace."

The friars must be very careful not to accept churches or poor dwellings for themselves, or anything else built for them, unless they are in harmony with the poverty which we have promised in the Rule; and they should occupy these places only as strangers and pilgrims.

In virtue of obedience, I strictly forbid the friars, wherever they may be, to petition the Roman Curia, either personally or through an intermediary, for a papal brief, whether it concerns a church or any other place, or even in order to preach, or because they are being persecuted. If they are not welcome somewhere, they should flee to another country where they can lead a life of penance, with God's blessing.

I am determined to obey the Minister General of the Order and the guardian whom he sees fit to give me. I want to be a captive in his hands so that I cannot travel about or do anything against his command or desire, because he is my superior. Although I am ill and not much use, I always want to have a cleric with me who will say the Office for me, as is prescribed in the Rule.

All the other friars, too, are bound to obey their guardians in the same way, and say the Office according to the Rule. If any of them refuse to say the Office according to the Rule and want to change it, or if they are not true to the Catholic faith, the other friars are bound in virtue of obedience to bring them before the custos nearest the place where they find them. The custos must keep any such friar as a prisoner day and night so that he cannot escape from his hands until he personally hands him over to his minister. The minister, then, is strictly bound by obedience to place him in the care of friars who will guard him day and night like a prisoner until they present him before his lordship the Bishop of Ostia, who is the superior, protector, and corrector of the whole Order.

The friars should not say, this is another Rule. For this is a reminder, admonition, exhortation, and my testament which I, Brother Francis, worthless as I am, leave to you, my brothers, that we may observe in a more Catholic way the Rule we have promised to God. The Minister General and all the other ministers and custodes are bound in virtue of obedience not to add anything to these words or subtract from them. They should always have this writing with them as well as the Rule and at the chapters they hold, when the Rule is read, they should read these words also.

In virtue of obedience, I strictly forbid any of my friars, clerics or lay brothers, to interpret the Rule or these words, saying, "This is what they mean." God inspired me to write the Rule and these words plainly and simply, and so you too must understand them plainly and simply, and live by them, doing good to the last.

And may whoever observes all this be filled in heaven with the blessing of the most high Father, and on earth with that of his beloved Son, together with the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, and all the powers of heaven and all the saints. And I, Brother Francis, your poor worthless servant, add my share internally and externally to that most holy blessing. Amen.

The Admonitions

I. The Blessed Sacrament

Our Lord Jesus told his disciples, *I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me. If you had known me, you would also have known my Father. And henceforth you do know him, and you have seen him. Philip said to him, Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us. Jesus said to him, Have I been so long a time with you, and you have not known me? Philip, he who sees me sees also the Father.*¹

Sacred Scripture tells us that the Father dwells in *light inaccessible*² and that *God is spirit*,³ and St. John adds, *No one at any time has seen God.*⁴ Because God is a spirit he can be seen only in spirit; *It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing.*⁵ But God the Son is equal to the Father and so he too can be seen only in the same way as the Father and the Holy Spirit. That is why all those were condemned who saw our Lord Jesus Christ in his humanity but did not see or believe in spirit in his divinity, that he was the true Son of God. In the same way now, all those are damned who see the sacrament of the Body of Christ which is consecrated on the altar in the form of bread and wine by the words of our Lord in the hands of the priest, and do not see or believe in spirit and in God that this is really the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the Most High himself who has told us, *This is my Body and Blood of the new covenant,*⁶ and, *He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has life everlasting.*⁷

And so it is really the Spirit of God who dwells in his faithful who receive the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord. Anyone who does not have this Spirit and presumes to receive him *eats and drinks judgement to himself.*⁸ And so we may ask in the words of Scripture, *Men of rank, how long will you be dull of*

¹ John 13:6–9.

² 1 Tim 6:16.

³ John 4:24.

⁴ John 1:18.

⁵ John 6:64.

⁶ Mark 14:22–24.

⁷ John 6:55.

⁸ 1 Cor 11:29.

*heart?*⁹ Why do you refuse to recognize the truth *and believe in the Son of God?*¹⁰ Every day he humbles himself just as he did when he came from his *heavenly throne*¹¹ into the Virgin's womb; every day he comes to us and lets us see him in abjection, when he descends from the bosom of the Father into the hands of the priest at the altar. He shows himself to us in this sacred bread just as he once appeared to his apostles in real flesh. With their own eyes they saw only his flesh, but they believed that he was God, because they contemplated him with the eyes of the spirit. We, too, with our own eyes, see only bread and wine, but we must see further and firmly believe that this is his most holy Body and Blood, living and true. In this way our Lord remains continually with his followers, as he promised, *Behold, I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world.*¹²

II. The Evil of Self-will

God told Adam: *From every tree of the garden you may eat; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you must not eat.*¹³ Adam, then, could eat his fill of all the trees in the garden, and as long as he did not act against obedience, he did not sin. A man eats of the tree that brings knowledge of good when he claims that his good will comes from himself alone and prides himself on the good that God says and does in him. And so, at the devil's prompting and by transgressing God's command, the fruit becomes for him the fruit that brings knowledge of evil, and it is only right that he should pay the penalty.

III. Perfect and Imperfect Obedience

Our Lord tells us in the Gospel, *Everyone of you who does not renounce all that he possesses cannot be my disciple,*¹⁴ and, *He who would save his life will lose it.*¹⁵ A man takes leave of all that he possesses and loses both his body and his life when he gives himself up completely to obedience in the hands of his superior. Any good that he says or does which he knows is not against the will of his superior

⁹ Ps 4:3.

¹⁰ John 9:35.

¹¹ Wis 18:15.

¹² Matt 28:20.

¹³ Gen 2:16-17.

¹⁴ Luke 14:33.

¹⁵ Matt 16:25.

is true obedience. A subject may realize that there are many courses of action that would be better and more profitable to his soul than what his superior commands. In that case he should make an offering of his own will to God, and do his best to carry out what the superior has enjoined. This is true and loving obedience which is pleasing to God and one's neighbour.

If a superior commands his subject anything that is against his conscience, the subject should not spurn his authority, even though he cannot obey him. If anyone persecutes him because of this, he should love him all the more, for God's sake. A religious who prefers to suffer persecution rather than be separated from his confrères certainly perseveres in true obedience, because he lays down his life for his brethren.¹⁶ There are many religious who under the pretext of doing something more perfect than what their superior commands look behind and go back to their own will that they have given up.¹⁷ People like that are murderers, and by their bad example they cause the loss of many souls.

IV. No One Should Claim the Office of Superior as His Own

I did *not come to be served but to serve*,¹⁸ our Lord tells us. Those who are put in charge of others should be no prouder of their office than if they had been appointed to wash the feet of their confrères. They should be no more upset at the loss of their authority than they would be if they were deprived of the task of washing feet. The more they are upset, the greater the risk they incur to their souls.

V. No One Should Give Way to Pride but Boast Only in the Cross of the Lord

Try to realize the dignity God has conferred on you. He created and formed your body in the image of his beloved Son, and your soul in his own likeness.¹⁹ And yet every creature under heaven serves and acknowledges and obeys its Creator in its own way better than you do. Even the devils were not solely responsible for crucifying him; it was you who crucified him with them and you continue to crucify him by taking pleasure in your vices and sins.

¹⁶ Cf. John 15:13.

¹⁷ Cf. Prov 26:11.

¹⁸ Matt 20:28.

¹⁹ Cf. Gen 1:26.

What have you to be proud of? If you were so clever and learned that you knew everything and could speak every language, so that the things of heaven were an open book to you, still you could not boast of that. Any of the devils knew more about the things of heaven, and knows more about the things of earth, than any human being, even one who might have received from God a special revelation of the highest wisdom. If you were the most handsome and the richest man in the world, and could work wonders and drive out devils, all that would be something extrinsic to you; it would not belong to you and you could not boast of it. But there is one thing of which we can all boast; we can boast of our humiliations²⁰ and in taking up daily the holy cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

VI. The Imitation of Christ

Look at the Good Shepherd, my brothers. To save his sheep he endured the agony of the cross. They followed him in trials and persecutions, in ignominy, hunger, and thirst, in humiliations and temptations, and so on. And for this God rewarded them with eternal life. We ought to be ashamed of ourselves; the saints endured all that, but we who are servants of God try to win honour and glory by recounting and making known what they have done.

VII. Good Works Must Follow Knowledge

St. Paul tells us, *The letter kills, but the spirit gives life.*²¹ A man has been killed by the letter when he wants to know quotations only so that people will think he is very learned and he can make money to give to his relatives and friends. A religious has been killed by the letter when he has no desire to follow the spirit of Sacred Scripture, but wants to know what it says only so that he can explain it to others. On the other hand, those have received life from the spirit of Sacred Scripture who, by their words and example, refer to the most high God, to whom belongs all good, all that they know or wish to know, and do not allow their knowledge to become a source of self-complacency.

²⁰ Cf. 2 Cor 12:5.

²¹ 2 Cor 3:6.

VIII. Beware the Sin of Envy

St. Paul tell us, *No one can say Jesus is Lord, except in the Holy Spirit*²² and, *There is none who does good, no, not even one.*²³ And so when a man envies his brother the good God says or does through him, it is like committing a sin of blasphemy, because he is really envying God, who is the only source of every good.

IX. Charity

Our Lord says in the Gospel, *Love your enemies.*²⁴ A man really loves his enemy when he is not offended by the injury done to himself, but for love of God feels burning sorrow for the sin his enemy has brought on his own soul, and proves his love in a practical way.

X. Exterior Mortification

Many people blame the devil or their neighbour when they fall into sin or are offended. But that is not right. Everyone has his own enemy in his power and this enemy is his lower nature which leads him into sin. Blessed the religious who keeps this enemy a prisoner under his control and protects himself against it. As long as he does this no other enemy, visible or invisible, can harm him.

XI. No One Should Be Scandalized at Another's Fall

Nothing should upset a religious except sin. And even then, no matter what kind of sin has been committed, if he is upset or angry for any other reason except charity, he is only drawing blame upon himself. A religious lives a good

²² 1 Cor 12:3.

²³ Rom 3:12.

²⁴ Matt 5:44.

life and avoids sin when he is never angry or disturbed at anything. Blessed the man who keeps nothing for himself, but renders to *Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.*²⁵

XII. How to Know the Spirit of God

We can be sure that a man is a true religious and has the spirit of God if his lower nature does not give way to pride when God accomplishes some good through him, and if he seems all the more worthless and inferior to others in his own eyes. Our lower nature is opposed to every good.

XIII. Patience

We can never tell how patient or humble a person is when everything is going well with him. But when those who should co-operate with him do the exact opposite, then we can tell. A man has as much patience and humility as he has then, and no more.

XIV. Poverty of Spirit

*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*²⁶ There are many people who spend all their time at their prayers and other religious exercises and mortify themselves by long fasts and so on. But if anyone says as much as a word that implies a reflection on their self-esteem or takes something from them, they are immediately up in arms and annoyed. These people are not really poor in spirit. A person is really poor in spirit when he hates himself and loves those who strike him in the face.²⁷

²⁵ Matt 22:21.

²⁶ Matt 5:3.

²⁷ Cf. Matt 5:39.

XV. The Peacemakers

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.*²⁸ They are truly peacemakers who are able to preserve their peace of mind and heart for love of our Lord Jesus Christ, despite all that they suffer in this world.

XVI. Purity of Heart

*Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.*²⁹ A man is really clean of heart when he has no time for the things of this world but is always searching for the things of heaven, never failing to keep God before his eyes and always adoring him with a pure heart and soul.

XVII. The Humble Religious

Blessed the religious who takes no more pride in the good that God says and does through him, than in that which he says and does through someone else. It is wrong for anyone to be anxious to receive more from his neighbour than he himself is willing to give to God.

XVIII. Compassion for One's Neighbour

Blessed the man who is patient with his neighbour's shortcomings as he would like him to be if he were in a similar position himself.

²⁸ Matt 5:9.

²⁹ Matt 5:8.

XIX. The Happy and the Unhappy Religious

Blessed the religious who refers all the good he has to his Lord and God. He who attributes anything to himself hides *his master's money*³⁰ in himself, and *even what he thinks he has shall be taken away*.³¹

XX. The Virtuous and Humble Religious

Blessed the religious who has no more regard for himself when people praise him and make much of him than when they despise and revile him and say that he is ignorant. What a man is before God, that he is and no more. Woe to that religious who, after he has been put in a position of authority by others, is not anxious to leave it of his own free will. On the other hand, blessed is that religious who is elected to office against his will but always wants to be subject to others.

XXI. The Happy and the Silly Religious

Blessed that religious who finds all his joy and happiness in the words and deeds of our Lord and uses them to make people love God gladly. Woe to the religious who amuses himself with silly gossip, trying to make people laugh.

XXII. The Talkative Religious

Blessed that religious who never says anything just for what he can get out of it. He should never be *hasty in his words*³² or open his heart to everyone, but he should think hard before he speaks. Woe to that religious who does not keep the favours God has given him to himself; people should see them only through his good works, but he wants to tell everybody about them, hoping he will get

³⁰ Matt 25:18.

³¹ Luke 8:18.

³² Prov 29:20.

something out of it. In this way he has received his reward, and it does not do his listeners any good.

XXIII. True Correction

Blessed that religious who takes blame, accusation, or punishment from another as patiently as if it were coming from himself. Blessed the religious who obeys quietly when he is corrected, confesses his fault humbly and makes atonement cheerfully. Blessed the religious who is in no hurry to make excuses, but accepts the embarrassment and blame for some fault he did not commit.

XXIV. True Humility

Blessed that person who is just as unassuming among his subjects as he would be among his superiors. Blessed the religious who is always willing to be corrected. A man is a *faithful and prudent servant*³³ when he is quick to atone for all his offences, interiorly by contrition, exteriorly by confessing them and making reparation.

XXV. True Love

Blessed that friar who loves his brother as much when he is sick and can be of no use to him as when he is well and can be of use to him. Blessed that friar who loves and respects his brother as much when he is absent as when he is present and who would not say anything behind his back that he could not say charitably to his face.

XXVI. Religious Should Be Respectful towards the Clergy

Blessed is that servant of God who has confidence in priests who live according to the laws of the holy Roman Church. Woe to those who despise them. Even if they fall into sin, no one should pass judgement on them, for God

³³ Matt 24:45.

has reserved judgement on them to himself. They are in a privileged position because they have charge of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which they receive and which they alone administer to others, and so anyone who sins against them commits a greater crime than if he sinned against anyone else in the whole world.

XXVII. Virtue and Vice

Where there is Love and Wisdom,
there is neither Fear nor Ignorance.
Where there is Patience and Humility,
there is neither Anger nor Annoyance.
Where there is Poverty and Joy,
there is neither Cupidity nor Avarice.
Where there is Peace and Contemplation,
there is neither Care nor Restlessness.
Where there is the Fear of God to guard the dwelling,
there no enemy can enter.
Where there is Mercy and Prudence,
there is neither Excess nor Harshness.

XXVIII. Virtue Should Be Concealed or It Will Be Lost

Blessed the religious who treasures up for heaven³⁴ the favours God has given him and does not want to show them off for what he can get out of them. God himself will reveal his works to whomsoever he pleases. Blessed the religious who keeps God's marvellous doings to himself.

³⁴ Cf. Matt 6:20.

Letter to All the Faithful

To all Christians, religious, clerics and layfolk, men and women; to everyone in the whole world, Brother Francis, their servant and subject, sends his humble respects, imploring for them true peace from heaven and sincere love in God.

I am the servant of all and so I am bound to wait upon everyone and make known to them the fragrant words of my Lord. Realizing, however, that because of my sickness and ill-health I cannot personally visit each one individually, I decided to send you a letter bringing a message with the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Word of the Father, and of the Holy Spirit, whose words are *spirit and life*.¹

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the glorious Word of the Father, so holy and exalted, whose coming the Father made known by St. Gabriel the Archangel to the glorious and blessed Virgin Mary, in whose womb he took on our weak human nature. He was rich beyond measure and yet he and his holy Mother chose poverty.

Then, as his passion drew near, he celebrated the Pasch with his disciples and, taking bread, he *blessed and broke, and gave to his disciples, and said, Take and eat; this is my body. And taking a cup, he gave thanks and gave it to them, saying. This is my blood of the new covenant, which is being shed for many unto the forgiveness of sins.*² And he prayed to his Father, too, saying, *Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from me;*³ and his sweat fell to the ground like thick drops of blood.⁴ Yet he bowed to his Father's will and said, *Father, thy will be done; yet not as I will, but as thou wilt.*⁵ And it was the Father's will that his blessed and glorious Son, whom he gave to us and who was born for our sake, should offer himself by his own blood as a sacrifice and victim on the altar of the cross; and this, not for himself, through whom *all things were made,*⁶ but for our sins, *leaving us an example that we may follow in his steps.*⁷ It is the Father's will that we should all

¹ John 6:64.

² Matt 26:26–28.

³ Matt 26:39.

⁴ Cf. Luke 22:44.

⁵ Matt 26:42; Matt 26:39.

⁶ John 1:3.

⁷ 1 Pet 2:21.

be saved by the Son, and that we should receive him with a pure heart and chaste body. But very few are anxious to receive him, or want to be saved by him, although his *yoke is easy, and his burden light*.⁸

All those who refuse to *taste and see how good the Lord is*⁹ and who love *the darkness rather than the light*¹⁰ are under a curse. It is God's commandments they refuse to obey and so it is of them the Prophet says, *You rebuke the accursed proud who turn away from your commands*.¹¹ On the other hand, those who love God are happy and blessed. They do as our Lord himself tells us in the Gospel, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, . . . and thy neighbour as thyself*.¹² We must love God, then, and adore him with a pure heart and mind, because this is what he seeks above all else, as he tells us, *True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth*.¹³ *All who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth*.¹⁴ We should praise him and pray to him day and night, saying, *Our Father, who art in heaven*,¹⁵ because we *must always pray and not lose heart*.¹⁶

And moreover, we should confess all our sins to a priest and receive from him the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. The man who does not eat his flesh and drink his blood cannot enter into the kingdom of God.¹⁷ Only he must eat and drink worthily because *he who eats and drinks unworthily, without distinguishing the body, eats and drinks judgement to himself*,¹⁸ that is, if he sees no difference between it and other food.

Besides this, we must *bring forth therefore fruits befitting repentance*¹⁹ and love our neighbours as ourselves. Anyone who will not or cannot love his neighbour as himself should at least do him good and not do him any harm.

Those who have been entrusted with the power of judging others should pass judgement mercifully, just as they themselves hope to obtain mercy from God. *For judgement is without mercy to him who has not shown mercy*.²⁰ We must be charitable, too, and humble, and give alms, because they wash the stains of sin from our souls. We lose everything which we leave behind us in this world; we can bring with us only the right to a reward for our charity and the alms we

⁸ Matt 11:30.

⁹ Ps 33:9.

¹⁰ John 3:19.

¹¹ Ps 118:21.

¹² Matt 22:37-39.

¹³ John 4:23.

¹⁴ John 4:24.

¹⁵ Matt 6:9.

¹⁶ Luke 18:1.

¹⁷ Cf. John 6:54.

¹⁸ 1 Cor 11:29.

¹⁹ Luke 3:8.

²⁰ Jas 2:13.

have given. For these we shall receive a reward, a just retribution from God.

We are also bound to fast and avoid vice and sin, taking care not to give way to excess in food and drink, and we must be Catholics. We should visit churches often and show great reverence for the clergy, not just for them personally, for they may be sinners, but because of their high office, for it is they who administer the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. They offer It in sacrifice at the altar, and it is they who receive It and administer It to others. We should realize, too, that no one can be saved except by the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the holy words of God, and it is the clergy who tell us his words and administer the Blessed Sacrament, and they alone have the right to do it, and no one else.

Religious especially are bound to make greater efforts, without neglecting the duties of ordinary Christians, because they have left the world.

Our lower nature, the source of so much vice and sin, should be hateful to us. Our Lord says in the Gospel. It is from the heart of man that all vice and sin comes,²¹ and he tells us, *Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you.*²² We are bound to order our lives according to the precepts and counsels of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so we must renounce self and bring our lower nature into subjection under the yoke of obedience; this is what we have all promised God. However, no one can be bound to obey another in anything that is sinful or criminal.

The man who is in authority and is regarded as the superior should become the least of all and serve his brothers, and he should be as sympathetic with each one of them as he would wish others to be with him if he were in a similar position. If one of his brothers falls into sin, he should not be angry with him; on the contrary, he should correct him gently, with all patience and humility, and encourage him.

It is not for us to be wise and calculating in the world's fashion; we should be guileless, lowly, and pure. We should hold our lower nature in contempt, as a source of shame to us, because through our own fault we are wretched and utterly corrupt, nothing more than worms, as our Lord tells us by the Prophet, *I am a worm, not a man; the scorn of men, despised by the people.*²³ We should not want to be in charge of others; we are to be servants, and should *be subject to every human creature for God's sake.*²⁴ On all those who do this and endure to the last the Spirit of God will rest;²⁵ he will make his dwelling in them and there he will stay, and they will be *children of your Father in heaven*²⁶ whose work

²¹ Matt 15:18–19.

²² Luke 6:27.

²³ Ps 21:7.

²⁴ 1 Pet 2:13.

²⁵ Cf. Isa 11:2.

²⁶ Matt 5:45.

they do. It is they who are the brides, the brothers and the mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ. A person is his bride when his faithful soul is united with Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit; we are his brothers when we do the will of his Father who is in heaven,²⁷ and we are mothers to him when we enthrone him in our hearts and souls by love with a pure and sincere conscience, and give him birth by doing good. This, too, should be an example to others.

How glorious, how holy and wonderful it is to have a Father in heaven. How holy it is, how beautiful and lovable to have in heaven a Bridegroom. How holy and beloved, how pleasing and lowly, how peaceful, delightful, lovable and desirable above all things it is to have a Brother like this, who laid down his life for his sheep,²⁸ and prayed to his Father for us, saying: Holy Father, in your name keep those whom you have given me. Father, all those whom you gave me in the world, were yours and you gave them to me. And the words you have given me, I have given to them. And they have received them and have known truly that I have come forth from you, and they have believed that you have sent me. I am praying for them, not for the world: Bless and sanctify them. And for them I sanctify myself, that they may be sanctified in their unity, just as we are. And, Father, I wish that where I am, they also may be with me, that they may see my splendour in your kingdom.²⁹

Every creature in heaven and on earth and in the depths of the sea should give God praise and glory and honour and blessing;³⁰ he has borne so much for us and has done and will do so much good to us; he is our power and our strength, and he alone is good,³¹ he alone most high, he alone all-powerful, wonderful, and glorious; he alone is holy and worthy of all praise and blessing for endless ages and ages. Amen.

All those who refuse to do penance and receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are blind, because they cannot see the true light, our Lord Jesus Christ. They indulge their vices and sins and follow their evil longings and desires, without a thought for the promises they made. In body they are slaves of the world and of the desires of their lower nature, with all the cares and anxieties of this life; in spirit they are slaves of the devil. They have been led astray by him and have made themselves his children, dedicated to doing his work. They lack spiritual insight because the Son of God does not dwell in them, and it is he who is the true wisdom of the Father. It is of such men as these that Scripture says, *their skill was swallowed up*.³² They can see clearly and are

²⁷ Matt 12:50.

²⁸ Cf. John 10:15.

²⁹ Cf. John 17:6-24.

³⁰ Cf. Rev 5:13.

³¹ Cf. Luke 18:19.

³² Ps 106:27.

well aware what they are doing; they are fully conscious of the fact that they are doing evil, and knowingly lose their souls.

See, then, you who are blind, deceived by your enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, our fallen nature loves to commit sin and hates to serve God; this is because vice and sin come from the heart of man, as the Gospel says. You have no good in this world and nothing to look forward to in the next. You imagine that you will enjoy the worthless pleasures of this life indefinitely, but you are wrong. The day and the hour will come of which you have no knowledge whatever. First sickness, then death, draws near; friends and relatives come and advise the dying man, "Put your affairs in order." Wife and children, friends and relatives, all pretend to mourn. Looking about, he sees them weeping. An evil inspiration comes to him. Thinking to himself, he says, "Look, I am putting my body and soul and all that I have in your hands." Certainly a man who would do a thing like that is under a curse, trusting and leaving his body and his soul and all that he has defenceless in such hands. God tells us by his Prophet, *Cursed shall he be that puts his trust in man.*³³ There and then, they call a priest; he says to the sick man, "Do you want to be absolved from all your sins?" And the dying man replies, "I do." "Are you ready then to make restitution as best you can out of your property for all that you have done, all the fraud and deceit you practised towards your fellow men?" the priest asks him. "No," he replies. And the priest asks, "Why not?" "Because I have left everything in the hands of my relatives and friends," is the answer. Then his speech begins to fail and so the unfortunate man dies an unhappy death.

We should all realize that no matter where or how a man dies, if he is in the state of mortal sin and does not repent, when he could have done so and did not, the devil tears his soul from his body with such anguish and distress that only a person who has experienced it can appreciate it. All the talent and ability, all the learning and wisdom which he thought his own, are taken away from him, while his relatives and friends bear off his property and share it among themselves. Then they say, "A curse on his soul; he could have made more to leave to us and he did not." And the worms feast on his body. So he loses both body and soul in this short life and goes to hell, where he will be tormented without end.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In that love which is God,³⁴ I, Brother Francis, the least of your servants and worthy only to kiss your feet, beg and implore all those to whom this letter comes to hear these words of our Lord Jesus Christ in a spirit of humility and love, putting them into practice with all gentleness and observing them perfectly.

³³ Jer 17:5.

³⁴ Cf. 1 John 4:16.

Those who cannot read should have them read to them often and keep them ever before their eyes, by persevering in doing good to the last, because they are *spirit and life*.³⁵ Those who fail to do this shall be held to account for it before the judgement-seat of Christ at the last day. And may God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless those who welcome them and grasp them and send copies to others, if they persevere in them to the last.³⁶

³⁵ John 6:64.

³⁶ Cf. Matt 10:22.

Praises of God

You are holy, Lord, the only God,
and your deeds are wonderful.

You are strong.
You are great.
You are the Most High,
You are almighty.
You, holy Father, are
King of heaven and earth.

You are Three and One,
Lord God, all good.
You are Good, all Good, supreme Good,
Lord God, living and true.

You are love,
You are wisdom.
You are humility,
You are endurance.
You are rest,
You are peace.
You are joy and gladness.
You are justice and moderation.
You are all our riches,
And you suffice for us.

You are beauty.
You are gentleness.
You are our protector,
You are our guardian and defender.
You are courage.
You are our haven and our hope.

You are our faith,
Our great consolation.
You are our eternal life,
Great and wonderful Lord,
God almighty,
Merciful Saviour.

The Blessing for Brother Leo

God bless you and keep you.

May God smile on you, and be merciful to you;
May God turn his regard towards you
and give you peace.

May God bless you, Brother Leo.

The Canticle of Brother Sun

Most high, all-powerful, all good, Lord!
All praise is yours, all glory, all honour
And all blessing.

To you, alone, Most High, do they belong.
No mortal lips are worthy
To pronounce your name.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through all that you have made,
And first my lord Brother Sun,
Who brings the day; and light you give to us through him.
How beautiful is he, how radiant in all his splendour!
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Moon and Stars;
In the heavens you have made them, bright
And precious and fair.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air,
And fair and stormy, all the weather's moods,
By which you cherish all that you have made.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Water,
So useful, lowly, precious and pure.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
Through whom you brighten up the night.
How beautiful is he, how gay! Full of power and strength.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Earth, our mother,
Who feeds us in her sovereignty and produces
Various fruits with coloured flowers and herbs.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through those who grant pardon
For love of you; through those who endure
Sickness and trial.

Happy those who endure in peace,
By you, Most High, they will be crowned.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death,
From whose embrace no mortal can escape.

Woe to those who die in mortal sin!
Happy those She finds doing your will!
The second death can do no harm to them.

Praise and bless my Lord, and give him thanks,
And serve him with great humility.

The Praises of the Virtues

Hail, Queen Wisdom! The Lord save you,
with your sister, pure, holy Simplicity.
Lady Holy Poverty, God keep you,
with your sister, holy Humility.
Lady Holy Love, God keep you,
with your sister, holy Obedience.
All holy virtues,
God keep you,
God, from whom you proceed and come.
In all the world there is not a man
who can possess any one of you
without first dying to himself.
The man who practises one and does not offend against
the others
possesses all;
The man who offends against one,
possesses none and violates all.
Each and every one of you
puts vice and sin to shame.
Holy Wisdom puts satan
and all his wiles to shame.
Pure and holy Simplicity puts
all the learning of this world,
all natural wisdom, to shame.
Holy Poverty puts to shame
all greed, avarice,
and all the anxieties of this life.
Holy Humility puts pride to shame,
and all the inhabitants of this world
and all that is in the world.
Holy Love puts to shame all the temptations
of the devil and the flesh
and all natural fear.
Holy Obedience puts to shame
all natural and selfish desires.
It mortifies our lower nature

and makes it obey the spirit
and our fellow men.
Obedience subjects a man
to everyone on earth,
And not only to men,
but to all the beasts as well
and to the wild animals,
So that they can do what they like with him,
as far as God allows them.

St. Bonaventure

St. Bonaventure (1217–74), Cardinal and Archbishop of Albano, minister general of the Friars Minor, was named by Pope St. Pius V as the “Seraphic Doctor” of the Church.

After election as head of the Franciscans, he wrote a life of St. Francis that, in 1263, was declared by a chapter of the Order to be the official biography of their founder. He took a prominent part in the general Council of Lyons, and died during its meeting.

Often called the second founder of the Franciscan Order, St. Bonaventure provided a theological foundation for the spirituality of St. Francis. Basic to Bonaventure’s teaching is the idea of exemplarism. Since Christ is the model of all holiness, as the eternal and uncreated Word, He is the pattern after Whom the world is made. Similarly, Christ in His human life is the model and mirror of all the virtues that we are to practice. Thus it follows that, because Christ is infinitely imitable, no one individual fully reflects the perfection of the Master.

As the Mother of Christ, Mary is the perfect model of her Son. The following commentary of St. Bonaventure on the Angelical Salutation is classic in Marian literature.

MIRROR OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY AND THE PSALTER OF OUR LADY

One: On the Angelical Salutation

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

Hear, O most sweet Virgin Mary, hear things new and wonderful! Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear! Hear that glorious messenger, Gabriel! Hear what is to be the wonderful mode of thy fecundity! Incline thine ear to a fruitful consent. Hear what is announced to thee as a certainty by God the Father! See in what manner the Son of God is to become Incarnate of thee! Incline thine ear to the Holy Spirit, who is about to operate within thee! Because thou hast ears to hear, hear!

And in the beginning of thy hearing, listen to this unheard-of salutation:

Hail Mary. This name, Mary, is not inserted here by Gabriel, but by the devotion of the faithful, inspired by the Holy Ghost. And the last sentence, *blessed is the fruit of thy womb*, was not uttered by Gabriel in his salutation, but was pronounced by Elizabeth in the spirit of prophecy. Let us each and everyone say, *Hail Mary*, O truly gracious and venerable, O truly glorious and admirable salutation! As Bede says: "Inasmuch as it is unheard of in human experience, so much more is it becoming to the dignity of Mary."

In this sweetest of salutations five sweet phrases are set forth, in which are contained five sweet prerogatives of the Virgin. Oh, how sweetly are these praises insinuated! For here is signified how most pure, how most full, how most firm and secure, how most worthy, how most useful was the Blessed Virgin Mary. She was most pure, because of the absence of all fault in her; she was most full and abounding, because of the plenitude of grace in her; she was most firm and secure, because of the Divine Presence within her; she was most

worthy, because of the dignity of her person; she was most useful, because of the excellence of her Child. How pure Mary was because of the absence of all evil in her, is well expressed by the word *Ave*. Rightly is the word *Ave* addressed to her, who was ever entirely immune from the “*vae*” or “*woe*” of sin. Thus it behooved the Mother of God to be, as St. Anselm testifies: “It was fitting that the conception of the God-Man should be of a most pure mother, that the purity of the Virgin-Mother, than which, under God, there was none greater, should be hers to whom God had designed to give His Only Son, whom He had begotten, equal to Himself, from His own Heart, that He should so give Him to her to be at the same time the Son of God and the Son of Man.”

Again, how full of grace was Mary by the abounding plenitude of her gifts is well signified when it is said to her: “*Full of grace.*” And truly full, and ever full, as St. Anselm testifies, when he most devoutly exclaims: “O Woman full and over-full of grace, of whose abundance every creature is revived and refreshed.” Again, how secure and firm was Mary by the Divine Presence is well signified by the words, *The Lord is with thee*. Rightly is Mary safe and secure, when the Lord is present with her; for the Lord, God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is with her, so that she is in an especial manner most intimately connected with God. St. Bernard shows this when he says: “Nor is God the Son alone with thee, whom thou dost clothe with thy flesh; but also God the Holy Ghost, of whom thou dost conceive; and God the Father, who hath begotten that which thou conceivest.”

Again, how worthy was Mary, because of the dignity of her person, is well expressed when she is saluted in the words: *Blessed art thou among women!* For it could not be that her person, having been made venerable by such a blessing, was not most worthy. Therefore, St. Anselm, overcome with amazement, exclaims: “O Blessed and ever Blessed Virgin, by whose blessing every creature is not only blessed by its Creator, but the Creator by the creature!” Again, how useful was Mary, by the excellence of her Child, is well expressed in the words: *Blessed is the fruit of thy womb!* For she availed to save the world, having brought forth the most excellent and powerful Fruit of salvation. Therefore doth the devout St. Anselm say: “By thy fruitfulness, O Lady, the unclean sinner is justified, the condemned sinner is saved, and the exile is recalled. Thy Son, O Lady, redeemed the captive world, healed the sick, and raised the dead to life.”

You see, therefore, dearly beloved, in what manner Mary, because of her immunity from guilt, is rightly saluted with the *Ave*. Because of the abundance and immensity of her grace, she is rightly saluted as *full of grace*; because of the Divine Presence within her, and her intimacy with Our Lord, she is told: *The Lord is with thee*; because of the dignity and reverence of her person, she is rightly saluted as *blessed among women*; because of the excellence and utility of her Child, it is fittingly said to her: *Blessed is the fruit of thy womb*. We shall now treat of each of these points in order.

Two: Freedom of Mary from the Threefold Woe of Actual Sin, from the Threefold Woe of Original Misery, and from the Threefold Woe of Eternal Punishment

Hail Mary, full of grace. Let us all utter this good and sweet word *Ave*, by which our redemption from eternal woe was begun. Let each one of us, I say, utter it; let all utter it most devoutly, saying: *Ave Maria, Ave, Ave*, and again a thousand times, *Ave!* Behold, *Ave* is said to the most holy Virgin Mary because of her absolute immunity from any fault; because of her perfect innocence and purity of life; rightly is *Ave* said to her in the very beginning of her salutation, *Ave* indeed and without woe (“*a*” or “*absque vae*”).

We must consider that the “*vae*” or woe, from which she is entirely immune, is threefold. There is the woe of guilt, misery, and hell. There is the woe of actual sin, of original misery, and the woe of the punishment or pain of hell. Of these three woes we may not unfitly understand what we read in the Apocalypse. “I heard,” says John, “the voice of one eagle flying through the midst of heaven, and saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth!” Behold how each of these woes is multiplied by three, so that all together we have nine woes, against which *Ave* is rightly said to Mary. For there are three faults, three miseries, three hells in this woe, for the absence of which Mary is rightly saluted by the *Ave*.

First, the woe of guilt is threefold, i.e., the woe of the guilt of the heart, of the guilt of the lips, and of the guilt of deeds. On account of these three woes it may be said: “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth!” Woe, therefore, to sinners because of the guilt of the heart, as it is said in Isaias: “Woe to you who are of a deep heart, that ye hide counsel from the Lord.” Woe, indeed, to those who are of a deep heart unto evil, for the deep hearts of evil-doers are haunts of the devils, and sepulchres full of the filth of vice. Woe, therefore, to them, as is said in St. Matthew: “Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, who are like to whited sepulchres, which appear outwardly to men fair, but within are

full of dead men's bones, and of all abominations." Oh, how far from this woe was the most innocent heart of Mary, as St. Bernard says: "Mary had no fault of her own, and far from her most innocent heart was repentance." Of what could the heart of Mary repent when she had never admitted into it anything worthy of penance? Therefore, her pure heart was not the haunt of the devil, nor the sepulchre of vice. Rather, it was a garden and a paradise of the Holy Ghost, according to that word of the Cantic of Canticles: "A garden enclosed is my Sister, my Spouse."—"A garden," says St. Jerome, "a garden of delights, in which were planted the seeds of all virtues, and the perfume of virtue." Because Mary was far from this woe of guilt, therefore it is rightly said to her: *Ave*.

Again, woe to sinners because of the guilt of the lips, as it is said in Isaias: "Woe to you who call evil good, and good evil." Woe to these, woe to all who sin by the lips, as is said in the Psalms: "The poison of asps is under their lips." Oh, how far from this woe was the most innocent mouth of Mary! Therefore Blessed Ambrose says: "There was nothing evil in the eyes of Mary; nothing prolix in her words, nothing forward in her deeds." On the lips of Mary there was nothing of the gall and poison of the devil, but the honey and milk of the Holy Ghost, according to the word of the Canticles: "Thy lips are as the dropping honeycomb, my Spouse; honey and milk are under thy tongue." Had not Mary on her lips this most pure milk when she uttered that most chaste word: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord"? Because the woe of the guilt of the lips was so entirely absent from Mary, therefore is she rightly saluted with *Ave*.

Again, there is woe to sinners because of the guilt of their deeds, as it is said in Ecclesiasticus: "Woe to the double heart and the wicked lips, and to the hands that do evil."¹ Woe to the double heart, for the guilt of the heart; woe to the wicked lips, for the guilt of the lips; woe to the hands that do evil, for the guilt of their deeds. Oh, how far removed from such a woe was every deed of Mary and the whole of her life! Therefore St. Bernard saith: "It behoved the Queen of Virgins, by a singular privilege of sanctity, to lead a life entirely free from sin, that while she ministered to the Destroyer of death and sin, she should obtain the gift of life and justice for all."

Note that never did she contract the least stain either in thought, word, or deed, so that the Lord could truly say to her: "Thou art all fair, O my beloved, and there is no spot in thee." So, therefore, the most innocent and holy Mary was without woe in thought, word, and deed, and therefore is it said to her, *Ave*.

Secondly, we must consider that Mary was not only free from the threefold woe of actual guilt, but also from the threefold woe of original misery, i.e., from the misery of them that are born, from the misery of them that bring forth, and from the misery of them that die.

¹ Eccl 2:14.

The woe of the misery of being born is the woe of the weakness of concupiscence; the woe of them that bring forth is the woe of the pains of travail; the woe of the dying is the misery of being reduced to dust and ashes. Because of these three woes is it said to the inhabitants of the earth: "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth!" The woe of those who are born is the woe of the fuel of sin which is born in us, by which, according to our original corruption, we are so weak unto good and so prone to evil; so that each one is born with the *fomes peccati*, and by this is weak and wounded, and can truly say with Jeremias: "Woe is me for my destruction, my wound is very grievous. But I said, truly this is my own evil, and I will bear it."² But alas! not only is there in those that are born weakness and misery, inclining them, when adults, to actual sin; but also the woe of stain and of guilt, bringing them even as little infants under the wrath of God. Therefore the Apostle saith: "All are born children of wrath."³ Oh, how far from this woe of them that are born was the most holy Nativity of Mary, who was not only free from original sin, but also from the fuel of misery, in so far as it leads to sin, for she was conceived without stain. Because the Nativity of Mary was so far removed from this woe, she is saluted by *Ave*.

Again, the misery of them that bring forth is that original curse pronounced against Eve, "Thou shalt bring forth children in sorrow."⁴ On account of this woe it may be said to all who bring forth what the Lord said to some amongst them: "Woe to them that are with child and bring forth in those days."⁵ Oh, how far from this woe was Mary when she conceived and brought forth, as St. Augustine testifies, saying: "Oh, how blessed is that Mother who without stain conceived Purity, and without pain brought forth Healing." Because she was so far from this woe of them that bring forth, therefore is Mary saluted with *Ave*.

Again, the misery of them that die is the woe of dissolution into dust, which was imposed upon man when it was said to the sinner: "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."⁶ Hence of those that are born and those that die, can be said that word of Ecclesiasticus: "Woe to you, ungodly men, who have forsaken the law of the most high Lord, and if you be born, you shall be born in malediction: and if you die, in malediction shall be your portion."⁷

Certainly both just and unjust are born under the curse of concupiscence, and in danger of being reduced to dust; yet to the impious alone is this curse particularly addressed, for their concupiscence is more deadly and their dissolution into dust more odious; and to the wicked their evil inclinations are more

² Jer 10:19.

³ Eph 2:3.

⁴ Gen 3:16.

⁵ Matt 24:19.

⁶ Gen 3:19.

⁷ Eccl 41:11f.

hurtful, and the remembrance of their future dissolution is more bitter, than to the just. Oh, how far from this dissolution was the body of Mary, as we universally believe. For this body was the most holy Ark of God, to which corruption was unbecoming, but which, according to the likeness of her Son, should rise again, before any taint of corruption could infect it. Whence it is both of the Son and the Mother that the Prophet saith: "Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest, Thou and the Ark of Thy sanctification."⁸ This Ark was made of incorruptible wood, because the flesh of Mary never became corrupted. Therefore St. Augustine well says: "The heavens were more worthy to preserve so glorious a treasure than the earth, and rightly incorruptibility followed on integrity, and not any dissolution or corruption." As Mary was entirely free from the misery of them that are born, so also was she from the woe of the dying, and rightly is she saluted by *Ave*.

Thirdly, we have to consider that Mary was not only immune from the threefold woe of actual guilt, and from the threefold woe of original sin; but also from the threefold pain of hell. This threefold woe consists in the greatness, the multitude, and the duration of the punishments.

Woe, therefore, to the damned and to those who will be damned, because of the greatness, the multitude, and the duration of their torments! "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth!" First, there is the greatness of the torments, as Ezechiel saith: "Woe to the bloody city, of which I will make a great bonfire."⁹ The bloody city is the multitude of the impious, of whom there will be an immense bonfire made in the great conflagration of the damned. Oh, how far removed from this woe of greatness of torment was the greatness of the grace and glory of Mary, for whom, instead of the grievous torments of hell, was prepared by God so great a glory in Heaven, and as she was great and garbed in merit, so is she great in her reward. She herself is that great throne of which it is said: "King Solomon also made a great throne of ivory."¹⁰ Mary is the Throne of Solomon, great in grace and glory. St. Bernard well says: "As much more grace than others as Mary obtained on earth, so great a degree of singular glory did she gain in Heaven." Rightly, therefore, is it said to her, *Ave*.

There is also the multitude of the pains of hell. Isaias says: "Woe to their souls, for evil things are rendered to them."¹¹ He says, evil things, in the plural, because there are many, yea, infinite evils rendered to evil-doers in hell. But to Mary, in contradistinction to the many evils prepared for the damned in hell, God hath prepared many good things in Heaven. No angel, no saint, can equal her in the multitude and accumulation of heavenly good things, as the Book of Proverbs says: "Many daughters have gathered together riches, thou hast surpassed

⁸ Ps 131:8.

⁹ Ezek 24:9.

¹⁰ 3 Kgs 10:18.

¹¹ Isa 3:9.

them all." If we understand these daughters to be human souls or angelic intelligences, has she not surpassed the riches of the virgins, of the confessors, of the martyrs, of the Apostles, of the prophets, of the patriarchs, and of the angels, when she herself is the first-fruit of the virgins, the mirror of confessors, the rose of martyrs, the ruler of Apostles, the oracle of prophets, the daughter of patriarchs, the queen of angels? What is wanting to her of the riches of all these? St. Jerome says: "If you look diligently at Mary, there is nothing of virtue, nothing of beauty, nothing of splendour or glory which does not shine in her."

Now the pains of hell consist also in their perpetuity. In the Epistle of St. Jude it is said: "Woe to them, for they have gone in the way of Cain and after the error of Balaam, and have perished in the contradiction of Core." And a little further on: "to whom the storm of darkness is preserved forever."¹² Note that he says, *forever*, and think how great is the duration of these pains and of the darkness which will have no end. But against this eternal darkness in hell the Lord has prepared for Mary eternal light in Heaven, so that, as the sinful soul, the throne of the devil, will be miraculously dark forever, Mary, the Mediatrix, the throne of Christ, will be marvellously luminous forever according to the Psalm: "Her throne is as the sun in my sight, and as the moon perfect for ever."¹³

Thus, therefore, as the Most Blessed Virgin Mary was free from the threefold woe of hell, yea, from all the nine woes, rightly is it said to her, *Ave*. Let every one of us salute her with *Ave*, and let us petition her that, through her own sweet *Ave*, she will pray that we may all be delivered from every woe by our Lord Jesus Christ, her Son.

¹² Jude 11:13.

¹³ Ps 88:38.

St. Thomas Aquinas

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–74). Dominican philosopher and theologian, was born at Roccasecca, Italy, the youngest son of the Count of Aquino. At the age of five he was sent to the Benedictine school at Monte Cassino, where he was destined by his parents for the abbacy. In 1240 he went to Naples to finish his arts course, and there was attracted to the newly founded Dominican Order. After his father's death in 1243, he took the Dominican habit but was strongly opposed by his mother and family, even to being abducted by his soldier brothers. Set free in 1245, he was allowed to follow his vocation.

The amount and variety of St. Thomas' writings are immense, especially in view of their compact thought and expression. But more important is their Catholic authenticity. The Roman Catholic Church has accepted the substance of St. Thomas' teaching as her official doctrine.

While the best known of St. Thomas' works are his Summa Contra Gentiles and the Summa Theologiae, other less familiar writings are also important. The selections here chosen are from the Summa Theologiae and from his last Lenten sermons, preached in the vernacular at Naples in 1273. The latter have been combined into a single commentary on the Apostles' Creed.

The modern Popes have been lavish in their praise of St. Thomas and their insistence on the faithful becoming familiar with his writings. Pope Leo XIII enjoined his study on all theological students, and made him patron of all Catholic universities. Pope John Paul II identified St. Thomas as one of the basic norms in the teaching of theology and philosophy (Sapientia Christiana, II, 71, 80).

SUMMA THEOLOGIAE

AN EXCERPT

The Existence of God (IN THREE ARTICLES)

Because the chief aim of sacred doctrine is to teach the knowledge of God not only as He is in Himself, but also as He is the beginning of things and their last end, and especially of rational creatures, as is clear from what has been already said, therefore, in our endeavor to expound this science, we shall treat: (1) of God; (2) of the rational creature's movement towards God; (3) of Christ Who as man is our way to God.

In treating of God there will be a threefold division:—

For we shall consider (1) whatever concerns the divine essence. (2) Whatever concerns the distinctions of Persons. (3) Whatever concerns the procession of creatures from Him.

Concerning the divine essence, we must consider:—

(1) Whether God exists? (2) The manner of His existence, or, rather, what is *not* the manner of His existence. (3) Whatever concerns His operations—namely, His knowledge, will, power.

Concerning the first, there are three points of inquiry:—

(1) Whether the proposition *God exists* is self-evident? (2) Whether it is demonstrable? (3) Whether God exists?

FIRST ARTICLE

Whether the Existence of God Is Self-evident

We proceed thus to the First Article:—

Objection 1. It seems that the existence of God is self-evident. For those things are said to be self-evident to us the knowledge of which exists naturally in us, as

we can see in regard to first principles. But as Damascene says, *the knowledge of God is naturally implanted in all*. Therefore the existence of God is self-evident.

Obj. 2. Further, those things are said to be self-evident which are known as soon as the terms are known, which the Philosopher says is true of the first principles of demonstration. Thus, when the nature of a whole and of a part is known, it is at once recognized that every whole is greater than its part. But as soon as the signification of the name *God* is understood, it is at once seen that God exists. For by this name is signified that thing than which nothing greater can be conceived. But that which exists actually and mentally is greater than that which exists only mentally. Therefore, since as soon as the name *God* is understood it exists mentally, it also follows that it exists actually. Therefore the proposition *God exists* is self-evident.

Obj. 3. Further, the existence of truth is self-evident. For whoever denies the existence of truth grants that truth does not exist: and, if truth does not exist, then the proposition *Truth does not exist* is true: and if there is anything true, there must be truth. But God is truth itself: *I am the way, the truth, and the life*.¹ Therefore God exists is self-evident.

On the contrary, No one can mentally admit the opposite of what is self-evident, as the Philosopher states concerning the first principles of demonstration. But the opposite of the proposition *God is* can be mentally admitted: *The fool said in his heart, There is no God*.² Therefore, that God exists is not self-evident.

I answer that, A thing can be self-evident in either of two ways: on the one hand, self-evident in itself, though not to us, on the other, self-evident in itself, and to us. A proposition is self-evident because the predicate is included in the essence of the subject: e.g., *Man is an animal*, for animal is contained in the essence of man. If, therefore, the essence of the predicate and subject be known to all, the proposition will be self-evident to all; as is clear with regard to the first principles of demonstration, the terms of which are certain common notions that no one is ignorant of, such as being and non-being, whole and part, and the like. If, however, there are some to whom the essence of the predicate and subject is unknown, the proposition will be self-evident in itself, but not to those who do not know the meaning of the predicate and subject of the proposition. Therefore, it happens, as Boethius says, that there are some notions of the mind which are common and self-evident only to the learned, as that incorporeal substances are not in space. Therefore I say that this proposition, *God exists*, of itself is self-evident, for the predicate is the same as the subject, because God is His own existence as will be hereafter shown. Now because we do not know the essence of God, the proposition is not self-evident to us, but

¹ John 14:6.

² Ps. 52:2.

needs to be demonstrated by things that are more known to us, though less known in their nature—namely, by His effects.

Reply Obj. 1. To know that God exists in a general and confused way is implanted in us by nature, inasmuch as God is man's beatitude. For man naturally desires happiness, and what is naturally desired by man is naturally known by him. This, however, is not to know absolutely that God exists; just as to know that someone is approaching is not the same as to know that Peter is approaching, even though it is Peter who is approaching; for there are many who imagine that man's perfect good, which is happiness, consists in riches, and others in pleasures, and others in something else.

Reply Obj. 2. Perhaps not everyone who hears this name *God* understands it to signify something than which nothing greater can be thought, seeing that some have believed God to be a body. Yet, granted that everyone understands that by this name *God* is signified something than which nothing greater can be thought, nevertheless, it does not therefore follow that he understands that what the name signifies exists actually, but only that it exists mentally. Nor can it be argued that it actually exists, unless it be admitted that there actually exists something than which nothing greater can be thought; and this precisely is not admitted by those who hold that God does not exist.

Reply Obj. 3. The existence of truth in general is self-evident, but the existence of a Primal Truth is not self-evident to us.

SECOND ARTICLE

Whether It Can Be Demonstrated that God Exists

We proceed thus to the Second Article:—

Objection 1. It seems that the existence of God cannot be demonstrated. For it is an article of faith that God exists. But what is of faith cannot be demonstrated, because a demonstration produces scientific knowledge, whereas faith is of the unseen, as is clear from the Apostle.³ Therefore it cannot be demonstrated that God exists.

Obj. 2. Further, essence is the middle term of demonstration. But we cannot know in what God's essence consists, but solely in what it does not consist, as Damascene says. Therefore we cannot demonstrate that God exists.

Obj. 3. Further, if the existence of God were demonstrated, this could only be from His effects. But His effects are not proportioned to Him, since He is infinite and His effects are finite, and between the finite and infinite there is no proportion. Therefore, since a cause cannot be demonstrated by an effect not proportioned to it, it seems that the existence of God cannot be demonstrated.

³ Heb 1:11.

On the contrary, The Apostle says: *The invisible things of Him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.*⁴ But this would not be unless the existence of God could be demonstrated through the things that are made; for the first thing we must know of anything is, whether it exists.

I answer that, Demonstration can be made in two ways: One is through the cause, and is called *propter quid*, and this is to argue from what is prior absolutely. The other is through the effect, and is called a demonstration *quia*; this is to argue from what is prior relatively only to us. When an effect is better known to us than its cause, from the effect we proceed to the knowledge of the cause. And from every effect the existence of its proper cause can be demonstrated, so long as its effects are better known to us; because, since every effect depends upon its cause, if the effect exists, the cause must pre-exist. Hence the existence of God, in so far as it is not self-evident to us, can be demonstrated from those of His effects which are known to us.

Reply Obj. 1. The existence of God and other like truths about God, which can be known by natural reason, are not articles of faith, but are preambles to the articles; for faith presupposes natural knowledge, even as grace presupposes nature and perfection the perfectible. Nevertheless, there is nothing to prevent a man, who cannot grasp a proof, from accepting, as a matter of faith, something which in itself is capable of being scientifically known and demonstrated.

Reply Obj. 2. When the existence of a cause is demonstrated from an effect, this effect takes the place of the definition of the cause in proving the cause's existence. This is especially the case in regard to God, because, in order to prove the existence of anything, it is necessary to accept as a middle term the meaning of the name, and not its essence, for the question of its essence follows on the question of its existence. Now the names given to God are derived from His effects, as will be later shown. Consequently, in demonstrating the existence of God from His effects, we may take for the middle term the meaning of the name *God*.

Reply Obj. 3. From effects not proportioned to the cause no perfect knowledge of that cause can be obtained. Yet from every effect the existence of the cause can be clearly demonstrated, and so we can demonstrate the existence of God from His effects; though from them we cannot know God perfectly as He is in His essence.

⁴ Rom 1:20.

THIRD ARTICLE

Whether God Exists

We proceed thus to the Third Article:—

Objection 1. It seems that God does not exist; because if one of two contraries be infinite, the other would be altogether destroyed. But the name *God* means that He is infinite goodness. If, therefore, God existed, there would be no evil discoverable; but there is evil in the world. Therefore God does not exist.

Obj. 2. Further, it is superfluous to suppose that what can be accounted for by a few principles has been produced by many. But it seems that everything we see in the world can be accounted for by other principles, supposing God did not exist. For all natural things can be reduced to one principle, which is nature; and all voluntary things can be reduced to one principle, which is human reason, or will. Therefore there is no need to suppose God's existence.

On the contrary, It is said in the person of God: *I am Who am.*⁵

I answer that, The existence of God can be proved in five ways.

The first and more manifest way is the argument from motion. It is certain, and evident to our senses, that in the world some things are in motion. Now whatever is moved is moved by another, for nothing can be moved except it is in potentiality to that towards which it is moved; whereas a thing moves inasmuch as it is in act. For motion is nothing else than the reduction of something from potentiality to actuality. But nothing can be reduced from potentiality to actuality, except by something in a state of actuality. Thus that which is actually hot, as fire, makes wood, which is potentially hot, to be actually hot, and thereby moves and changes it. Now it is not possible that the same thing should be at once in actuality and potentiality in the same respect, but only in different respects. For what is actually hot cannot simultaneously be potentially hot; but it is simultaneously potentially cold. It is therefore impossible that in the same respect and in the same way a thing should be both mover and moved, i.e., that it should move itself. Therefore, whatever is moved must be moved by another. If that by which it is moved be itself moved, then this also must needs be moved by another, and that by another again. But this cannot go on to infinity, because then there would be no first mover, and, consequently, no other mover, seeing that subsequent movers move only inasmuch as they are moved by the first mover; as the staff moves only because it is moved by the hand. Therefore it is necessary to arrive at a first mover, moved by no other; and this everyone understands to be God.

⁵ Exod 3:14.

The second way is from the nature of efficient cause. In the world of sensible things we find there is an order of efficient causes. There is no case known (neither is it, indeed, possible) in which a thing is found to be the efficient cause of itself; for so it would be prior to itself, which is impossible. Now in efficient causes it is not possible to go on to infinity, because in all efficient causes following in order, the first is the cause of the intermediate cause, and the intermediate is the cause of the ultimate cause, whether the intermediate cause be several, or one only. Now to take away the cause is to take away the effect. Therefore, if there be no first cause among efficient causes, there will be no ultimate, nor any intermediate, cause. But if in efficient causes it is possible to go on to infinity, there will be no first efficient cause, neither will there be an ultimate effect, nor any intermediate efficient causes; all of which is plainly false. Therefore it is necessary to admit a first efficient cause, to which everyone gives the name of God.

The third way is taken from possibility and necessity, and runs thus. We find in nature things that are possible to be and not to be, since they are found to be generated, and to be corrupted, and consequently, it is possible for them to be and not to be. But it is impossible for these always to exist, for that which can not-be at some time is not. Therefore, if everything can not-be, then at one time there was nothing in existence. Now if this were true, even now there would be nothing in existence, because that which does not exist begins to exist only through something already existing. Therefore, if at one time nothing was in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist; and thus even now nothing would be in existence—which is absurd. Therefore, not all beings are merely possible, but there must exist something the existence of which is necessary. But every necessary thing either has its necessity caused by another, or not. Now it is impossible to go on to infinity in necessary things which have their necessity caused by another, as has been already proved in regard to efficient causes. Therefore we cannot but admit the existence of some being having of itself its own necessity, and not receiving it from another, but rather causing in others their necessity. This all men speak of as God.

The fourth way is taken from the gradation to be found in things. Among beings there are some more and some less good, true, noble, and the like. But *more* and *less* are predicated of different things according as they resemble in their different ways something which is the maximum, as a thing is said to be hotter according as it more nearly resembles that which is hottest; so that there is something which is truest, something best, something noblest, and, consequently, something which is most being, for those things that are greatest in truth are greatest in being, as it is written in *Metaph.* ii. Now the maximum in any genus is the cause of all in that genus, as fire, which is the maximum of heat, is the cause of all hot things, as is said in the same book. Therefore there must

also be something which is to all beings the cause of their being, goodness, and every other perfection; and this we call God.

The fifth way is taken from the governance of the world. We see that things which lack knowledge, such as natural bodies, act for an end, and this is evident from their acting always, or nearly always, in the same way, so as to obtain the best result. Hence it is plain that they achieve their end, not fortuitously, but designedly. Now whatever lacks knowledge cannot move towards an end, unless it be directed by being endowed with knowledge and intelligence; as the arrow is directed by the archer. Therefore some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and this being we call God.

Reply Obj. 1. As Augustine says: *Since God is the highest good, He would not allow any evil to exist in His works, unless His omnipotence and goodness were such as to bring good even out of evil.* This is part of the infinite goodness of God, that He should allow evil to exist, and out of it produce good.

Reply Obj. 2. Since nature works for a determinate end under the direction of a higher agent, whatever is done by nature must be traced back to God as to its first cause. So likewise whatever is done voluntarily must be traced back to some higher cause other than human reason and will, since these can change and fail; for all things that are changeable and capable of defect must be traced back to an immovable and self-necessary first principle, as has been shown.

Exposition of the Apostles' Creed

FIRST ARTICLE

I Believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth

The first thing that a Christian needs is faith, without which no man is a faithful Christian. Now faith confers four boons.

(1) Faith unites the soul to God: because by faith the Christian soul is in a sense wedded to God: *I will espouse thee to myself in faith.*¹ For this reason, when we are baptized, we begin by confessing our faith when we are asked *Dost thou believe in God?* for baptism is the first of the sacraments of faith. Hence our Lord said: *He that shall believe and shall be baptized shall be saved;*² in as much as without faith baptism is of no avail. Consequently we must realise that without faith no man is acceptable to God: *Without faith it is impossible to please God.*³ Wherefore Augustine commenting on Romans 14:23, *All that is not of faith is sin*, says: *Without the recognition of the eternal and unchangeable truth all virtue is but a sham even in the best of men.*

(2) Faith introduces into us a beginning of eternal life: since eternal life is nothing else than to know God: thus our Lord said:⁴ *This is eternal life, to know thee, the only true God.* This knowledge of God begins in us by faith, and is perfected in the life to come, when we shall know Him as He is: *Faith is the substance of the things to be hoped for;*⁵ wherefore no man can obtain the happiness of Heaven, which is the true knowledge of God, unless he know Him first by faith: *Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed.*⁶

(3) Faith is our guide in the present life: since in order to lead a good life a man needs to know what is necessary in order to live well: and if in order to discover all that is necessary for that purpose he had to rely on his own efforts, either he would never discover them all or he would only do so after a long

¹ Hos 2:20.

² Mark 16:16.

³ Heb 11:6.

⁴ John 17:3.

⁵ Heb 11:1.

⁶ John 20:29.

time. Now faith teaches us all that is necessary for leading a good life: since we learn thereby that there is one God who is the rewarder of the good and the punisher of the wicked: and that there is another life besides this; and other like truths whereby we are sufficiently enticed to do good and avoid evil: *The just man liveth by faith.*⁷ This is also shown from the fact that before the coming of Christ none of the philosophers was able, however great his effort, to know as much about God or about the means necessary for obtaining eternal life, as any old woman knows by faith since Christ came down upon earth: *The earth is filled with knowledge of God.*⁸

(4) By faith we overcome temptations: *The saints by faith have conquered kingdoms.*⁹ The reason is that all temptation is from either the devil, or the world, or the flesh. The devil tempts thee to disobey God and to refuse to be subject to Him: and this is removed by faith, in as much as it teaches us that He is the Lord of all, wherefore we must obey Him: *Your adversary the devil goeth about seeking whom he may devour: whom resist ye strong in faith.*¹⁰—The world tempts us either by the attractions of prosperity or by fear of adversity: and these we overcome by faith because it teaches us that there is a better life than this, so that we despise the good things of this world and fear not its afflictions: *This is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith;*¹¹ and also because it teaches us that there are evils still greater, those, namely, of hell.—The flesh tempts us by drawing us to the passing pleasures of this life: while faith teaches us that if we seek them unduly we shall forfeit eternal happiness: *In all things putting on the shield of faith.*¹² Hence we gather how profitable it is to have faith.

But someone will object that it is foolish to believe what one cannot see, and that one ought not to believe what one sees not.—I reply in the first place that this difficulty disappears if we consider the imperfection of our intelligence: for if a man were able by himself to know perfectly all things, visible and invisible, it would be foolish for us to believe what we do not see: whereas our knowledge is so imperfect that no philosopher has ever been able to discover perfectly the nature of a single fly. Thus we are told that a certain philosopher spent thirty years in solitude in the endeavour to know the nature of the bee. If, then, our intelligence is so weak, is it not foolish to refuse to believe anything about God, except such things alone which we are able to find out by ourselves? In fact, this is condemned by the words of Job: *Behold God is great and surpasseth our*

⁷ Hab 2:4.

⁸ Isa 11:9.

⁹ Heb 11:33.

¹⁰ 1 Pet 5:8.

¹¹ 1 John 5:4.

¹² Eph 6:16.

knowledge.¹³—Another solution is that supposing a master were to make a statement in his own particular branch of knowledge, an ignoramus would be accounted no small fool if he were to contradict him for no other reason but that he could not understand what the master said. Now without doubt the intelligence of an angel surpasses that of the greatest philosopher far more than the intelligence of the latter surpasses that of an ignoramus. Wherefore the philosopher is a fool to disbelieve what an angel says, and a much greater fool if he disbelieves what God says: for he is condemned in the words of Ecclesiasticus 3:25: *Many things are shown to thee above the understanding of men.*—Yet a third solution is that life in this world would be altogether impossible if one were only to believe what one sees. How can one live without believing others? How is a man to believe that So-and-so is his father? Hence man must needs believe others in matters that he cannot know perfectly by himself. Now no one is to be believed as much as God is: wherefore those who will not believe the statements of faith are not wise, but foolish and proud. Thus the Apostle says: *He is proud, knowing nothing*:¹⁴ and *I know in whom I have believed; and I am certain*:¹⁵ and it is written: *Ye who fear God, believe in him*.¹⁶—Fourthly, we may reply that God proves the truth of the things which faith teaches. Thus if a king sends a letter to which he has attached his seal, none will dare say that this letter was not written by the king's orders. Now it is plain that whatsoever the saints have believed and handed down to us concerning Christ's faith is confirmed by God's seal, which is to be seen in those works which no mere creature is able to do, namely, the miracles whereby Christ confirmed the doctrine of the Apostles and of other saints.

And if anyone say that nobody has seen those miracles done, I reply that it is a well-known fact, related in Pagan histories, that the whole world worshipped idols and persecuted the faith of Christ; yet now behold all, the wise, the noble, the rich, and the powerful and the great have been converted at the words of a few simple poor men who preached Christ. Now was this a miracle or was it not? If it was, then you have what you asked for: if you say it was not a miracle, then I say that you could not have a greater miracle than the conversion of the whole world without miracles, and we need to seek no further.

Accordingly no one should doubt about the faith, and we should believe what is of faith even more than the things that we see: since man's sight may be deceived, whereas God's knowledge is never at fault.

I believe in one God. (The word *one* was added in the Nicene Creed.) The first of all the articles of faith is that the faithful must believe in one God.

It will be well to consider what is meant by this word *God*, for it signifies the

¹³ Job 36:26.

¹⁴ 1 Tim 6:4.

¹⁵ 2 Tim 1:12.

¹⁶ Sir 2:8.

governor and provider of all things: wherefore to believe that there is a God is to believe in one whose government and providence extend to all things: whereas one who believes that all things happen by chance does not believe that there is a God. No one, however, is so foolish as not to believe that the things of the physical world are subject to someone's government, providence and disposition; seeing that they are regulated according to a certain order and time. Thus we see the sun, the moon, and the stars and other parts of the physical world all holding a certain course, which would not happen if they were the sport of chance: and therefore a man would be a fool not to believe in God: *The fool hath said within his heart: There is no God.*¹⁷ Some there are, however, who, although they believe that nature is governed and ordained by God, deny that human actions come under His providence, who believe, in fact, that human actions are not disposed by God. Their reason is that they see that in this world the good suffer and the wicked prosper, which would seem to argue against God's providence in regard to mankind: wherefore it is said in their person: *He walks about the poles of the earth; nor does he consider our things.*¹⁸ But this is very foolish: for they behave like one who knows nothing about medicine, and who, seeing the physician prescribing water for one invalid and wine for another, according to the requirements of the medical art, believes this to be done at haphazard; whereas it is the medical art which with good reason prescribes water for the one and wine for the other. It is so with God: who with good cause and by His providence disposes such things as are necessary to man: and thus He afflicts some good men, and allows certain wicked men to prosper. Wherefore anyone who believes this to be the result of hazard is, and is reputed, a fool: since the only cause of his believing thus is because he knows not the art and the reason of the divine disposition: *Would that he might show thee the secrets of wisdom, and that his law is manifold.*¹⁹

We must, therefore, firmly believe that God governs and disposes not only the things of nature, but also the acts of men: *And they have said: The Lord shall not see; neither shall the God of Jacob understand. Understand, ye senseless among the people; and, ye fools, be wise at last. He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? Or he that formed the eye, shall he not consider? . . . The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men.*²⁰ Therefore, He sees all things, our thoughts and the secrets of our will. For this reason men are placed under a special obligation of doing good, since all their thoughts and deeds are manifest to the all-seeing God: hence the Apostle says: *All things are naked and open to his eyes.*²¹

Moreover, we must believe that this God who disposes and rules all things is

¹⁷ Ps 13:1.

¹⁸ Job 22:14.

¹⁹ Job 11:6.

²⁰ Ps 93:7-11.

²¹ Heb 4:13.

but one God. The reason of this is because human affairs are found to be rightly disposed when many things are subject to the disposition and government of one. A multitude of heads often produces dissension among the subjects; wherefore since the divine government surpasses human government it is evident that the world must be governed not by many gods, but by one only.

There are four motives which lead men to believe in many gods. (1) The first is the weakness of human intelligence, the result being that through inability to transcend the corporeal world, men did not believe that there was any nature besides that of sensible bodies: and consequently they held that the world is disposed and ruled by those bodies which they observed to surpass all others in beauty and nobility: to which accordingly they attributed and paid divine worship: and these were the sun, the moon, and the stars. It was with these men as it would be with one who, going to court in order to see the king, thinks anyone that is well dressed or exercises an office to be the king. Of such men it is said: *They have imagined . . . the sun and moon . . . or the circle of the stars to be the gods that rule the world:*²² and: *Lift up your eyes to heaven and look down to the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish like smoke, and the earth shall be worn away like a garment, and the inhabitants thereof shall perish in like manner. But my salvation shall be for ever, and my justice shall not fail.*²³

(2) The second motive was human flattery: (2) some men with the desire to flatter their masters and sovereigns, gave them the honour due to God, by obeying them and subjecting themselves to them, even so as to make gods of them when they were dead, or even while yet in life: *Let every nation know that Nabuchodonosor is god upon the earth, and beside him is no other.*²⁴

(3) The third motive was carnal affection for their children and kindred: thus some, through an excessive love for their own relatives, raised statues to them after they had died, the result being that they paid divine honour to these statues. Of these it is said: *Men serving either their affection or their kings gave the incommunicable name to stones and wood.*²⁵

(4) The fourth cause was the wickedness of the devil. For he it was who from the beginning desired to be equal to God: thus he says: *I will place my throne in the North; I will ascend into heaven; I will be like the most High.*²⁶ This desire he has never put aside; wherefore he strives his utmost to be worshipped by men and to have sacrifice offered to himself: not that he is pleased in the dog or cat that is offered to him, but in being paid the reverence due to God. Hence he said to Christ: *All these things will I give thee if falling down thou wilt adore me.*²⁷

²² Wis 13:2.

²³ Isa 51:6.

²⁴ Jdt 5:29.

²⁵ Wis 14:21.

²⁶ Isa 14:13.

²⁷ Matt 4:9.

With this purpose the demons entered idols, and answered when questioned, that they might be revered as gods: *All the gods of the gentiles are demons.*²⁸ Thus the Apostle says: *The things which the heathens sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God.*²⁹

Now although all this is horrible, yet from time to time there have been some to whom these four causes apply: and who though neither in word nor thought, nevertheless in deed show that they believe in many gods. Thus those who believe that the heavenly bodies can influence the human will, and who choose certain seasons for their actions, made gods and rulers of the heavenly bodies, and cast horoscopes: *Be not afraid of the signs from heaven which the heathens fear, for the laws of the people are vain.*³⁰ — Again, all those who obey kings rather than God, in matters wherein they ought not to obey them, make them their gods: *We ought to obey God rather than men.*³¹ — Again, those who love their children or their kindred more than God, imply by their deeds that there are many gods. — Or again, those who love the pleasures of the table more than God, and of whom the Apostle says: *Whose God is their belly.*³² — Again, all those who practise sorcery and incantations, treat the demons as though they were gods, inasmuch as they seek to obtain from the demons that which God alone can give, namely the knowledge of the occult and the truth about future events. We must, therefore, believe that there is but one God.

The Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

As stated above, the first thing that we must believe is that there is but one God: now, the second is that this God is the Creator and Maker of heaven and earth, *of things visible and invisible.* Without having recourse to subtle explanations, it is enough for our present purpose to illustrate by means of a homely example the fact that all things were created and made by God. Supposing a man on entering a house were to feel heat in the porch, and on going further in to feel the heat increasing, and all the more as he penetrated further within, without doubt he would believe that there was a fire in the house, even though he saw it not, that must be the cause of all this heat: and the same will happen to anyone who considers this world in detail. For he will observe that all things are arranged according to their degrees of beauty and excellence, and that the nearer they are to God the more beautiful and the better they are. Hence the heavenly bodies are more beautiful and more noble than the bodies of the lower world, and invisible things than visible: wherefore we must believe that all these things come from one God who gives each thing its being and excellence: *All men are vain in whom there is not the knowledge of God; and who by these*

²⁸ Ps 115:5.

²⁹ I Cor 10:20.

³⁰ Jer 10:2.

³¹ Acts 5:29.

³² Phil 3:19.

good things that are seen could not understand him that is; neither by attending to the works have acknowledged who was the workman; and further on: *By the greatness of the beauty and of the creature the Creator of them may be seen so as to be known thereby.*³³ We must, therefore, take it as clearly demonstrated that all the things that are in the world come from God.

In connection with this matter three errors are to be avoided. The first is that of the Manicheans, who say that all things visible were created by the devil: wherefore they assert that God created only invisible things. The reason for their falling into this error was that while asserting that God is the sovereign good, which is true, they said that whatsoever comes from good is itself good: so that through not knowing how to discern what is good and what is evil, they believed that whatsoever is in any way evil, is altogether evil; for instance, they said that fire, because it burns, and water, because it suffocates, are evils simply, and so on. Wherefore seeing that none of these sensible things is good simply, but is in some way evil and defective, they asserted that all visible things were made, not by the good God, but by an evil god. Arguing against these, Augustine employs the following example. If a man were to enter a smith's forge and injure himself by colliding with the smith's tools, and then blame the smith for his wickedness in possessing such tools, he would be a fool, since the smith has those tools for his work; even so is it foolish to say that a creature is evil because in some way it is harmful: since what is harmful to one is useful to another. This error is contrary to the Church's faith, and therefore we say (in the Nicene Creed): *Of all things visible and invisible. — In the beginning God created heaven and earth.*³⁴ — *All things were made by him.*³⁵

The second is the error of those who say that the world has existed from eternity: in reference to which Peter says: *Since the time that the fathers slept, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*³⁶ They were led into this error through not knowing how to imagine the world as having had a beginning. Referring to these, Rabbi Moses says that they are like a man placed on an island immediately after his birth, and remaining in ignorance of the manner of child-bearing and child-birth, who, on someone telling him after he has grown up how man is conceived, carried in the womb, and born into the world, refuses to believe his informant because he deems it impossible for a man to be in his mother's womb. Even so these, in view of the present state of the world, believe not that it had a beginning. This also is contrary to the Church's faith: and, therefore, to remove this we say: *Maker* (Nicene Creed) *of heaven and earth*, since if they were made it goes without saying that they did not always exist; hence we read in the psalm: *He spake and they were made.*³⁷

³³ Wis 13:1,5.

³⁴ Gen 1:1.

³⁵ John 1:3.

³⁶ 2 Pet 3:4.

³⁷ Ps 148:5.

The third is the error of those who asserted that God made the world from pre-jacent matter. They were led to their position, through wishing to measure God's power by our own power; and, therefore, seeing that man can make nothing without pre-jacent matter, they believed that it is the same with God; and consequently they said that in producing things God had pre-jacent matter at His disposal. But this is not true, because man is unable to make anything without pre-jacent matter in as much as he is a particular maker, and can only introduce this or that form into this or that matter which is presupposed from another source. The reason for this is that a man's power is confined to the form only, and consequently his causality is confined to the production of this or that form. On the other hand God is the universal cause of all things, and creates not only the form, but also the matter; so that He made all things out of nothing: wherefore to remove this position we say: *Creator of heaven and earth*. For to create and to make differ in that the former is to make something out of nothing; and consequently, if God made something out of nothing we must needs believe that He can re-make all things if they happen to be destroyed: so that He can give sight to the blind, raise the dead to life, and work other similar miracles: *For thy power is at hand when thou wilt*.³⁸

These thoughts afford us five fruits. (1) In the first place they lead us to knowledge of the divine majesty, in as much as the maker is greater than the things he makes. Therefore, since God is the maker of all things, it follows that He is greater than all things: *With whose beauty if they being delighted took them to be gods, let them know how much the Lord of them is more beautiful than they. . . . Or if they admired their power and their effects, let them understand by them that he who made them is mightier than they*.³⁹ Thus think or imagine whatsoever we will, it is less than God: *Behold, God is great, exceeding our knowledge*.⁴⁰

(2) Secondly, we are led to give thanks to God, because seeing that God is the Creator of all things, it is certain that all that we are, and all that we have come from God: hence the Apostle says: *What hast thou that thou hast not received?*⁴¹— *The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and all they that dwell therein*.⁴² For which reason we owe Him thanksgiving: *What shall I render unto the Lord for all the things that he has rendered to me?*⁴³

(3) Thirdly, we are encouraged to be patient in adversity. For though all creatures come from God and therefore are good as regards their nature, yet if in any way they be harmful and penal to us, we must believe that what is penal is from God: but not that which is sinful: because no evil comes from God except in so far as it is directed to a good; and consequently, if all the pains that a

³⁸ Wis 12:18.

³⁹ Wis 13:3,4.

⁴⁰ Job 36:26.

⁴¹ 1 Cor 4:7.

⁴² Ps 23:1.

⁴³ Ps 115:12.

man suffers come from God, he must bear them patiently. For by pain sins are cleansed, the guilty are humbled and the good are urged on to the love of God: *If we have received good things at the Lord's hands, why should we not receive evil?*⁴⁴

(4) Fourthly, we are persuaded to make a good use of creatures, since we ought to employ creatures for the purpose to which God made them. Now this purpose is twofold: namely, for the glory of God, since *the Lord hath made all things for himself*,⁴⁵ i.e. for His own glory; and for our profit: *Which the Lord thy God created for the service of all the nations*.⁴⁶ We must, therefore, make use of things for God's glory, in such wise as thereby to please God, and to profit ourselves, i.e. so as to avoid sin in using them: *All things are thine; and we have given thee what we have received from thy hand*.⁴⁷ Hence whatsoever thou hast, be it knowledge or beauty, thou must refer all and use all for the glory of God.

(5) Fifthly, we are led to acknowledge man's dignity. For God made all things for man's sake: *Thou hast subjected all things under his feet*:⁴⁸ moreover, after the angels, man of all creatures is most like God: *Let us make man to our own image and likeness*.⁴⁹ He did not say this of the heaven or of the stars, but of man; not, indeed, as regards man's body, but as regards his soul which is endowed with a free will and is incorruptible, wherein he resembles God more than other creatures do. We must, therefore, realise that after the angels man excels all other creatures, and that in no way must we forfeit our dignity on account of sin or for the sake of an inordinate desire for corporeal things which are beneath us and made to serve us: and we must conduct ourselves according to the purpose for which God made us; seeing that He made man to preside over all things on earth and to be subject to Himself. Accordingly, we must rule and hold dominion over the things of the earth, but we must be subject to God by obeying and serving Him, and thus we shall attain to the enjoyment of God. May He grant that this be so.

SECOND ARTICLE

And in Jesus Christ His Only Son, Our Lord

Not only must Christians believe in one God and that He is the Creator of heaven and earth and of all things, but they must also believe that God is the Father, of whom Christ is the True Son. As the blessed Peter says in his second

⁴⁴ Job 2:10.

⁴⁵ Prov 16:4.

⁴⁶ Deut 4:19.

⁴⁷ 1 Chr 29:14.

⁴⁸ Ps 8:8.

⁴⁹ Gen 1:26.

canonical Epistle, this is no fable, but an ascertained fact proved by the voice on the mountain: *For we have not by following artificial fables made known to you the power and the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of his greatness. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, the voice coming down to him from the excellent glory; 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him.'* And this voice we heard brought from heaven when we were with him in the holy mount.⁵⁰ Moreover, on several occasions Jesus Christ called God His Father, and Himself the Son of God: and the apostles and holy fathers reckoned this among the articles of faith, saying: *And (I believe) in Jesus Christ, his, i.e. God's, only Son.*

There were heretics, however, who believed this in a distorted sense. Thus Photinus asserted that Christ is the Son of God in the same way as any other good men, who, by leading a good life, merit to be called God's sons by adoption through doing God's will: and so Christ who led a good life and did the will of God merited to be called a Son of God. He pretended, in fact, that Christ did not exist before the Blessed Virgin, and that He began to exist when He was conceived of her. Accordingly he erred in two ways: first by denying that He was the Son of God by nature: secondly, by asserting that with regard to His whole being, Christ began to exist in time: whereas our faith holds that He is the Son of God by nature, and that He is from eternity. Now Holy Scripture explicitly contradicts him on both counts. Against the first it is stated not only that He is the Son, but also that He is the only begotten Son: *The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*⁵¹—Against the second: *Before Abraham was, I am:*⁵² and it is undeniable that Abraham existed before the Blessed Virgin. For this reason the holy Fathers added in another Creed (the Nicene), against the first error, *The only begotten Son of God;* and against the second, *And born of the Father before all ages.*

Sabellius, although he said that Christ was before the Blessed Virgin, denied the distinction between the Person of the Father and the Person of the Son, and said that the Father Himself became incarnate, so that the Person of the Father is the same as that of Christ. But this is erroneous, since it removes the Trinity of Persons, contrary to the words of John: *I am not alone, but I and the Father who sent me;*⁵³ and it is plain that no one is sent by himself. Accordingly Sabellius lied, and therefore in the Creed of the Fathers, it was added, *God of God, Light of Light;* in other words, we must believe in God the Son of God the Father, and the Son who is the Light of the Father who is Light.

Arius, while admitting that Christ was before the Blessed Virgin, and that the Person of the Father was distinct from that of the Son, nevertheless attributed

⁵⁰ 2 Pet 1:16.

⁵¹ John 1:18.

⁵² John 8:58.

⁵³ John 8:16.

to Christ three things. First, that the Son of God is a creature: second, that He is the highest of all creatures made by God, not from eternity, but in the course of time: third, that God the Son was not of the same nature as God the Father, and that therefore He was not truly God. But this again is erroneous and contrary to the authority of Holy Scripture. For it is said: *I and the Father are one*,⁵⁴ namely, in nature: and consequently as the Father always was, so also was the Son; and as the Father is true God, so also is the Son. Accordingly whereas Arius asserted that Christ was a creature, it is said by the Fathers in the Nicene Creed: *True God of true God*; and whereas he said that Christ was not from eternity but from time, on the contrary it is said in the Nicene Creed: *Begotten, not made*; and against his assertion that Christ was not of the same nature as the Father, it was added in the Nicene Creed, *Consubstantial with the Father*.

It is clear then that we must believe that Christ is the only begotten of God, and the true Son of God; that He has always existed together with the Father; that the Person of the Son is distinct from the Person of the Father; and that He is of one nature with the Father. This, however, in the present life we believe by faith, but we shall know it by perfect vision in eternal life: and accordingly for our own consolation we shall make a few observations on this point.

We must observe then that various things have various ways of generating: while in God generation is other than the generation of other things: wherefore we cannot obtain a notion of divine generation except from the generation of that creature which approaches nearest to a likeness to God. Now nothing is so like God as the human soul, as we have stated. And the manner of generation in the soul is that a man by his soul excogitates something which is called the concept of the intellect: which concept proceeds from the soul as its father, and is called the word of the mind or of man. Accordingly the soul by thought generates its word: and thus the Son of God is nothing else but the Word of God, not like the word that is uttered externally, for this is transitory, but as the word conceived inwardly. Therefore this same Word of God is of one nature with God and equal to God. Thus the Blessed John in speaking of the Word of God destroyed three heresies. Firstly, the heresy of Photinus, when he says,⁵⁵ *In the beginning was the Word*; secondly, that of Sabellius, when he says, *And the Word was with God*; thirdly, that of Arius, when he says, *And the Word was God*.

Now a word is not in us in the same way as it is in God. In us our own word is accidental: whereas in Him, the Word of God is the same as God Himself, since there is nothing in God that is not the divine essence. Yet none can say that God has not a Word, for it would follow that God is most foolish: and therefore, just as God always was, so also His Word always was. Now, even as a craftsman makes all things by means of the form or word which he has

⁵⁴ John 10:30.

⁵⁵ John 1:1.

preconceived in his mind, so, too, God makes all things by His Word as by His art: *All things were made by him.*⁵⁶ If, then, God's Word is His Son, and all His words bear a certain likeness to that Word, we ought in the first place to be willing to hear God's words; since it is a sign that we love God, if we willingly hear His words.—Secondly, we ought to believe the words of God, since thereby the Word of God, i.e. Christ who is God's Word, dwells in us, or to quote the Apostle:⁵⁷ *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.—You have not his word abiding in you.*⁵⁸—Thirdly, the Word of God abiding in us should be continually in our thoughts: since not only should we believe in Him, but also meditate upon Him: else we would derive no profit from His presence: in fact, meditation of this kind is of great assistance against sin: *In my heart I have hidden thy words that I may not sin against thee.*⁵⁹ Again, it is said of the just man: *Day and night he shall meditate on His law.*⁶⁰ Thus it is said of the Blessed Virgin that she *kept all these words, pondering on them in her heart.*⁶¹—Fourthly, we ought to communicate God's Word to others, by admonishing them, preaching to them, inflaming their hearts: thus the Apostle wrote to the Ephesians: *Let no evil speech proceed from your mouth, but that which is good unto edification;*⁶² and to the Colossians: *Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly: in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another;*⁶³ and again to Timothy: *Preach the word, be insistent in season and out of season, reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine.*⁶⁴—Lastly, we ought to put the words of God into practice: *Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*⁶⁵

These five were observed by the Blessed Virgin in their order when she begot the Word of God. First she heard: "*The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee*";⁶⁶ then she consented by faith: "*Behold the handmaid of the Lord*";⁶⁷ thirdly, she held and bore Him in her womb: fourthly, she brought Him forth and gave birth to Him: fifthly, she nourished and fed Him. Hence the Church sings: *The Virgin alone gave her heaven-filled breast to the king of angels.*

⁵⁶ John 1:3.

⁵⁷ Eph 3:17.

⁵⁸ John 5:38.

⁵⁹ Ps 118:11.

⁶⁰ Ps 1:2.

⁶¹ Luke 2:19.

⁶² Eph 4:29.

⁶³ Col 3:16.

⁶⁴ 2 Tim 4:2.

⁶⁵ Jas 1:22.

⁶⁶ Luke 1:35.

⁶⁷ Luke 1:38.

THIRD ARTICLE

*Who Was Conceived by the Holy Ghost,
Born of the Virgin Mary*

As we have shown, a Christian must believe not only that Christ is the Son of God, but also that He became man. Wherefore the blessed John having said many subtle things about the Word of God that are hard to understand, goes on to tell us of the incarnation, by saying: *And the Word was made flesh.*⁶⁸ In order to throw some light on this subject, I shall illustrate it by means of two examples.

In the first place, without doubt, nothing is more like the Word of God than the unvoiced word that is conceived in man's heart. Now the word conceived in the heart is unknown to all save the one who conceived it: and it is first known to others when the voice gives utterance to it. Thus the Word of God while yet in the bosom of the Father was known to the Father alone; but when He was clothed with flesh as a word is clothed with the voice, then He was first made manifest and known: *Afterwards he was seen on earth and conversed with men.*⁶⁹—Another example lies in the fact that although the voiced word is known by the hearing, it is not seen or touched: but when it is written it is both seen and touched. In like manner the Word of God became both visible and tangible when It was, as it were, written on our flesh: and just as the parchment on which the king's word is written is called the king's word, so the man united to God's Word in unity of person is called the Word of God: *Take thee a great book and write in it with a man's pen.*⁷⁰ and therefore the holy Apostles said: *Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.*

On this point there arose many errors: wherefore the holy Fathers in another Creed, of the council of Nicaea, made several additions whereby all these errors stand condemned.

Origen said that Christ was born and came into the world in order to save the demons also: and so he asserted that all the demons would be saved at the end of the world. But this is contrary to Holy Scripture: for it is said: *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, that was prepared for the devil and his angels.*⁷¹ Wherefore in order to exclude this the following clause was added: *Who for us*

⁶⁸ John 1:14.

⁶⁹ Bar 3:38.

⁷⁰ Isa 8:1.

⁷¹ Matt 25:41.

men (not for the demons) and for our salvation . . . thus stressing God's love for us.

Photinus admitted that Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, but asserted that He was a mere man, who by leading a good life, and doing God's will, merited to become a son of God, even as other holy men. And against this it is said: *I came down from heaven, not to do my will, but the will of him who sent me.*⁷² Now it goes without saying that He would not have come down thence unless He had been there: and if He were a mere man He would not have been in heaven: wherefore in order to exclude this, the following words were added: *He descended from heaven.*

The Manicheans said that although the Son of God always existed, and came down from heaven, yet He had flesh not really but only apparently. But this is false: in as much as it was unbecoming for the Teacher of truth to have anything false about Him: and therefore since He had flesh ostensibly, He really had it. Thus it is said: *Handle and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see me to have.*⁷³ Wherefore in order to exclude this, they added: *And he took flesh.*

Ebion, who was of Jewish nationality, said that Christ was born of the Blessed Virgin from sexual intercourse and fecundation by the male seed. But this is false, since the Angel said: *For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost;*⁷⁴ and therefore the holy Fathers excluded this by adding: *By the Holy Ghost.*

Valentine, while confessing that Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, taught that the Holy Ghost fashioned a heavenly body which He placed in the Virgin's womb: and this was Christ's body, so that the Blessed Virgin's co-operation was reduced to her serving as a place for Christ's body. Hence Valentine said that Christ's body passed through the Blessed Virgin as through a channel. But this is false, because the Angel said: *The Holy One that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God;*⁷⁵ and the Apostle says: *When the fulness of time came, God sent his Son made of a woman.*⁷⁶ For which reason they added: *Born of the Virgin Mary.*

Arius and Apollinarius said that though Christ was the Word of God born of the Virgin Mary, He had no soul but the Godhead in lieu thereof. But this is contrary to Scripture, for Christ said: *Now is my soul troubled;*⁷⁷ and again: *My soul is sorrowful even unto death.*⁷⁸ Wherefore the holy Fathers excluded this by adding, *And was made man:* because a man is composed of a soul and a body: so that Christ had whatsoever a man can have, except sin.

⁷² John 6:38.

⁷³ Luke 24:39.

⁷⁴ Matt 1:20.

⁷⁵ Luke 1:35.

⁷⁶ Gal 4:4.

⁷⁷ John 12:27.

⁷⁸ Matt 26:38.

In that He is said to have become man, all the aforesaid errors stand condemned, beside all possible errors, especially that of Eutyches, who maintained that the divine and human natures were mixed together so as to form one nature in Christ, that is neither purely divine nor purely human. But this is false, since in that case He would not be a man, and this would be contrary to the words, *And was made man*.

Again the error of Nestorius stands condemned, for he said that the Son of God was united to man solely by indwelling. But this is false, because then He would not be a man, but in a man; whereas that He became man is declared by the Apostle:⁷⁹ *He was in habit found as a man. — Ye seek to kill me, a man who have spoken the truth to you, which I have heard of God.*⁸⁰

From what has been said we may gather a few points for our instruction.

(1) In the first place our faith is thereby strengthened. For instance, if anyone were to tell us about a far-distant country which he had never visited, we would not believe him to the same extent as if he had been there. Accordingly before Christ came into the world, the patriarchs, prophets and John the Baptist said certain things about God; yet men did not believe them as they believe Christ who was with God, who indeed was one with God; for which reason our faith is very strong, seeing that we have received it from Christ: *No man has ever seen God, the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*⁸¹ Hence it is that many mysteries of faith have been made known to us after the coming of Christ, which until then were hidden.

(2) Secondly, thereby our hope is raised. Because it is evident that God's Son took our flesh and came to us, not for a trifling reason, but for our exceeding great good: wherefore He bound Himself to us, as it were, by deigning to take a human soul and body and to be born of a Virgin, in order to bestow His Godhead on us, thus becoming man that man might become God: *By whom we have access through faith into this grace wherein we stand; and glory in the hope of the glory of the sons of God.*⁸²

(3) Thirdly, charity is inflamed thereby. Because there is no greater proof of God's love than that God the Creator became a creature, that our Lord became our brother, and that the Son of God became the Son of man: *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.*⁸³ The very thought of this should kindle and inflame our hearts with the love of God.

(4) Fourthly, we are encouraged to keep our souls pure: in as much as our nature was ennobled and raised through being united to God to the extent of being assumed into union with a divine Person: wherefore after the incarnation

⁷⁹ Phil 2:7.

⁸⁰ John 8:40.

⁸¹ John 1:18.

⁸² Rom 5:2.

⁸³ John 3:16.

the Angel would not allow the Blessed John to worship him,⁸⁴ whereas an angel had suffered this from even the greatest patriarchs. Consequently, man ought to bear this exaltation in mind and in consideration thereof should disdain to debase himself and his nature by falling into sin. For this reason the blessed Peter says: *By whom he hath given us most great and precious promises; that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature, flying the corruption of that concupiscence which is in the world.*⁸⁵

(5) Thereby is inflamed our desire of going to Christ. Thus a man whose brother is king in a far-distant country will have a great longing to go to him, to be with and stay with him: wherefore seeing that Christ is our brother, we should long to be with Him and to be united to Him: *Wheresoever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together.*⁸⁶ The Apostle also desired *to be dissolved and to be with Christ.* This same desire increases in us when we meditate on Christ's incarnation.

FOURTH ARTICLE

Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was Crucified, Died, and Was Buried

Just as a Christian is required to believe in the incarnation of the Son of God; even so is it necessary that he believe in His Passion and Death, because as Augustine says: *His Birth would have profited us nothing had we not profited by His Redemption.* That Christ did indeed die for us is so hard to conceive that scarcely is our mind able to grasp it: in fact it is utterly beyond our understanding. The Apostle insinuates this when he says: *I work a work in your days, a work which you will not believe if any man shall tell it you.*⁸⁷ In fact, so great is God's favour and love in our regard that He has done more for us than we are able to understand. However, we are not to believe that Christ suffered death in such wise that His Godhead died, but that His human nature died; for He died not as God, but as man. This may be illustrated by examples.

The first is in ourselves. It is clear that when a man dies, it is not the soul, but the body or the flesh that dies when body and soul are separated. Accordingly when Christ died, it was not His Godhead that died, but His human nature. But surely if the Jews did not kill His Godhead, they sinned no more than if they had killed any other man—I reply that a man who bespatters a

⁸⁴ Rev 22:8,9.

⁸⁵ 2 Pet 1:4.

⁸⁶ Matt 24:28.

⁸⁷ Acts 13:41.

king's robe is as guilty as though he had bespattered the king himself. Hence the Jews, though they could not slay God, yet for slaying the human nature wherewith Christ was clothed, they were punished as though they had slain the Godhead.

Again, as we have said above, the Son of God is the Word of God, and the Word of God was made flesh even as the king's word is inscribed on parchment. If, then, one were to tear the king's parchment, he would be held as guilty as if he had torn the king's word. Hence the Jews are held equally guilty as if they had slain the Word of God.

But what need was there for the Word of God to suffer for us? That the need was great may be assigned to two reasons. (1) One was the need for a remedy for sin: (2) The other was the need for an example of what we ought to do.

(1) We find a remedy in as much as Christ's Passion proves a remedy for all the evils that we incur through sin: which evils are of five kinds.

(a) Firstly, there is the stain of sin: because when a man sins, he defiles his soul: for just as virtue is the soul's beauty, so is sin its stain: *How happeneth it, O Israel, that thou art in thy enemies' land? . . . Thou art defiled with the dead.*⁸⁸ This is removed by Christ's Passion: for Christ by His Passion poured out His blood as a laver wherein sinners are cleansed: *He hath washed us from our sins in his own blood.*⁸⁹ Now the soul is cleansed by Christ's blood in Baptism which from Christ's blood derives the power of regeneration; and, consequently, when a man defiles himself with sin, he does an injury to Christ, and sins more grievously than before he was baptized: *A man making void the law of Moses dieth without any mercy under two or three witnesses; how much more, think you, he deserveth worse punishments who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God and hath esteemed the blood of the testament unclean?*⁹⁰

(b) Secondly, we incur the anger of God. For just as a carnal man loves carnal beauty, so does God love spiritual beauty, which is that of the soul. When, therefore, the soul is defiled by sin, God is offended, and the sinner becomes an object of His hatred: *To God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful.*⁹¹ But Christ's Passion removes this, because He atoned to God the Father for sin, for which man himself was unable to atone: whereas Christ's charity and obedience were greater than the sin and disobedience of the first man: *When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.*⁹²

(c) Thirdly, we incur weakness: in as much as a man thinks that if he sin once he will be able afterwards to refrain from sinning; whereas it is quite the reverse that happens: because by the first sin he is weakened and is more inclined to sin

⁸⁸ Bar 3:10, 11.

⁸⁹ Rev 1:5.

⁹⁰ Heb 10:28, 29.

⁹¹ Wis 14:9.

⁹² Rom 5:10.

again; likewise sin has a greater power over him; and, moreover, so far as he is concerned, he puts himself in a state whence there is no escape—like a man who jumps into a well—except by the power of God. Hence after man had sinned, our nature was weakened and corrupt: and thus man was more prone to sin. But Christ diminished this weakness and infirmity, although He did not remove it altogether. And yet man is so strengthened and sin is so weakened by Christ's Passion, that sin has no longer such power over him: while man, by the help of God's grace bestowed in the Sacraments, which derive their efficacy from Christ's Passion, is able to endeavour to arise from his sins. Thus says the Apostle: *Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed.*⁹³ Because before Christ's Passion there were few who lived without falling into mortal sin: whereas afterwards many have lived and are living without mortal sin.

(d) Fourthly, we incur the debt of punishment, because God's justice demands that whosoever sins should be punished. Now punishment is awarded according to the guilt; wherefore since the guilt of mortal sin is infinite, as being against the infinite good, namely God whose commandments the sinner holds in contempt, it follows that the punishment due to mortal sin is infinite. But Christ by His Passion delivered us from this punishment which He bore Himself: *He bore our sins*, i.e. the punishment due to our sins, *in his body.*⁹⁴ because His Passion was so efficacious as to suffice to atone for all the sins of the whole world, even of a hundred thousand worlds. For this reason when a man is baptized he is released from all his sins; hence also it is that a priest forgives sins; and again that the more a man conforms to the Passion of Christ, the more is he pardoned, the more grace does he merit.

(e) Fifthly, we incur banishment from the kingdom: because those who offend their king are compelled to leave the kingdom: and thus on account of sin man is banished from paradise. For this reason immediately after he had sinned Adam was banished from paradise and the gates of Eden were closed. But Christ by His Passion opened the gates and recalled the exiles to the kingdom. For when Christ's side was pierced, the gates of paradise were opened, and by the shedding of His blood the stain of sin was deleted, God was appeased, man's weakness was removed, his punishment was expiated, the exiles were called back to the kingdom. Hence the thief received the immediate response: *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*⁹⁵ This had not been said of old, not to Adam, not to Abraham, not to David: but this day, i.e. as soon as the gates were opened, the thief having sought pardon, found it: *Having . . . confidence in the entering into the holies by the blood of Christ.*⁹⁶

⁹³ Rom 6:6.

⁹⁴ I Pet 2:24.

⁹⁵ Luke 23:43.

⁹⁶ Heb 10:19.

(2) Accordingly it is clear how profitable was Christ's Passion as a remedy; nor is it less profitable as an example. For, as the blessed Augustine says, Christ's Passion affords us a model in all the circumstances of life: since whosoever wishes to lead a perfect life needs but to despise what Christ despised on the cross, and to desire what He desired. There is not a virtue an example of which we do not find on the cross. If you seek an example of charity, *greater love no man hath than that a man lay down his life for his friends*,⁹⁷ and this Christ did on the cross. Wherefore if He laid down His life for us, we should not deem it a hardship to suffer any evils whatsoever for His sake: *What shall I render unto the Lord for all the things which he hath rendered to me?*⁹⁸—If anyone seek an example of patience, he will find a most perfect example on the cross. For a man's patience is proved to be great on two counts: either when he suffers great evils patiently, or when he suffers that which he is able to avoid, yet avoids not. Now Christ suffered greatly on the cross: *Oh all ye that pass by the way, attend and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow*:⁹⁹ and He suffered patiently in as much as *when he suffered he threatened not*.¹⁰⁰ *He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer*.¹⁰¹ Moreover He could have escaped, and did not escape: *Thinkest thou that I cannot ask my Father and he will give me presently more than twelve legions of angels?*¹⁰² Great therefore was Christ's patience on the cross: *Let us run by patience to the fight proposed to us; looking on Jesus the author and finisher of faith who, having joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame*.¹⁰³—If you seek an example of humility, look on the Crucified: although He was God, He chose to be judged by Pontius Pilate and to suffer death: *Thy cause hath been judged as that of the wicked*;¹⁰⁴ truly 'as of the wicked': *Let us condemn him to a most shameful death*.¹⁰⁵ The Master chose to die for His servant; the Life of the Angels suffered death for man: *Made obedient unto death*.¹⁰⁶—If you seek an example of obedience, follow Him who was made obedient to the Father even unto death: *As by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners: so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just*.¹⁰⁷—If you seek an example of contempt for earthly things, follow Him, the King of kings and Lord of lords, in whom are the treasures of wisdom; and see Him on the cross, despoiled, derided, spat upon, scourged, crowned with thorns, served

⁹⁷ John 15:13.

⁹⁸ Ps 115:12.

⁹⁹ Lam 1:12.

¹⁰⁰ 1 Pet 2:23.

¹⁰¹ Isa 53:7.

¹⁰² Matt 26:53.

¹⁰³ Heb 12:1,2.

¹⁰⁴ Job 36:17.

¹⁰⁵ Wis 2:20.

¹⁰⁶ Phil 2:8.

¹⁰⁷ Rom 5:19.

with gall and hyssop, dead. Therefore, take no account of your apparel or of your possessions, since *they parted my garments amongst them*;¹⁰⁸—nor of honours, since I suffered Myself to be jeered at and scourged,—nor of rank, since they plaited a crown of thorns and placed it on My head,—nor of pleasures, since *in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink*.¹⁰⁹ Thus Augustine in commenting on Hebrews 12:2: *Who, having joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame*, says: *The man Christ despised all earthly things in order to teach us to despise them.*

FIFTH ARTICLE

He Descended into Hell, the Third Day He Rose Again from the Dead

As we have stated, Christ's death, like that of other men, consisted in the separation of His soul from His body; while His Godhead was so inseparably united to the man Christ, that although His soul and body were separated from each other, His Godhead remained ever most perfectly united to both His soul and His body. Consequently in the tomb there was His body, together with the Son of God, who together with His soul descended into hell.

There are four reasons why Christ, together with His soul, descended into hell.

(1) The first was that He might bear the whole punishment of sin, so that thus He might wholly atone for the sin. Now the punishment of man's sin was not only the death of the body, there was also a punishment in the soul; for seeing that sin had been committed in the soul, the latter was punished by being deprived of the beatific vision, and as yet no atonement had been offered for the abolishment of this punishment. For this reason, after their death and before the coming of Christ, all, even the holy patriarchs, went down into hell. Accordingly in order to bear the entire punishment due to sinners, Christ chose not only to die, but also that His soul should descend into hell. Thus it is said:¹¹⁰ *I am counted among them that go down into the pit: I am become as a man without help, free among the dead: for others were there under constraint, whereas Christ was there as free.*

(2) The second reason was that He might bring perfect succour to all His friends, for He had His friends not only in the world but also in hell, since one is Christ's friend by having charity; and in hell there were many who had died in charity and faith in Christ to come, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses,

¹⁰⁸ Ps 21:19.

¹⁰⁹ Ps 18:12.

¹¹⁰ Ps 87:5.

David, besides other righteous and perfect men. And since Christ had visited His friends in the world and had succoured them by His death, He wished to visit His friends who were in hell and succour them by coming to them: *I will penetrate to all the lower parts of the earth, and will behold all that sleep, and will enlighten all that hope in the Lord.*¹¹¹

(3) A third reason was that He might completely overcome the devil, for a man's triumph over another is complete when he conquers him not only in the open field, but attacks him in his stronghold and deprives him of his kingdom and even of his dwelling-place. Now Christ had triumphed over the devil and had conquered him on the cross; wherefore He said:¹¹² *Now is the judgement of the world, now shall the prince of this world, i.e. the devil, be cast out.* And, therefore, that His victory might be complete, it was His will to deprive him of his throne and imprison him in his own house, which is hell. For which reason He descended thither, deprived the devil of his own, bound him, and carried off his spoils: *Despoiling the principalities and powers, he hath exposed them confidently, openly triumphing over them in himself.*¹¹³ Moreover, seeing that Christ had been given power and possession in Heaven and on earth, He wished to take possession of hell, so that, to quote the Apostle,¹¹⁴ *in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. — In my name they shall cast out devils.*¹¹⁵

(4) The fourth and last reason was to deliver the saints who were in hell because even as Christ wished to suffer death that He might deliver the living from death, so did He wish to descend into hell in order to deliver those that were there: *Thou also by the blood of thy testament hath sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.*¹¹⁶ *O death, I will be thy death; O hell, I will be thy bite.*¹¹⁷ For although Christ destroyed death altogether, He did not altogether destroy hell, but took a piece out of it as it were, in that He did not deliver all that were there, but those only that were free from mortal as well as original sin. As regards the latter, they were freed personally therefrom by circumcision; or, before circumcision—either by the faith of their parents who were believers (as regards those who died before having the use of reason)—or by the sacrifices, and their faith in Christ to come (as regards adults). Yet all these were in hell as having contracted original sin from Adam, from which, as members of the human race, they could not be freed except by Christ. Wherefore He left there those who had gone down thither with the stain of mortal sin, as well as the

¹¹¹ Sir 24:45.

¹¹² John 12:31.

¹¹³ Col 2:15.

¹¹⁴ Phil 2:10.

¹¹⁵ Mark 16:17.

¹¹⁶ Zech 9:11.

¹¹⁷ Hos 13:14.

uncircumcised children; and in this sense He said: *O hell, I will be thy bite*. Thus we know that Christ descended into hell, and why.

From this exposition we may gather four points for our instruction.

(1) The first is a firm hope in God, because no matter how great a man's afflictions may be, he should always hope in God's assistance and trust in Him. For nothing is so grievous as to be in hell: wherefore if Christ freed those who were in hell, anyone, provided he is a friend of God, should be confident that God will deliver him from his straits whatever they be: *She (wisdom) forsook not the just when he was sold . . . and went down with him into the pit, and in bands she left him not.*¹¹⁸ And seeing that God gives special assistance to His servants, anyone who serves God should be full of confidence: *He that feareth the Lord shall tremble at nothing: he shall not be afraid, for he is his hope.*¹¹⁹

(2) Secondly, we ought to conceive fear and cast away presumption. Because although Christ suffered for sinners and descended into hell, yet He did not deliver all, but only those who were free from mortal sin, as we have said; whereas He left those who had died in mortal sin. Consequently none who goes down thither in a state of mortal sin may hope for pardon, but he will remain in hell as long as the holy Fathers in paradise, namely, for all eternity: *These shall go into everlasting punishment: but the just into life everlasting.*¹²⁰

(3) Thirdly, we should bear this in mind. Because as Christ descended into hell for our salvation, so we ought to take care to descend thither, by meditating on His sufferings, even as did the saintly Ezechias: *I said: In the midst of my days I shall go to the gates of hell.*¹²¹ For anyone who in thought frequently goes down thither in life, is not likely to go down thither in death, because such thoughts withdraw us from sin. Thus we observe that the people of this world beware of evil doing for fear of temporal punishment: how much more then should they beware for fear of the punishment of hell, which is greater both in point of severity and in point of its manifold nature: *Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.*¹²²

(4) Fourthly, we may gather an example of love. For Christ descended into hell in order to deliver His own; and consequently we ought to descend thither in order to succour our friends, in as much as they are helpless: and therefore we ought to succour those who are in purgatory. Surely he were passing cruel who would not succour his friend in an earthly prison; much more cruel, then, is he who succours not his friend in purgatory, since there is no comparison between the world's punishments and those of purgatory: *Have mercy on me, have mercy on*

¹¹⁸ Wis 10:13,14.

¹¹⁹ Sir 34:16.

¹²⁰ Matt 25:46.

¹²¹ Isa 38:10.

¹²² Sir 7:40.

me, at least you my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me.¹²³ It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they be loosed from sins.¹²⁴ This succour is given to them under three forms: by masses, by prayers, by alms, according to Augustine: and Gregory adds a fourth, viz. fasting. And no wonder, seeing that even in this world one friend can pay for another, but this applies only to those who are in purgatory.

The third day he rose again from the dead. Man needs to know two things, the glory of God and the punishment of hell; because through being drawn by His glory, and terrified by His punishments, men are careful on their own account, and refrain from sin. Yet these things are very difficult for a man to know; thus it is said of God's glory: *Who shall search out the things that are in heaven?*¹²⁵ This, however, is difficult to the earthly-minded, because he that is of the earth . . . speaketh of the earth,¹²⁶ whereas it is not difficult for the spiritual man, since he that cometh from heaven is above all.¹²⁷ Hence God came down from Heaven and took flesh in order to teach us heavenly things. It was also difficult to know about the punishments of hell; for no man hath been known to have returned from hell,¹²⁸ which is said in the person of the wicked. But it cannot be said now, since just as He came down from Heaven in order to teach us heavenly things, so did He come back from hell in order to teach us about hell. Consequently we must believe not only that He became man and died, but also that He rose again from the dead. And therefore the Creed goes on: *The third day he rose again from the dead.* Now, as we are aware, there were several who rose from the dead, namely, Lazarus, the widow's son, and the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue. But Christ's resurrection differs from the resurrection of these and of others in four points. First as to the cause of resurrection, since others who came back to life arose not by their own power but either by Christ's power or at the prayer of a saint; whereas Christ arose by His own power, for He was not only man but God, and the Godhead of the Word was never separated either from His soul or from His body; and therefore whenever He chose His body could resume His soul, and His soul could resume His body: *I have power to lay down (my life) and I have power to take it up again.*¹²⁹ And although He died, it was neither through weakness nor of necessity, but of power, since He chose to die. This is evident from the fact that in the moment of dying He cried out with a loud voice, which others cannot do at the moment of death, for they die from weakness. Wherefore the centurion exclaimed:

¹²³ Job 19:21.

¹²⁴ 2 Macc 12:46.

¹²⁵ Wis 9:16.

¹²⁶ John 3:31.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Wis 2:1.

¹²⁹ John 10:18.

Verily this was the Son of God.¹³⁰ Therefore, just as by His own power He laid down His life, so by His own power He took it up again; for which reason it is said He rose again, and not that He was raised up as though by another: *I have slept and have taken my rest: and I have risen up.*¹³¹ Nor is this contradicted by what is said: *This Jesus hath God raised again,*¹³² because both the Father and the Son raised Him up, in as much as the Father's power is one and the same as the Son's.—The second difference lies in the life to which He rose again: since Christ arose to a glorious and incorruptible life: *Christ is risen from the dead through the glory of the Father,*¹³³ whereas others rise again to the same life which they had before, as instanced in Lazarus and others.—Thirdly, they differ in fruit and efficacy, for by virtue of Christ's resurrection all rise again: *Many bodies of the saints that had slept arose,*¹³⁴ and the Apostle declares that *Christ is risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep.*¹³⁵ And behold how Christ by His Passion attained glory: *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and so to enter into his glory?*¹³⁶ in order to teach us how we may be able to attain glory: *Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.*¹³⁷—Fourthly, they differ in point of time, in as much as the resurrection of others is deferred to the end of the world, except in special cases where some have been privileged to rise again before, as, for instance, the Blessed Virgin, and, according to a pious tradition, the blessed John the Evangelist, whereas Christ rose again on the third day. The reason for this is that Christ's resurrection, death and birth were for *our salvation* (Nicene Creed), and therefore He chose to rise again at such a time as would be profitable to our salvation. Thus, had He risen again at once people would not have believed that He had died, and if He had delayed His resurrection for a long time, His disciples would not have remained faithful, and consequently His Passion would have profited no one: *What profit is there in my blood whilst I go down to corruption?*¹³⁸ For this reason, then, He rose again the third day, that it might be believed that He died, and that the disciples might not lose faith in Him.

From the above we may gather four points for our instruction:

(1) The first is that we strive to rise again spiritually from the death of the soul which we incur by sin, to the life of righteousness which becomes ours by repentance. Thus the Apostle says: *Arise, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead,*

¹³⁰ Matt 27:54.

¹³¹ Ps 3:6.

¹³² Acts 2:32.

¹³³ Rom 6:4.

¹³⁴ Matt 27:52.

¹³⁵ I Cor 15:20.

¹³⁶ Luke 24:26.

¹³⁷ Acts 14:21.

¹³⁸ Ps 29:10.

and Christ shall enlighten thee.¹³⁹ This is the first resurrection: *Blessed . . . is he that hath part in the first resurrection.*¹⁴⁰

(2) The second is that we delay not to rise again until the time of death, but that we do so quickly, seeing that Christ rose again on the third day: *Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day;*¹⁴¹ for when thou art burdened with sickness thou wilt be unable to think of those things which concern thy salvation, and also because by persisting in sin thou dost forfeit a share in all the good works that are done in the Church, besides incurring many evils. Moreover, the longer the devil possesses us, as Bede says, the more loath he is to lose his hold on us.

(3) The third is that we rise again to an incorruptible life: in other words, that we so rise as not to die again, through having the purpose not to sin again: *Christ rising from the dead dieth now no more; death shall no more have dominion over him.*¹⁴²—*So do you also reckon that you are dead to sin, but alive unto God, in Christ Jesus our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, so as to obey the lusts thereof: neither yield ye your members as instruments of iniquity unto sin: but present yourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead.*¹⁴³

(4) The fourth point is that we rise unto a new and glorious life by avoiding whatsoever was an occasion or a cause of death and sin: *As Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so may we also walk in the newness of life.*¹⁴⁴ This new life is the life of righteousness which renews the soul and brings us to the life of glory. Amen.

SIXTH ARTICLE

He Ascended into Heaven, Sitteth at the Right Hand of God the Father Almighty

Furthermore we must believe in Christ's ascension; in other words, we must believe that He ascended into Heaven on the fortieth day after His resurrection: hence the words, *He ascended into heaven*. In this connection we must observe three things—namely, that it was sublime, reasonable and profitable.

(1) In the first place it was sublime, since He ascended into Heaven. This is expounded in three ways:

¹³⁹ Eph 5:14.

¹⁴⁰ Rev 20:6.

¹⁴¹ Sir 5:8.

¹⁴² Rom 6:9.

¹⁴³ Rom 6:11–13.

¹⁴⁴ Rom 6:4.

(a) He ascended above all the corporeal heavens: *He . . . ascended above all the heavens.*¹⁴⁵ This was realised first of all in Christ, since hitherto there was no earthly body except on earth, in fact, even Adam was in an earthly paradise.

(b) He ascended above all spiritual heavens, i.e. above spiritual natures: *Raising (Jesus) up from the dead and setting him on his right hand in the heavenly places, above all principality, and power, and virtue, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and he hath subjected all things under his feet.*¹⁴⁶

(c) He ascended even to the Father's throne: *Lo, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven; and he came even to the Ancient of days.*¹⁴⁷ *And the Lord Jesus after he had spoken to them was taken up to heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God.*¹⁴⁸ Right hand is not to be taken literally, but metaphorically, when we speak of God: for Christ as God is said to sit at the right hand of the Father, i.e. in equality with the Father; while as man He sits at the Father's right hand, as being next to Him in the "highest goods." (*Summa Theologica*, III, Q. lviii, art. 3). Now this is what the devil craved for: *I will ascend into heaven: I will exalt my throne above the stars: I will sit in the mountain of the covenant, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the height of the clouds: I will be like the most High.*¹⁴⁹ But Christ alone arose to that height and therefore it is said that *He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of the Father.—The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand.*¹⁵⁰

(2) Secondly, Christ's ascension was reasonable, in as much as it was into Heaven: and this for three reasons:

(a) Firstly, because Heaven was due to Christ according to His nature: since it is natural for a thing to return to the place whence it originated. Now Christ drew His origin from God who is above all: *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world and I go to the Father.*¹⁵¹ *No man hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven.*¹⁵² And though the saints ascend to Heaven, they do not do so as Christ did, because Christ ascended by His own power, whereas the saints are drawn up thither by Christ. *Draw me after thee.*¹⁵³—Or it may be said that no man but Christ hath ascended into Heaven, because the saints do not ascend thither except as members of Christ, who is the head of

¹⁴⁵ Eph 4:10.

¹⁴⁶ Eph 1:20–22.

¹⁴⁷ Dan 7:13.

¹⁴⁸ Mark 16:19.

¹⁴⁹ Isa 14:13, 14.

¹⁵⁰ Ps 109:1.

¹⁵¹ John 16:28.

¹⁵² John 3:13.

¹⁵³ Cant 1:3.

the Church: *Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles be gathered together.*¹⁵⁴

(b) Secondly, Heaven was due to Christ on account of His victory. Because Christ was sent into the world in order to fight the devil; and He overcame him: wherefore He merited to be exalted above all things: *I have overcome and am set down with my Father on his throne.*¹⁵⁵

(c) Thirdly, it was reasonable on account of His humility. Because there never was so great humility as Christ's, who, although He was God, chose to become man, who, whereas He was Lord, chose to take the form of a servant, being made obedient unto death,¹⁵⁶ and descended into the depths of hell. Therefore He merited to be exalted to the heights of Heaven, to the very throne of God: because humility is the road to exaltation: *He that humbleth himself shall be exalted:*¹⁵⁷ *He that descended is the same also who ascended above all the heavens.*¹⁵⁸

(3) Thirdly, Christ's ascension was profitable: and this in three ways:

(a) Firstly, as our Leader: in as much as He ascended in order to lead us thither: because whereas we knew not the way, He showed it to us: *He shall go up that shall open the way before them*¹⁵⁹—and in order to assure us of the possession of the heavenly kingdom: *I go to prepare a place for you.*¹⁶⁰

(b) Secondly, to increase our confidence in Him: in as much as He ascended in order to intercede for us: (*He is able . . . to save . . . them*) *that come to God by him: always living to make intercession for us.*¹⁶¹ *We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just.*¹⁶²

(c) Thirdly, in order to draw our hearts to Himself: *Wheresoever thy treasure is, there also is thy heart,*¹⁶³ so that we may despise temporal things: hence the Apostle says: *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.*¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁴ Matt 24:28.

¹⁵⁵ Rev 3:21.

¹⁵⁶ Phil 2:8.

¹⁵⁷ Luke 14:11.

¹⁵⁸ Eph 4:10.

¹⁵⁹ Mic 2:13.

¹⁶⁰ John 14:2.

¹⁶¹ Heb 7:25.

¹⁶² 1 John 2:1.

¹⁶³ Matt 6:21.

¹⁶⁴ Col 3:1.

SEVENTH ARTICLE

From Thence He Shall Come to Judge the Living and the Dead

It belongs to the office of a king and of a lord to judge: *The king that sitteth on the throne of judgement scattereth away all evil with his look.*¹⁶⁵ Since, then, Christ ascended into Heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God, as Lord of all, it is evident that judgement belongs to Him; and for this reason in the rule of Catholic Faith we confess that *he will come to judge the living and the dead.* The same is expressed in the words of the angels: *This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven shall so come as you have seen him going into heaven.*¹⁶⁶

Three points must be considered in connection with this judgement. (1) The first is the form of the judgement; (2) the second is that this judgement is to be feared; (3) the third is how we are to prepare for this judgement.

(1) As regards the form of the judgement, three things are to be observed: (a) who will be judge? (b) who will be judged? (c) concerning what will they be judged?

(a) The judge is Christ: *It is he who was appointed by God to be the judge of the living and the dead,*¹⁶⁷ whether we take the dead to signify sinners, and *the living* to signify those who live aright; or *the living* to mean literally those who will then be actually alive, and *the dead* to mean those who literally will have died. And He is judge not only as God, but also as man; and this for three reasons:

Firstly, it is necessary that those to be judged should see the judge: while the Godhead is an object of so great delight, that none can see it without joy: wherefore none of the damned will be able to see it, since then he would rejoice. Hence it is necessary that He appear in the form of man so as to be seen by all: *He hath given him power to make judgement because he is the Son of man.*¹⁶⁸

Secondly, because He merited this position as man: because as man He was judged unjustly, for which reason God made Him judge over the whole world: *Thy cause hath been judged as that of the wicked; cause and judgement thou shalt recover.*¹⁶⁹

Thirdly, that men might not lose all hope if they be judged by a man: for if God alone were judge men would lose hope through terror: *They will see the Son of man coming in a cloud.*¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁵ Prov 20:8.

¹⁶⁶ Acts 1:11.

¹⁶⁷ Acts 10:42.

¹⁶⁸ John 5:27.

¹⁶⁹ Job 36:17.

¹⁷⁰ Luke 21:27.

All, past, present and future will be judged: thus the Apostle says: *We must all be manifested before the judgement-seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the proper things of the body according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil.*¹⁷¹ Of the wicked, some will be condemned, but not judged: namely unbelievers whose works will not be discussed, since *he that believeth not is already judged.*¹⁷² Some will be both condemned and judged, namely the faithful who die in mortal sin: *The wages of sin is death,*¹⁷³ because on account of the faith which they had they will not be excluded from the judgement. Of the good, some will be saved and will not be judged, namely those who for God's sake are poor in spirit; indeed, they will judge others: *You who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the seat of his majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel,*¹⁷⁴ which is to be referred not only to the disciples, but also to all the poor; otherwise Paul who laboured more than the others would not be of their number: and consequently we must understand these words to refer to all who follow the Apostles, and of men with an apostolic spirit. Hence the Apostle says: *Know ye not that we shall judge the angels?*¹⁷⁵—*The Lord will enter into judgement with the ancients of his people and its princes.*¹⁷⁶ Some, however, will be both saved and judged, those, namely, who die in a state of righteousness: since although they died righteous, yet through being occupied with temporal matters they fell somewhat, and therefore they will be judged, yet saved; in fact, they will be judged concerning all their works both good and bad: *Walk in the ways of thy heart . . . and know that for all these God will bring thee into judgement.*¹⁷⁷ *All things that are done God will bring into judgement for every error, whether it be good or evil.*¹⁷⁸ *Every idle word that men shall speak they shall render an account for it in the day of judgement.*¹⁷⁹ Of thoughts it is said: *Inquisition shall be made into the thoughts of the ungodly.*¹⁸⁰ Thus it is clear what will be the form of judgement.

(2) This judgement is to be feared for four reasons.

(a) On account of the judge's wisdom: for He knows all, thoughts, words, and deeds, since *all things are naked and open to his eyes,*¹⁸¹ and *all the ways of man are open to his eyes.*¹⁸² He also knows our words: *The ear of jealousy heareth*

¹⁷¹ 2 Cor 5:10.

¹⁷² John 3:18.

¹⁷³ Rom 6:23.

¹⁷⁴ Matt 19:28.

¹⁷⁵ 1 Cor 6:3.

¹⁷⁶ Isa 3:14.

¹⁷⁷ Eccl 11:9.

¹⁷⁸ Eccl 12:14.

¹⁷⁹ Matt 12:36.

¹⁸⁰ Wis 1:9.

¹⁸¹ Heb 4:13.

¹⁸² Prov 16:2.

all things,¹⁸³ as well as our thoughts: *The heart is perverse above all things and unsearchable: Who can know it? I, the Lord who search the heart and prove the reins: who give to everyone according to his way, and according to the fruit of his devices.*¹⁸⁴ Moreover, the witnesses will be infallible, namely men's own consciences: *Their conscience bearing witness to them: and their thoughts between themselves accusing or also defending one another, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men.*¹⁸⁵

(b) On account of the judge's power, for He is almighty in Himself: *Behold the Lord God shall come with strength,*¹⁸⁶ and also almighty in others: *The whole world shall fight with him against the unwise;*¹⁸⁷ hence Job said: *Whereas there is no man that can deliver out of thy hand:*¹⁸⁸ and the Psalmist: *If I ascend into heaven thou art there: if I descend into hell thou art present.*¹⁸⁹

(c) Thirdly, on account of the judge's inflexible justice. Because now is the time for mercy, whereas the time to come will be the time for justice only: wherefore the present time is ours, but the future time will be God's only: *When I shall take a time I shall judge justices.*¹⁹⁰ *The jealousy and rage of the husband will not spare in the day of revenge; nor will he yield to any man's prayers; nor will he accept for satisfaction ever so many gifts.*¹⁹¹

(d) Fourthly, on account of the judge's anger. For to the just He will present a sweet and smiling countenance: *They shall see the king in his beauty;*¹⁹² whereas to the wicked He will appear angry and pitiless, so that they will say to the mountains: *Fall upon us and hide us from the . . . wrath of the Lamb.*¹⁹³ This wrath does not imply disturbance of mind in God, but the effect of wrath, namely the eternal punishment inflicted on sinners. Origen says: *How straitened will the ways of sinners be at the judgement; and yet over and above the Judge will be incensed against them.*

(3) There are four remedies against this fear: (a) The first is good deeds: *Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good; and thou shalt have praise from the same.*¹⁹⁴

(b) The second is confession and repentance of the evil done: and this should

¹⁸³ Wis 1:10.

¹⁸⁴ Jer 17:9,10.

¹⁸⁵ Rom 2:15,16.

¹⁸⁶ Isa 40:10.

¹⁸⁷ Wis 5:21.

¹⁸⁸ Job 10:7.

¹⁸⁹ Ps 138:8.

¹⁹⁰ Ps 74:3.

¹⁹¹ Prov 6:34,35.

¹⁹² Isa 33:17.

¹⁹³ Rev 6:16.

¹⁹⁴ Rom 13:3.

include three conditions, sorrow of heart, shame in confession, and rigour of satisfaction: and these atone for eternal punishment.

(c) The third is almsdeeds which cleanse us from all stains: *Make unto yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings.*¹⁹⁵

(d) The fourth is charity, namely the love of God and our neighbour: for this charity covereth a multitude of sins.¹⁹⁶

EIGHTH ARTICLE

I Believe in the Holy Ghost

As we have said above, the Word of God is the Son of God, even as man's word is a conception of man's intellect. Now man's word is sometimes a dead word; for instance, if he thinks of what he ought to do, whereas he has not the will to do it: such is faith without works, in which case faith is said to be dead.¹⁹⁷ But God's is a living Word: *The word of God is living,*¹⁹⁸ and therefore in God besides the Word there is will and love: hence Augustine (*De Trinitate* ix, 10) says: *The Word of which we wish to speak is knowledge with love.* Now just as the Word of God is the Son of God; so is God's love the Holy Ghost: and consequently a man has the Holy Ghost when he loves God: *The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us.*¹⁹⁹

Now some through entertaining a false opinion about the Holy Ghost held Him to be a creature; that He is less than the Father and the Son; and that He is God's servant and minister. Wherefore in order to condemn these errors, the holy Fathers added to the second Creed five clauses about the Holy Ghost.

In the first place although there are other spirits, namely the angels, they are God's ministers: *Are they not all ministering spirits?:*²⁰⁰ whereas the Holy Ghost is the Lord: *God is a Spirit:*²⁰¹ *The Lord is a Spirit:*²⁰² and consequently *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty:*²⁰³ the reason being that He makes us love God and cease to love the world. Hence the words: *I believe in the Holy Ghost, Lord.*

Secondly, the soul's life is to be united to God, in as much as God is the life of

¹⁹⁵ Luke 16:9.

¹⁹⁶ 1 Pet 4:8; Prov 10:12.

¹⁹⁷ Jas 2:26.

¹⁹⁸ Heb 4:12.

¹⁹⁹ Rom 5:5.

²⁰⁰ Heb 1:14.

²⁰¹ John 4:24.

²⁰² 2 Cor 3:17.

²⁰³ Ibid.

love, for He is Himself God's love, wherefore He gives life: *It is the Spirit that quickeneth*:²⁰⁴ hence they added, *and Life-giver*. The third is that the Holy Ghost is one in substance with the Father and the Son: because just as the Son is God's Word, so the Holy Ghost is the love of the Father and Son. Consequently He proceeds from both: and just as God's Word is one in substance with the Father, even so God's Love is one in substance with the Father and the Son. Hence the addition, *Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son*; whence it is evident that He is not a creature.

The fourth is that He is to be worshipped equally with the Father and the Son: *True adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth*.²⁰⁵ *Teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost*. For this reason the following clause is added: *Who, together with the Father and Son, is equally adored*.

The fifth, whereby He is declared to be equal to God, is that the holy prophets spoke on behalf of God. Now it is clear that if the Holy Ghost were not God, it could not be said that the prophets spoke on His behalf: and yet Peter states that: *The holy men of God spoke inspired by the Holy Ghost*.²⁰⁶ — *The Lord God hath sent me, and his Spirit*,²⁰⁷ and, therefore, we have this clause added: *Who spoke by the prophets*.

Hereby two errors stand condemned: the error of the Manicheans who said that the Old Testament did not come from God: and this is false since the Holy Ghost spoke by the prophets—and the error of Priscilla and Montanus who maintained that the prophets spoke not on behalf of the Holy Ghost, but as though they were out of their minds.

We derive many fruits from the Holy Ghost.

(a) The first is that He cleanses us from our sins. The reason for this is that a thing is repaired by the same one as made it. Now the soul is created by the Holy Ghost, since by Him God makes all things: in as much as it is through loving His own goodness that God is the cause of all: *Thou lovest all the things that are, and hatest none of the things that thou hast made*,²⁰⁸ in which sense Dionysius (*Div. Nom.*, iv) says: *God's love did not allow him to be barren*. Consequently the human heart which is ruined by sin must needs be restored by the Holy Ghost: *Send forth thy Spirit and they shall be created, and thou shalt renew the face of the earth*.²⁰⁹ Nor need we wonder that the Spirit cleanses, seeing that all sins are forgiven through love: *Many sins are forgiven her, because she*

²⁰⁴ John 6:64.

²⁰⁵ John 4:23.

²⁰⁶ 2 Pet 1:21.

²⁰⁷ Isa 48:16.

²⁰⁸ Wis 11:25.

²⁰⁹ Ps 103, 30.

*hath loved much.*²¹⁰ *Charity covereth all sins.*²¹¹ *Charity covereth a multitude of sins.*²¹²

(b) Secondly, the Holy Ghost enlightens our mind, because whatsoever we know, it is through the Holy Ghost that we know it: *But the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, whom the Father will send in my name, will himself teach you all things and will bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you* (John xiv, 26). *His unction teacheth you of all things.*²¹³

(c) The Holy Ghost helps us, and to a certain extent compels us, to keep the commandments. Because none can keep the commandments unless he loves God: *If any man love me, he will keep my word.*²¹⁴ Now the Holy Ghost makes us love God; therefore He helps us to keep the commandments: *I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit in the midst of you; and I will cause you to walk in my commandments and to keep my judgements and do them.*²¹⁵

(d) He strengthens our hope of eternal life, in as much as He is a kind of surety that we shall inherit it; hence the Apostle says:²¹⁶ *You were signed with the Holy Spirit of promise who is the pledge of our inheritance:* for He is, as it were, a token of eternal life. The reason is that eternal life is due to a man, in as much as he is made a son of God: and this is effected through his becoming like unto Christ: and a man becomes like unto Christ through having the Spirit of Christ, and this is the Holy Ghost: *For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons whereby we cry: Abba (Father). For the Spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God.*²¹⁷ *And because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts crying: Abba, Father.*²¹⁸

(e) He counsels us when we are in doubt, and teaches us what is God's will: *He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches.*²¹⁹ *That I may hear him as a master.*²²⁰

²¹⁰ Luke 7:47.

²¹¹ Prov 10:12.

²¹² 1 Pet 4:8.

²¹³ 1 John 2:27.

²¹⁴ John 14:23.

²¹⁵ Ezek 36:26,27.

²¹⁶ Eph 1:13.

²¹⁷ Rom 8:15,16.

²¹⁸ Gal 4:6.

²¹⁹ Rev 2:17.

²²⁰ Isa 50:4.

NINTH ARTICLE

I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church

As in one man there is one soul and one body, yet many members withal: even so the Catholic Church is one body, having many members. The soul that quickens this body is the Holy Ghost: and therefore after confessing our belief in the Holy Ghost, we are bid to believe in the Holy Catholic Church: hence the Creed continues—*the Holy Catholic Church*.

Here be it observed that the word *Ecclesia* (Church) signifies assembly: wherefore the Holy Church signifies the assembly of the faithful, and the individual Christian is as a member of the Church, of which it is said,²²¹ *Draw near to me, ye unlearned, and gather yourselves together into the house of discipline*. This Holy Church has four conditions in that she is one, holy, catholic, i.e. universal, and strong, i.e. firmly established.

(1) With regard to the first, it must be noted that although various heretics have formed themselves into various sects, they do not belong to the Church, since they are so many divisions, whereas the Church is one: *One is my dove: my perfect one is but one*.²²² The unity of the Church arises from three sources.—Firstly, from the unity of faith, in as much as all Christians who belong to the body of the Church have the same belief: *I beseech you . . . that you all speak the same thing: and that there be no schisms among you*.²²³ *One God, one faith, one baptism*.²²⁴—Secondly, from the unity of hope, since all are confirmed in the hope of obtaining eternal life: wherefore the Apostle says:²²⁵ *One body, and one Spirit: as you are called in one hope of your calling*.—Thirdly, from the unity of charity, in as much as all are united in loving God, and bound to one another in mutual love: *The glory which thou hast given me, I have given to them: that they may be one as we also are one*.²²⁶ If this love is true it is evinced in the mutual solicitude and sympathy of the members: *That we may in all things grow up in him who is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body being compacted and fitly joined together, by what every joint supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in charity*,²²⁷ because each one ought to be of service to his neighbour by making use of the grace that God has

²²¹ Sir 51:31.

²²² Cant 6:8.

²²³ 1 Cor 1:10.

²²⁴ Eph 4:5.

²²⁵ Eph 4:4.

²²⁶ John 17:22.

²²⁷ Eph 4:15,16.

bestowed upon him. Therefore no man should think it of small account or allow himself to be cut off and expelled from this Church: for there is but one Church wherein men find salvation, even as outside the Ark of Noe it was not possible for anyone to be saved.

(2) With regard to the second, be it observed that there is also another assembly, that of the wicked: *I have hated the assembly of the malignant.*²²⁸ But this is an evil assembly, whereas Christ's Church is holy: *The temple of God is holy, which ye are;*²²⁹ hence the words, *The holy . . . Church.* In this Church the faithful are sanctified by four things.

(a) In the first place, just as when a church is consecrated, it is cleansed materially, even so the faithful are washed with the blood of Christ: *He hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood.*²³⁰ *Jesus, that he might sanctify the people by his own blood, suffered outside the gate.*²³¹

(b) Secondly, they are sanctified by being anointed because, just as a church is anointed, so also are the faithful anointed with a spiritual unction unto sanctification; otherwise they would not be Christians, since Christ is the same as Anointed. This unction is the grace of the Holy Ghost: *God who hath anointed us.*²³² *Ye are sanctified . . . in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*²³³

(c) Thirdly, by the indwelling Trinity, since wheresoever God dwells, that place is holy: *Verily, this place is holy.*²³⁴ *Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord.*²³⁵

(d) Fourthly, because God is invoked over them: *But thou, O Lord, art among us, and thy name hath been called upon us.*²³⁶

We must, therefore, beware, seeing that we are thus sanctified, lest by sin we defile our soul which is God's temple: *If any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy.*²³⁷

(3) With regard to the third, we must observe that the Church is catholic or universal—firstly, in point of place, in that it is spread throughout the whole world, contrary to the teaching of the Donatists: *Your faith is spoken of in the whole world.*²³⁸ *Go ye into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature.*²³⁹ Formerly, God was known only in Judea, whereas now He is known throughout the whole world. In this sense the Church has three parts: one is on earth,

²²⁸ Ps 25:5.

²²⁹ I Cor 3:17.

²³⁰ Rev 1:5.

²³¹ Heb 13:12.

²³² 2 Cor 1:21.

²³³ I Cor 6:11.

²³⁴ Gen 28:16.

²³⁵ Ps 92:5.

²³⁶ Jer 14:9.

²³⁷ I Cor 3:17.

²³⁸ Rom 1:8.

²³⁹ Mark 16:15.

another in Heaven, the third is in Purgatory.—Secondly, the Church is universal as regards the different conditions of humanity, in as much as no exceptions are made, for it includes master and servant, male and female: *There is neither male nor female.*²⁴⁰—Thirdly, it is universal in point of time. For there have been those who said that the Church was to last until a certain time; but this is false, since this Church began from the time of Abel and will endure to the end of the world: *Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world,*²⁴¹ and after the end of the world it will continue in Heaven.

(4) The fourth condition is that the Church is firmly established. A house is said to be firmly established when (a) it has good foundations. Now the Church's chief foundation is Christ: *Other foundation no man can lay but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus.*²⁴² The Apostles and their doctrine are the Church's secondary foundation, whence she derives her stability which is described²⁴³ where it is said that the city had *twelve foundations, wherein were inscribed the names of the twelve apostles.* Hence the Church is called Apostolic. Moreover, it was to indicate the stability of the Church that the Blessed Peter is called the *head*.

(b) Secondly, a house is proved to be firmly built if, however much it be shaken, it remains standing; and the Church has ever proved indestructible. Her persecutors have failed to destroy her; in fact, it was during times of persecution that the Church grew more and more; the persecutors themselves, and those whom the Church would destroy, these it was who came to naught: *Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind to powder.*²⁴⁴—Again, errors have assailed her; in fact, the greater the number of errors that have arisen, the more has the truth been made manifest: *Men corrupt in mind, reprobate in faith: but they shall proceed no further.*²⁴⁵—Nor has the Church failed before the assaults of demons: for she is like a tower of refuge to all who fight against the devil: *The name of the Lord is a strong tower.*²⁴⁶ Hence the devil does his utmost to destroy the Church: but he prevails not, for our Lord said²⁴⁷ *that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,* as though to say: "They will war against thee, but they shall not overcome thee." The result is that alone the Church of Peter (to whom it befell to evangelize Italy when the disciples were sent to preach) was always strong in faith; and whereas outside that Church there is either no faith at all, or it is mingled with many errors,

²⁴⁰ Gal 3:28.

²⁴¹ Matt 28:20.

²⁴² 1 Cor 3:11.

²⁴³ Rev 21:14.

²⁴⁴ Matt 21:44.

²⁴⁵ 2 Tim 3:8.

²⁴⁶ Prov 18:10.

²⁴⁷ Matt 16:18.

nevertheless the Church of Peter flourishes in faith and is immune from error. Nor need we wonder at this, since the Lord said to Peter: *I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith may not fail.*²⁴⁸

TENTH ARTICLE

The Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of Sins

Just as in a physical body the operation of one member conduces to the good of the whole body, so is it in a spiritual body such as the Church. And since all the faithful are one body, the good of one member is communicated to another: *every one*, as the Apostle says, *members, one of another.*²⁴⁹ Wherefore among the points of faith handed down by the Apostles, is that there is a community of goods in the Church, and this is expressed in the words *Communion of saints*. Now of all the members of the Church Christ is the principal, for He is the head: *He . . . hath made him head over all the Church which is his body.*²⁵⁰ Accordingly Christ's good is communicated to all Christians, even as the power in the head is shared by all the members.

This communication is effected by the sacraments of the Church, wherein the power of Christ's Passion operates, the effect of which is the bestowal of grace unto the remission of sins. These sacraments of the Church are seven in number. The first is *Baptism*, which is a spiritual regeneration: for just as a man cannot live in the flesh unless he is born in the flesh, even so a man cannot have the spiritual life of grace unless he be born again spiritually. This regeneration is effected by Baptism: *Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*²⁵¹ And it should be remarked that as a man can be born but once, so is he baptized but once. For this reason the holy Fathers (at the Council of Nicaea) added the words: *I confess one Baptism*. The power of Baptism consists in cleansing a man from all his sins as regards both stain and punishment; for which reason no penance is enjoined to those who receive Baptism, no matter how great sinners they may have been. And if they were to die immediately after Baptism, they would rise at once to eternal life. Another result is that although none but a priest may baptize *ex officio*, in cases of necessity anyone may baptize, provided he observe the form of Baptism which is: *I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost*. This sacrament derives its efficacy from Christ's Passion: *All we who are*

²⁴⁸ Luke 22:32.

²⁴⁹ Rom 12:5.

²⁵⁰ Eph 1:22.

²⁵¹ John 3:5.

baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in his death.²⁵² For this reason it is that as Christ was three days in the tomb, so Baptism is conferred by a triple immersion. — The second sacrament is that of *Confirmation*. For just as those who are born in the body need to be fortified in order that the body become operative, even so those who are reborn in the spirit need to be fortified by the Holy Ghost. Hence the Apostles, in order that they might become strong, received the Holy Ghost after Christ's ascension: *Stay you in the city till you be clothed with power from on high.*²⁵³ This power is conferred in the sacrament of Confirmation; and, therefore, those who have charge of children ought to be most careful to see that they be confirmed, because great grace is bestowed in Confirmation: besides, one who is confirmed receives, when he dies, greater glory than one who has not been confirmed, because he has received more grace. — The third sacrament is the *Eucharist*. As in the life of the body, after a man is born and becomes strong, he requires food that his life may be preserved and sustained; so also in the spiritual life, after being fortified, he requires spiritual food, which is Christ's body: *Unless you shall eat of the flesh of the Son of man, and drink of his blood, you shall not have life in you.*²⁵⁴ For this reason the Church has ordained that every Christian once a year must receive the body of Christ; worthily, however, and with a clear conscience: since *he that eateth and drinketh unworthily*, i.e. being conscious of mortal sin which he has not confessed or from which he does not purpose to abstain, *eateth and drinketh judgement to himself.*²⁵⁵ — The fourth sacrament is *Penance*. In the life of the body a man is sometimes sick, and unless he take medicine, he will die: even so in the spiritual life a man is sick on account of sin; wherefore he needs medicine that he may be restored to health; and this grace is bestowed in the sacrament of Penance: *Who forgiveth all thy iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases.*²⁵⁶ Three conditions are necessary for Penance: contrition, which is sorrow for sin, together with a purpose of amendment; confession of sins without any omission; and satisfaction by means of good works. — The fifth sacrament is *Extreme Unction*. In this life man encounters many obstacles which prevent him from being perfectly cleansed from his sins. And since none can enter eternal life unless he be entirely cleansed from sin, another sacrament was needed whereby a man is cleansed from sin, delivered from his weakness, and prepared to enter the heavenly kingdom, and this is the sacrament of Extreme Unction. That this sacrament does not always restore the health of the body is because it may be that a man's life is not expedient for the salvation of his soul: *Is any man sick among you? let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him in the name of the*

²⁵² Rom 6:3.

²⁵³ Luke 24:49.

²⁵⁴ John 6:54.

²⁵⁵ 1 Cor 11:29.

²⁵⁶ Ps 102:3.

*Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man: and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him.*²⁵⁷ Accordingly, it is clear how by the five foregoing sacraments a man obtains perfection in the spiritual life. Since, however, these same sacraments need to be conferred by certain definite ministers, hence arose the necessity of the sacrament of *Orders* by means of which the above sacraments are dispensed. Nor need we consider the ministers' manner of life, if at times they fall into evil ways: the point to consider is the power of Christ, which gives efficacy to the sacraments whereof they are the dispensers: *Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God.*²⁵⁸ This then is the sixth sacrament, namely, *Orders*. — The seventh sacrament is *Matrimony*, wherein if men lead a pure life they are saved, since thereby they are enabled to live without mortal sin. Sometimes married people fall into venial sins, provided their concupiscence does not lead them to act against the blessings of matrimony: whereas if they go beyond this they fall into mortal sin.

By these seven sacraments we receive the remission of sins: wherefore there follows immediately, *The forgiveness of sins*, thus expressing our belief that the Apostles received the power to forgive sins: wherefore we must believe that the ministers of the Church, who derive this power from the Apostles, who received it from Christ, have power in the Church to bind and to loose, and that there is in the Church full power to forgive sins: which power, however, is possessed in various degrees, descending from the Pope to other prelates.

It must be observed also that not only is the efficacy of Christ's Passion communicated to us, but also the merits of His life; and besides this all the good deeds of holy men are communicated to those who are in a state of grace, because all are one: *I am a partaker with all them that fear thee.*²⁵⁹ Hence it is that a man who lives in the state of grace is a partaker of all the good that is done in the whole world; but in a special way those for whom specially a good deed is done: since one man can satisfy for another, as instanced in those benefits to which many societies admit certain persons.

Through this communion, then, we derive a twofold benefit. One is that Christ's merit is communicated to all; the other is that one man's good is communicated to another: wherefore those who are excommunicated, by the very fact that they are outside the Church, forfeit a share in all the good that is done: which is a greater loss than the loss of any temporal good. They incur besides another risk: for it is clear that by this mutual assistance the devil is baulked in his temptations; so that when a man is deprived of these aids, the devil overcomes him with ease. For this reason in the early Church, when a

²⁵⁷ Jas 5:14,15.

²⁵⁸ I Cor 4:1.

²⁵⁹ Ps 118:63.

person was excommunicated, it was not uncommon for him to experience in his body the assaults of the devil.

ELEVENTH ARTICLE

The Resurrection of the Body

Not only does the Holy Ghost sanctify the Church as regards our souls, but also it is by His power that our bodies will rise again: *Who raised up Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead.*²⁶⁰ *For by a man came death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead.*²⁶¹ Hence we believe, according to our faith, that there will be a resurrection of the dead.

Here four points arise for our consideration. (1) The first is the profit we are to derive from our faith in the resurrection: (2) the second is the condition of those who will rise again, as regards all in general: (3) the third is their condition as regards the good: (4) the fourth is their condition as regards the wicked.

(1) As regards the first point, it is well to observe that faith and hope in the resurrection are profitable to us in four ways: (a) By removing the sadness occasioned by the death of others, since it is impossible for a man not to grieve at the death of one who is dear to him, but in as much as he hopes that he will rise again, his sorrow for his death is much alleviated: *We will not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that you be not sorrowful, even as others who have no hope.*²⁶²

(b) By removing the fear of death, because if man had no hope of another and a better life after death, without doubt death would be very dreadful, and man would be guilty of any wicked deed rather than taste death. But since we believe that there is another and a better life to which we shall come after death, it is evident that none should fear death or do anything wrong through fear of death: *That through death he might destroy him who had the empire of death, that is to say, the devil: and might deliver them who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to servitude.*²⁶³

(c) By making us bethink ourselves of and apply ourselves to the performance of good works. For if man could look forward to no other life beyond this present life, he would have no great motive to do good works, since whatever he did would count for little, seeing that his desire is not confined to any particular good at any particular time, but looks to eternity. But because we

²⁶⁰ Rom 4:24.

²⁶¹ I Cor 15:21.

²⁶² I Thess 4:13.

²⁶³ Heb 2:14,15.

believe that in return for what we do now we shall receive eternal goods at the resurrection, therefore do we apply ourselves to doing good: *If with this life only in view we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*²⁶⁴

(d) By drawing us away from evil. For just as the hope of a reward is a motive for good works, so fear of punishment which we believe to be reserved for the wicked is a motive for avoiding evil deeds: *And they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life: but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgement.*²⁶⁵

(2) In connection with the second point it should be observed that four conditions will attach to all who will rise again.

(a) The first regards identity of body after resurrection: seeing that the same body that now is with its flesh and bones will rise again: although some maintained that this very body which is corruptible here below will not rise again; which is contrary to the Apostle's statement,²⁶⁶ that this corruptible must put on incorruption, and because Holy Writ says that by God's power the same body will come back to life: *I shall be clothed again in my skin and in my flesh I shall see God.*²⁶⁷

(b) The second condition regards the quality of the bodies in the resurrection, for they will be of a different quality from that which they have now. Thus both good and wicked will rise with incorruptible bodies, since the good will be for ever in glory, and the wicked in everlasting punishment: *this corruptible must put on incorruption: and this mortal must put on immortality.*²⁶⁸ And since the body will be incorruptible and immortal there will be no use for food or venery: *In the resurrection they will neither marry nor be given in marriage, but will be as the angels in heaven.*²⁶⁹ This is against the Jews and Mohammedans: *Nor shall he return any more into his house.*²⁷⁰

(c) The third condition concerns the integrity of bodies in the resurrection, since all both good and wicked will arise with all that bodily integrity which appertains to the perfection of man: thus none will be blind or lame or suffering from any defect: *The dead shall rise again incorruptible,*²⁷¹ i.e. impassible to the corruptions of the present life.

(d) The fourth condition regards age, in as much as all will rise again of a perfect age, namely that which corresponds to the age of thirty-two or thirty-three years. The reason for this is that those who have not reached that age are

²⁶⁴ I Cor 15:19.

²⁶⁵ John 5:29.

²⁶⁶ I Cor 15:53.

²⁶⁷ Job 19:26.

²⁶⁸ I Cor 15:53.

²⁶⁹ Matt 22:30.

²⁷⁰ Job 7:10.

²⁷¹ I Cor 15:52.

not of a perfect age, and the old have already passed this: so that young people and children will receive what they lack, and to the old will be restored what they have lost: *Until we all meet into the unity of faith . . . unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ.*²⁷²

(3) Regarding the third point, the good will have a special glory, because the saints will have glorified bodies, which will be endowed with four gifts.

(a) The first is clarity: *The just shall shine as the sun in their Father's kingdom.*²⁷³

(b) The second is impassibility: *It is sown in dishonour; it shall rise in glory.*²⁷⁴ *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more. Neither mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more; for the former things are passed away.*²⁷⁵

(c) The third is agility: *The just shall shine and shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds.*²⁷⁶

(d) The fourth is subtilty: *It is sown a natural body; it shall rise a spiritual body,*²⁷⁷ not that it will be a spirit altogether, but because it will be wholly subject to the spirit.

(4) Concerning the fourth it must be observed that the state of the damned will be contrary to that of the blessed, since they will be in a state of eternal punishment, to which a fourfold evil condition attaches.

(a) Their bodies will be darksome: *Their countenances shall be as faces burnt.*²⁷⁸

(b) Their bodies will be passible, and yet never destroyed: for they will burn for ever in the fire, and will never be consumed: *Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched.*²⁷⁹

(c) Their bodies will be weighed down, for the soul will be as it were enchained therein: *To bind their kings with fetters and their nobles with manacles of iron.*²⁸⁰

(d) Both body and soul will be, so to speak, carnal: *The beasts have rotted in their dung.*²⁸¹

²⁷² Eph 4:13.

²⁷³ Matt 13:43.

²⁷⁴ I Cor 15:43.

²⁷⁵ Rev 21:4.

²⁷⁶ Wis 3:7.

²⁷⁷ I Cor 15:44.

²⁷⁸ Isa 13:8.

²⁷⁹ Isa 66:24.

²⁸⁰ Ps 149:8.

²⁸¹ Joel 1:17.

TWELFTH ARTICLE

Life Everlasting. Amen

It is becoming that the last article of faith in the Creed should give expression to that which is the end of all our desires, namely eternal life, in the words, *Life everlasting. Amen*: an article which is contradicted by those who pretend that the soul perishes with the body. If this were true man would be of the same condition as the beasts. To those who hold this opinion we may apply the words of the Psalmist:²⁸² *Man whereas he was in honour, understood it not: he hath been compared to senseless beasts, and made like to them.* Because the human soul is likened to God in point of immortality, whereas in point of sensuality he is like the beasts; so that when a man believes that his soul dies with his body, he abandons his likeness to God and becomes like a beast. Against these it is said:²⁸³ *They . . . hoped not for the wages of righteousness, nor esteemed the honour of holy souls. For God created man incorruptible, and to the image of his own likeness he made him.*

(1) In this article we must first consider what *eternal* life is, and in this connection the first thing to be noted is that in eternal life man is united to God: since God Himself is our reward and the end of all our labours: *I am thy protector and thy reward exceeding great.*²⁸⁴ This union with God consists (a) in seeing Him perfectly: *We see now through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face.*²⁸⁵ (b) It consists in perfect praise: *We shall behold, we shall love, and we shall praise,* as Augustine says in *City of God* (xxii). *Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of praise.*²⁸⁶ (c) Eternal life is the perfect fulfilment of desire; in as much as each of the blessed will have more than he desired or hoped for. The reason for this is because in this life no man can fulfil his desires, nor can any creature satisfy a man's craving; for God alone satisfies and infinitely surpasses man's desire which for that reason is never at rest save in God: *Thou hast made us, O Lord, for thyself and our heart is restless until it rests in thee* (Augustine, *Confessions* i). And since in Heaven the Saints will possess God perfectly, it is evident that their desire will be satisfied and that their glory will surpass their expectation; hence our Lord said:²⁸⁷ *Enter into the joy of the Lord,* which Augustine explains by saying: *Their whole joy will not enter into the joyful,*

²⁸² Ps 48:21.

²⁸³ Wis 2:22,23.

²⁸⁴ Gen 15:1.

²⁸⁵ 1 Cor 13:12.

²⁸⁶ Isa 51:3.

²⁸⁷ Matt 25:21.

but the joyful will enter into joy.—I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear.²⁸⁸ Who filleth thy desire with good things,²⁸⁹ because whatsoever is delightful will all be there superabundantly.—Thus if we desire pleasure, there will be supreme and most perfect delight, in that its object will be God the sovereign good: *Then shalt thou abound in delights in the Almighty.*²⁹⁰ *At thy right hand are delights even to the end.*²⁹¹—Again, if we desire honours, all honour will be there. The highest ambition of a man, if he be a layman, is to be a king; and if he be a cleric, is to be a bishop, and both these honours are there: *Thou hast made us to our God a kingdom and priests.*²⁹² *Behold how they are reckoned among the sons of God.*²⁹³—Again, if we desire knowledge, there will be most perfect knowledge: because we shall know all natures of all things, and all truth, and whatsoever we wish, we shall know; and we shall possess whatsoever we desire to possess, together with eternal life itself: *All good things came to me together with her.*²⁹⁴ *To the righteous their desire shall be given.*²⁹⁵ (d) It consists in perfect security. In this world there is no perfect security, since the more one has, and the higher one's position, the more reasons one has to fear, and the more one wants; whereas in eternal life there is neither sorrow, nor toil, nor fear: *He shall enjoy abundance without fear of evils.*²⁹⁶ (e) It consists in the pleasant companionship of all the blessed, a companionship that is replete with delight: since each one will possess all good things together with the blessed, for they will all love one another as themselves, and, therefore, will rejoice in the happiness of others' goods as their own, and consequently the joy and gladness of one will be as great as the joy of all: *The dwelling in thee is as it were of all rejoicing.*²⁹⁷

(2) The saints in Heaven will have all these things and many more that surpass description. The wicked, on the other hand, who will be in everlasting death, will have no less sorrow and pain than the good will have of joy and glory. Their punishment is aggravated—(a) through their separation from God and from all good things: this is the pain of loss, which corresponds to aversion, and surpasses the pain of sense: *Cast out the unprofitable servant into exterior darkness.*²⁹⁸ In this life the wicked have internal darkness, namely the darkness of sin, but then they will have exterior darkness besides.—(b) By the remorse of

²⁸⁸ Ps 16:15.

²⁸⁹ Ps 102:5.

²⁹⁰ Job 22:26.

²⁹¹ Ps 15:11.

²⁹² Rev 5:10.

²⁹³ Wis 5:5.

²⁹⁴ Wis 7:11.

²⁹⁵ Prov 10:24.

²⁹⁶ Prov 1:33.

²⁹⁷ Ps 86:7.

²⁹⁸ Matt 25:30.

conscience: *I will reprove thee and set before thy face.*²⁹⁹ *Groaning for anguish of spirit.*³⁰⁰ Nevertheless their regret and anguish will be useless, for it will not be on account of the hatred of evil, but on account of grief for their punishment, — (c) By the intensity of the pain of sense, which is inflicted by the fires of hell, which will torture both soul and body: a most painful punishment according to the saints. For they will be as though always dying and never dead and never going to die. For this reason it is described as everlasting death, seeing that just as a dying man is in extreme pain, even so are they that are in hell: *They are laid in hell like sheep, death shall feed upon them.*³⁰¹ (d) By their despair of salvation, for if it were given them to hope for deliverance from their torture, their punishment would be alleviated; but since they have lost all hope, their pains are exceedingly aggravated: *Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched.*³⁰²

Thus we can realise the difference between doing good works and doing evil deeds: seeing that good works lead to life, while wicked deeds drag us to death. For this reason man should frequently call these things to mind, since thereby he is urged to good things and drawn away from evil. Thus significantly the Creed ends with these words: *Life everlasting*, that it may ever remain more and more impressed on the memory. To this life may we be brought by our Lord Jesus Christ who is God blessed for ever and ever. Amen.

²⁹⁹ Ps 49:21.

³⁰⁰ Wis 5:3.

³⁰¹ Ps 48:15.

³⁰² Isa 66:24.

Dante Alighieri

Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) is simply called by the Italians “the Poet.” He was the most learned layman of his time and deeply steeped in theology, especially that of St. Thomas Aquinas. But he was also a man of action, as revealed in his writings, which are profoundly reflective but also show a wide-ranging familiarity with the events of his day.

Dante loved Beatrice, a young woman who had married someone else. When she died, his life was suddenly changed. He was twenty-five. At first he gave himself up to disorderly conduct and unbelief. Then, while studying philosophy and theology, he one day had a vision of Beatrice (A.D. 1296) which brought him back to the practice of virtue and his Faith.

Best known of Dante’s writings is his Divine Comedy, which is a trilogy of the three realms of the next world —Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso. In the form of a vision, the poet describes first the state of a soul eternally separated from God; then the journey of a soul through purgation, to the ultimate goal of the Beatific vision.

The Purgatorio was here chosen because it is so unmistakably Catholic, and because it shows clearly Dante’s own sense of the need for purification before a person beholds the Face of God.

The Divine Comedy: Purgatorio

Canto X

THE NEEDLE'S EYE

THE FIRST CORNICE

The Proud

The Whip of Pride

The gate closes behind them and the Poets begin the ascent to the First Cornice through a tortuous passage that Dante describes as a needle's eye. They reach the Cornice about 9:00 or 10:00 of Monday morning.

At first the Cornice seems deserted. Dante's eye is caught by a series of three marvelously wrought bas-reliefs in the marble of the inner cliff face. Three panels depict three scenes that serve as the Whip of Pride, exemplifying to each sinner as he enters how far greater souls have put by far greater reasons for pride in order to pursue the grace of humility.

As Dante stands in admiration before the carvings, Virgil calls his attention to a band of souls approaching from the left, and Dante turns for his first sight of the souls of the Proud, who crawl agonizingly round and round the Cornice under the crushing weight of enormous slabs of rock. Their punishment is so simple and so terrible that Dante can scarcely bear to describe it. He cries out in anguish to the proud of this world to take heed of the nature of their sin and of its unbearable punishment.

When we had crossed the threshold of that gate
so seldom used because man's perverse love
so often makes the crooked path seem straight,

I knew by the sound that it had closed again;
and had I looked back, to what water ever
could I have gone to wash away that stain?

We climbed the rock along a narrow crack
through which a zigzag pathway pitched and slid
just as a wave swells full and then falls back.

"This calls for careful judgment," said my guide.
"Avoid the places where the rock swells up
and weave among the troughs from side to side."

Our steps became so difficult and few,
 the waning moon had reached its western bed
 and sunk to rest before we could work through

that needle's eye. But when we had won clear
 to an open space above, at which the mountain
 steps back to form a ledge, we halted there;

I tired, and both of us confused for lack
 of any sign or guide. The ledge was level,
 and lonelier even than a desert track.

From brink to cliff-face measured three men's height,
 and the Cornice did not vary in its width
 as far as I could see to left or right.

Our feet had not yet moved a step up there,
 when I made out that all the inner cliff
 which rose without a foothold anywhere

was white and flawless marble and adorned
 with sculptured scenes beside which Polyclitus',
 and even Nature's, best works would be scorned.

The Angel who came down from God to man
 with the decree of peace the centuries wept for,
 which opened Heaven, ending the long ban,

stood carved before us with such force and love,
 with such a living grace in his whole pose,
 the image seemed about to speak and move.

One could have sworn an *Ave!* sounded clear,
 for she who turned the key that opened to us
 the Perfect Love, was also figured there;

and all her flowing gesture seemed to say—
 impressed there as distinctly as a seal
 impresses wax—*Ecce ancilla Dei.*

"Do not give all your thoughts to this one part,"
 my gentle Master said. (I was then standing
 on that side of him where man has his heart.)

I turned my eyes a little to the right
 (the side on which he stood who had thus urged me)
 and there, at Mary's back, carved in that white

and flawless wall, I saw another scene,
and I crossed in front of Virgil and drew near it
the better to make out what it might mean.

Emerging from the marble were portrayed
the cart, the oxen, and the Ark from which
the sacrilegious learned to be afraid.

Seven choirs moved there before it, bringing
confusion to my senses; with my hearing
I thought "No," with my sight, "Yes, they are singing."

In the same way, the smokes the censers poured
were shown so faithfully that eyes and nose
disputed yes and no in happy discord.

And there before the Holy Vessel, dancing
with girt-up robes, the humble Psalmist moved,
less than a king, and more, in his wild prancing.

Facing him, portrayed with a vexed frown
of mingled sadness and contempt, Michal
stood at a palace window looking down.

I moved a little further to the right,
the better to observe another panel
that shone at Michal's back, dazzling and white.

Here was portrayed from glorious history
that Roman Prince whose passion to do justice
moved Gregory to his great victory.

I speak of Trajan, blessed Emperor.
And at his bridle was portrayed a widow
in tears wept from the long grief of the poor.

Filling the space on both sides and behind
were mounted knights on whose great golden banners
the eagles seemed to flutter in the wind.

The widow knelt and by consummate art
appeared to say: "My Lord, avenge my son
for he is slain and I am sick at heart."

And he to answer: "Justice shall be done;
wait only my return." And she: "My Lord"—
speaking from the great grief that urged her on—

"If you do not?" And he: "Who wears my crown
will right your wrong." And she: "Can the good deed
another does grace him who shuns his own?"

And he, then: "Be assured. For it is clear
this duty is to do before I go.
Justice halts me, pity binds me here."

The Maker who can never see or know
anything new, produced that "visible speaking":
new to us, because not found below.

As I stood relishing the art and thought
of those high images—dear in themselves,
and dearer yet as works His hand had wrought—

the poet said: "Look there: they seem to crawl
but those are people coming on our left:
they can tell us where to climb the wall."

My eyes, always intent to look ahead
to some new thing, finding delight in learning,
lost little time in doing as he said.

Reader, I would not have you be afraid,
nor turn from your intention to repent
through hearing how God wills the debt be paid.

Do not think of the torments: think, I say,
of what comes after them: think that at worst
they cannot last beyond the Judgment Day.

"Master," I said, "those do not seem to me
people approaching us; nor do I know—
they so confuse my sight—what they may be."

And he to me: "Their painful circumstance
doubles them to the very earth: my own eyes
debated what they saw there at first glance.

Look hard and you will see the people pressed
under the moving boulders there. Already
you can make out how each one beats his breast."

O you proud Christians, wretched souls and small,
who by the dim lights of your twisted minds
believe you prosper even as you fall—

can you not see that we are worms, each one
 born to become the Angelic butterfly
 that flies defenseless to the Judgment Throne?

What have your souls to boast of and be proud?
 You are no more than insects, incomplete
 as any grub until it burst the shroud.

Sometimes at roof or ceiling-beam one sees
 a human figure set there as a corbel,
 carved with its chest crushed in by its own knees,

so cramped that what one sees imagined there
 makes his bones ache in fact—just such a sense
 grew on me as I watched those souls with care.

True, those who crawled along that painful track
 were more or less distorted, each one bent
 according to the burden on his back;

yet even the most patient, wracked and sore,
 seemed to be groaning: "I can bear no more!"

Canto XIII

THE SECOND CORNICE

The Envious

The Whip of Envy

The Poets reach the Second Cornice and find the blue-black rock unadorned by carvings. There are no souls in sight to guide them and Virgil, therefore, turns toward the Sun as his Guide, bearing right around the Cornice.

As they walk on, Dante hears voices crying out examples of great love of others (Caritas), the virtue opposed to Envy. These voices are the Whip of Envy.

A short way beyond, Dante comes upon the souls of the Envious and describes their punishment. The Cornice on which they sit is the color of a bruise, for every other man's good fortune bruised the souls of the Envious. They offended with their eyes, envying all the good they saw of others, and therefore their eyes are wired shut. So blinded, they sit supporting one another, as they never did in life, and all of them lean for support against the blue-black cliff (God's Decree). They are dressed in haircloth, the further to subdue their souls, and they intone endlessly the Litany of the Saints.

Among them Dante encounters Sapia of Siena and has her relate her story. When she questions him in turn, Dante confesses his fear of his own besetting sin, which is Pride.

We climbed the stairs and stood, now, on the track
where, for a second time, the mount that heals
all who ascend it, had been terraced back.

The terrace circles the entire ascent
in much the same way as the one below,
save that the arc it cuts is sooner bent.

There were no spirits and no carvings there.
Bare was the cliff-face, bare the level path.
The rock of both was livid, dark and bare.

“Were we to wait till someone came this way
who might direct us,” Virgil said to me,
“I fear that would involve a long delay.”

Then he looked up and stared straight at the sun;
and then, using his right side as a pivot,
he swung his left around; then he moved on.

“O Blessed Lamp, we face the road ahead
placing our faith in you: lead us the way
that we should go in this new place,” he said.

“You are the warmth of the world, you are its light;
if other cause do not urge otherwise,
your rays alone should serve to lead us right.”

We moved on with a will, and in a while
we had already gone so far up there
as would be reckoned, here on earth, a mile;

when we began to hear in the air above
invisible spirits who flew toward us speaking
sweet invitations to the feast of love.

The first voice that flew past rang to the sky
“*Vinum non habent.*” And from far behind us
we heard it fade repeating the same cry.

Even before we heard it cry its last
far round the slope, another voice rang out:
“I am Orestes!”—and it, too, sped past.

“Sweet Father,” I began, “what are these cries?”—
and even as I asked, I heard a third
bodiless voice say: “Love your enemies.”

And my good Master then: "This circle purges
the guilt of Envious spirits, and for these
who failed in Love, Love is the lash that scourges.

The Rein must cry the opposite of Love:
you will hear it, I expect, before you reach
the pass of absolution that leads above.

But now look carefully across the air
ahead of us, and you will see some people
seated against the inner cliff up there."

I opened my eyes wider: further on
I saw a group of spirits dressed in cloaks
exactly the same color as the stone.

As we drew nearer I heard prayers and plaints.
"O Mary, pray for us," I heard them cry;
and to Michael, and to Peter, and all Saints.

I cannot think there walks the earth today
a man so hard that he would not be moved
by what I saw next on that ashen way.

For when I drew near and could see the whole
penance imposed upon those praying people,
my eyes milked a great anguish from my soul.

Their cloaks were made of haircloth, coarse and stiff.
Each soul supported another with his shoulder,
and all leaned for support against the cliff.

The impoverished blind who sit all in a row
during Indulgences to beg their bread
lean with their heads together exactly so,

the better to win the pity they beseech,
not only with their cries, but with their look
of fainting grief, which pleads as loud as speech.

Just as the sun does not reach to their sight,
so to those shades of which I spoke just now
God's rays refuse to offer their delight;

for each soul has its eyelids pierced and sewn
with iron wires, as men sew new-caught falcons,
sealing their eyes to make them settle down.

Somehow it seemed to me a shameful act
 to stare at others and remain unseen.
 I turned to Virgil. He, with perfect tact,

knew what the mute was laboring to say
 and did not wait my question. "Speak," he said,
 "but count your words and see they do not stray."

Virgil was walking by me down the ledge
 on the side from which—because no parapet
 circled the cliff—one might plunge off the edge.

On the other side those spirits kept their places
 absorbed in prayer, while through the ghastly stitches
 tears forced their way and flowed down from their faces.

I turned to them and said: "O souls afire
 with hope of seeing Heaven's Light, and thus
 already certain of your heart's desire—

so may High Grace soon wash away the scum
 that clogs your consciousness, that memory's stream
 may flow without a stain in joys to come—

tell me if there is any Latin soul
 among you here: I dearly wish to know,
 and telling me may help him to his goal."

—"We are all citizens of one sublime
 and final city, brother; you mean to ask
 who lived in Italy in his pilgrim-time."

These are the words I heard a spirit say
 from somewhere further on. I moved up, therefore,
 in order to direct my voice that way.

I saw one shade who seemed to have in mind
 what I had said.—How could I tell? She sat
 chin raised, the waiting gesture of the blind.

"O soul self-humbled for the climb to Grace,"
 I said, "if it was you who spoke, I beg you,
 make yourself known either by name or place."

"I was Sienese," she answered. "On this shelf
 I weep away my world-guilt with these others
 in prayers to Him that he vouchsafe Himself.

Sapia was I, though sapient I was not;
I found more joy in the bad luck of others
than in the good that fell to my own lot.

If this confession rings false to your ears,
hear my tale out; then see if I was mad.
—In the descending arc of my own years,

the blood of my own land was being spilled
in battle outside Colle's walls, and I
prayed God to do what He already willed.

So were they turned—their forces overthrown—
to the bitter paths of flight; and as I watched
I felt such joy as I had never known;

such that I raised my face, flushed with false power,
and screamed to God: 'Now I no longer fear you'—
like a blackbird when the sun comes out an hour.

Not till my final hour had all but set
did I turn back to God, longing for peace.
Penance would not yet have reduced my debt

had not Pier Pettinaio in saintly love
grieved for my soul and offered holy prayers
that interceded for me there above.

But who are you that you come here to seek
such news of us; and have your eyes unsewn,
as I believe; and breathe yet when you speak?"

"My eyes," I said, "will yet be taken from me
upon this ledge, but not for very long:
little they sinned through being turned in envy.

My soul is gripped by a far greater fear
of the torment here below, for even now
I seem to feel the burden those souls bear."

And she: "Then who has led you to this Round,
if you think to go below again?" And I:
"He who is with me and who makes no sound.

And I still live: if you would have me move
my mortal feet down there in your behalf,
ask what you will, O soul blessed by God's love."

“Oh,” she replied, “this is a thing so rare
 it surely means that God has loved you greatly;
 from time to time, then, help me with a prayer.

I beg by all you most desire to win
 that if you walk again on Tuscan soil
 you will restore my name among my kin.

You will find them in that foolish mob whose dream
 is Talamone now, and who will lose there
 more than they did once in their silly scheme

to find the lost Diana. Though on that coast
 it is the admirals who will lose the most.”

Canto XV

THE SECOND CORNICE

The Envious

THE ASCENT

The Angel of Caritas

THE THIRD CORNICE

The Wrathful

The Whip of Wrath

It is 3:00 P.M. and the Poets are walking straight into the sun when an even greater radiance blinds Dante and he finds himself in the presence of the Angel of Caritas who passes the Poets on the ledge above. As they ascend, they hear the Angel sing the Fifth Beatitude.

As soon as the Poets enter the Third Cornice, Dante is entranced by three visions which constitute the Whip of Wrath, extolling the virtue of Meekness toward kin, toward friends, and toward enemies.

These events consume three hours. It is, therefore, 6:00 P.M. of the second day in Purgatory when the Poets, moving forward, observe an enormous cloud of smoke ahead of them.

Of that bright Sphere that, like a child at play,
 skips endlessly, as much as lies between
 the third hour's end and the first light of day

remained yet of the Sun's course toward the night.

Thus, it was Vespers there upon the mountain
 and midnight here in Italy, where I write.

The Sun's late rays struck us full in the face,
for in our circling course around the mountain
we now were heading toward his resting place.

Suddenly, then, I felt my brow weighed down
by a much greater splendor than the first.
I was left dazzled by some cause unknown

and raised my hands and joined them in the air
above my brows, making a sunshade of them
which, so to speak, blunted the piercing glare.

When a ray strikes glass or water, its reflection
leaps upward from the surface once again
at the same angle but opposite direction
from which it strikes, and in an equal space
spreads equally from a plumb-line to mid-point,
as trial and theory show to be the case.

Just so, it seemed to me, reflected light
struck me from up ahead, so dazzlingly
I had to shut my eyes to spare my sight.

"Dear Father, what is that great blaze ahead
from which I cannot shade my eyes enough,
and which is still approaching us?" I said.

"Do not be astonished," answered my sweet Friend,
"if those of the Heavenly Family still blind you.
He has been sent to bid us to ascend.

Soon now, such sights will not aggrieve your sense
but fill you with a joy as great as any
Nature has fitted you to experience."

We stand before the Blessed Angel now.
With joyous voice he cries: "Enter. The stair
is far less steep than were the two below."

We had gone past him and were climbing on
when *Blessed are the merciful* hymned out
behind us, and *Rejoice you who have won*.

My Guide and I were going up the stair—
we two alone—and I, thinking to profit
from his wise words as we were climbing there,

questioned him thus: "What deep intent lay hidden
 in what the spirit from Romagna said?
 He spoke of 'sharing' and said it was 'forbidden.' "

And he: "He knows the sad cost of his own
 besetting sin: small wonder he reviles it
 in hope that you may have less to atone.

It is because you focus on the prize
 of worldly goods, which every sharing lessens
 that Envy pumps the bellows for your sighs.

But if, in true love for the Highest Sphere,
 your longing were turned upward, then your hearts
 would never be consumed by such a fear;

for the more there are there who say 'ours'—not 'mine'—
 by that much is each richer, and the brighter
 within that cloister burns the Love Divine."

"I am left hungrier being thus fed,
 and my mind is more in doubt being thus answered,
 than if I had not asked at all," I said.

"How can each one of many who divide
 a single good have more of it, so shared,
 than if a few had kept it?" He replied:

"Because within the habit of mankind
 you set your whole intent on earthly things,
 the true light falls as darkness on your mind.

The infinite and inexpressible Grace
 which is in Heaven, gives itself to Love
 as a sunbeam gives itself to a bright surface.

As much light as it finds there, it bestows;
 thus, as the blaze of Love is spread more widely,
 the greater the Eternal Glory grows.

As mirror reflects mirror, so, above,
 the more there are who join their souls, the more
 Love learns perfection, and the more they love.

And if this answer does not yet appease
 your hunger, you will soon see Beatrice,
 and this, and every wish, shall find surcease.

Only strive hard that soon no trace may show
of the five scars which true contrition heals—
as the first two have faded from your brow.”

I was about to say, “I am satisfied,”
when suddenly we came to the next Round,
and my eyes’ avidity left me tongue-tied.

Here suddenly, in an ecstatic trance,
I find myself caught up into a vision.
I see a crowded temple, and in the entrance

a lady by herself, her eyes aglow
with the sweet grace of a mother, saying gently:
“My son, my son, why do you treat us so?”

Your father and I were seeking you in tears.”
So saying, she falls silent, and as quickly
as it first came, the vision disappears.

Another lady now appears, her cheeks
bathed in those waters that are born of grief
when grief is born of anger. Now she speaks:

“O Pisistratus, if you are true Lord
of the city for whose name the Gods debated,
and whence all learning shone forth afterward,

avenge yourself on the presumptuous one
who dared embrace our daughter.” And her master,
sweetly forbearing, in a placid tone,

and smiling gently at her, answers thus:
“What shall we do to those that wish us harm
if we take vengeance upon those that love us?”

Then there appears a wild and murderous spill
of people hate-incensed, stoning a boy,
and roaring to each other’s wrath: “Kill! Kill!”

I see the boy sink to the ground, his death
already heavy on him, but his eyes,
like gates of heaven, open through such wrath;

and even in his last extremity
he prays God to forgive his murderers,
turning to Him the look that unlocks pity.

When finally my soul could see and feel
things which were true outside it, I understood
my not-false errors had been dreams, though real.

My Guide, who watched me as I moved along
like one just wakened and still sleep-stunned, said:
“You barely seem to keep your feet—what’s wrong?”

You’ve stumbled on now for a good half-league
with eyes half-shut and legs too-wide, like one
groggy with wine or dropping with fatigue.”

“O my sweet Father, if you wish to know,
listen, and I shall tell you what I saw,”
I answered, “when my legs were stricken so.”

“Were you to wear a hundred masks,” he said,
“to hide your face, it would lie open to me
so that your slightest thought might yet be read.

These visions warn your soul on no account
still to refuse the water of that peace
which flows to man from the Eternal Fount.

I did not ask ‘what’s wrong’ as a man might
who sees with eyes alone, and when the body
is lying senseless has no other sight;

but rather to put strength into your stride:
for so must laggards be spurred on to use
their reawakening senses as a guide.”

Through the last vesper-hour we traveled on,
looking ahead as far as eye could see
against the level rays of the late sun.

And there ahead of us against the light
we saw come billowing in our direction
by slow degrees, a smoke as black as night.

Nor was there refuge from it anywhere.
It took our sight from us, and the pure air.

Canto XVIII

THE FOURTH CORNICE

The Slothful

The Whip of Sloth

The Rein of Sloth

Virgil continues his Discourse on Love, explaining the relation of Love and Free Will, but warns Dante that Reason is limited. Dante must seek the final answer from Beatrice, for the question involves one of the mysteries of faith.

It is near midnight when Virgil concludes, and Dante is starting to drowse, when he is suddenly brought awake by a long train of souls who come running and shouting from around the mountain. They are the Slothful, souls of those who recognized The Good but were not diligent in pursuit of it. As once they delayed, so now they are all hurry and zeal, and will not even pause to speak to the Poets.

Two souls run before the rest shouting aloud the Whip of Sloth, one citing Mary as an example of holy zeal, the other citing Caesar as an example of temporal zeal.

Virgil hails the racing souls to ask the nearer way to the ascent, but not even the news that Dante is still alive slows them. One soul, a former Abbot of San Zeno, shouts back an answer while still running.

Behind the train come two more souls shouting the Rein of Sloth, citing as examples of the downfall of the laggard, the Israelites in the desert, and those followers of Aeneas who remained in Sicily.

The souls pass from sight and hearing. Dante, his head full of confused thoughts, sinks into sleep. Instantly, his thoughts are transformed into a dream.

His explanation at an end, My Guide,
that lofty scholar, scrutinized my face
as if to see if I seemed satisfied.

And I, my thirst already sprung anew,
said nothing, thinking "He may well be tired
of all this questioning I put him through."

But that true Father, sensing both my thirst
and that I was too timid to reveal it,
encouraged me to speak by speaking first.

I, therefore: "Master, in the light you shed
my sight grows so acute that I see clearly
all that your argument implied or said.

But, dear and gentle Father, please discourse
more fully on that love in which you say
all good and evil actions have their source."

And he: "Focus the keen eyes of your mind
on what I say, and you will see made clear
the error of the blind who lead the blind.

The soul, being created prone to Love,
is drawn at once to all that pleases it,
as soon as pleasure summons it to move.

From that which really is, your apprehension
extracts a form which it unfolds within you;
that form thereby attracts the mind's attention,

then if the mind, so drawn, is drawn to it,
that summoning force is Love; and thus within you,
through pleasure, a new natural bond is knit.

Then, just as fire yearns upward through the air,
being so formed that it aspires by nature
to be in its own element up there;

so love, which is a spiritual motion,
fills the trapped soul, and it can never rest
short of the thing that fills it with devotion.

By now you will, of course, have understood
how little of the truth they see who claim
that every love is, in itself, a good;

for though love's substance always will appear
to be a good, not every impress made,
even in finest wax, is good and clear."

"Your words and my own eager mind reveal
exactly what Love is," I said, "but now
there is an even greater doubt I feel:

if love springs from outside the soul's own will,
it being made to love, what merit is there
in loving good, or blame in loving ill?"

And he to me: "As far as reason sees,
I can reply. The rest you must ask Beatrice.
The answer lies within faith's mysteries.

Every substantial form distinct from matter
and yet united with it in some way,
has a specific power in it. This latter

is not perceivable save as it gives
evidence of its workings and effects—
as the green foliage tells us a plant lives.

Therefore, no man can know whence springs the light
of his first cognizance, nor of the bent
of such innate primordial appetite

as springs within you, as within the bee
the instinct to make honey; and such instincts
are, in themselves, not blamable nor worthy.

Now, that all later wills and this first bent
may thrive, the innate counsel of your Reason
must surely guard the threshold of consent.

This is the principle from which accrue
your just deserts, according as it reaps
and winnows good or evil love in you.

Those masters who best reasoned nature's plan
discerned this innate liberty, and therefore
they left their moral science to guide Man.

Or put it this way: all love, let us say,
that burns in you, springs from necessity;
but you still have the power to check its sway.

These noble powers Beatrice will comprehend
as 'The Free Will.' Keep that term well in mind
if she should speak of it when you ascend."

It was near midnight. The late-risen moon,
like a brass bucket polished bright as fire,
thinned out the lesser stars, which seemed to drown.

It traveled retrograde across that sign
the sun burns when the Romans look between
the Sards and Corsicans to its decline.

And he who made Piètola shine above
all other Mantuan towns, had discharged fully
the burden I had laid on him for love;

because of which I, being pleased to find
 such clear and open answers to my questions,
 was rambling drowsily within my mind.

I wakened in an instant to a pack
 of people running toward us, a great mob
 that broke around the mountain at my back:

as once, of old, wild hordes ran through the night
 along Ismenus' and Asopus' banks
 when Thebes invoked no more than Bacchus' might;

in such a frenzy, far as I could see,
 those who were spurred by good will and high love
 ran bent like scythes along that Cornice toward me.

They were upon us soon, for all that rout
 was running furiously, and out in front
 two spirits streaming tears were calling out:

"Mary *ran* to the hills"—so one refrain;
 and the other: "Caesar, to subdue Ilerda
 struck at Marseilles, and then *swooped* down on Spain."

"Faster! Faster! To be slow in love
 is to lose time," cried those who came behind;
 "Strive on that grace may bloom again above."

"O souls in whom the great zeal you now show
 no doubt redeems the negligence and delay
 that marred your will to do good, there below;

this man lives—truly—and the instant day
 appears again, he means to climb. Please show him
 how he may reach the pass the nearer way."

So spoke my Master, and one running soul
 without so much as breaking step replied:
 "Come after us, and you will find the hole.

The will to move on with all speed so fills us
 we cannot stop; we humbly beg your pardon
 if duty makes us seem discourteous.

I was abbot of San Zeno in the reign
 of the good emperor Frederick Barbarossa,
 of whom the Milanese still speak with pain.

And another with one foot now in the grave
 will shed tears for that monastery soon,
 and rue the evil orders he once gave.

For he has set his son up as the head—
 a man deformed in body, worse in mind,
 and bastard born—in its true Pastor's stead."

He had by then left us so far behind
 that if he said more, it was lost to me:
 but I was pleased to keep this much in mind.

My aid on all occasion, the prompt Master,
 said: "Look, for here come two who cry aloud
 the Scourge of Sloth, that souls may flee it faster."

At the tail end one runner cried: "They died
 before the Jordan saw its heirs, those people
 for whom the Red Sea's waters stood aside."

The other: "Those who found it too laborious
 to go the whole way with Anchises' son
 cut from their own lives all that was most glorious."

Then when those shades had drawn so far ahead
 that I could not make out a trace of them,
 a new thought seized upon me, and it bred

so many more, so various, and so scrambled,
 that turning round and round inside itself
 so many ways at once, my reason rambled;

I closed my eyes and all that tangled theme
 was instantly transformed into a dream.

Canto XX

THE FIFTH CORNICE

*The Hoarders and Wasters
 (The Avaricious)*

The Whip of Avarice

The Rein of Avarice

Dante walks on after Adrian has dismissed him, wishing he might have continued the conversation, but bowing to Adrian's wish to resume his purification.

The Poets find the ledge so crowded with the souls of the Avaricious that only one narrow passage is left open to them. Dante hears a soul cry out the Whip of Avarice, a litany in praise of Mary, Fabricius, and St. Nicholas. The sinner identifies himself as Hugh Capet and proceeds to a denunciation of the Capetian Kings, the dynasty he himself founded, but which has degenerated into a succession of kings distinguished only for their bloodthirsty avarice.

Hugh Capet then explains the Rein of Avarice, citing seven examples of the downfall of the Avaricious.

Dante has hardly left Capet when he feels the mountain shake as if stricken by an earthquake, and he hears a shout of triumph. Dante is frightened but Virgil reassures him. The Poets move on at top speed, but Dante remains deep in thought, his mind pondering these new phenomena.

What's willed must bow to what is stronger willed:
 against my pleasure, to please him, I drew
 my sponge back from the water still unfilled.

I turned: my Guide set off along the space
 left clear next to the rock; for they who drain,
 slow tear by tear, the sin that eats the race

left little room along the outer edge.
 Thus, as one hugs the battlements in walking
 atop a wall, we moved along the ledge.

Hell take you, She-Wolf, who in the sick feast
 of your ungluttable appetite have taken
 more prey on earth than any other beast!

You Heavens, in whose turnings, as some say,
 things here below are changed—when will he come
 whose power shall drive her from the light of day?

We moved along with measured step and slow,
 and all my thoughts were centered on those shades,
 their tears and lamentations moved me so.

And walking thus, I heard rise from the earth
 before us: "Blessed Mary!"—with a wail
 such as is wrung from women giving birth.

"How poor you were," the stricken voice went on,
 "is testified to all men by the stable
 in which you laid your sacred burden down."

And then: "O good Fabricius, you twice
refused great wealth that would have stained your honor,
and chose to live in poverty, free of vice."

These words had pleased me so that I drew near
the place from which they seemed to have been spoken,
eager to know what soul was lying there.

The voice was speaking now of the largesse
St. Nicholas bestowed on the three virgins
to guide their youth to virtuous steadiness.

"O soul," I said, "whose words recite such good,
let me know who you were, and why no other
joins in your praises of such rectitude.

If I return to finish the short race
remaining of that life that ends so soon,
your words will not lack some reward of grace."

"Not for such comfort as the world may give
do I reply," he said, "but that such light
of grace should shine on you while yet you live.

I was the root of that malignant tree
which casts its shadow on all Christendom
so that the soil bears good fruit only rarely.

But if Douay and Lille and Bruges and Ghent
were strong again, their vengeance would be swift;
and that it may, I pray the King of Judgment.

I was Hugh Capet in my mortal state.
From me stem all the Philips and the Louis'
who have occupied the throne of France of late.

I was born in Paris as a butcher's son.
When the old line of kings had petered out
to one last heir, who wore a monk's gray gown,

I found that I held tight in my own hand
the reins of state, and that my new wealth gave me
such power, and such allies at my command,

that my son's head, with pomp and sacrament
rose to the widowed crown of France. From him
those consecrated bones took their descent.

Till the great dowry of Provence increased
 my race so that it lost its sense of shame,
 it came to little, but did no harm at least.

That was the birth of its rapacity,
 its power, its lies. Later—to make amends—
 it took Normandy, Ponthieu, and Gascony.

Charles came to Italy, and—to make amends—
 he victimized Conradin. Then he sent
 Saint Thomas back to Heaven—to make amends.

I see a time, not far off, that brings forth
 another Charles from France. It shall make clear
 to many what both he and his are worth.

He comes alone, unarmed but for the lance
 of Judas, which he drives so hard he bursts
 the guts of Florence with the blow he plants.

He wins no land there; only sin and shame.
 And what is worse for him is that he holds
 such crimes too lightly to repent his blame.

The third, once hauled from his own ship, I see
 selling his daughter, haggling like a pirate
 over a girl sold into slavery.

O Avarice, what more harm can you do?
 You have taken such a hold on my descendants
 they sell off their own flesh and blood for you!

But dwarfing all crimes, past or yet to be,
 I see Alagna entered, and, in His Vicar,
 Christ Himself dragged in captivity.

I see Him mocked again and crucified,
 the gall and vinegar once more sent up.
 He dies again—with *live* thieves at His side.

I see another Pilate, so full of spite
 not even that suffices: his swollen sails
 enter the very Temple without right.

O God, my Lord, when shall my soul rejoice
 to see Thy retribution, which, lying hidden,
 sweetens Thine anger in Thy secret choice?

What you first heard me cry in adoration
of that one only Bride of the Holy Ghost,
which made you turn and ask an explanation,

is the litany we add to every prayer
as long as it is day. When the sun sets
we raise the counter-cry on the night air.

We cry then how Pygmalion of old
was made a traitor, thief, and parricide
by his insatiable sick lust for gold;

how Midas suffered when his miser's prayer
was answered, and became forever after
the legend of a ludicrous despair;

and then we tell how Achan, covetous,
stole from the booty, for which Joshua's rage
still falls upon him—so it seems to us.

We cry Sapphira's and her husband's blame;
we praise the hooves that battered Heliodorus;
then round the ledge runs Polymnestor's name,

foul to all time with Polydorus' blood.

Then we conclude the litany crying: 'Crassus,
you supped on gold—tell us, did it taste good?'

We wail or mutter in our long remorse
according to the inner spur that drives us,
at times with more, at others with less force:

thus I was not the only one who praised
the good we tell by day; but, as it happened,
the only one nearby whose voice was raised."

We had already left him to his prayers
and were expending every ounce of strength
on the remaining distance to the stairs,

when suddenly I felt the mountain shake
as if it tottered. Such a numb dread seized me
as a man feels when marching to the stake.

Not even Delos, in that long ago
before Latona went there to give birth
to Heaven's eyes, was ever shaken so.

Then there went up a cry on every side,
 so loud that the sweet Master, bending close
 said: "Do not fear, for I am still your Guide."

"Glory to God in the Highest!" rang a shout
 from every throat—as I could understand
 from those nearby, whose words I could make out.

We stood there motionless, our souls suspended—
 as had the shepherds who first heard that hymn—
 until the ground grew still and the hymn ended.

Then we pushed on our holy way once more,
 studying those prostrate souls who had already
 resumed their lamentation, as before.

I never felt my soul assaulted so—
 unless my memory err—as in that war
 between my ignorance and desire to know

the explanation of that shock and shout;
 nor dared I ask, considering our haste;
 nor could I of myself, looking about,

find anywhere the key to what I sought.
 So I moved on, timid and sunk in thought.

Canto XXII

THE ASCENT TO THE SIXTH CORNICE

THE SIXTH CORNICE

The Gluttons

The Tree

The Whip of gluttony

The Poets have passed the Angel who guards the ascent, and Dante has had one more P removed from his forehead. So lightened, he walks easily behind Virgil and Statius despite their rapid ascent, listening eagerly to their conversation.

Virgil declares his great regard for Statius, and Statius explains that he was on the Fifth Cornice for Wasting rather than for Hoarding. He adds that he would certainly have been damned, had Virgil's poetry not led him to see his error. For Virgil, he acknowledges, not only inspired his song, but showed him the road to faith, whereby he

was baptized, though secretly, for fear of the persecutions—a lukewarmness for which he spent four hundred years on the Fourth Cornice.

Statius then names his favorite poets of antiquity and asks where they are. Virgil replies that they are with him in Limbo. He then cites many who have not been mentioned before as being among his eternal companions.

At this point the Poets arrive at the Sixth Cornice and, moving to the right, come upon an enormous tree laden with fruits. From its foliage a voice cries out the examples of abstinence that constitute the Whip of Gluttony.

We had, by now, already left behind
the Angel who directs to the Sixth Round.

He had erased a stigma from my brow,

and said that they who thirst for rectitude
are blessed, but he did not say “who hunger”
when he recited that Beatitude.

I, lighter than on any earlier stairs,
followed those rapid spirits, and I found it
no strain at all to match my pace to theirs.

Virgil began: “When virtue lights in us
a fire of love, that love ignites another
within the soul that sees its burning. Thus,

ever since Juvenal came down to be
one of our court in the Infernal Limbo,
and told me of your great regard for me,

my good will toward you has been of a sort
I had not felt for any unseen person;
such as will make the climb ahead seem short.

But tell me—and if I presume too much
in slackening the rein this way, forgive me
as a friend would and answer me as such:

how, amid all the wisdom you possessed—
and which you won to by such diligence—
could Avarice find a place within your breast?”

At these words Statius let a brief smile play
across his lips, and fade. Then he replied:
“I hear love’s voice in every word you say.

Often, indeed, appearances give rise
to groundless doubts in us, and false conclusions,
the true cause being hidden from our eyes.

Seeing me on the ledge from which I rose,
 you have inferred my sin was Avarice;
 an inference your question clearly shows.

Know then that my particular offense
 was all too far from Avarice: I wept
 thousands of months for riotous expense.

Had I not turned from prodigality
 in pondering those lines in which you cry,
 as if you raged against humanity:

“To what do you not drive man’s appetite
 O cursèd gold-lust!”—I should now be straining
 in the grim jousts of the Infernal night.

I understood then that our hands could spread
 their wings too wide in spending, and repented
 of that, and all my sins, in grief and dread.

How many shall rise bald to Judgment Day
 because they did not know this sin to grieve it
 in life, or as their breaths slipped away!

For when the opposite of a sin, as here,
 is as blameworthy as the sin itself,
 both lose their growth together and turn sere.

If, then, I lay so long in my distress
 among the Avaricious where they weep,
 it was to purge the opposite excess.”

“But when you sang of the fierce warfare bred
 between the twin afflictions of Jocasta,”
 the singer of the sweet *Bucolics* said,

“from what you said when Clio tuned your strain,
 it would not seem that you had found the faith
 without the grace of which good works are vain.

If that be so, what sun or beacon shone
 into your mist that you set sail to follow
 the Fisherman?” And that long-waiting one:

“You were the lamp that led me from that night.
 You led me forth to drink Parnassian waters;
 then on the road to God you shed your light.

When you declared, 'A new birth has been given.
Justice returns, and the first age of man.
And a new progeny descends from Heaven'—

you were as one who leads through a dark track
holding the light behind—useless to you,
precious to those who followed at your back.

Through you I flowered to song and to belief.
That you may know all, let me stretch my hand
to paint in full what I have sketched in brief.

The world, by then, was swollen with the birth
of True Belief sown by those messengers
the Everlasting Kingdom had sent forth.

Those words of yours I quoted, so agreed
with the new preachers', that I took to going
to where they gathered to expound the Creed.

In time, they grew so holy in my eyes
that in the persecutions of Domitian
the tears burst from me when I heard their cries.

And long as I remained upon the vexed
shores of that life, I helped them, and they taught me,
by their strict ways, to scorn all other sects.

Before my poem sang how the Greeks drew near
the Theban rivers, I had been baptized,
but kept my faith a secret, out of fear,

pretending to be pagan as before;
for which lukewarmness I was made to circle
the Ledge of Sloth four hundred years and more.

Now may you please to tell me—you who rent
the veil that hid me from this good I praise—
while we have time to spare in the ascent,

where is our ancient Terence now? and where
Caecilius, Varro, Plautus?—are they damned?
and if they are, what torments must they bear?"

—“All these are there with Perseus and the rest,
myself among them, who surround that Greek
who outsucked all men at the Muses' breast.

All walk the first ledge of the dark of Hell;
and we speak often of the glorious mountain
on which the Nine who suckled us still dwell.

Euripides is with us, Antiphon,
Athenian Agathon, Simonides,
and many more who wore the laurel crown.

And there, of your own people, one may see
Ismene, mournful as she was before,
Deiphyle, Argia, Antigone,

Hypsipyle, who led to Langia's water,
Thetis, Deidamia with her sisters,
and there, too, one may see Tiresias' daughter."

We stepped from the walled stairs to level ground,
and both the Poets now had fallen still,
attentive once again to look around.

Of the day's handmaids, four had fallen back,
and now the fifth stood at the chariot's pole,
pointing the bright tip on its upward track,

when Virgil said: "I think we ought to go
with our right shoulders to the outer edge,
circling the slope as we have done below."

So custom served to guide us, and we went
as Virgil said, with all the more assurance
since Statius' silence gave us his consent.

They walked ahead and I came on behind
treasuring their talk, which was of poetry,
and every word of which enriched my mind.

But soon, in mid-road, there appeared a tree
laden with fragrant and delicious fruit,
and at that sight the talk stopped instantly.

As fir trees taper up from limb to limb,
so this tree tapered down; so shaped, I think,
that it should be impossible to climb.

From that side where the cliff closed-off our way
a clear cascade fell from the towering rock
and broke upon the upper leaves as spray.

The poets drew nearer, reverent and mute,
 and from the center of the towering tree
 a voice cried: "You shall not eat of the fruit!"

Then said: "Mary thought more of what was due
 the joy and honor of the wedding feast
 than of her mouth, which still speaks prayers for you.

Of old, the mothers of Rome's noble blood
 found joy in water. And great wisdom came
 to holy Daniel in despising food.

Bright as pure gold was mankind's state at first:
 then, hunger seasoned acorns with delight,
 and every rill ran sweet to honest thirst.

No wine nor meat were in the wilderness.
 Honey and locusts—that and nothing more
 nourished the Baptist in his holiness;

and to that fact is his great glory due,
 as the Gospel clearly testifies to you."

Canto XXV

DEPARTURE FROM THE SIXTH CORNICE

The Ascent

The Discourse of Statius

THE SEVENTH CORNICE

The Lustful

The Whip of Lust

It is 2:00 P.M. as the Three Poets leave the Cornice of the Gluttonous and begin their hurried ascent to the Seventh Cornice.

Dante, burning with eagerness to ask how the Gluttons could give the appearance of advanced starvation despite the fact that they are airy bodies and do not need food, fears to speak but is finally encouraged to do so by Virgil. Dante immediately offers his question, and Virgil, as an act of courtesy, invites Statius to answer it. The rest of the rapid ascent is then occupied by the Discourse of Statius on the nature of the Generative Principle, the birth of the human soul, and the nature of aerial bodies.

By the time Statius is finished, the Poets have reached the Seventh Cornice. There, unwrapped in sheets of flame, the souls of the Lustful sing over and over the hymn Summae Deus Clementiae. At each conclusion of the hymn, they cry out in praise of an example of High Chastity. These examples form the Whip of Lust. It is in this way, singing and praising as they move through the flames, that the Lustful perform their purification.

It was an hour to climb without delay.
Taurus succeeded to the Sun's meridian,
and Scorpio to Night's—a world away;

thus, as a man spurred on by urgent cause
will push ahead, no matter what appears
along the way inviting him to pause—

just so we filed, one of us at a time,
into the gap, and started up those stairs
whose narrowness divides all those who climb.

And as a little stork, eager to fly
but afraid to leave the nest, will raise a wing
then let it fall again—just such was I,

the will within me now strong and now weak,
eager to ask, but going only so far
as to make me clear my throat, and then not speak.

The pace was swift; nor did my Sweet Lord slow
his stride, but said: "I see the bow of speech
drawn back to the very iron. Let it go."

My doubts resolved, I did not hesitate
to use my mouth. "How can they grow so thin,"
I said, "who need no food in their new state?"

"Recall Meleager wasting as the brand
wasted in fire," he said, "and you will find
the matter not so hard to understand.

Or think how your least move before a glass
is answered by your image, and what seemed hard
is bound to grow much clearer than it was.

But this wish burns you, I know, and to put out
all of its flames, I shall beg Statius now
to be the one to heal the wounds of doubt."

"If, in your presence," Statius first replied,
"I explain eternal things, let my excuse
be only that your wish be not denied."

And then to me: "Son, let it be your task
to hear and heed my words, and they will be
a light upon the 'how' of what you ask.

Perfect blood—that pure blood that remains
 as one might say, like food upon the table,
 and never goes to slake the thirsty veins—

acquires, within the heart, formative power
 over all human organs; as that which flows
 into the veins forms *them*. It is once more

changed in the heart, then flows down to that place
 the better left unmentioned. Thence, it drips
 over another blood in its natural vase.

There, the two commingle; and one blood shows
 a passive bent, while the other blood is active,
 due to the perfect place from which it flows.

So joined, the active force within the latter
 first clots, then quickens what it has made firm
 of the former blood to serve as working matter.

The active force has now become a soul
 like that of a plant, but with the difference
 that this begins where that achieves its goal.

Soon, like some sea-thing, half-beast and half-weed,
 it moves and feels. It then begins to form
 those powers of sense of which it is the seed.

Now, my son, the formative power expands
 and elongates within, till every member
 takes form and place as nature's plan commands.

But how this animal-thing grows human powers
 you do not yet see; and this very point
 has led astray a wiser head than yours.

By him, the *possible intellect* was thought
 (since it occupied no organ) to be disjoined
 from the *vegetative soul*—and so he taught.

Open your heart to the truth I shall explain,
 and know that at the instant articulation
 has been perfected in the foetal brain,

that instant the First Mover turns to it.

And there, rejoicing at such art in nature,
 breathes into it a new and powerful spirit.

All that is active there, this spirit draws
 into itself, forming a single soul
 that lives, and feels, and measures its own cause.

(Consider, if you find these words of mine
 too strange to understand, how the sun's heat
 joined to the sap of the vine turns into wine.)

Then when Lachesis' flax is drawn, it frees
 itself from flesh, but takes with it the essence
 of its divine and human faculties—

its lower powers grown passive now and mute;
 but memory, intelligence, and will
 more active than they were, and more acute.

Miraculously then, by its own will,
 it falls at once to one or the other shore.
 There it first learns its way, for good or ill.

And once inclosed in that new atmosphere,
 the *formative power* rays out, as it did first
 in shaping the bodily parts it left back there.

Then, as the air after a rain will glow
 inside itself, reflecting an outer ray,
 and clothe itself in many colors—so

wherever the soul may stop in its new hour,
 the air about it takes on that soul's image.
 Such is the virtue of the *formative power*.

Thereafter, in the same way one may see
 flame follow fire wherever it may shift,
 the new form follows the soul eternally.

From air it draws its visibility. Hence,
 it is called a *shade*. And out of air it forms
 the organs of sight, speech, and every sense.

Thus are we able to speak and laugh. And thus
 are we able to weep such tears and breathe such sighs
 as you have seen and heard, passing among us.

As desire, or other feelings move us, so
 our shades change their appearances. And that
 is that cause of what amazed you just below."

—We had come, by then, to the last turn of the stairs
from which we bore to the right along the cornice,
and our minds were drawn already to other cares.

Here, from the inner wall, flames blast the ledge,
while from the floor an air-blast bends them back,
leaving one narrow path along the edge.

This path we were forced to take as best we might,
in single file. And there I was—the flames
to the left of me, and the abyss to the right.

My Leader said: “In this place, it is clear,
we all must keep a tight rein on our eyes.
To take a false step would be easy here.”

“*Summae Deus clementiae,*” sang a choir
inside that furnace, and despite my road
I could not help but look into the fire.

Then I saw spirits moving through the flames,
and my eyes turned now to them, now to my feet,
as if divided between equal claims.

When they had sung the hymn, those souls in pain
cried out in full voice: “*Virum non cognosco.*”
Then, softly, they began the hymn again.

That done, they cried: “Diana kept to the wood,
and drove Helicé from her when that nymph
had felt Venus’s poison in her blood.”

Then, once again, the hymn swelled from their choir;
and after it they praised husbands and wives
who were chaste as virtue and marriage vows require.

And in this way, I think, they sing their prayer
and cry their praise for as long as they must stay
within the holy fire that burns them there.

Such physic and such diet has been thought fit
before the last wound of them all may knit.

St. Catherine of Siena

St. Catherine of Siena (1347–80), mystic and Doctor of the Church, was the twenty-third child of her parents. Gifted with mystical communications from childhood, she lived—with her father’s permission—in seclusion in her own home. After becoming a Dominican tertiary, she devoted herself to prayer and severe austerities until 1368, when Christ in a vision told her to carry her love for Him into the world.

From then on, she gathered around her a group of friends and disciples who called her “Mother.” At the same time, she began a series of letters, some of which dealt with public affairs in the Church—for example, the projected Crusade against the Turks, the war between Florence and the Papacy, and the Avignon “exile” of the Popes. From 1378 to her death, she was in Rome pleading on behalf of Urban VI and the unity of the Church.

It was during this last stage of her life that she dictated the Dialogue, which she intended as her spiritual testament to the world.

Her basic theme is God’s ineffable love in creating the world and redeeming the human race. This love, for Catherine, is symbolized in the Precious Blood of Christ. Along with St. Francis of Assisi, she is the heavenly patron of Italy.

DIALOGUE

A Treatise of Divine Providence

How a soul, elevated by desire of the honour of God, and of the salvation of her neighbours, exercising herself in humble prayer, after she had seen the union of the soul, through love, with God, asked of God four requests.

The soul, who is lifted by a very great and yearning desire for the honour of God and the salvation of souls, begins by exercising herself, for a certain space of time, in the ordinary virtues, remaining in the cell of self-knowledge, in order to know better the goodness of God towards her. This she does because knowledge must precede love, and only when she has attained love, can she strive to follow and to clothe herself with the truth. But, in no way, does the creature receive such a taste of the truth, or so brilliant a light therefrom, as by means of humble and continuous prayer, founded on knowledge of herself and of God; because prayer, exercising her in the above way, unites with God the soul that follows the footprints of Christ Crucified, and thus, by desire and affection, and union of love, makes her another Himself. Christ would seem to have meant this, when He said: *To him who will love Me and will observe My commandment, will I manifest Myself; and he shall be one thing with Me and I with him.* In several places we find similar words, by which we can see that it is, indeed, through the effect of love, that the soul becomes another Himself. That this may be seen more clearly, I will mention what I remember having heard from a handmaid of God, namely, that, when she was lifted up in prayer, with great elevation of mind, God was not wont to conceal, from the eye of her intellect, the love which He had for His servants, but rather to manifest it; and, that among other things, He used to say: "Open the eye of thy intellect, and gaze into Me, and thou shalt see the beauty of My rational creature. And look at those creatures who, among the beauties which I have given to the soul, creating her in My image and similitude, are clothed with the nuptial garment (that is, the garment of love), adorned with many virtues, by which they are united with Me through love. And yet I tell thee, if thou shouldest ask Me, who

these are, I should reply" (said the sweet and amorous Word of God) "they are another Myself, inasmuch as they have lost and denied their own will, and are clothed with Mine, are united to Mine, are conformed to Mine." It is therefore true, indeed, that the soul unites herself with God by the affection of love.

So, that soul, wishing to know and follow the truth more manfully, and lifting her desires first for herself—for she considered that a soul could not be of use, whether in doctrine, example, or prayer, to her neighbour, if she did not first profit herself, that is, if she did not acquire virtue in herself—addressed four requests to the Supreme and Eternal Father. The first was for herself; the second for the reformation of the Holy Church; the third a general prayer for the whole world, and in particular for the peace of Christians who rebel, with much lewdness and persecution, against the Holy Church; in the fourth and last, she besought the Divine Providence to provide for things in general, and in particular, for a certain case with which she was concerned.

How the desire of this soul grew when God showed her the neediness of the world.

This desire was great and continuous, but grew much more, when the First Truth showed her the neediness of the world, and in what a tempest of offence against God it lay. And she had understood this the better from a letter, which she had received from the spiritual Father of her soul, in which he explained to her the penalties and intolerable dolour caused by offences against God, and the loss of souls, and the persecutions of Holy Church.

All this lighted the fire of her holy desire with grief for the offences, and with the joy of the lively hope, with which she waited for God to provide against such great evils. And, since the soul seems, in such communion, sweetly to bind herself fast within herself and with God, and knows better His truth inasmuch as the soul is then in God, and God in the soul, as the fish is in the sea, and the sea in the fish, she desired the arrival of the morning (for the morrow was a feast of Mary) in order to hear Mass. And, when the morning came, and the hour of the Mass, she sought with anxious desire her accustomed place; and, with a great knowledge of herself, being ashamed of her own imperfection, appearing to herself to be the cause of all the evil that was happening throughout the world, conceiving a hatred and displeasure against herself, and a feeling of holy justice, with which knowledge, hatred, and justice, she purified the stains which seemed to her to cover her guilty soul, she said: "O Eternal Father, I accuse myself before Thee, in order that Thou mayest punish me for my sins in this finite life, and, inasmuch as my sins are the cause of the sufferings which my neighbour must endure, I implore Thee, in Thy kindness, to punish them in my person."

How finite works are not sufficient for punishment or recompense without the perpetual affection of love.

Then, the Eternal Truth seized and drew more strongly to Himself her desire, doing as He did in the Old Testament, for when the sacrifice was offered to God, a fire descended and drew to Him the sacrifice that was acceptable to Him; so did the sweet Truth to that soul, in sending down the fire of the clemency of the Holy Spirit, seizing the sacrifice of desire that she made of herself, saying: "Dost thou not know, dear daughter, that all the sufferings, which the soul endures, or can endure, in this life, are insufficient to punish one smallest fault, because the offence, being done to Me, who am the Infinite Good, calls for an infinite satisfaction? However, I wish that thou shouldst know, that not all the pains that are given to men in this life are given as punishments, but as corrections, in order to chastise a son when he offends; though it is true that both the guilt and the penalty can be expiated by the desire of the soul, that is, by true contrition, not through the finite pain endured, but through the infinite desire; because God, who is infinite, wishes for infinite love and infinite grief. Infinite grief I wish from My creature in two ways: in one way, through her sorrow for her own sins, which she has committed against Me her Creator; in the other way, through her sorrow for the sins which she sees her neighbours commit against Me. Of such as these, inasmuch as they have infinite desire, that is, are joined to Me by an affection of love, and therefore grieve when they offend Me, or see Me offended, their every pain, whether spiritual or corporeal, from wherever it may come, receives infinite merit, and satisfies for a guilt which deserved an infinite penalty, although their works are finite and done in finite time; but, inasmuch as they possess the virtue of desire, and sustain their suffering with desire, and contrition, and infinite displeasure against their guilt, their pain is held worthy. Paul explained this when he said: *If I had the tongues of angels, and if I knew the things of the future and gave my body to be burned, and have not love, it would be worth nothing to me.* The glorious Apostle thus shows that finite works are not valid, either as punishment or recompense, without the condiment of the affection of love."

How desire and contrition of heart satisfies, both for the guilt and the penalty in oneself and in others; and how sometimes it satisfies for the guilt only, and not the penalty.

"I have shown thee, dearest daughter, that the guilt is not punished in this finite time by any pain which is sustained purely as such. And I say, that the guilt is punished by the pain which is endured through the desire, love, and contrition of the heart; not by virtue of the pain, but by virtue of the desire of the soul; inasmuch as desire and every virtue is of value, and has life in itself, through Christ crucified, My only begotten Son, in so far as the soul has drawn her love from Him, and virtuously follows His virtues, that is, His Footprints.

In this way, and in no other, are virtues of value, and in this way, pains satisfy for the fault, by the sweet and intimate love acquired in the knowledge of My goodness, and in the bitterness and contrition of heart acquired by knowledge of one's self and one's own thoughts. And this knowledge generates a hatred and displeasure against sin, and against the soul's own sensuality, through which, she deems herself worthy of pains and unworthy of reward."

The sweet Truth continued: "See how, by contrition of the heart, together with love, with true patience, and with true humility, deeming themselves worthy of pain and unworthy of reward, such souls endure the patient humility in which consists the above-mentioned satisfaction. Thou askest me, then, for pains, so that I may receive satisfaction for the offences, which are done against Me by My Creatures, and thou further askest the will to know and love Me, Who am the Supreme Truth. Wherefore I reply that this is the way, if thou wilt arrive at a perfect knowledge and enjoyment of Me, the Eternal Truth, that thou shouldest never go outside the knowledge of thyself, and, by humbling thyself in the valley of humility, thou wilt know Me and thyself, from which knowledge thou wilt draw all that is necessary. No virtue, my daughter, can have life in itself except through charity, and humility, which is the foster-mother and nurse of charity. In self-knowledge, then, thou wilt humble thyself, seeing that, in thyself, thou dost not even exist; for thy very being, as thou wilt learn, is derived from Me, since I have loved both thee and others before you were in existence; and that, through the ineffable love which I had for you, wishing to re-create you to Grace, I have washed you, and re-created you in the Blood of My only-begotten Son, spilt with so great a fire of love. This Blood teaches the truth to him, who, by self-knowledge, dissipates the cloud of self-love, and in no other way can he learn. Then the soul will inflame herself in this knowledge of Me with an ineffable love, through which love she continues in constant pain; not, however, a pain which afflicts or dries up the soul, but one which rather fattens her; for since she has known My truth, and her own faults, and the ingratitude of men, she endures intolerable suffering, grieving because she loves Me; for, if she did not love Me, she would not be obliged to do so; whence it follows immediately, that it is right for thee, and My other servants who have learnt My truth in this way, to sustain, even unto death, many tribulations and injuries and insults in word and deed, for the glory and praise of My Name; thus wilt thou endure and suffer pains. Do thou, therefore, and My other servants, carry yourselves with true patience, with grief for your sins, and with love of virtue for the glory and praise of My Name. If thou actest thus, I will satisfy for thy sins, and for those of My other servants, inasmuch as the pains which thou wilt endure will be sufficient, through the virtue of love, for satisfaction and reward, both in thee and in others. In thyself thou wilt receive the fruit of life, when the stains of thy ignorance are effaced, and I shall not remember that thou ever didst offend Me. In others I will satisfy through

the love and affection which thou hast to Me, and I will give to them according to the disposition with which they will receive My gifts. In particular, to those who dispose themselves, humbly and with reverence, to receive the doctrine of My servants, will I remit both guilt and penalty, since they will thus come to true knowledge and contrition for their sins. So that, by means of prayer, and their desire of serving Me, they receive the fruit of grace, receiving it humbly in greater or less degree, according to the extent of their exercise of virtue and grace in general. I say then, that, through thy desires, they will receive remission for their sins. See, however, the condition, namely, that their obstinacy should not be so great in their despair as to condemn them through contempt of the Blood, which, with such sweetness, has restored them.

“What fruit do they receive?”

“The fruit which I destine for them, constrained by the prayers of My servants, is that I give them light, and that I wake up in them the hound of conscience, and make them smell the odour of virtue, and take delight in the conversation of My servants.

“Sometimes I allow the world to show them what it is, so that, feeling its diverse and various passions, they may know how little stability it has, and may come to lift their desire beyond it, and seek their native country, which is the Eternal Life. And so I draw them by these, and by many other ways, for the eye cannot see, nor the tongue relate, nor the heart think, how many are the roads and ways which I use, through love alone, to lead them back to grace, so that My truth may be fulfilled in them. I am constrained to do so by that inestimable love of Mine, by which I created them, and by the love, desire, and grief of My servants, since I am no despiser of their tears, and sweat, and humble prayers; rather I accept them, inasmuch as I am He who give them this love for the good of souls and grief for their loss. But I do not, in general, grant to these others, for whom they pray, satisfaction for the penalty due to them, but, only for their guilt, since they are not disposed, on their side, to receive, with perfect love, My love, and that of My servants. They do not receive their grief with bitterness, and perfect contrition for the sins they have committed, but with imperfect love and contrition, wherefore they have not, as others, remission of the penalty, but only of the guilt; because such complete satisfaction requires proper dispositions on both sides, both in him that gives and him that receives. Wherefore, since they are imperfect, they receive imperfectly the perfection of the desires of those who offer them to Me, for their sakes, with suffering; and, inasmuch as I told thee that they do receive remission, this is indeed the truth, that, by that way which I have told thee, that is, by the light of conscience, and by other things, satisfaction is made for their guilt; for, beginning to learn, they vomit forth the corruption of their sins, and so receive the gift of grace.

“These are they who are in a state of ordinary charity, wherefore, if they have trouble, they receive it in the guise of correction, and do not resist over

much the clemency of the Holy Spirit, but, coming out of their sin, they receive the life of grace. But if, like fools, they are ungrateful, and ignore Me and the labours of My servants done for them, that which was given them, through mercy, turns to their own ruin and judgement, not through defect of mercy, nor through defect of him who implored the mercy for the ingrate, but solely through the man's own wretchedness and hardness, with which, with the hands of his free will, he has covered his heart, as it were, with a diamond, which, if it be not broken by the Blood, can in no way be broken. And yet, I say to thee, that, in spite of his hardness of heart, he can use his free will while he has time, praying for the Blood of My Son, and let him with his own hand apply It to the diamond over his heart and shiver it, and he will receive the imprint of the Blood which has been paid for him. But, if he delays until the time be past, he has no remedy, because he has not used the dowry which I gave him, giving him memory so as to remember My benefits, intellect, so as to see and know the truth, affection, so that he should love Me, the Eternal Truth, whom he would have known through the use of his intellect. This is the dowry which I have given you all, and which ought to render fruit to Me, the Father; but, if a man barter and sells it to the devil, the devil, if he choose, has a right to seize on everything that he has acquired in this life. And, filling his memory with the delights of sin, and with the recollection of shameful pride, avarice, self-love, hatred, and unkindness to his neighbours (being also a persecutor of My servants), with these miseries, he has obscured his intellect by his disordinate will. Let such as these receive the eternal pains, with their horrible stench, inasmuch as they have not satisfied for their sins with contrition and displeasure of their guilt. Now, therefore, thou hast understood how suffering satisfies for guilt by perfect contrition, not through the finite pain; and such as have this contrition in perfection satisfy not only for the guilt, but also for the penalty which follows the guilt, as I have already said when speaking in general; and if they satisfy for the guilt alone, that is, if, having abandoned mortal sin, they receive grace, and have not sufficient contrition and love to satisfy for the penalty also, they go to the pains of Purgatory, passing through the second and last means of satisfaction.

“So thou seest that satisfaction is made, through the desire of the soul united to Me, who am the Infinite Good, in greater or less degree, according to the measure of love, obtained by the desire and prayer of the recipient. Wherefore, with that very same measure with which a man measures to Me, doth he receive in himself the measure of My goodness. Labour, therefore, to increase the fire of thy desire, and let not a moment pass without crying to Me with humble voice, or without continual prayers before Me for thy neighbours. I say this to thee and to the father of thy soul, whom I have given thee on earth. Bear yourselves with manful courage, and make yourselves dead to all your own sensuality.”

How very pleasing to God is the willing desire to suffer for Him.

“Very pleasing to Me, dearest daughter, is the willing desire to bear every pain and fatigue, even unto death, for the salvation of souls, for the more the soul endures, the more she shows that she loves Me; loving Me she comes to know more of My truth, and the more she knows, the more pain and intolerable grief she feels at the offences committed against Me. Thou didst ask Me to sustain thee, and to punish the faults of others in thee, and thou didst not remark that thou wast really asking for love, light, and knowledge of the truth, since I have already told thee that, by the increase of love, grows grief and pain, wherefore he that grows in love grows in grief. Therefore, I say to you all, that you should ask, and it will be given you, for I deny nothing to him who asks of Me in truth. Consider that the love of divine charity is so closely joined in the soul with perfect patience, that neither can leave the soul without the other. For this reason (if the soul elect to love Me) she should elect to endure pains for Me in whatever mode or circumstance I may send them to her. Patience cannot be proved in any other way than by suffering, and patience is united with love as has been said. Therefore bear yourselves with manly courage, for, unless you do so, you will not prove yourselves to be spouses of My Truth, and faithful children, nor of the company of those who relish the taste of My honour, and the salvation of souls.”

How every virtue and every defect is obtained by means of our neighbour.

“I wish also that thou shouldest know that every virtue is obtained by means of thy neighbour, and likewise, every defect; he, therefore, who stands in hatred of Me, does an injury to his neighbour, and to himself, who is his own chief neighbour, and this injury is both general and particular. It is general because you are obliged to love your neighbour as yourself, and loving him, you ought to help him spiritually, with prayer, counselling him with words, and assisting him both spiritually and temporally, according to the need in which he may be, at least with your goodwill if you have nothing else. A man therefore, who does not love, does not help him, and thereby does himself an injury; for he cuts off from himself grace, and injures his neighbour, by depriving him of the benefit of the prayers and of the sweet desires that he is bound to offer for him to Me. Thus, every act of help that he performs should proceed from the charity which he has through love of Me. And every evil also, is done by means of his neighbour, for, if he do not love Me, he cannot be in charity with his neighbour; and thus, all evils derive from the soul’s deprivation of love of Me and her neighbour; whence, inasmuch as such a man does no good, it follows that he must do evil. To whom does he evil? First of all to himself, and then to his neighbour, not against Me, for no evil can touch Me, except in so far as I count done to Me that which he does to himself. To himself he does the injury

of sin, which deprives him of grace, and worse than this he cannot do to his neighbour. Him he injures in not paying him the debt, which he owes him, of love, with which he ought to help him by means of prayer and holy desire offered to Me for him. This is an assistance which is owed in general to every rational creature; but its usefulness is more particular when it is done to those who are close at hand, under your eyes, as to whom, I say, you are all obliged to help one another by word and doctrine, and the example of good works, and in every other respect in which your neighbour may be seen to be in need; counselling him exactly as you would yourselves, without any passion of self-love; and he (a man not loving God) does not do this, because he has no love towards his neighbour; and, by not doing it, he does him, as thou seest, a special injury. And he does him evil, not only by not doing him the good that he might do him, but by doing him a positive injury and a constant evil. In this way sin causes a physical and a mental injury. The mental injury is already done when the sinner has conceived pleasure in the idea of sin, and hatred of virtue, that is, pleasure from sensual self-love, which has deprived him of the affection of love which he ought to have towards Me, and his neighbour, as has been said. And, after he has conceived, he brings forth one sin after another against his neighbour, according to the diverse ways which may please his perverse sensual will. Sometimes it is seen that he brings forth cruelty, and that both in general and in particular.

“His general cruelty is to see himself and other creatures in danger of death and damnation through privation of grace, and so cruel is he that he reminds neither himself nor others of the love of virtue and hatred of vice. Being thus cruel he may wish to extend his cruelty still further, that is, not content with not giving an example of virtue, the villain also usurps the office of the demons, tempting, according to his power, his fellow-creatures to abandon virtue for vice; this is cruelty towards his neighbours, for he makes himself an instrument to destroy life and to give death. Cruelty towards the body has its origin in cupidity, which not only prevents a man from helping his neighbour, but causes him to seize the goods of others, robbing the poor creatures; sometimes this is done by the arbitrary use of power, and at other times by cheating and fraud, his neighbour being forced to redeem, to his own loss, his own goods, and often indeed his own person.

“Oh, miserable vice of cruelty, which will deprive the man who practises it of all mercy, unless he turn to kindness and benevolence towards his neighbour!

“Sometimes the sinner brings forth insults on which often follows murder; sometimes also impurity against the person of his neighbour, by which he becomes a brute beast full of stench, and in this case he does not poison one only, but whoever approaches him, with love or in conversation, is poisoned.

“Against whom does pride bring forth evils? Against the neighbour, through love of one’s own reputation, whence comes hatred of the neighbour, reputing

one's self to be greater than he; and in this way is injury done to him. And if a man be in a position of authority, he produces also injustice and cruelty and becomes a retailer of the flesh of men. Oh, dearest daughter, grieve for the offence against Me, and weep over these corpses, so that, by prayer, the bands of their death may be loosened!

"See now, that, in all places and in all kinds of people, sin is always produced against the neighbour, and through his medium; in no other way could sin ever be committed either secret or open. A secret sin is when you deprive your neighbour of that which you ought to give him; an open sin is where you perform positive acts of sin, as I have related to thee. It is, therefore, indeed the truth that every sin done against Me, is done through the medium of the neighbour."

How virtues are accomplished by means of our neighbour, and how it is that virtues differ to such an extent in creatures.

"I have told thee how all sins are accomplished by means of thy neighbour, through the principles which I exposed to thee, that is, because men are deprived of the affection of love, which gives light to every virtue. In the same way self-love, which destroys charity and affection towards the neighbour, is the principle and foundation of every evil. All scandals, hatred, cruelty, and every sort of trouble proceed from this perverse root of self-love, which has poisoned the entire world, and weakened the mystical body of the Holy Church, and the universal body of the believers in the Christian religion; and, therefore, I said to thee, that it was in the neighbour, that is to say in the love of him, that all virtues were founded; and, truly indeed did I say to thee, that charity gives life to all the virtues, because no virtue can be obtained without charity, which is the pure love of Me.

"Wherefore, when the soul knows herself, as we have said above, she finds humility and hatred of her own sensual passion, for she learns the perverse law, which is bound up in her members, and which ever fights against the spirit. And, therefore, arising with hatred of her own sensuality, crushing it under the heel of reason, with great earnestness, she discovers in herself the bounty of My goodness, through the many benefits which she has received from Me, all of which she considers again in herself. She attributes to Me, through humility, the knowledge which she has obtained of herself, knowing that, by My grace, I have drawn her out of darkness and lifted her up into the light of true knowledge. When she has recognised My goodness, she loves it without any medium, and yet at the same time with a medium, that is to say, without the medium of herself or of any advantage accruing to herself, and with the medium of virtue, which she has conceived through love of Me, because she sees that, in no other way, can she become grateful and acceptable to Me, but by

conceiving, hatred of sin and love of virtue; and, when she has thus conceived by the affection of love, she immediately is delivered of fruit for her neighbour, because, in no other way, can she act out the truth she has conceived in herself, but, loving Me in truth, in the same truth she serves her neighbour.

“And it cannot be otherwise, because love of Me and of her neighbour are one and the same thing, and, so far as the soul loves Me, she loves her neighbour, because love towards him issues from Me. This is the means which I have given you, that you may exercise and prove your virtue therewith; because, inasmuch as you can do Me no profit, you should do it to your neighbour. This proves that you possess Me by grace in your soul, producing much fruit for your neighbour and making prayers to Me, seeking with sweet and amorous desire My honour and the salvation of souls. The soul, enamoured of My truth, never ceases to serve the whole world in general, and more or less in a particular case according to the disposition of the recipient and the ardent desire of the donor, as I have shown above, when I declared to thee that the endurance of suffering alone, without desire, was not sufficient to punish a fault.

“When she has discovered the advantage of this unitive love in Me, by means of which, she truly loves herself, extending her desire for the salvation of the whole world, thus coming to the aid of its neediness, she strives, inasmuch as she has done good to herself by the conception of virtue, from which she has drawn the life of grace, to fix her eye on the needs of her neighbour in particular. Wherefore, when she has discovered, through the affection of love, the state of all rational creatures in general, she helps those who are at hand, according to the various graces which I have entrusted to her to administer; one she helps with doctrine, that is, with words, giving sincere counsel without any respect of persons, another with the example of a good life, and this indeed all give to their neighbour, the edification of a holy and honourable life. These are the virtues, and many others, too many to enumerate, which are brought forth in the love of the neighbour; but, although I have given them in such a different way, that is to say not all to one, but to one, one virtue, and to another, another, it so happens that it is impossible to have one, without having them all, because all the virtues are bound together. Wherefore, learn, that, in many cases I give one virtue, to be as it were the chief of the others, that is to say, to one I will give principally love, to another justice, to another humility, to one a lively faith, to another prudence or temperance, or patience, to another fortitude. These, and many other virtues, I place, indifferently, in the souls of many creatures; it happens, therefore, that the particular one so placed in the soul becomes the principal object of its virtue; the soul disposing herself, for her chief conversation, to this rather than to other virtues, and, by the effect of this virtue, the soul draws to herself all the other virtues, which, as has been said, are all bound together in the affection of love; and so with many gifts and graces of

virtue, and not only in the case of spiritual things but also of temporal. I use the word temporal for the things necessary to the physical life of man; all these I have given indifferently, and I have not placed them all in one soul, in order that man should, perforce, have material for love of his fellow. I could easily have created men possessed of all that they should need both for body and soul, but I wish that one should have need of the other, and that they should be My ministers to administer the graces and the gifts that they have received from Me. Whether man will or no, he cannot help making an act of love. It is true, however, that that act, unless made through love of Me, profits him nothing so far as grace is concerned. See then, that I have made men My ministers, and placed them in diverse stations and various ranks, in order that they may make use of the virtue of love.

“Wherefore, I show you that in My house are many mansions, and that I wish for no other thing than love, for in the love of Me is fulfilled and completed the love of the neighbour, and the law observed. For he, only, can be of use in his state of life, who is bound to Me with this love.”

How virtues are proved and fortified by their contraries.

“Up to the present, I have taught thee how a man may serve his neighbour, and manifest, by that service, the love which he has towards Me.

“Now I wish to tell thee further, that a man proves his patience on his neighbour, when he receives injuries from him.

“Similarly, he proves his humility on a proud man, his faith on an infidel, his true hope on one who despairs, his justice on the unjust, his kindness on the cruel, his gentleness and benignity on the irascible. Good men produce and prove all their virtues on their neighbour, just as perverse men all their vices; thus, if thou consider well, humility is proved on pride in this way. The humble man extinguishes pride, because a proud man can do no harm to a humble one; neither can the infidelity of a wicked man, who neither loves Me, nor hopes in Me, when brought forth against one who is faithful to Me, do him any harm; his infidelity does not diminish the faith or the hope of him who has conceived his faith and hope through love of Me, it rather fortifies it, and proves it in the love he feels for his neighbour. For, he sees that the infidel is unfaithful, because he is without hope in Me, and in My servant, because he does not love Me, placing his faith and hope rather in his own sensuality, which is all that he loves. My faithful servant does not leave him because he does not faithfully love Me, or because he does not constantly seek, with hope in Me, for his salvation, inasmuch as he sees clearly the causes of his infidelity and lack of hope. The virtue of faith is proved in these and other ways. Wherefore, to those, who need the proof of it, My servant proves his faith in himself and in his neighbour, and so, justice is not diminished by the wicked man’s injustice, but is rather proved,

that is to say, the justice of a just man. Similarly, the virtues of patience, benignity, and kindness manifest themselves in a time of wrath by the same sweet patience in My servants, and envy, vexation, and hatred demonstrate their love, and hunger and desire for the salvation of souls. I say, also, to thee, that, not only is virtue proved in those who render good for evil, but, that many times a good man gives back fiery coals of love, which dispel the hatred and rancour of heart of the angry, and so from hatred often comes benevolence, and that this is by virtue of the love and perfect patience which is in him, who sustains the anger of the wicked, bearing and supporting his defects. If thou wilt observe the virtues of fortitude and perseverance, these virtues are proved by the long endurance of the injuries and detractions of wicked men, who, whether by injuries or by flattery, constantly endeavour to turn a man aside from following the road and the doctrine of truth. Wherefore, in all these things, the virtue of fortitude conceived within the soul, perseveres with strength, and, in addition proves itself externally upon the neighbour, as I have said to thee; and, if fortitude were not able to make that good proof of itself, being tested by many contrarities, it would not be a serious virtue founded in truth."

Thomas à Kempis

The Imitation of Christ was first published anonymously in 1418, and has been traditionally attributed to Thomas à Kempis (1380–1471), a German Augustinian monk. An ancient manuscript exists in Brussels with his signature. Attempts to discredit his authorship have not been accepted.

The Imitation—for centuries the most popular book after the Bible—was originally written in Latin, in a popular style, and divided into four parts or libri. The first two contain general counsel for the spiritual life; the third deals with the interior dispositions of mind and heart; and the fourth with the Holy Eucharist. It is often used outside of Catholic circles, generally with the fourth book omitted.

The basic theme of the Imitation is synthesized in the title. If we imitate the virtues of Christ as Man, we shall become more and more like Christ, Who is God.

The Imitation is a classic expression of the so-called *Devotio Moderna* (Modern Devotion), which places great emphasis on personal virtues and on methodical meditation, especially on the Passion of Christ. The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, who used the Imitation constantly, are a systematic development of the same approach to the spiritual life.

IMITATION OF CHRIST

Book II Admonitions Leading to the Inner Life

I.

Of Inward Conversation

The kingdom of God is within you, says Christ, our Saviour. Turn yourself, therefore, with all your heart to God, and forsake this wretched world, and you will soon find great inward rest. Learn to despise outward things, and give yourself to inward things, and you will see the kingdom of God come into your soul.

The kingdom of God is peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, such as is not granted to wicked people. Our Lord Jesus Christ will come to you and will show you His consolations, if you will make ready for Him a dwelling place within. All that He desires in you is within yourself, and there it is His pleasure to be. There are between Almighty God and a devout soul many spiritual visitings, sweet inward conversations, great gifts of grace, many consolations, much heavenly peace, and wondrous familiarity of the blessed presence of God.

Therefore, faithful soul, prepare your heart for Christ your Spouse, that He may come to you and dwell in you, for He Himself says: Whoever loves me will keep My commandments, and My Father and I and the Holy Spirit will make in him Our dwelling place.

Give to Christ, therefore, free entrance into your heart, and keep out all things that withstand His entrance. When you have Him, you are rich enough, and He alone will be sufficient to you. Then He will be your provider and defender and your faithful helper in every necessity, so that you will not need to put your trust in any other save Him.

Man is soon changed, and easily falls away, but Christ abides forever, and stands strongly with His lover unto the end. No great trust is to be put in man, who is mortal and frail, though he be greatly profitable to you and much loved, nor is any great grief to be taken if he sometimes turns against you. Those who today may be with you, tomorrow may be against you; they often turn as the wind does.

Put your full trust, therefore, in God. Let Him be your love and fear above all things, and He will answer for you, and will do for you in all things as shall be most needful and most expedient for you. You have here no place of long abiding, for wherever you have come you are but a stranger and a pilgrim, and never will find perfect rest until you are fully joined to God. Why do you look to have rest here, since this is not your resting place? Your full rest must be in heavenly things, and you must behold all earthly things as transitory and shortly passing away. And beware well not to cling to them overmuch, lest you be seized with love of them, and so perish in the end.

Let your thought always be upward toward God, and direct your prayers continually to Christ. If you cannot, because of your frailty, always occupy your mind in contemplation of the Godhead, yet be occupied with a remembrance of His Passion, and make for yourself a dwelling place in His blessed wounds. And if you flee devoutly to the wound in Christ's side, and to the marks of His Passion, you will feel great comfort in every trouble. You will give little heed, even though you are openly despised in the world, and whatever evil word is spoken against you, will grieve you little.

Our Master Christ was despised by men in the world, and in His greatest need was forsaken by His acquaintances and friends, and left amid shame and rebuke. He was content to suffer wrongs, and to be set at naught by the world, and we desire that no person do us wrong, or belittle our deeds. Christ had many adversaries and revilers, and we would have all to be our friends and lovers. How can your patience be crowned in heaven, if no adversity should befall you on earth? If you would suffer no adversity, how can you be the friend of Christ? It behooves you to suffer with Christ, and for Christ, if you would reign with Christ.

Truly, if you had once entered the bloody wounds of Jesus, and had there tasted a little of His love, you would care nothing for the liking or the disliking of the world, but would rather have great joy when wrongs and injuries were done you, for perfect love of God makes a man perfectly to disregard himself. The true inward love of God that is free from all inordinate affections may soon turn freely to God, and in spirit lift itself up into contemplation, and fruitfully rest in Christ.

He who esteems all things as they are, and not as they are taken to be or thought to be by worldly people, is very wise, and is taught by God rather than

by man. And he who can inwardly lift his mind up to God, and can regard outward things little, needs not to seek for time or place to pray, or to do other good deeds or virtuous works, for the spiritual man can soon recollect himself, and fix his mind on God, because he never allows it to be fully occupied in outward things. Therefore, his outward labors and his worldly occupations, which are necessary for the time, hinder him but little; as they come, he applies himself to them, and refers them always to the will of God. Moreover, a man who is well ordered in his soul heeds little the unkind and proud behavior of worldly people. As much as a man loves any worldly thing more than it should be loved, so much his mind is hindered from the true, ordered love he should have for God.

If you were well freed from all inordinate affections, then whatever should befall you would turn to your spiritual profit, and to the great increase of grace and virtue in your soul. The reason why so many things displease and trouble you is that you are not yet perfectly dead to the world, or fully severed from the love of earthly things. And nothing so much defiles the soul as an unclean love for creatures.

If you cease to be comforted by worldly things, you may behold more perfectly heavenly things, and you shall then sing continually praise and blessing to God, with great joy and inward gladness. May the Holy Trinity grant this to you and me.

2.

Of the Humble Acknowledgment of Our Own Defects

Do not regard much who is with you or who is against you, but let this be your greatest study: that God may be with you in everything that you do. Have a good conscience, and He will defend you well, and no evil will hinder or grieve the man God will help and defend. If you can be quiet and suffer for a while, you will, without doubt, see the help of God come in your need. He knows the time and place to deliver you, and therefore you must resign yourself wholly to Him. It is God's concern to help and to deliver from all confusion.

Nevertheless, it is often very profitable to us for the surer protection of humility that other men know our faults and rebuke us for them. When a man humbles himself for his offenses he easily pleases others, and reconciles himself to them whom he has offended. Almighty God defends and comforts the humble man; He inclines Himself to the humble, and sends him great plenty of His grace. God also shows His secrets to the humble man, and lovingly draws

him to Himself, and after oppression He lifts him up to glory. When the humble man has suffered confusion and rebuke, he is in good peace, for he trusts God, and not the world. Moreover, if you will come to the height of perfection, do not think that you have advanced in virtue until you can feel humbly in your heart that you have less humility and less virtue than anyone else.

3.

How Good It Is for a Man to be Peaceful

First put yourself at peace, and then you may the better make others be at peace. A peaceful and patient man is of more profit to himself and to others, too, than a learned man who has no peace. A man who is passionate often turns good into evil, and easily believes the worst. But a good, peaceful man turns all things to the best, and suspects no man.

He who is not content is often troubled with many suspicions, and is neither quiet himself nor allows others to be quiet. He often speaks what he should not, and fails to speak what it would be more expedient to say. He considers seriously what others are bound to do, but he grandly neglects that to which he himself is bound.

First, therefore, have a zealous regard to yourself and to your own soul, and then you may more righteously and with better ordered charity have zeal for your neighbor's soul. You are at once ready to excuse your own defects, but you will not hear the excuses of your brethren. Truly, it would be more charitable and more profitable to you to accuse yourself and excuse your brother, for, if you will be borne, bear with others. Consider how far you yet are from the perfect humility and charity of Christian people, who cannot be angry with any except themselves.

It is no great thing to get on well with good and docile men, for that is naturally pleasant to all people, and all men gladly have peace with those and most love those who are agreeable. But to live peacefully with evil men and with impertinent men who lack good manners and are illiterate and rub us the wrong way—that is a great grace, and a manly deed, and much to be praised, for it cannot be done save through great spiritual strength. Some people can be quiet themselves, and live quietly with others, and some cannot be quiet themselves, nor permit others to be quiet; they are grievous to others—they are more grievous to themselves. And some can keep themselves in good peace, and can also bring others to live in peace. Nevertheless, all our peace, while we are in this mortal life, rests more in the humble endurance of troubles and of things that are irksome to us than in not feeling them at all. For no man is here without

some trouble. Therefore, he who can suffer best will have most peace, and he who is the true conqueror of himself is the true lord of the world, the friend of Christ, and the true inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

4.

Of a Pure Mind and a Simple Intention

Man is borne up from earthly things on two wings: simplicity and purity. Simplicity is in the intention; purity is in the love. The good, true, and simple intention looks toward God, and the pure love samples and tastes His sweetness. If you will be free from inordinate love, no good deed will prevent you from advancing by it in the way of perfection. If you intend well, and seek nothing but God and the profit of your own soul, you will have great inward liberty of mind. And if your heart is straight with God, then every creature will be to you a mirror of life and a book of holy doctrine. No creature is so little or so mean as not to show forth and represent the goodness of God.

If you were pure and clean inwardly in your soul, then you would without impediment take all things to the best. A clean heart pierces both heaven and hell. What a man is inwardly in his conscience, that he shows himself to be by his outward deportment. If there is any true joy in this world, a man of clean conscience has it; if there is tribulation or anguish anywhere, an evil conscience knows it best. As iron put into the fire is cleansed from rust and is made all clean and pure, so, truly, a man who turns himself wholly to God is purged from sloth and is suddenly changed into a new man.

When a man begins to grow dull and slow in spiritual matters, then a little labor greatly frightens him, and he gladly seeks outward comfort from the world and the flesh. But when he begins perfectly to overcome himself and to walk strongly in the way of God, then he little considers those labors he before thought troublesome and insupportable.

5.

Of the Knowledge of Ourselves

We may not trust much in ourselves or in our own intelligence, for often, through our presumption, we lack grace, and very little of the true light of understanding is in us. Many times we lose through our negligence what we have, yet we do not see, or want to see, how blind we are. Often we do evil,

and in defending it do much worse, and sometimes, when we are moved by passion we think it zeal for God. We can quickly reprove small faults in our neighbors, but we do not see our own faults, which are much greater. We soon feel and deeply ponder on what we suffer from others, but we will not consider what others suffer from us. He who would well and righteously judge his own defects should not so rigorously judge the defects of his neighbors.

A man who is inwardly turned toward God takes heed of himself before all others, and he who can well take heed of himself can easily be quiet about other men's deeds. You will never be a spiritual man and a devout follower of Christ unless you can keep from meddling in other men's deeds and, especially, can give heed to your own deeds. If you will take heed wholly to God and to yourself, the faults you see in others will move you but little. Where are you when you are not present to yourself? And when you have run all about, and have considered other men's works, what has been your profit in it if you have forgotten yourself? So, if you will have peace in your soul, and be perfectly united to God in blessed love, set aside all other men's deeds, and set yourself and your own deeds only before the eye of your soul, and, if you see anything amiss in yourself, promptly reform it.

You will grow much in grace if you keep yourself free from all temporal cares, but if you set store by any temporal thing it will hinder you greatly. Therefore, let nothing in your sight be high, nothing great, nothing pleasing or acceptable to you, unless it be God alone, or things concerning God. Consider as vain all comforts that come to you from any creature. He who loves God and his own soul for God despises all other love, for He sees well that God alone is eternal and incomprehensible, and fills all things with His goodness, is the whole solace and comfort of the soul. He who loves God and his own soul for God sees that God is the very true gladness of our hearts, and no one else but only He.

6.

Of the Gladness of a Pure Conscience

The glory of a good man is God's testimony that he has a good conscience. Therefore, have a good conscience, and you will always have joy. A good conscience can bear many wrongs and is constantly merry and glad in adversities, but an evil conscience is always fearful and unquiet. You will rest sweetly and blessedly if your own heart does not reprove you. Never be glad save when you have done well. Evil men never have perfect happiness, or feel inward peace, for our Lord says: There is no peace for wicked people. And though they say: We are in good peace, no evil thing shall come to us; lo, who can grieve or hurt us?

do not believe them, for the wrath of God will fall suddenly upon them unless they amend, and all they have done will turn to naught, and whatever they should have done will remain undone.

It is not hard for a fervent lover of God to rejoice in tribulation, for all his joy and glory is in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Brief glory is what men can give, and, commonly, some grief follows after. The joy and gladness of good men is in their own conscience. The joy of righteous men is in God and of God, and their gladness is in virtue and in a good life. He who desires the very perfect joy that is everlasting puts little price on temporal joy, and he who seeks any worldly joy, and does not in his heart fully despise it, shows himself openly to love but little the joy of heaven.

He has great tranquility and peace of heart who does not regard praise or blame, and he will soon be at peace and content who has a good conscience. You are not the better because you are praised, or the worse because you are blamed, for as you are, you are, and whatever is said of you, you are no better than Almighty God, the Searcher of men's hearts, will testify that you are. If you behold well what you are inwardly, you will not care much what the world says of you outwardly. Man sees the face, but God beholds the heart, man beholds the deeds, but God beholds the intention of the deeds. It is a great sign of a humble heart that a man will do well, yet think that he has done but little, and it is a great sign of purity of life and of an inward trust in God when a man takes his comfort from no creature. When a man seeks no outward witness for himself, it appears that he has wholly committed himself to God. Also, as St. Paul says, He who commends himself is not justified, but he whom God commends. He who has his mind lifted up constantly to God and is not held by any inordinate affection is in the degree and in the state of a holy and blessed man.

7.

Of the Love of Jesus above All Things

Blessed is he who knows how good it is to love Jesus and, for His sake, to despise himself. It behooves the lover of Jesus to forsake all other loves besides Him, for He will be loved alone, above all others. The love of creatures is deceptive and disappointing, but the love of Jesus is faithful and always abiding. He who clings to any creature must by necessity fail as the creature fails. But he who cleaves abidingly to Jesus shall be made firm in Him forever.

Love Him, therefore, and hold Him for your friend, for, when all others forsake you, He will not forsake you, or suffer you finally to perish. You must,

of necessity, leave your friends and the company of all men, whether you will or not, and therefore keep yourself in the company of your Lord Jesus, living and dying. Commit yourself to His fidelity, and He will be with you and help you when all others forsake you. Your Beloved is of such nature that He will not admit any other love, for He alone will have the love of your heart, and will sit therein as a king, on His proper throne. If you could empty yourself of the love of creatures, He would always abide with you and never forsake you.

You will find that all trust is, in a way, lost, which is put elsewhere save in Jesus. Do not, therefore, put your trust in anything that is only a reed full of wind, or a hollow stick which cannot hold you up or help you, but rather, when you need it most, will fail you. Man is but as grass, and all his glory is as a flower of the fields which suddenly vanishes away.

If you take heed only to the outward appearance you will soon be deceived, and if you seek your comfort in anything but in Jesus you will soon feel great spiritual loss. If you seek your Lord Jesus in all things you will truly find Him, but if you seek yourself you will find yourself, and that will be to your own great loss. Truly, a man is more grievous and more harmful to himself if he does not seek Christ than is all the world and all his adversaries together.

8.

Of the Familiar Friendship of Jesus

When our Lord Jesus is present, all things are pleasing, and nothing seems hard to do for His love. But when He is absent, all things done for His love are painful and hard. When Jesus speaks not to the soul, there is no steadfast consolation. But if He speaks only one word, the soul feels great inward comfort. Did not Mary Magdalene soon rise from weeping when Martha showed her that her Master, Christ, was near and called her? Yes, truly. Oh, that is a happy hour when Jesus calls us from weeping to joy of spirit.

Remember how dry and how undevout you are without Jesus, and how unwise, how vain, and how ignorant you are when you desire anything but Jesus. Truly, such a desire is more harmful to you than if you had lost all the world. What can this world give you save through the help of Jesus? To be without Jesus is the pain of hell. And to be with Him is a pleasant paradise. If Jesus is with you no enemy can grieve you. He who finds Jesus finds a treasure, better than all other treasures, and he who loses Him has lost more than all the world. He is most poor who lives without Jesus, and he is most rich who is with Him. It is great wisdom to be closely familiar with Him and to keep Him. Be humble and peaceful, and Jesus will be with you; be devout and quiet, and He will abide with you.

You may soon drive your Lord Jesus away and lose His grace if you devote yourself to outward things. And if through negligence you lose Him, what friend will you then have? Without a friend you cannot long endure, and if Jesus is not your friend before all others you will be very downcast and desolate, and will be left without perfect friendship. And so you do not act wisely if you trust or take joy in any other things besides Him. We should choose rather to have all the world against us than to offend God, and therefore, of all who are close and dear to you, let your Lord Jesus be the closest and dearest and more beloved than all others. And let all others be loved for Him, and He alone be loved for Himself.

Jesus is alone to be loved for Himself, for He alone is proved good and faithful beyond all other friends. In Him and for Him, enemies and friends alike are to be loved, and before all else we ought humbly and with diligence to pray for Him, that He may be loved and honored by all His creatures. Never crave to be singularly loved or commended, for that belongs only to God, who has none like Himself. And do not desire that anything occupy your heart, or that you be occupied with the love of any created thing, but that your Lord Jesus may be in you and in every good man and woman.

Be pure and clean within, free from the hindrance of any creature, as much as you can, for it behooves you to have a clean and pure heart toward Jesus if you will know and feel how sweet He is. Truly, you cannot come to that surety unless you are assisted and drawn through His grace and unless, all other things set aside, you are inwardly knit and joined to Him.

When the grace of God comes to a man, then he is made mighty and strong to do everything that belongs to virtue. And when grace withdraws, then a man becomes too weak and feeble to do any good deeds, and is as though he were left only to pain and punishment. If this happens to you, do not despair, and do not let good deeds go undone, but stand constant and firm, according to the will of God, and turn all things that happen to you to the praise and blessing of His Name. After winter comes summer. After the night comes the day. After the great storm clear and pleasant weather shines through again.

9.

Of the Lack of Solace and Comfort

It is no great thing to despise the comfort of man when the comfort of God is present. But it is a great thing, and indeed a very great thing, that a man should be so strong in spirit as to bear the lack of both comforts, and for the love of

God and for God's honor should have a ready will to bear desolation of spirit and yet in nothing to seek himself or his own merits.

What proof of virtue is it if a man is joyful and devout in God when grace comes and visits the soul—for that hour is desired by every creature. He rides quite safely whom the grace of God bears up and supports. And what marvel is it if he feel no burden, who is borne up by Him who is Almighty, and led by the sovereign Guide who is God Himself? We are always glad to have solace and consolation, but we desire to have no tribulation, and we will not easily cast forth from ourselves the false love of ourselves. The blessed martyr, St. Lawrence, through the love of God overcame mightily the love of the world and of himself. He despised all that was pleasant and delectable in the world, and humbly suffered Pope Sixtus, whom he loved most, to be taken from him; and so, through the love of God, he overcame the love of man, and instead of man's comfort he chose to follow the will of God. Do in like manner, and learn to forsake some necessary and some well-beloved friend for the love of God. Do not take it to heart when you are left or forsaken by your friend, for worldly friends must of necessity be separated. It behooves a man to fight long and mightily to strive with himself before he will learn fully to overcome himself and freely and readily to set all his desires in God. When a man loves himself much he soon inclines to man's comfort; but the true lover of Christ, and the diligent follower of virtue, inclines not so easily to comforts. He seeks little such sensible sweetness and bodily pleasure, and, instead, is glad to suffer great and hard pain and labor for the love of Christ.

Nevertheless, when spiritual comfort is sent to you by God, take it humbly and give thanks meekly for it. But know for certain that it is the great goodness of God that sends it to you, and not because you deserve it. See to it, then, that you are not lifted up to pride because of the comfort, and that you do not rejoice too much in it or presume vainly in it; instead, seek to be more humble for so noble a gift, and the more watchful and fearful in all your works. That time of comfort will pass away, and the time of temptation will follow shortly after.

When comfort is withdrawn, do not be cast down, but humbly and patiently await the visitation of God, for He is able and powerful to give you more grace and more spiritual comfort than you first had. Such alteration of grace is no new thing and no strange thing to those who have had experience in the way of God. Such alteration was found many times in the great saints and the holy prophets, and so the prophet David says: I have said in my abundance, I shall not be moved forever. That is to say, when David had abundance of spiritual comfort, he said to our Lord that he trusted he would never be deprived of such comfort. But afterwards, when grace withdrew itself, David said: You have withdrawn your face from me, and I am perturbed. That is to say: O Lord, You have withdrawn Your spiritual comfort from me, and I am left in great trouble

and depression. Yet David did not despair because of this, but prayed heartily to our Lord and said: To You shall I cry, O Lord, and I shall make petition to my God. That is, I shall busily cry to You, O Lord, and I shall humbly pray for Your grace and comfort. And soon he had the effect of his prayer, as he himself bears witness, saying: Our Lord has heard my prayer and has had mercy on me and has now again sent me spiritual help and comfort. And therefore he said afterwards: Lord, You have turned my joy into sorrow, and You have encompassed me about with heavenly gladness.

If Almighty God has thus acted with His holy saints, it is not for us weak and feeble persons to despair, though we sometimes have fervor of spirit, and are sometimes left cold and devoid of devotion. The Holy Spirit comes and goes after His good pleasure, and therefore Job says: Lord, You graciously visit Your lover in the morning (that is to say, in the time of comfort) and suddenly You prove him by withdrawing some comfort from him.

Wherein, then, may I trust, or in whom may I have any confidence, save in the great, endless grace and mercy of God? The company of good men and the fellowship of devout brethren and faithful friends, the possession of holy books or of devout treatises, the hearing of sweet songs or of devout hymns may avail little and bring but little comfort to the soul when we are left to our own frailty and poverty. And when we are so left, there is no better remedy than patience, with a complete resignation of our will to the will of God.

I never yet found any religious person so perfect that he did not experience at some times the absence of grace or some diminishing of fervor. And there was never yet any saint so highly exalted who did not, first or last, have some temptation. He is not worthy to have the high gift of contemplation who has not suffered some tribulation for God. The temptations preceding were a sure token of heavenly comfort coming afterwards, and great consolation is promised by our Lord to those who are found unshaken in their temptation. And therefore the Lord says: To him who overcometh I shall give to eat of the tree of life.

Heavenly comfort is sometimes given to a man so that he may be stronger to suffer adversity. But temptation follows so that he may not be lifted up into pride and think he is worthy of such consolations. The spiritual enemy does not sleep, and the flesh is not yet fully mortified, and therefore you must never cease to prepare yourself for spiritual battle, for you have enemies on every side who are ever ready to assail you and to hinder your good purpose all they can.

IO.

Of Yielding Thanks to God for His Many Graces

Why do you seek rest here, since you were born to labor? Dispose yourself to patience rather than to comfort, to bear the cross of penance rather than to have gladness. What man would not gladly have spiritual comforts, if he could always keep them? Spiritual comforts exceed by far all worldly delights and all bodily pleasures. All worldly delights are either foul or vain, but spiritual delights are only joyful and honest, brought forth by virtue, and sent by God into a pure soul. But no man can have such comforts when he would, for the time of temptation does not long delay.

The false liberty of will and the excessive trust we have in ourselves are quite contrary to heavenly visitation. Our Lord does well in sending such comforts, but we do not do well when we render no thanks to Him for them. The greatest reason why the gifts of grace do not easily come to us is that we are ungrateful to the Giver, and render no thanks to Him from whom all good things come. Grace is always given to those ready to give thanks for it, and therefore it is wont to be given to the humble man, and to be taken from the proud man.

I would have none of that consolation that should take compunction from me. I would have none of that contemplation that should lift my soul into presumption. Everything high in the sight of man is not holy; every desire is not clean and pure; every sweet thing is not good. All that is pleasant and dear to man is not always pleasant to God. We shall therefore gladly take such gifts as make us the more ready to forsake ourselves and our own will. He who knows the comforts that come through the gifts of grace and knows also how sharp and painful the absence of grace is will not dare think that any goodness comes from himself, but he will openly confess that of himself he is very poor and naked of all virtue. Give, therefore, to God what is His, and to yourself what is yours; that is, thank God for His manifold graces, and blame yourself for your offenses. Hold always in yourself a firm ground and a sure foundation of humility, and then the height of virtue will shortly be given to you, for the high tower of virtue cannot long stand unless it is based on the low foundation of humility.

Those who are greatest in heaven are least in their own sight, and the more glorious they are, the humbler they are in themselves, full of truth and heavenly joy, and not desirous of any vainglory or the praise of man. Also, those who are fully established and confirmed in God cannot in any way be lifted up into pride. They who ascribe all goodness to God seek no glory or vain praise in the

world. They desire only to rejoice and to be glorified in God, and desire in heart that He may be honored and praised above all things, both in Himself and in His saints, and that is always what perfect men most desire to bring about.

Be loving and thankful to God for the least benefits that He gives you, and then you will be the better prepared and the more worthy to receive greater benefits from Him. Think that the least gift that He gives is great, and take the meanest things as special gifts and as great tokens of love. If the dignity of the Giver is well considered, no gift will seem little. It is no small thing that God gives, for, though He send pain and sorrow, we should take them gladly and thankfully, since all He permits to come to us is for our spiritual health. If a man desires to hold the grace of God, let him be affectionate and thankful for such grace as he has received, and patient when it is withdrawn. Let him pray devoutly that it may come again shortly, and then let him be meek and humble in spirit, so that he will not lose the grace through his presumption and pride of heart.

II.

Of the Small Number of the Lovers of the Cross

Jesus has many lovers of His kingdom of heaven, but He has few bearers of His Cross. Many desire His consolation, but few desire His tribulation. He finds many comrades in eating and drinking, but He finds few who will be with Him in His abstinence and fasting. All men would joy with Christ, but few will suffer anything for Christ. Many follow Him to the breaking of His bread, for their bodily refreshment, but few will follow Him to drink a draft of the chalice of His Passion. Many honor His miracles, but few will follow the shame of His Cross and His other ignominies. Many love Jesus as long as no adversity befalls them, and can praise and bless Him whenever they receive any benefits from Him, but if Jesus withdraws a little from them and forsakes them a bit, they soon fall into some great grumbling or excessive dejection or into open despair.

But those who love Jesus purely for Himself, and not for their own profit or convenience, bless Him as heartily in temptation and tribulation and in all other adversities as they do in time of consolation. And if He never sent them consolation, they would still always bless and praise Him. Oh, how much more may the love of Jesus do for the help of a soul if it is pure and clean, not mixed with any inordinate love of itself! Therefore, may not they who always look for worldly comforts and for worldly consolations be called worldly merchants and worldly lovers rather than lovers of God? Do they not show openly by

their deeds that they love themselves rather than God? Yes, truly. Oh, where may any be found who will serve God freely and purely, without looking for some reward in return? And where may any be found so spiritual that he is clearly delivered and freed from love of himself, truly poor in spirit, and wholly separated from love of creatures? I think none such can be found, unless it be far away in far countries.

If a man gives all his possessions for God, he yet is nothing, and if he does great penance for his sins, and if he has great wisdom and knowledge, he yet is far from virtue. And if he has great virtue and fervent devotion, he yet lacks much, and there is especially one thing most necessary to him. And what is that? It is that, forsaking all things and himself as well, he go clearly out of himself, and keep nothing to himself of any private love. And when he has done all that he ought to do, that he feel in himself as if he had done nothing, that he think little what some other one might think great, and that he believe himself, truly—as he is—an unprofitable servant. The Author of truth, our Saviour Christ, says: When you have done all that is commanded of you, yet say that you are but unprofitable servants. Then he who can do thus may well be called poor in spirit and stripped of private love, and he may well say with the prophet David: I am one with God, and poor and meek in heart. There is no one more rich, no one more free, no one more powerful than he who can forsake himself and all passing things and truly hold himself to be the lowest and meanest of all.

I2.

Of the Way of the Cross, and How Profitable Is Patience in Adversity

The words of our Saviour are thought very hard and grievous when He says: Forsake yourselves, take the Cross and follow Me. But it shall be much more grievous to hear these words at the Last Judgment: Go from Me, you cursed, into the fire that shall last forever. But those who now gladly hear and follow the words of Christ, by which He counsels them to follow Him, shall not then need to fear, hearing those words of everlasting damnation. The sign of the Cross shall appear in heaven when our Lord shall come to judge the world, and the servants of the Cross, who conformed themselves here in this life to Christ crucified on the Cross, shall go to Christ their judge with great faith and trust.

Why, then, do you dread to take His Cross, since it is the very way to the kingdom of heaven, and there is no other way? In the Cross is health, in the Cross is life; in the Cross is the fullness of heavenly sweetness; in the Cross is strength of mind, joy of spirit, height of virtue, full perfection of all holiness,

and there is no help for the soul, or hope of everlasting life, save through the virtue of the Cross.

Take, therefore, your cross and follow Jesus, and you shall go to life everlasting. He has gone before you, bearing His Cross, and died for you upon that Cross so that you should in like manner bear with Him the cross of penance and tribulation, and that you should be ready in like manner for His love to suffer death, if need be, as He has done for you. If you die with Him you will live with Him; if you are His companion with Him in pain, you will be His companion in glory.

Behold, then, how in the Cross all things stand; and how, in dying to the world, lies all our health; and that there is no other way to life and true inward peace but the way of the Cross, and the way of daily submission of the body to the spirit. Go wherever you will, and reap whatever you desire, and you will never find, above you or beneath you, within you or without you, a more high, a more excellent, a more sure way to Christ than the way of the Holy Cross.

Arrange everything after your own will, and yet you will find that you must of necessity suffer something, either according to your will or against it, and so you will always find the Cross. You will either feel pain in your body or have trouble of spirit in your soul. You will be sometimes as if you were forsaken by God; sometimes you will be vexed with your neighbor and, what is yet more painful, you will sometimes be a burden to yourself. And you will find no means of deliverance save that it behooves you to suffer until it please Almighty God of His goodness to dispose otherwise for you. He desires that you should learn to suffer tribulation without consolation, so that you may learn to submit yourself wholly to Him, and by tribulation to be made more humble than you were at first. No man feels the Passion of Christ so efficaciously as he who feels pain like the pain Christ felt.

This Cross is always ready, and everywhere it awaits you, and you cannot flee it nor fully escape it, wherever you go. For, wherever you go, you will always bear yourself about with you, and so you will always find yourself. Turn where you will, above yourself and beneath yourself, within and without yourself, and you will find this Cross on every side, so that it will be necessary for you to keep yourself always in patience, and it behooves you to do this if you will have inward peace and deserve a perpetual crown in heaven.

If you will gladly bear this Cross, it will bear you, and it will bring you to the end you desire, where you will never afterwards have anything to suffer. But if you bear this Cross against your will, you make a great burden for yourself, and it will be the more grievous to you, and yet it behooves you to bear it. And if it happens that you put away one cross, that is to say, one tribulation, another surely will come, perhaps heavier than the first one was.

Do you hope to escape what no mortal man has ever yet escaped? What saint in this world has been without his cross and without some trouble? Truly, our

Lord Jesus was not one hour without some sorrow and pain as long as He lived here. It behooved Him to suffer death and to rise again and so to enter into His glory. How is it, then, that you seek any other way to heaven than this plain, high way of the Cross. All the life of Christ was Cross and martyrdom; do you seek pleasure and joy? You err greatly if you seek any other thing than to suffer, for all this mortal life is full of misery and is all surrounded and marked with crosses. And the more highly a man profits in spirit, the more painful crosses will he find, for, by the firm certainty of Christ's love, in which he daily increases, the pain of this exile daily appears to him more and more.

Nevertheless, a man vexed with pain is not left wholly without all comfort, for he sees well that great fruit and high reward shall grow unto him by the bearing of his cross. And when a man freely submits himself to such tribulation, then all the burden of tribulation is suddenly turned into a great trust of heavenly solace. The more the flesh is punished by tribulation, the more the soul is daily strengthened by inward consolation. And sometimes the soul will feel such comforts in adversities, that for love and a desire to be conformed to Christ Crucified, it would not be without sorrow and trouble. The more it may suffer for His love here, the more acceptable it will be to him in the life to come. But this working is not in the power of man, save through the grace of God—that is to say, that a frail man should accept and love adversities that his natural inclinations so much abhor and flee.

It is not in the power of man gladly to bear the Cross, to love the Cross, to chastise the body and make it submissive to the will of the spirit, to flee honors gladly, to sustain reproofs, to despise himself and to desire to be despised, patiently to suffer adversities with all the displeasures that accompany them, and not to desire any manner of profit in this world. If you trust in yourself, you will never bring all this about. But if you trust in God, He will send you strength from heaven, and the world and the flesh will be made subject to you. Yes, and if you are strongly armed with faith, and are marked with the Cross of Christ as His family servant, you will not need to fear your spiritual enemy, for he will also be made subject to you, so that he will have no power against you. Steel yourself as a faithful servant of God manfully to bear the Cross of your Lord Jesus who, for your love, was crucified upon the Cross. Prepare yourself to suffer all manner of adversities and inconveniences in this wretched life, for so it will be with you wherever you hide yourself. There is no remedy for escaping, but you must always keep yourself in patience. If you desire to be a dear and well-beloved friend of Christ, drink effectively with Him a draft of the chalice of His tribulation. As for consolations, commit them to His will so that He may ordain them as He knows most expedient for you. But as for yourself, as much as lies in your power, dispose yourself to suffer, and when tribulations come, take them as special consolations, saying with the Apostle: The passions of this world are not worthy of themselves to bring us to the glory that is

ordained for us in the life to come. And that is true, even though one man alone might suffer as much as all men together could suffer.

When you come to such a degree of patience that tribulation is sweet to you, and for the love of God is savory and pleasant in your sight, then may you trust that it is well with you, and that you are in good estate; for you have found paradise on earth. But as long as it is irksome to you to suffer, and you seek to flee it, just so long it is not well with you, and just so long you are not in the perfect way of patience. If you could bring yourself to that disposition where you should be, that is, to suffer gladly for God and to die fully to the world, then it would shortly be better with you and you would find great peace.

Yet, although you were rapt with St. Paul into the third heaven, you would not therefore be secure and without all adversity. Our Saviour, speaking of St. Paul after he had been rapt into heaven, said: I shall show him how many things he shall suffer for Me. To suffer, therefore, remains your lot, if you will love your Lord Jesus, and serve without ceasing. Would to God you were worthy to suffer something for His love. Oh, how great joy it should be to you to suffer for Him, what gladness to all the saints in heaven, and how great edification to your neighbor. All men praise patience, yet few men will suffer. Rightly, then, should you suffer some small thing for God, who suffered much more for the world. After this bodily death you will still live, and the more you can die to yourself here, the more do you begin to live to God. No man is worthy to receive heavenly rewards unless he has first learned to bear adversities for the love of Christ. Nothing is more acceptable to God or more profitable to man in this world than to be glad to suffer for Christ, insomuch that, if it were given to your choice, you would choose adversity rather than prosperity, for then, by the patient suffering of adversity, you would be more like to Christ and the more conformed to all His saints. Our merit and our perfection in this life stand not in consolation and in sweetness, but in suffering great, grievous adversities and tribulations.

If there had been any nearer or better way for the health of man's soul than to suffer, our Lord Jesus would have showed it by word and by example. But because there was not, He openly exhorted His disciples who followed Him and all others who desire to follow Him to forsake their own will and to take the cross of penance and follow Him, saying: Whosoever will come after Me, let him forsake his own will, take the cross and follow Me. And so, when all things are searched and read, this is the final conclusion: By many tribulations it behooves us to enter into the kingdom of heaven, and may Our Lord Jesus Christ bring us there.

St. Thomas More

St. Thomas More (1477–1535), chancellor of England and humanist, was martyred for the Catholic faith by Henry VIII. The immediate charge against him was high treason, but the real reason was his refusal to take the Oath of Supremacy, declaring the King spiritual head of the Church in England.

The occasion for the Oath of Supremacy was Henry VIII's desire to marry Anne Boleyn, to replace his lawful wife, Catherine of Aragon. As the Protestant English Parliament pursued its course, it became obvious that Thomas More, still chancellor, would have to either deny his Faith or align himself with the English clergy, who by 1532 had made their submission to the King. More decided to resign as chancellor. Three years later, he was beheaded in the Tower of London. So powerful was the memory of his personality that by the end of the sixteenth century his life already was the subject of many biographies.

His best-known work, Utopia (1516), has inspired numerous other writings, like Francis Bacon's New Atlantis (1626) and George Orwell's 1984.

The present selections have been taken from some of Thomas More's less well-known writings, in defense of the Catholic faith. The original English spelling and some archaisms have been modernized.

DIALOGUE CONCERNING HERESIES

Scripture and the True Faith

The author shows that if, as the messenger stated, Christ remained with His Church in no other way than by leaving His Holy Scriptures and the whole Faith is contained only within them, it follows that God gives the Church the right understanding of the Scriptures insofar as our salvation depends on them. It also follows that the Church cannot err in the right Faith. The conclusion therefore affirms all that the messenger would have rejected. It is especially true, then, that all the texts of Holy Scripture which heretics cite against the use of images or any point of the common teaching of Christ's Catholic Church do not serve their purpose.

"But now I would like to know, since you judge Him present in no way other than in the Holy Scripture, whether He gives His Church the right understanding of Holy Scripture or not?"

"What if He does not?" he asked.

"Well," I said, "as you can see for yourself, the Church could do as well without them. And so the Scriptures would do as much for the Church as a pair of spectacles a blind man!"

"That is very true," he said. "That is why His wisdom and goodness inspired the Scriptures to be written, and the Scriptures may be well understood by the comparison and consideration of one text with another."

"May it not also be," I said, "that some of those who read the Scriptures diligently, and diligently compare and consider every text and how these texts relate to one another, may yet, for all that, mistake and misunderstand them?"

"Yes," he said, "it may be so. For otherwise there would not have been so many heretics as there have been."

"Very true," I said. "But now, what if the whole of our Faith be in Holy Scripture, and no part anywhere else so that to learn the Faith is limited to learning the Scriptures. Would it not, then, be sufficient to understand some parts correctly, and other parts erroneously, even those which concern the

necessary points of our Faith; or must we misunderstand no part which concerns the Faith?"

"We must," he said, "mistake no part, to the extent that it concerns the Faith. But we must have such a right understanding of the whole of the Scriptures that we conceive no damnable error."

"Well," I said, "then if we must, we may. For if it were not possible for us to do so, it would not be required of us. For the Lord binds no man to an impossibility."

"We may," he said.

"If we may," I said, "then either we may by good fortune fall into the right understanding, or else by natural reason come to it, or else by supernatural grace be led to it."

"That is true," he said; "it is necessarily one of these ways."

"Well," I said, "we will not yet probe which. But I would first want to know whether Christ has a Church in the world continually and until the end of the world, or else has a church sometimes, and sometimes none at all. Or might we think that He had one while He was here Himself, and perhaps awhile after, but mysteriously none since, or do we not know when?"

"No," he said, "that can in no way be since He must necessarily still preserve His Church somewhere, otherwise how could He be with His followers continually to the world's end, in Scripture or otherwise, if they (with whom He promised to be, and continues with them until the world's end) should not continue to endure for so long? Or how could those words of Christ be true, "Lo, I am with you all the days to the world's end," if before the world's end He would be away some days, since indeed He would be from the Church some days, or if some days He had no Church."

"Well," I said, "there is one more thing I would like to know. Can Christ have a Church without Faith?"

"No," he said, "that would be impossible."

"Indeed," I said, "so would it be. For His Church is a congregation of people gathered into His Faith. And Faith is the first substantial difference between Christians and heathens, even as reason is the difference dividing man from all kinds of brute beasts. Now, then, let us suppose that His Church is and ever shall be continual without any times in between (in which there shall be none) and without Faith it may never be, and no part of the Faith is as you say had elsewhere, but in Holy Scripture, and it all must be had, and also as we were agreed a little while before, there must be no error adjoined thereto, and therefore as far as touches the necessity of Faith, no part of Scripture may be mistaken, but all must be understood rightly and may be rightly understood either by chance, reason, or the help of grace. It necessarily follows that by one or the other of these ways, the Church of Christ has always, and never fails in, the right understanding of Scripture, so far as is necessary for our salvation."

"That follows indeed," he said.

“Well,” I said, “let us put this aside for a while, what follows further? Since the Church so has this right understanding, let us first agree by which of these three ways the Church has it, whether by chance, reason, or grace?”

“It would be a poor thing to have it by chance,” he said. “For then the Church might chance to have it and by chance fail to have it.”

“Then,” I said, “since the Church has the right understanding always, it cannot be by chance. What think you then of reason?”

“As little,” he said, “as any man thinks. For I consider reason a plain enemy to the Faith.”

“You consider, perhaps, wrongly,” I said. “We shall investigate that later on. But now, since you think so, you leave but the third way which is the help of grace.”

“Yes, surely,” he said.

“Truly,” I said, “while reason may greatly doubt the understanding between diverse texts, I think that God with His Holy Spirit leads His Church into the consent of the truth. He Himself promised that the Holy Spirit (Whom He would send) should lead them to understand all truth. He said not that the Holy Spirit should at His coming write for them all truth, nor speak the whole truth to them, but that He would, by secret inspiration, lead them to understand all truth. And therefore, surely, the true conclusion of this means that by God Himself, by the help of His grace (as you yourself grant), the right understanding of Scripture is ever preserved in His Church from all such misinterpretation from which would follow any damnable error concerning the Faith.

From this it first follows that, besides the Scriptures, there is present another assistance and special care of God, perpetual with His Church, to keep it in the right Faith so that it may not err by the misunderstanding of Holy Scripture, contrary to the opinion you proposed, when you said that Christ being with His Church meant only that He left Holy Scripture to us. And above all, if God were in no other way present than as you propose, then since it is proved that His Church always has the right understanding of Scripture, we agree again on the same point that you would so quickly pass over. For if the Scripture (and nothing but the Scripture) contains all that we are bound to believe, do, and suffer, and God provides for His Church the right understanding of all that concerns and is necessary for us which is contained in the Scriptures, then there follows exactly what you wanted to avoid wrongly or inadvertently granting, namely to know that God always keeps the right Faith in His Church. What follows further is all that we have been discussing that the Faith of the Church, in the devotion it believes well given to saints, relics, and images, is not in error but right. We must finally conclude that the miracles done at such places are not the illusions produced by evil spirits, but the mighty hand of God to show His pleasure in the support and exercise of our devotion.”

"Indeed," he said, "we seem to have as much difficulty wandering about in this discourse as do men in a maze."

"You have not lost all your labor," I said, "for though you have half a check on this point, yet have you (if you perceive it) mated me on another point, by the one thing that is agreed by now by both of us."

"What is that?" he asked.

"This," I said, "that I have agreed as well as have you, that God has given His Church the right understanding of Scripture insofar as it is necessary for our salvation."

"On what point," he said, "has that mated you?"

"Why," I said, "do you not see it? No, then I will not tell you, for if you hear it from me, or if I tell you, you will not win the game because you do not see it for yourself. It is but a blind mate."

"Let me know it anyway," he said, "and I agree to take no advantage of it."

"On that bargain be it," I said.

"You know well," I said, "that against the worshipping of images and praying to saints you presented certain texts of Scripture to prove it forbidden, and reputed by God for idolatry. In answer, when I held that we must accept the interpretation which the Church and its holy doctors give to those texts, you said they were but men's false interpretation against God's true texts. And now, we both grant that the Church cannot misunderstand the Scripture to the hindrance of right Faith in those things necessary for our salvation. Moreover, as you also acknowledge in this matter, it must either be right belief and acceptable service to God, or else a wrong and erroneous opinion and plain idolatry. It necessarily follows that the Church does not misunderstand those texts, as you or any other allege and present for that purpose. Why? Because all these texts are so held and understood that they do not make cause against the Church, but against your own opinion in this matter.

"So you have suddenly answered yourself with a gloss of your own, you have made your interpretation as true as any text in the Bible. The whole world cannot escape doing the same, except that in the process people would make void the use of Scripture in the service of the Church, that is to their hindrance rather than furtherance in the Faith. For so it would be, if God did not give them a correct understanding of the Scriptures, but allowed them to be deceived and deluded in many errors by misinterpreting the words of the Scriptures."

"Well," he said, "this is a blind mate indeed!"

"Surely," I said, "the following two things seem to me as true as any two points, and as plain to a Christian as any proposition of Euclid's geometry is to a reasonable man. For as true as it is that the whole is more than its half, so are the following true to every Christian man. Faith makes them as certain.

"First, that Christ's Church cannot err in any such article which God wills that we believe on pain of the loss of Heaven. Second, it necessarily follows that

no text of Scripture is correctly understood if by it Christian people are commanded to do things which the Church believes they may lawfully leave undone, nor any text whereby they are forbidden anything which the Church believes they may lawfully do.”

Truths Requisite for Salvation

The author proves by Scripture that God instructs the Church of Christ in every truth necessary for our salvation.

“Truly,” he said, “you weave a good argument. However, you made out as though God had told me in Scripture that He would always tell His Church the truth in all matters of salvation. And now you reach the conclusion that it is not really the Scriptures but man’s reason which tells me what I must know. Yet, as I showed you before, I dare not trust reason in matters of Faith and the Holy Scripture.”

“I began,” I said, “to prove it to you by Scripture, and you then put me back at the beginning. Nevertheless, let me say this: reason has Scripture for its foundation and ground. Moreover, reason can build upon this foundation, nor is reason always to be mistrusted where it does not contradict the Faith, or where God says nothing to the contrary. I presume you do not so mistrust reason that you will not believe it even when it tells you that two and two make four. I trust you will be more reasonable than was one man in his attitude toward a liar. He swore that he would not for twenty li hear him say his Creed. For he knew him to be so untruthful that he thought he would no longer believe his own Creed if he heard it once out of the mouth of this liar.

“Nevertheless,” I said, “let us see whether God Himself tells you the same thing in Scripture or not. God tells you in Scripture that He will be with His Church to the end of the world. I think you have no doubt that He spoke those words to the whole Church of His own time and for all times from the days of the Apostles and until the end of the world.”

“That, in good faith,” he said, “is necessarily so.”

“Then, in good faith, this should be enough for our purpose since no man doubts that Christ will be with His Church, unless we think He is with it for nothing. Why should He be with it, except by His gracious presence to preserve it from spiritual harm, and all other kinds of evil, especially from infidelity and from idolatry? It was mainly from idolatry that He called His Church forth from the gentiles. Yet many of them were not far behind many of us in moral and political virtue, if they had not lacked the right cause and purpose of referring their acts to God. Let us go further. In Chapters 14, 15, and 16 of St. John’s Gospel, does not Christ repeatedly say that after His going He will come again to them? He also says He will not leave them orphaned as fatherless children, but will Himself come back to them. If we now add to the

words stated before, that He will be with them till the world's end, it seems plain what He meant by all this, namely that His whole Church should remain to the end of the world."

"When He said to them, 'I call you friends, for all that I have heard of My Father I have made known to you,' He spoke as though speaking to His perpetual Church and not just to the Apostles alone. Suppose He had also told only the Apostles, 'I command that you love each other,' then only the Apostles would thereafter love one another. Moreover, to make sure that what He taught them should not be forgotten by the Church afterwards, which was more likely than that they who heard Him would forget, He also said to them: 'These things have I spoken to you abiding here with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit (whom My Father shall send in My Name) He shall teach you everything, and He shall put you in mind and remembrance of everything that I shall have said unto you.' Here you see that He will always teach the Church of new the old lessons of Christ. He also told them, that this Comforter, this Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, would be sent to abide with them forever, which can only mean the whole Church. The Holy Spirit was not sent forth to the earth to dwell only with the Apostles forever, for they lived only a short time here.

"The conclusion is clear. If the Spirit of Truth shall dwell in the Church forever, how can the Church err in perceiving the truth, in such things as God will bind Christians to know or will be necessary for them to know? Our Lord was referring only to the foregoing when He said that the Holy Spirit will teach them all things. As St. Paul says, the manifestation of the Spirit is to the utility and profit of every man. Also, this Holy Spirit was not promised by Our Saviour Christ, that He should merely repeat Christ's words to His Church. On the contrary, as Christ further said, 'I have besides all this, many things to say to you but you are not able to bear them now. But when He shall come, the Spirit of Truth, He will lead you to all truth.' In other words, Our Lord did not say that the Holy Spirit would write for His Church all truth, but that He would lead them by the secret inspiration and inclination of their hearts to all truth. Thus we are assured of both the formation and right belief of every necessary article of Faith, and of the right and true sense of Holy Scripture insofar as it is required to preserve the Church from any damnable error.

"By God's promise and for this purpose shall the Holy Spirit abide with the Church forever. Christ Himself also promised that He will not leave His Church as orphans, but will come Himself, and be with it until the end of the world. He further says that His Father is in Him and He is in His Father, and that His Father and He are both One Thing, not both one person, but both One Substance, and with the Holy Spirit both One God. What necessarily follows is that until the end of the world the whole Trinity dwells within the Church. Since this assistance of the Trinity is continual in the Church, how can it ever fall from the true Faith into false errors and heresies?"

Free Will and the Laws

The author complains vehemently against the most pestilent sect . . . which ascribes our salvation and damnation and all our deeds to destiny.

Now to describe what that heretic said after shifting his position so many times. He claims that all that will be saved will be saved only because God from the beginning has chosen them, and because of that choice, all their deeds are good. Whatever evil the saved do, God because of His eternal choice considers only their worth in His sight and imputes no blame to them. All the other people that God has created will be damned, but only because He would not choose them, and all their deeds are either worth nothing or not acceptable to Him. Why? Simply because God, in the beginning, did not deign to choose them. God Himself alone works all the deeds both of the saved and of the damned, so that they do nothing of themselves. Thus, God, whose goodness is inestimable, damns so huge a number of people to intolerable and interminable torments only for His pleasure, and for His own deeds wrought in them by Himself alone.

This false opinion is, as his Highness the King most virtuously writes in his epistle, the most abominable heresy that ever was. It is so contrary to all Holy Scripture well understood and against all natural reason, so utterly subversive to all virtue and all good order in the world, so highly blasphemous to the goodness and majesty of Almighty God in Heaven, that it is incredible how any man, who has the least spark of wit in his head, or one drop of good will in his heart toward God or man, should not abhor to hear it. For this execrable heresy makes God the cause of all evil, and such cruel appetite as was never had in either tyrant or tormentor, and this they ascribe to the benign nature of Almighty God. Our Saviour Christ took upon Himself all our sin, and of His endless pity bore the pain of our sins for our sake. But this damnable heresy holds, that God should be so untrue that He places on us the knowledge and blame of His own sins, that is to say, the evil works which according to the heretics are not wrought by us but in us by God. And worse still, they make Him so despicable and cruel that, for His own deeds so done, He will have a perpetual delight and pleasure in tormenting us.

Thus they turn the treacle of Holy Scripture quite literally into poison. For what service then is all Scripture once this deceptive error is taken for the truth? What purpose do all the exhortations serve if men neither do any good works,

nor can do any, either of themselves or with the help of grace? Or, if any good works are done by the unchosen, their deeds are not acceptable to God because He has not chosen their persons. To what purpose serve all the preachings and exhortations to the Faith, if the hearers have not the liberty of their own free will, by which they may, together with God's grace, labor to submit and subdue the rebellion of their reason to the obedience of Faith and belief in the Word of God? To what purpose serve all the exhortations and comminations and threats of Scripture, by which God calls men from sin and evil works, if ever the world came to believe that no man does any evil deeds himself, but God does them all Himself, and that every man is either chosen or unchosen. If we are of the chosen sort, no evil deed can damn us. And if we are of the unchosen sort, no good deed can help us. Whoever believes this, what does he care what he does, except for fear of the temporal laws of this world. In fact, if his false faith is strong enough, he will care little for the temporal law as well. He will think that neither death in bed nor death on the gallows comes according to his just deserts but hangs upon his destiny, and so will ignore all laws. Therefore they hold that no man is bound to obey any authority. All are at liberty to believe what they like and do what they like since they say that God does with us not what we deserve, but what He Himself likes.

What purpose does reason serve if man has no power over himself to direct his own works? If all our works are brought forth from us without our free will, then our actions are worse than those of a brute beast which are caused by the impulse of his sensual instinct. Given this opinion, our actions take place like leaves falling from a tree, or as a stone falls downward, and smoke upward by the power of nature, so all our deeds are good or bad because they ascend or descend by the violent hand of God Who acts independent of our minds. These beasts are not ashamed to say that, from their own experience of themselves, they prey according to their instinct, when they would do a thing they do it, and when they like, they leave it. But, I say, they never act by themselves alone without God. His assistance is always at hand if we are willing to cooperate with it, as the light is present with the sun, if we choose not to shut and wink our eyes willfully.

What purpose do all the laws serve? And where has all good order gone among men if every misordered wretch can allege that his wicked deed is his destiny?

If there is no free will, and every one's deed is his destiny, why do these people complain about any man, since they say that they do the deed because it is their destiny to do so? Why should they be angry with those who punish heretics, if it is their destiny to be heretical? For if they would keep to their own sect, and say that men do them wrong to burn them for their heresies because it was their destiny to be heretics, they are well answered with their own words. As one of their sect was in a good town in Germany which when he had robbed

a man and was brought before the judges, he could not deny the deed, but he said it was his destiny to do it and therefore they ought not to blame him. They answered him according to his own doctrine that if it were his destiny to steal, and that they should therefore excuse him, then it was also their destiny to hang him, and therefore he must as well excuse them. Undoubtedly, those who take away free will from among men cannot avoid this reasonable response. But the wretches then fall into the desperate ways of devils and damned souls. They fall into railing against and reproving the Justice of God, and say that He Himself has wrought their evil works, and wrongfully punished them, and cruelly created them to wretchedness. Our mother Eve put the guilt of her sin on the serpent and God was offended that she did not acknowledge her own part. But these wretches excuse themselves and the devil and all, and put the blame for their own sins and the devil's as well on Almighty God!

Surely, they care little about Heaven or Hell but would live in this world in lewd license and have all run to riot. Then when they see that they are not tolerated or their sect allowed free reign in the state, they devise by every means possible to convert many others to fall in with their lot in order to turn the world upside down and defend their folly and false heresy by force. And this they call the liberty of the Gospel, to be discharged from all order and all laws and do what they like. Whether what they do is good or be it bad, they say it is nothing but the work of God being wrought in them. Meanwhile, they hope that by this means God will give them many joys and pleasures. Needless to say, if their heresy were accepted and the world changed thereby, they would find themselves sorely deceived. For once law and order among men with the fear of punishment are taken away, there would be no one so strong who could keep his pleasure long before some stronger would take it from him. And once it had come to that point, with the world disturbed and fallen into chaos, how long would it be, and how much evil would have to occur before some remedy were found to set the world in order and peace again?

St. Ignatius Loyola

St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556), founder of the Society of Jesus, was baptized Iñigo, in the Spanish province of Guipúzcoa. In 1521 he was converted from a worldly life by reading a life of Christ and a collection of biographies of the saints during convalescence, after being wounded in a battle at Pamplona.

He spent the next eleven months in penance and prayer, mainly in a cave at Manresa. At this time he wrote the substance of the *Spiritual Exercises*, which were completed in Rome by 1541.

The *Spiritual Exercises* are a systematic method of growth in holiness. In the words of St. Ignatius, “just as strolling, walking, and running are bodily exercises, so spiritual exercises are methods of preparing and disposing the soul to free itself of all inordinate attachments, and after accomplishing this, of seeking and discovering the Divine Will regarding the disposition of one’s life, thus ensuring the salvation of one’s soul.”

The sections chosen from the *Spiritual Exercises* are mainly directives for the person making the Exercises. Most of the book, however, is a series of meditations, covering what are called four weeks, namely: (1) a reflection on the purpose of man’s creation, sin and its consequences; (2) the call of Christ to follow Him in the extension of His Kingdom; (3) the Passion and Death of Christ; (4) the Risen Christ from Easter Sunday to the Ascension, and the Contemplation for obtaining Divine Love.

St. Ignatius is the Church’s official patron of retreats and, according to Pope Pius XI, the book of Exercises is “a most wise and universal code of laws for the direction of souls in the way of salvation and perfection.”

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

Introductory Observations

The purpose of these observations is to provide some understanding of the spiritual exercises which follow and to serve as a help both for the one who is to give them and for the exercitant

1. By the term "Spiritual Exercises" is meant every method of examination of conscience, of meditation, of contemplation, of vocal and mental prayer, and of other spiritual activities that will be mentioned later. For just as taking a walk, journeying on foot, and running are bodily exercises, so we call Spiritual Exercises every way of preparing and disposing the soul to rid itself of all inordinate attachments, and, after their removal, of seeking and finding the will of God in the disposition of our life for the salvation of our soul.

2. The one who explains to another the method of meditating or contemplating should narrate accurately the facts of the contemplation or meditation. Let him adhere to the points, and add only a short or summary explanation. The reason for this is that when one in meditating takes the solid foundation of facts, and goes over it and reflects on it for himself, he may find something that makes them a little clearer or better understood. This may arise either from his own reasoning, or from the grace of God enlightening his mind. Now this produces greater spiritual relish and fruit than if one in giving the Exercises had explained and developed the meaning at great length. For it is not much knowledge that fills and satisfies the soul, but the intimate understanding and relish of the truth.

3. In all the Spiritual Exercises which follow, we make use of the acts of the intellect in reasoning, and of the acts of the will in manifesting our love. However, we must observe that when in acts of the will we address God our Lord or His saints either vocally or mentally, greater reverence is required on our part than when we use the intellect in reasoning.

4. Four Weeks are assigned to the Exercises given below. This corresponds to the four parts into which they are divided, namely: the first part, which is devoted to the consideration and contemplation of sin; the second part, which is taken up with the life of Christ our Lord up to Palm Sunday inclusive; the

third part, which treats of the passion of Christ our Lord; the fourth part, which deals with the Resurrection and Ascension; to this are appended Three Methods of Prayer.

However, it is not meant that each week should necessarily consist of seven or eight days. For it may happen that in the First Week some are slower in attaining what is sought, namely, contrition, sorrow, and tears for sin. Some, too, may be more diligent than others, and some more disturbed and tried by different spirits. It may be necessary, therefore, at times to shorten the Week, and at others to lengthen it. So in our search for the fruit that is proper to the matter assigned, we may have to do the same in all the subsequent Weeks. However, the Exercises should be finished in approximately thirty days.

5. It will be very profitable for the one who is to go through the Exercises to enter upon them with magnanimity and generosity toward his Creator and Lord, and to offer Him his entire will and liberty, that His Divine Majesty may dispose of him and all he possesses according to His most holy will.

6. When the one who is giving the Exercises perceives that the exercitant is not affected by any spiritual experiences, such as consolations or desolations, and that he is not troubled by different spirits, he ought to ply him with questions about the exercises. He should ask him whether he makes them at the appointed times, and how he makes them. He should question him about the Additional Directions, whether he is diligent in the observance of them. He will demand an account in detail of each one of these points.

7. If the director of the Exercises observes that the exercitant is in desolation and tempted, let him not deal severely and harshly with him, but gently and kindly. He should encourage and strengthen him for the future by exposing to him the wiles of the enemy of our human nature, and by getting him to prepare and dispose himself for the coming consolation.

8. If the one who is giving the Exercises should perceive from desolations, from the wiles of the enemy, and from consolations that the exercitant has need of them, he should explain to him the rules of the First Week and of the Second Week for the understanding of different spirits.

9. It should be observed that when the exercitant is engaged in the Exercises of the First Week, if he is a person unskilled in spiritual things, and if he is tempted grossly and openly, for example, by bringing before his mind obstacles to his advance in the service of God our Lord, such as labors, shame, fear for his good name in the eyes of the world, etc., the one who is giving the Exercises should not explain to him the rules about different spirits that refer to the Second Week. For while the rules of the First Week will be very helpful to him, those of the Second Week will be harmful, since they deal with matter that is too subtle and advanced for him to understand.

10. When the one who is giving the Exercises perceives that the exercitant is being assailed and tempted under the appearance of good, then is the proper

time to explain to him the rules of the Second Week, which we mentioned above. For commonly the enemy of our human nature tempts more under the appearance of good when one is exercising himself in the illuminative way. This corresponds to the Exercises of the Second Week. He does not tempt him so much under the appearance of good when he is exercising himself in the purgative way, which corresponds to the Exercises of the First Week.

11. While the exercitant is engaged in the First Week of the Exercises, it will help very much if he knows nothing of what is to be done in the Second Week. Rather, let him labor to attain what he is seeking in the First Week as if he hoped to find no good in the Second.

12. He who is giving the Exercises must insist with the exercitant that since he is to spend an hour in each of the five exercises or contemplations which are made every day, he must always take care that he is satisfied in the consciousness of having persevered in the exercise for a full hour. Let him rather exceed an hour than not use the full time. For the enemy is accustomed to make every effort that the hour to be devoted to a contemplation, meditation, or prayer should be shortened.

13. We must remember that during the time of consolation it is easy, and requires only a slight effort, to continue a whole hour in contemplation, but in time of desolation it is very difficult to do so. Hence, in order to fight against the desolation and conquer the temptation, the exercitant must always remain in the exercise a little more than the full hour. Thus he will accustom himself not only to resist the enemy, but even to overthrow him.

14. If the one who is giving the Exercises sees that the exercitant is going on in consolation and in great fervor, he must admonish him not to be inconsiderate or hasty in making any promise or vow. The more unstable in character he knows him to be, the more he should forewarn and admonish him. For though it is right to urge one to enter the religious state in which he knows that vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity are taken, and though a good work done under vow is more meritorious than one done without a vow, nevertheless, it is necessary to consider with great care the condition and endowments of each individual, and the help or hindrance one would experience in carrying out his promises.

15. The director of the Exercises ought not to urge the exercitant more to poverty or any promise than to the contrary, nor to one state of life or way of living more than to another. Outside the Exercises, it is true, we may lawfully and meritoriously urge all who probably have the required fitness to choose continence, virginity, the religious life, and every form of religious perfection. But while one is engaged in the Spiritual Exercises, it is more suitable and much better that the Creator and Lord in person communicate Himself to the devout soul in quest of the divine will, that He inflame it with love of Himself, and dispose it for the way in which it could better serve God in the future.

Therefore, the director of the Exercises, as a balance at equilibrium, without leaning to one side or the other, should permit the Creator to deal directly with the creature, and the creature directly with his Creator and Lord.

16. Hence, that the Creator and Lord may work with greater certainty in His creature, if the soul chance to be inordinately attached or inclined to anything, it is very proper that it rouse itself by the exertion of all its powers to desire the opposite of that to which it is wrongly attached. Thus if one's attachment leads him to seek and to hold an office or a benefice, not for the honor and glory of God our Lord, nor for the spiritual welfare of souls, but for his own personal gain and temporal interests, he should strive to rouse a desire for the contrary. Let him be insistent in prayer and in his other spiritual exercises in begging God for the reverse, that is, that he neither seek such office or benefice, nor anything else, unless the Divine Majesty duly regulate his desires and change his former attachment. As a result, the reason he wants or retains anything will be solely the service, honor, and glory of the Divine Majesty.

17. While the one who is giving the Exercises should not seek to investigate and know the private thoughts and sins of the exercitant, nevertheless, it will be very helpful if he is kept faithfully informed about the various disturbances and thoughts caused by the action of different spirits. This will enable him to propose some spiritual exercises in accordance with the degree of progress made and suited and adapted to the needs of a soul disturbed in this way.

18. The Spiritual Exercises must be adapted to the condition of the one who is to engage in them, that is, to his age, education, and talent. Thus exercises that he could not easily bear, or from which he would derive no profit, should not be given to one without education or with little natural ability.

Similarly, each one should be given those exercises that would be more helpful and profitable according to the degree of progress he wishes to attain.

Hence, one who wishes no further help than some instruction and the attainment of a certain degree of peace of soul may be given the Particular Examination of Conscience, and after that the General Examination of Conscience. Along with this, let him be given for half an hour each morning the method of prayer on the Commandments and on the Capital Sins, etc. Weekly confession should be recommended to him, and if possible, the reception of Holy Communion every two weeks, or even better, every week if he desires it. This method is more appropriate for those who have little ability or are illiterate. Let each of the Commandments be explained to them, and also the Capital Sins, the use of the five senses, the precepts of the Church, and the Works of Mercy.

Similarly, if the one giving the Exercises sees that the exercitant has little aptitude or little natural ability, that he is one from whom little fruit is to be expected, it is more suitable to give him some of the easier exercises as a preparation for confession. Then he should be given some ways of examining

his conscience, a plan for more frequent confession than he was accustomed to before, so as to retain what he has gained. But let him not go on further and take up the matter dealing with the Choice of a Way of Life, nor any other exercises that are outside the First Week. This is especially to be observed when much better results could be obtained with other persons, and when there is not sufficient time to take everything.

19. One who is educated or talented, but engaged in public affairs or necessary business, should take an hour and a half daily for the Spiritual Exercises.

First, the end for which man is created should be explained to him, then for half an hour the Particular Examination of Conscience may be presented, then the General Examination of Conscience, and the method of confessing and of receiving Holy Communion. For three days, let him meditate each morning for an hour and a half on the first, second, and third sins. For three more days, at the same time, he should take the meditation on personal sins. Then for three days, at the same hour, he should meditate on the punishment due to sin. Along with all of these meditations, he should be given the ten Additional Directions. In the mysteries of the life of our Lord, the same order should be observed which is explained later on at great length in the Exercises themselves.

20. To one who is more disengaged, and desirous of making as much progress as possible, all the Spiritual Exercises should be given in the same order in which they follow below. Ordinarily, the progress made in the Exercises will be greater, the more the exercitant withdraws from all friends and acquaintances, and from all worldly cares. For example, he can leave the house in which he dwelt and choose another house or room in order to live there in as great privacy as possible, so that he will be free to go to Mass and Vespers without any fear that his acquaintances will cause any difficulty. There are many advantages resulting from this separation, but the following three are the most important:

First, if in order to serve and praise God our Lord one withdraws from friends and acquaintances and from many occupations that were not undertaken with a pure intention, he gains no little merit before the Divine Majesty.

Secondly, in this seclusion the mind is not engaged in many things, but can give its whole attention to one single interest, that is, to the service of its Creator and its spiritual progress. Thus it is more free to use its natural powers to seek diligently what it so much desires.

Thirdly, the more the soul is in solitude and seclusion, the more fit it renders itself to approach and be united with its Creator and Lord; and the more closely it is united with Him, the more it disposes itself to receive graces and gifts from the infinite goodness of its God.

First Principle and Foundation

Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul.

The other things on the face of the earth are created for man to help him in attaining the end for which he is created.

Hence, man is to make use of them in as far as they help him in the attainment of his end, and he must rid himself of them in as far as they prove a hindrance to him.

Therefore, we must make ourselves indifferent to all created things, as far as we are allowed free choice and are not under any prohibition. Consequently, as far as we are concerned, we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, honor to dishonor, a long life to a short life. The same holds for all other things.

Our one desire and choice should be what is more conducive to the end for which we are created.

Daily Particular Examination of Conscience

There are three different times of the day and two examinations involved in this practice

First, in the morning, immediately on rising, one should resolve to guard carefully against the particular sin or defect with regard to which he seeks to correct or improve himself.

Secondly, after dinner, he should ask God our Lord for the grace he desires, that is, to recall how often he has fallen into the particular sin or defect, and to avoid it for the future.

Then follows the first examination. He should demand an account of himself with regard to the particular point which he has resolved to watch in order to correct himself and improve. Let him go over the single hours or periods from the time he arose to the hour and moment of the present examination, and in the first line of the figure given below, make a mark for each time that he has fallen into the particular sin or defect. Then he is to renew his resolution, and strive to amend during the time till the second examination is to be made.

Thirdly, after supper, he should make a second examination, going over as before each single hour, commencing with the first examination, and going up to the present one. In the second line of the figure given below, let him make a mark for each time he has fallen into the particular fault or sin.

Four Additional Directions

These are to serve as a help to more ready removal of the particular sin or fault

1. Every time one falls into the particular sin or fault, let him place his hand upon his breast, and be sorry for having fallen. He can do this even in the presence of many others without their perceiving what he is doing.

2. Since the first line of the figure to which G is prefixed represents the first examination of conscience, and the second one, the second examination, he should observe at night whether there is an improvement from the first line to the second, that is, from the first examination to the second.

3. The second day should be compared with the first, that is, the two examinations of the present day with the two of the preceding day. Let him observe if there is an improvement from one day to another.

4. Let him compare one week with another and observe whether he has improved during the present week as compared with the preceding.

NOTE

It should be noted that in the figure below the first G is larger, and signifies Sunday. The second is smaller, and stands for Monday, the third for Tuesday, the fourth for Wednesday, and so forth.

G

General Examination of Conscience

The purpose of this examination of conscience is to purify the soul and to aid us to improve our confessions

I presuppose that there are three kinds of thoughts in my mind, namely: one which is strictly my own, and arises wholly from my own free will; two others which come from without, the one from the good spirit, and the other from the evil one.

THOUGHTS

There are two ways of meriting from evil thoughts that come from without:

1. When a thought of committing a mortal sin comes to my mind which I resist at once, and thus overcome it.
2. When the same evil thought comes to me, and I resist it, but it returns again and again, and I always resist it till it is conquered.

This second way is more meritorious than the first.

It is a venial sin if the same thought of sinning mortally comes to mind and for a short time one pays heed to it, or receives some sense pleasure, or is somewhat negligent in rejecting it.

There are two ways of sinning mortally:

1. The first is to consent to the evil thought with the intention of carrying it out, or of doing so if one can.
2. The second way of sinning mortally is actually carrying out the sin to which consent was given.

This is a greater sin for three reasons: 1. Because of the greater duration; 2. Because of the greater intensity; 3. Because of the greater harm done to both persons.

WORDS

(One may also offend God in word in many ways: by blasphemy, by swearing.)

One must not swear, neither by the creature nor by the Creator, unless it is according to truth, out of necessity, and with reverence. By necessity I understand, not when anything that is true is affirmed under oath, but when the truth to which we swear is of some importance for the welfare of the soul or of the body, or with regard to temporal goods.

By reverence I understand that when the name of the Creator and Lord is mentioned, one acts with consideration and devoutly manifests due honor and respect.

It must be noted that in idle oaths we sin more grievously when we swear by the Creator than when we swear by a creature. However, to swear as one ought, according to truth, out of necessity, with reverence, is more difficult when we swear by a creature than when we swear by the Creator. There are three reasons for this:

1. When we wish to take an oath by some creature, the intention to call upon its name does not make us so attentive and cautious to speak the truth, and to confirm it by oath only if necessary, as we would be with the intention to use the name of the Creator and Lord of all.

2. When we swear by the name of some creature, it is not so easy to observe reverence and respect for the Creator as when in swearing we use the name of the Creator and Lord Himself. For the intention of using the name of God our Lord carries along with it a greater respect and reverence than the intention to use the name of a creature.

Hence, those who are perfect should be allowed to swear by a creature rather than those who are imperfect. The perfect, due to constant contemplation and the enlightenment of the understanding, consider, meditate, and ponder more that God our Lord is in every creature by His essence, power, and presence. Therefore, when they swear by a creature, they are more apt to be disposed to show respect and reverence to the Creator and Lord than those who are imperfect.

3. In frequent swearing by a creature, idolatry is more to be feared in those who are imperfect than in those who are perfect.

(Among other sins of the tongue that we must avoid are idle words.) No idle word should be uttered. I understand a word to be idle when it serves no good purpose, either for myself or for another, and was not intended to do so. Hence, words are never idle when spoken for any useful purpose, or when meant to serve the good of one's own soul or that of another, of the body or of temporal possessions. Nor are they idle because one speaks of matters that do not pertain to his state, for example, if a religious speaks of wars or of commerce. In all we have mentioned, there will be merit if the speech is directed to some good purpose; there will be sin if it is directed to an evil purpose, or if engaged in for no good end.

(Lying, false testimony, detraction are also sins of the tongue.) Nothing should be said to lessen the good name of another, or to complain about him. For if I reveal the hidden mortal sin of another, I sin mortally; if I reveal a hidden venial sin, I sin venially; if his defect, I manifest my own.

If, however, my intention is good, there are two ways in which it is permissible to speak of the sin or fault of another:

1. When a sin is public, as in the case of a woman openly leading a shameless life, or of a sentence passed in court, or of a commonly known error that infests the minds of those with whom we live.

2. When a hidden sin is revealed to someone with the intention that he help the one who is in sin to rise from his state. But then there must be some grounds or probable reasons for believing that he will be able to help him.

(Among sins of the tongue may be considered ridicule, insults, and other similar sins, which the one giving the Exercises may discuss if he judges it necessary.)

DEEDS

The subject matter for examination will be the Ten Commandments, the laws of the Church, the recommendations of superiors. All transgressions of obligations arising from any of these three groups are more or less grievous sins according to the gravity of the matter.

By recommendations of superiors is meant crusade indulgences and other indulgences, such as those for peace on condition of confession and reception of Holy Communion. For to be the cause of one acting against such pious recommendations and regulations of superiors, or to do so oneself, is no small sin.

Method of Making the General Examination of Conscience

THERE ARE FIVE POINTS IN THIS METHOD

1. The first point is to give thanks to God for the favors received.
2. The second point is to ask for grace to know my sins and to rid myself of them.
3. The third point is to demand an account of my soul from the time of rising up to the present examination. I should go over one hour after another, one period after another. The thoughts should be examined first, then the words, and finally, the deeds in the same order as was explained under the Particular Examination of Conscience.
4. The fourth point will be to ask pardon of God our Lord for my faults.
5. The fifth point will be to resolve to amend with the grace of God. Close with an *Our Father*.

Three Methods of Prayer

The First Method of Prayer

The First Method of Prayer is on the Ten Commandments, the Seven Capital Sins, the three powers of the soul, and the five senses.

This manner of praying is not meant so much to provide a form and method of prayer properly so called, but rather to supply a way of proceeding and some practices by which the soul may prepare itself and profit so that its prayer may be acceptable to God.

I. ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Additional Direction. First an equivalent of the second Additional Direction as given in the Second Week is to be observed, that is, before entering on the prayer I recollect myself for a while, and either seated or walking up and down, as may seem better, I will consider where I am going, and for what purpose. The same direction should be observed at the beginning of all the methods of prayer.

Prayer. A preparatory prayer should be made, for example, I ask God our Lord for grace to know how I have failed in the observance of the Ten Commandments, and also for grace and help to amend for the future. I will beg for a perfect understanding of them in order to observe them better and glorify and praise the Divine Majesty more.

Method. In this first method of prayer I should consider and think over the First Commandment, asking myself, how I have observed it, and in what I have failed. I will use as a measure of this consideration the space of time it takes to recite three times the *Our Father* and the *Hail Mary*. If during this time I find faults I have committed, I will ask forgiveness and say an *Our Father*. This same method will be followed with each of the Ten Commandments.

NOTES

Note I. If one comes to the consideration of a Commandment against which he is not in the habit of committing any sins, it is not necessary to delay so long on it. According as he finds that he sins more or less against a Commandment, he should devote more or less time to the examination and consideration of it. The same rule should be observed with regard to the Capital Sins.

Note II. After one has finished the consideration of all the Commandments as indicated above, and has accused himself of his faults, and asked for grace and help to amend for the future, he should close with a colloquy to God our Lord, adapted to the subject matter.

II. ON THE CAPITAL SINS

Method. With regard to the Seven Capital Sins, after the Additional Direction, the preparatory prayer should be made in the way prescribed, but with the modification that the object is the sins to be avoided, whereas before, it was the Commandments to be observed. In like manner the method prescribed, the regulation of the time, and the colloquy are to be observed.

Note. In order to understand better the faults committed that come under the Seven Capital Sins, let the contrary virtues be considered. So also, the better to avoid these sins, one should resolve to endeavor by devout exercises to acquire and retain the seven virtues contrary to them.

III. ON THE THREE POWERS OF THE SOUL

Method. With regard to the three powers of the soul, the same method and regulation that were given for the Commandments should be observed.

IV. ON THE FIVE SENSES OF THE BODY

Method. With regard to the five senses of the body, the same method should always be observed, only the subject matter is changed.

Note. If anyone wishes to imitate Christ our Lord in the use of the senses, he should recommend himself to His Divine Majesty in the preparatory prayer, and after the consideration of each sense say a *Hail Mary* or an *Our Father*.

If he wishes to imitate our Lady in the use of his senses, he should recommend himself to her in the preparatory prayer that she obtain for him this grace from her Son, and after the consideration of each sense say a *Hail Mary*.

Second Method of Prayer

This consists in contemplating the meaning of each word of a prayer

Additional Direction. The same Additional Direction used in the First Method of Prayer should be used here also.

Preparatory Prayer. This should be made according to the person to whom the prayer is addressed.

Method. This is as follows: One may kneel or sit, as may be better suited to his disposition and more conducive to devotion. He should keep his eyes closed, or fixed in one position without permitting them to roam. Then let him say, "Father," and continue meditating upon this word as long as he finds various meanings, comparisons, relish, and consolation in the consideration of it. The same method should be followed with each word of the *Our Father*, or of any other prayer which he wishes to use for this method.

Rule I. He should continue for an hour in the way described, going through the whole *Our Father*. When he has finished, let him say the *Hail Mary*, the *Creed*, *Soul of Christ*, and *Hail Holy Queen*, vocally or mentally, in the usual way.

Rule II. If in contemplation, say on the *Our Father*, he finds in one or two words abundant matter for thought and much relish and consolation, he should not be anxious to go on, though the whole hour be taken up with what he has found. When the hour is over, let him say the rest of the *Our Father* in the usual way.

Rule III. If he has been occupied with one or two words of the *Our Father* for a whole hour, when he wishes to pray on another day, let him say those words in the ordinary way, and commence to contemplate as stated in the second rule with the words that follow immediately after them.

Note I. After one or more days, when he has finished the *Our Father*, he should use the *Hail Mary* for prayer in the same way, then other forms of prayer, so that for some time he is always engaged with one of them.

Note II. At the end of the prayer, he should turn to the person to whom the prayer is directed, and ask for the virtues or graces which he sees he needs most.

Third Method of Prayer

A Measured Rhythmical Recitation

Additional Direction. The same Additional Direction will be observed here as in the First and Second Methods.

Prayer. The preparatory prayer will be as in the Second Method of Prayer.

Method. This is as follows: With each breath or respiration, one should pray mentally while saying a single word of the *Our Father*, or other prayer that is being recited, in such a way that from one breath to another a single word is said. For this same space of time, the attention is chiefly directed to the meaning of the word, to the person who is addressed, to our own lowliness, or the difference between the greatness of the person and our own littleness. In this way, observing the same measure of time, he should go through the other words of the *Our Father*. Let the other prayers, the *Hail Mary*, the *Soul of Christ*, the Creed, and the *Hail Holy Queen*, be recited in the ordinary way.

Rule I. On another day, or at some other time, when he wishes to pray, he may recite the *Hail Mary* in this measured rhythm, and the other prayers in the ordinary way.

Rule II. He who wishes to spend more time in this measured prayer, may say all the prayers mentioned above, or a part of them in this way. But let him keep the same method of a breath for the measure as has been explained above.

Rules for the Discernment of Spirits

I

Rules for understanding to some extent the different movements produced in the soul and for recognizing those that are good to admit them, and those that are bad, to reject them. These rules are more suited to the first week

1. In the case of those who go from one mortal sin to another, the enemy is ordinarily accustomed to propose apparent pleasures. He fills their imagination with sensual delights and gratifications, the more readily to keep them in their vices and increase the number of their sins.

With such persons the good spirit uses a method which is the reverse of the above. Making use of the light of reason, he will rouse the sting of conscience and fill them with remorse.

2. In the case of those who go on earnestly striving to cleanse their souls from sin and who seek to rise in the service of God to greater perfection, the method pursued is the opposite of that mentioned in the first rule.

Then it is characteristic of the evil spirit to harass with anxiety, to afflict with sadness, to raise obstacles backed by fallacious reasonings that disturb the soul. Thus he seeks to prevent the soul from advancing.

It is characteristic of the good spirit, however, to give courage and strength, consolations, tears, inspirations, and peace. This He does by making all easy, by removing all obstacles so that the soul goes forward in doing good.

3. Spiritual Consolation. I call it consolation when an interior movement is aroused in the soul, by which it is inflamed with love of its Creator and Lord, and as a consequence, can love no creature on the face of the earth for its own sake, but only in the Creator of them all. It is likewise consolation when one sheds tears that move to the love of God, whether it be because of sorrow for sins, or because of the sufferings of Christ our Lord, or for any other reason that is immediately directed to the praise and service of God. Finally, I call consolation every increase of faith, hope, and love, and all interior joy that invites and attracts to what is heavenly and to the salvation of one's soul by filling it with peace and quiet in its Creator and Lord.

4. Spiritual Desolation. I call desolation what is entirely the opposite of what is described in the third rule, as darkness of soul, turmoil of spirit,

inclination to what is low and earthly, restlessness rising from many disturbances and temptations which lead to want of faith, want of hope, want of love. The soul is wholly slothful, tepid, sad, and separated, as it were, from its Creator and Lord. For just as consolation is the opposite of desolation, so the thoughts that spring from consolation are the opposite of those that spring from desolation.

5. In time of desolation we should never make any change, but remain firm and constant in the resolution and decision which guided us the day before the desolation, or in the decision to which we adhered in the preceding consolation. For just as in consolation the good spirit guides and counsels us, so in desolation the evil spirit guides and counsels. Following his counsels we can never find the way to a right decision.

6. Though in desolation we must never change our former resolutions, it will be very advantageous to intensify our activity against the desolation. We can insist more upon prayer, upon meditation, and on much examination of ourselves. We can make an effort in a suitable way to do some penance.

7. When one is in desolation, he should be mindful that God has left him to his natural powers to resist the different agitations and temptations of the enemy in order to try him. He can resist with the help of God, which always remains, though he may not clearly perceive it. For though God has taken from him the abundance of fervor and overflowing love and the intensity of His favors, nevertheless, he has sufficient grace for eternal salvation.

8. When one is in desolation, he should strive to persevere in patience. This reacts against the vexations that have overtaken him. Let him consider, too, that consolation will soon return, and in the meantime, he must diligently use the means against desolation which have been given in the sixth rule.

9. The principal reasons why we suffer from desolation are three:

The first is because we have been tepid and slothful or negligent in our exercises of piety, and so through our own fault spiritual consolation has been taken away from us.

The second reason is because God wishes to try us, to see how much we are worth, and how much we will advance in His service and praise when left without the generous reward of consolations and signal favors.

The third reason is because God wishes to give us a true knowledge and understanding of ourselves, so that we may have an intimate perception of the fact that it is not within our power to acquire and attain great devotion, intense love, tears, or any other spiritual consolation; but that all this is the gift and grace of God our Lord. God does not wish us to build on the property of

another, to rise up in spirit in a certain pride and vainglory and attribute to ourselves the devotion and other effects of spiritual consolation.

10. When one enjoys consolation, let him consider how he will conduct himself during the time of ensuing desolation, and store up a supply of strength as defense against that day.

11. He who enjoys consolation should take care to humble himself and lower himself as much as possible. Let him recall how little he is able to do in time of desolation, when he is left without such grace or consolation.

On the other hand, one who suffers desolation should remember that by making use of the sufficient grace offered him, he can do much to withstand all his enemies. Let him find his strength in his Creator and Lord.

12. The enemy conducts himself as a woman. He is a weakling before a show of strength, and a tyrant if he has his will. It is characteristic of a woman in a quarrel with a man to lose courage and take to flight if the man shows that he is determined and fearless. However, if the man loses courage and begins to flee, the anger, vindictiveness, and rage of the woman surge up and know no bounds. In the same way, the enemy becomes weak, loses courage, and turns to flight with his seductions as soon as one leading a spiritual life faces his temptations boldly, and does exactly the opposite of what he suggests. However, if one begins to be afraid and to lose courage in temptations, no wild animal on earth can be more fierce than the enemy of our human nature. He will carry out his perverse intentions with consummate malice.

13. Our enemy may also be compared in his manner of acting to a false lover. He seeks to remain hidden and does not want to be discovered. If such a lover speaks with evil intention to the daughter of a good father, or to the wife of a good husband, and seeks to seduce them, he wants his words and solicitations kept secret. He is greatly displeased if his evil suggestions and depraved intentions are revealed by the daughter to her father, or by the wife to her husband. Then he readily sees he will not succeed in what he has begun. In the same way, when the enemy of our human nature tempts a just soul with his wiles and seductions, he earnestly desires that they be received secretly and kept secret. But if one manifests them to a confessor, or to some other spiritual person who understands his deceits and malicious designs, the evil one is very much vexed. For he knows that he cannot succeed in his evil undertaking, once his evident deceits have been revealed.

14. The conduct of our enemy may also be compared to the tactics of a leader intent upon seizing and plundering a position he desires. A commander and leader of an army will encamp, explore the fortifications and defenses of the

stronghold, and attack at the weakest point. In the same way, the enemy of our human nature investigates from every side all our virtues, theological, cardinal, and moral. Where he finds the defenses of eternal salvation weakest and most deficient, there he attacks and tries to take us by storm.

2

Further rules for understanding the different movements produced in the soul. They serve for a more accurate discernment of spirits and are more suitable for the second week

1. It is characteristic of God and His Angels, when they act upon the soul, to give true happiness and spiritual joy, and to banish all the sadness and disturbances which are caused by the enemy.

It is characteristic of the evil one to fight against such happiness and consolation by proposing fallacious reasonings, subtleties, and continual deceptions.

2. God alone can give consolation to the soul without any previous cause. It belongs solely to the Creator to come into a soul, to leave it, to act upon it, to draw it wholly to the love of His Divine Majesty. I said without previous cause, that is, without any preceding perception or knowledge of any subject by which a soul might be led to such a consolation through its own acts of intellect and will.

3. If a cause precedes, both the good angel and the evil spirit can give consolation to a soul, but for a quite different purpose. The good angel consoles for the progress of the soul, that it may advance and rise to what is more perfect. The evil spirit consoles for purposes that are the contrary, and that afterwards he might draw the soul to his own perverse intentions and wickedness.

4. It is a mark of the evil spirit to assume the appearance of an angel of light. He begins by suggesting thoughts that are suited to a devout soul, and ends by suggesting his own. For example, he will suggest holy and pious thoughts that are wholly in conformity with the sanctity of the soul. Afterwards, he will endeavor little by little to end by drawing the soul into his hidden snares and evil designs.

5. We must carefully observe the whole course of our thoughts. If the beginning and middle and end of the course of thoughts are wholly good and directed to what is entirely right, it is a sign that they are from the good angel. But the course of thoughts suggested to us may terminate in something evil, or distracting, or less good than the soul had formerly proposed to do. Again, it may end in what weakens the soul, or disquiets it; or by destroying the peace,

tranquillity, and quiet which it had before, it may cause disturbance to the soul. These things are a clear sign that the thoughts are proceeding from the evil spirit, the enemy of our progress and eternal salvation.

6. When the enemy of our human nature has been detected and recognized by the trail of evil marking his course and by the wicked end to which he leads us, it will be profitable for one who has been tempted to review immediately the whole course of the temptation. Let him consider the series of good thoughts, how they arose, how the evil one gradually attempted to make him step down from the state of spiritual delight and joy in which he was, till finally he drew him to his wicked designs. The purpose of this review is that once such an experience has been understood and carefully observed, we may guard ourselves for the future against the customary deceits of the enemy.

7. In souls that are progressing to greater perfection, the action of the good angel is delicate, gentle, delightful. It may be compared to a drop of water penetrating a sponge.

The action of the evil spirit upon such souls is violent, noisy, and disturbing. It may be compared to a drop of water falling upon a stone.

In souls that are going from bad to worse, the action of the spirits mentioned above is just the reverse. The reason for this is to be sought in the opposition or similarity of these souls to the different kinds of spirits. When the disposition is contrary to that of the spirits, they enter with noise and commotion that are easily perceived. When the disposition is similar to that of the spirits, they enter silently, as one coming into his own house when the doors are open.

8. When consolation is without previous cause, as was said, there can be no deception in it, since it can proceed from God our Lord only. But a spiritual person who has received such a consolation must consider it very attentively, and must cautiously distinguish the actual time of the consolation from the period which follows it. At such a time the soul is still fervent and favored with the grace and aftereffects of the consolation which has passed. In this second period the soul frequently forms various resolutions and plans which are not granted directly by God our Lord. They may come from our own reasoning on the relations of our concepts and on the consequences of our judgments, or they may come from the good or evil spirit. Hence, they must be carefully examined before they are given full approval and put into execution.

Rules for Thinking with the Church

The following rules should be observed to foster the true attitude of mind we ought to have in the Church Militant

1. We must put aside all judgment of our own, and keep the mind ever ready and prompt to obey in all things the true Spouse of Christ our Lord, our holy Mother, the hierarchical Church.

2. We should praise sacramental confession, the yearly reception of the Most Blessed Sacrament, and praise more highly monthly reception, and still more weekly Communion, provided requisite and proper dispositions are present.

3. We ought to praise the frequent hearing of Mass, the singing of hymns, psalmody, and long prayers whether in the church or outside; likewise, the hours arranged at fixed times for the whole Divine Office, for every kind of prayer, and for the canonical hours.

4. We must praise highly religious life, virginity, and continency; and matrimony ought not be praised as much as any of these.

5. We should praise vows of religion, obedience, poverty, chastity, and vows to perform other works of supererogation conducive to perfection. However, it must be remembered that a vow deals with matters that lead us closer to evangelical perfection. Hence, whatever tends to withdraw one from perfection may not be made the object of a vow, for example, a business career, the married state, and so forth.

6. We should show our esteem for the relics of the saints by venerating them and praying to the saints. We should praise visits to the Station Churches, pilgrimages, indulgences, jubilees, crusade indulgences, the lighting of candles in churches.

7. We must praise the regulations of the Church with regard to fast and abstinence, for example, in Lent, on Ember Days, Vigils, Fridays, and Saturdays. We should praise all works of penance, not only those that are interior but also those that are exterior.

8. We ought to praise not only the building and adornment of churches, but also images and veneration of them according to the subject they represent.

9. Finally, we must praise all the commandments of the Church, and be on the alert to find reasons to defend them, and by no means in order to criticize them.

10. We should be more ready to approve and praise the orders, recommendations, and way of acting of our superiors than to find fault with them. Though some of the orders, etc., may not have been praiseworthy, yet to speak against them, either when preaching in public or in speaking before the people, would rather be the cause of murmuring and scandal than of profit. As a consequence, the people would become angry with their superiors, whether secular or spiritual. But while it does harm in the absence of our superiors to speak evil of them before the people, it may be profitable to discuss their bad conduct with those who can apply a remedy.

11. We should praise both positive theology and that of the Scholastics.

It is characteristic of the positive doctors, such as St. Augustine, St. Jerome, St. Gregory, and others, to rouse the affections so that we are moved to love and serve God our Lord in all things.

On the other hand, it is more characteristic of the scholastic doctors, such as St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, the Master of the Sentences, and others, to define and state clearly, according to the needs of our times, the doctrines that are necessary for eternal salvation, and that help to refute and expose more efficaciously all errors and fallacies.

Further, just because scholastic doctors belong to more recent times, they not only have the advantage of correct understanding of Holy Scripture and of the teaching of the saints and positive doctors, but, enlightened by the grace of God, they also make use of the decisions of the Councils and of the definitions and decrees of our holy Mother Church.

12. We must be on our guard against making comparisons between those who are still living and the saints who have gone before us, for no small error is committed if we say: "This man is wiser than St. Augustine," "He is another St. Francis or even greater," "He is equal to St. Paul in goodness and sanctity," and so on.

13. If we wish to proceed securely in all things, we must hold fast to the following principle: What seems to me white, I will believe black if the hierarchical Church so defines. For I must be convinced that in Christ our Lord, the bridegroom, and in His spouse the Church, only one Spirit holds sway, which governs and rules for the salvation of souls. For it is by the same Spirit and Lord who gave the Ten Commandments that our holy Mother Church is ruled and governed.

14. Granted that it be very true that no one can be saved without being predestined and without having faith and grace, still we must be very cautious about the way in which we speak of all these things and discuss them with others.

15. We should not make it a habit of speaking much of predestination. If somehow at times it comes to be spoken of, it must be done in such a way that the people are not led into any error. They are at times misled, so that they say: "Whether I shall be saved or lost, has already been determined, and this cannot be changed whether my actions are good or bad." So they become indolent and neglect the works that are conducive to the salvation and spiritual progress of their souls.

16. In the same way, much caution is necessary, lest by much talk about faith, and much insistence on it without any distinctions or explanations, occasion be given to the people, whether before or after they have faith informed by charity, to become slothful and lazy in good works.

17. Likewise we ought not to speak of grace at such length and with such emphasis that the poison of doing away with liberty is engendered.

Hence, as far as is possible with the help of God, one may speak of faith and grace that the Divine Majesty may be praised. But let it not be done in such a way, above all not in times which are as dangerous as ours, that works and free will suffer harm, or that they are considered of no value.

18. Though the zealous service of God our Lord out of pure love should be esteemed above all, we ought also to praise highly the fear of the Divine Majesty. For not only filial fear but also servile fear is pious and very holy. When nothing higher or more useful is attained, it is very helpful for rising from mortal sin, and once this is accomplished, one may easily advance to filial fear, which is wholly pleasing and agreeable to God our Lord since it is inseparably associated with the love of Him.

Everyman

Everyman is an English morality play of the late fifteenth century, and one of the most popular in medieval literature. Its author is unknown, although some claim it is a free translation of a Dutch play, *Elckerlijc*. The success of the play over the centuries, into modern times, indicates the universality of its basic theme and the author's mastery of its dramatic structure.

The plot revolves around the encounter of the play's hero with Death, who suddenly appears to summon him to give his final account to God. Everyman asks for delay, which is not allowed. But he may have as companion anyone bold enough to undertake the journey. There follows a series of encounters with allegorical representatives of Everyman's associates and possessions, like Fellowship, Kindred, and Worldly Goods, all of whom decline the invitation. Only Good Deeds is willing to accompany Everyman, prepared by Self-Knowledge and Confession. Accompanied to the point of death by such powers as Five Wits and Discretion, Everyman finally commends his soul to God.

Essential to the play is the lesson that one earthly value after another must be surrendered as we prepare for eternity. Essential, too, is the very Catholic notion that our good works on earth, performed with the free will cooperating with the grace of God, are our one abiding hope as we leave this world and enter eternal life.

Everyman

[*Dramatis Personae:*

GOD
MESSENGER
DEATH
EVERYMAN
FELLOWSHIP
KINDRED
COUSIN
GOODS
GOOD DEEDS
KNOWLEDGE
CONFESSION
BEAUTY
STRENGTH
DISCRETION
FIVE WITS
ANGEL
DOCTOR]

Here begins a Treatise how the high Father of Heaven sends Death to summon every Creature to come and give Account of their Lives in this World, and is in the Manner of a Morality Play.

[*Enter Messenger as prologue.*]

MESSENGER. I pray you all give your audience,
And hear this matter with reverence,
By figure a moral play:
The *Summoning of Everyman* called it is,
That of our lives and ending shows
How transitory we be all day.
This matter is wonderous precious,
But the intent of it is more gracious,
And sweet to bear away.
The story saith: Man, in the beginning

Look well, and take good heed to the ending,
 Be you never so gay!
 Ye think sin in the beginning full sweet,
 Which in the end causeth thy soul to weep,
 When the body lieth in clay.
 Here shall you see how Fellowship and Jollity,
 Both Strength, Pleasure, and Beauty,
 Will fade from thee as flower in May;
 For ye shall hear how our heavenly King
 Calleth Everyman to a general reckoning.
 Give audience, and hear what he doth say. [*Exit.*]

[*God speaks from above.*]

GOD. I perceive, here in my majesty,
 How that all creatures be to me unkind,
 Living without dread in worldly prosperity:
 Of ghostly sight the people be so blind,
 Drowned in sin, they know me not for their God.
 In worldly riches is all their mind;
 They fear not my rightwiseness, the sharp rod.
 My love that I shewed, when I for them died
 They forget clean, and shedding of my blood red.
 I hanged between two [thieves], it cannot be denied;
 To get them life I suffered to be dead;
 I held their fate, with thorns hurt was my head.
 I could do no more than I did, truly;
 And now I see the people do clean forsake me.
 They use the seven deadly sins damnable,
 As pride, covetousness, wrath, and lechery
 Now in the world be made commendable;
 And thus they leave of angels the heavenly company.
 Everyman lives so after his own pleasure,
 And yet of their life they be nothing sure.
 I see the more that I them forebear
 The worse they be from year to year.
 All that liveth appaireth fast.
 Therefore I will, in all the haste,
 Have a reckoning of Everyman's person;
 For, and I leave the people thus alone
 In their life and wicked tempests,
 Verily they will become much worse than beasts!
 For now one would by envy another up eat;

Charity they do all clean forget.
 I hoped well that Everyman
 In my glory should make his mansion,
 And thereto I had them all elect.
 But now I see, like traitors deject,
 They thank me not for the pleasure that I to them meant,
 Nor yet for their being that I them have lent.
 I proffered the people great multitude of mercy,
 And few there be that asketh it heartily.
 They be so cumbered with worldly riches,
 That needs on them I must do justice,
 On Everyman living, without fear.
 Where art thou, Death, thou mighty messenger?

[*Enter Death.*]

DEATH. Almighty God, I am here at your will,
 Your commandment to fulfill.

GOD. Go thou to Everyman
 And show him, in my name,
 A pilgrimage he must on him take,
 Which he in no wise may escape,
 And that he bring with him a sure reckoning
 Without delay or any tarrying. [*God withdraws.*]

DEATH. Lord, I will in the world go run over all,
 And cruelly outsearch both great and small.
 Every man will I beset that liveth beastly
 Out of God's laws, and dreadeth not folly.
 He that loveth riches I will strike with my dart,
 His sight to blind, and from heaven to depart—
 Except that alms be his good friend—
 In hell for to dwell, world without end.

[*Enter Everyman at a distance.*]

Lo, yonder I see Everyman walking.
 Full little he thinketh on my coming;
 His mind is on fleshly lusts and his treasure,
 And great pain it shall cause him to endure
 Before the Lord, heaven's King.

[*Death halts Everyman.*]

Everyman, stand still! Whither art thou going
 Thus gaily? Hast thou thy Maker forgot?

EVERYMAN. Why askst thou?
Wouldest thou wete?

DEATH. Yea, sir, I will show you:
In great haste I am sent to thee
From God out of his majesty.

EVERYMAN. What, sent to me?

DEATH. Yea, certainly.
Though thou have forgotten him here,
He thinketh on thee in the heavenly sphere,
As, or we depart, thou shalt know.

EVERYMAN. What desireth God of me?

DEATH. That shall I show thee:
A reckoning he will needs have
Without any longer respite.

EVERYMAN. To give a reckoning, longer leisure I crave;
This blind matter troubleth my wit.

DEATH. On thee thou must take a long journey;
Therefore thy book of account with thee thou bring,
For turn again thou can not by no way.
And look thou be sure of thy reckoning,
For before God thou shalt answer, and show
Thy many bad deeds, and good but a few,
How thou hast spent thy life, and in what wise,
Before the chief Lord of paradise.
Have ado that we were in that way,
For, wete thou well, thou shalt makê none [thine] attorney.

EVERYMAN. Full unready I am such reckoning to give.
I know thee not: what messenger art thou?

DEATH. I am Death, that no man dreadeth,
For every man I rest, and no man spareth;
For it is God's commandment
That all to me should be obedient.

EVERYMAN. O Death, thou comest when I had thee least in mind!
In thy power it lieth me to save;
Yet of my good will I give thee, if ye will be kind:
Yea, a thousand pound shalt thou have
And [thou] defer this matter till another day.

DEATH. Everyman, it may not be by no way.
 I set not by gold, silver, nor riches,
 Ne by pope, emperor, king, duke, ne princes;
 For, and I would receive gifts great,
 All the world I might get;
 But my custom is clean contrary.
 I give thee no respite come hence, and not tarry.

EVERYMAN. Alas, shall I have no longer respite?
 I may say Death giveth no warning!
 To think on thee, it maketh my heart sick,
 For all unready is my book of reckoning.
 But twelve year and I might have abiding,
 My counting book I would make so clear
 That my reckoning I should not need to fear.
 Wherefore, Death, I pray thee, for God's mercy,
 Spare me till I be provided of remedy!

DEATH. Thee availeth not to cry, weep, and pray;
 But haste thee lightly that thou were gone the journey,
 And prove thy friends if thou can;
 For, wete thou well, the tide abideth no man,
 And in the world each living creature
 For Adam's sin must die of nature.

EVERYMAN. Death, if I should this pilgrimage take,
 And my reckoning surely make,
 Show me, for saint charity,
 Should I not come again shortly?

DEATH. No, Everyman. And thou be once there,
 Thou mayest never more come here,
 Trust me verily.

EVERYMAN. O gracious God in the high seat celestial,
 Have mercy on me in this most need!
 Shall I have no company from this vale terrestrial
 Of mine acquaintance, that way me to lead?

DEATH. Yea, if any be so hardy
 That would go with thee and bear thee company.
 Hie thee that thou were gone to God's magnificence,
 Thy reckoning to give before his presence.
 What, weenest thou thy life is given thee,
 And thy worldly goods also?

EVERYMAN. I had wend so, verily.

DEATH. Nay, nay; it was but lent thee.
For, as soon as thou art gone,
Another awhile shall have it, and then go therefrom,
Even as thou hast done.
Everyman, thou art mad! Thou hast thy wits five,
And here on earth will not amend thy life—
For suddenly I do come.

EVERYMAN. O wretched caitiff, whither shall I flee,
That I might scape this endless sorrow?
Now, gentle Death, spare me till to-morrow,
That I may amend me
With good advisement.

DEATH. Nay, thereto I will not consent,
Nor no man will I respite,
But to the hearty suddenly I shall smite
Without any advisement.
And now out of thy sight I will me hie
See thou make thee ready shortly,
For thou mayst say this is the day
That no man living may scape away. [*Exit.*]

EVERYMAN. Alas, I may well weep with sighs deep;
Now have I no manner of company
To help me in my journey, and me to keep;
And also my writing is full unready.
How shall I do now for to excuse me?
I would to God I had never been begotten!
To my soul a full great profit it had been,
For now I fear pains huge and great.
The time passeth. Lord, help, that all wrought!
For though I mourn it availeth nought:
The day passeth, and is almost a-go;
I wot not well what for to do.
To whom were I best my complaint to make?
What and I to Fellowship thereof spoke,
And showed him of this sudden chance?
For in him is all mine affiance;
We have in the world so many a day
Be on good friends, in sport and play.
[*Fellowship enters at a distance.*]

I see him yonder, certainly.
I trust that he will bear me company;
Therefore to him will I speak to ease my sorrow.
Well met, good Fellowship, and good morrow!

[*Fellowship speaks.*]

FELLOWSHIP. Everyman, good morrow, by this day!
Sir, why lookest thou so piteously?
If any thing be amiss, I pray thee, me say,
That I may help to remedy.

EVERYMAN. Yea, good Fellowship, yea,
I am in great jeopardy.

FELLOWSHIP. My true friend, show to me your mind;
I will not forsake thee unto my life's end
In the way of good company.

EVERYMAN. That was well spoken, and lovingly.

FELLOWSHIP. Sir, I must needs know your heaviness;
I have pity to see you in any distress;
If any have you wronged, ye shall revenged be,
Though I on the ground be slain for thee—
Though that I know before that I should die!

EVERYMAN. Verily, Fellowship, gramercy.

FELLOWSHIP. Tush! by thy thanks I set not a straw.
Show me your grief, and say no more.

EVERYMAN. If I my heart should to you break,
And then you to turn your mind from me
And would not me comfort when you hear me speak,
Then should I ten times sorrier be.

FELLOWSHIP. Sir, I say as I will do in deed.

EVERYMAN. Then be you a good friend at need;
I have found you true here before.

FELLOWSHIP. And so ye shall evermore.
For, in Faith, and thou go to Hell,
I will not forsake thee by the way.

EVERYMAN. Ye speak like a good friend! I believe you well.
I shall deserve it, and I may.

FELLOWSHIP. I speak of no deserving, by this day.
For he that will say, and nothing do,
Is not worthy with good company to go;
Therefore show me the grief of your mind,
As to your friend most loving and kind.

EVERYMAN. I shall show you how it is:
Commaned I am to go a journey —
A long way, hard, and dangerous —
And give a strait count, without delay
Before the high judge Adonai.
Wherefore, I pray you, bear me company,
As ye have promised, in this journey.

FELLOWSHIP. That is matter indeed! Promise is duty;
But, and I should take such a voyage on me,
I know it well, it should be to my pain.
Also it make me afeard certain.
But let us take counsel here, as well as we can,
For your words would frighten a strong man.

EVERYMAN. Why, ye said if I had need,
Ye would me never forsake, alive nor dead,
Though it were to hell, truly.

FELLOWSHIP. So I said, certainly,
But such pleasures be set aside, thee sooth to say:
And also, if we took such a journey,
When should we come again?

EVERYMAN. Nay, never again, till the day of doom.

FELLOWSHIP. In faith, then will not I come there!
Who hath you these tidings brought?

EVERYMAN. Indeed, Death was with me here.

FELLOWSHIP. Now, by God that all hath bought,
If Death were the messenger,
For no man that is living to-day
I will not go that loath journey —
Not for the father that begat me!

EVERYMAN. Ye promised otherwise, pardie.

FELLOWSHIP. I wot well I said so, truly.
And yet, if thou will eat, and drink, and make good cheer,
Or haunt to women the lusty company,

I would not forsake you while the day is clear,
Trust me, verily!

EVERYMAN. Yea, thereto ye would be ready!
To go to mirth, songs, and play
Your mind will sooner apply,
Than to bear me company in my long journey.

FELLOWSHIP. Now, in good faith, I will not that way.
But, and thou wilt murder, or any man kill,
In that I will help thee with a good will!

EVERYMAN. O, that is a simple advice, indeed!
Gentle Fellow, help me in my necessity;
We have loved long, and now I need;
And now, gentle Fellowship, remember me!

FELLOWSHIP. Whether ye have loved me or no,
By Saint John, I will not with thee go.

EVERYMAN. Yet, I pray thee, take the labour and do so much for me
To bring me forward, for saint charity,
And comfort me till I come without the town.

FELLOWSHIP. Nay, and thou would give me a new gown,
I will not a foot with thee go.
But, and you had tarried, I would not have left thee so.
And now as God speed thee in thy journey,
For from thee I will depart as fast as I may.

EVERYMAN. Whither away, Fellowship? Will thou forsake me?

FELLOWSHIP. Yea, by my fay, to God I betake thee.

EVERYMAN. Farewell, good Fellowship! For this my heart is sore;
Adieu for ever! I shall see thee no more.

FELLOWSHIP. In faith, Everyman, farewell now at the end;
For you I will remember that parting is mourning. [*Exit.*]

EVERYMAN. Alack! shall we thus depart indeed?
Our Lady, help, without any more comfort,
Lo, Fellowship forsaketh me in my most need.
For help in this world whither shall I resort?
Fellowship herebefore with me would merry make,
And now little sorrow for me doth he take.
It is said, in prosperity men friends may find,
Which in adversity be full unkind.

Now whither for succor shall I flee,
 Sith that Fellowship hath forsaken me?
 To my kinsmen I will, truly,
 Praying them to help me in my necessity:
 I believe that they will do so,
 For Kind will creep where it may not go.
 I will go say, for yonder I see them go.
 Where be ye now, my friends and kinsmen?

[*Enter Kindred and Cousin.*]

KINDRED. Here be we now, at your commandment.
 Cousin, I pray you show us your intent
 In any wise, and not spare.

COUSIN. Yea, Everyman, and to us declare
 If ye be disposed to go any whither,
 For, wete you well, we will live and die together.

KINDRED. In wealth and woe we will with you hold,
 For over his kin a man may be bold.

EVERYMAN. Gramercy, my friends and kinsmen kind.
 Now shall I show you the grief of my mind:
 I was commanded by a messenger
 That is a high king's chief officer;
 He bade me go a pilgrimage, to my pain,
 And I know well I shall never come again.
 Also I must give a reckoning straight,
 For I have a great enemy that hath me in wait,
 Which intendeth me for to hinder.

KINDRED. What account is that which ye must render?
 That would I know.

EVERYMAN. Of all my works I must show
 How I have lived, and my days spent;
 Also of ill deeds that I have used
 In my time, since life was me lent,
 And of all virtues that I have refused.
 Therefore, I pray you, go thither with me
 To help to make mine account, for saint charity.

COUSIN. What, to go thither? Is that the matter?
 Nay, Everyman, I had liefer fast on bread and water
 All this five year and more.

EVERYMAN. Alas, that ever I was bore!
For now shall I never be merry
If that you forsake me.

KINDRED. Ah, sir, what, ye be a merry man!
Take good heart to you, and make no moan.
But one thing I warn you, by Saint Anne:
As for me, ye shall go alone.

EVERYMAN. My Cousin, will you not with me go?

COUSIN. No, by Our Lady! I have the cramp in my toe.
Trust not to me, for, so God me speed.
I will deceive you in your most need.

KINDRED. It availeth not us to tice.
Ye shall have my maid with all my heart;
She loveth to go to feasts, there to be nice,
And to dance, and abroad to start:
I will give her leave to help you in that journey,
If that you and she may agree.

EVERYMAN. Now, show me the very effect of your mind:
Will you go with me, or abide behind?

KINDRED. Abide behind? yea, that I will, and I may!
Therefore farewell until another day. [*Exeunt Kindred.*]

EVERYMAN. How should I be merry or glad?
For, fair promises men to me make,
But when I have most need they me forsake.
I am deceived; that makes me sad.

COUSIN. Cousin Everyman, farewell now,
For verily I will not go with you.
Also of mine own [life] an unready reckoning
I have to account; therefore I make tarrying.
Now God keep thee, for now I go. [*Exit.*]

EVERYMAN. Ah, Jesus, is all come hereto?
Lo, fair words maketh fools glad;
They promise, and nothing will do, certain.
My kinsmen promised me faithfully
For to abide with me steadfastly,
And now fast away do they flee;
Even so Fellowship promised me.
What friend were best me of to provide?

I lose my time here longer to abide.
 Yet in my mind a thing there is;—
 All my life I have loved riches;
 If that my Goods now help me might,
 He would make my heart full light.
 I will speak to him in this distress.—
 Where art thou, my Goods and riches?

[*Goods speaks from a corner.*]

GOODS. Who calleth me? Everyman? What, haste thou hast!
 I lie here in corners, trussed and piled so high,
 And in chests I am locked so fast,
 Also sacked in bags, thou mayst see with thine eye,
 I cannot stir; in packs low I lie.
 What would ye have, lightly me say.
 ever among,

EVERYMAN. Come hither, Goods, in all the haste thou may,
 For of counsel I must desire thee.

[*Goods approaches.*]

GOODS. Sir, and ye in the world have trouble or adversity,
 That can I help you to remedy shortly.

EVERYMAN. It is another disease that grieveth me;
 In this world it is not, I tell thee so.
 I am sent for another way to go,
 To give a straight count general
 Before the highest Jupiter of all;
 And all my life I have had joy and pleasure in thee,
 Therefore, I pray thee go with me.
 For, peradventure, thou mayst before God Almighty
 My reckoning help to clean and purify;
 For it is said ever among,
 That money maketh all right that is wrong.

GOODS. Nay, Everyman, I sing another song!
 I follow no man in such voyages;
 For, and I went with thee,
 Thou shouldst fare much the worse for me;
 For because on me thou did set thy mind,
 Thy reckoning I have made blotted and blind,
 That thine account thou cannot make truly—
 And that hast thou for the love of me.

EVERYMAN. That would grieve me full sore,
When I should come to that fearful answer.
Up, let us go thither together.

GOODS. Nay, not so! I am too brittle, I may not endure.
I will follow no man one foot, be ye sure.

EVERYMAN. Alas, I have thee loved, and had great pleasure
All my life-days on good and treasure!

GOODS. That is to thy damnation, without a lesing.
For my love is contrary to the love everlasting.
But, if thou had me loved moderately during,
As, to the poor give part of me,
Then shouldst thou not in this dolour be,
Nor in this great sorrow and care.

EVERYMAN. Lo, now was I deceived or I was ware,
And all I may wyte my spending of time!

GOODS. What, weenest thou that I am thine?

EVERYMAN. I had wend so.

GOODS. Nay, Everyman, I say no.
As for a while I was lent thee;
A season thou hast had me in prosperity;
My condition is man's soul to kill;
If I save one, a thousand I do spill.
Weenest thou that I will follow thee?
Nay, from this world, not verily.

EVERYMAN. I had wend otherwise.

GOODS. Therefore to thy soul Goods are a thief;
For when thou art dead, this is my guise:
Another to deceive in this same wise
As I have done thee, and all to his soul's reprief.

EVERYMAN. O false Goods, cursed thou be,
Thou traitor to God, that hast deceived me
And caught me in thy snare!

GOODS. Marry, thou brought thyself in care,
Whereof I am glad;
I must needs laugh, I cannot be sad.

EVERYMAN. Ah, Goods, thou has had long my hearty love!

I gave thee that which should be the Lord's above.
 But wilt thou not go with me in deed?
 I pray thee truth to say.

GOODS. No, so God me speed!
 Therefore farewell, and have good day. [*Exit.*]

EVERYMAN. O, to whom shall I make my moan
 For to go with me in that heavy journey?
 First Fellowship said he would with me gone.
 His words were very pleasant and gay,
 But afterward he left me alone.
 Then spake I to my kinsmen, all in despair,
 And also they gave me words fair—
 They lacked no fair speaking,
 But all forsake me in the ending.
 Then went I to my Goods, that I loved best,
 In hope to have comfort; but there had I least,
 For my Goods sharply did me tell
 That he bringeth many into hell.
 Then of myself I was ashamed;
 And so I am worthy to be blamed.
 Thus may I well myself hate.
 Of whom shall I now counsel take?
 I think that I shall never speed
 Till that I go to my Good Deed.
 But, alas, she is so weak,
 That she can neither go nor speak.
 Yet will I venture on her now.—
 My Good Deeds, where be you?

[*Good Deeds speaks from the ground.*]

GOOD DEEDS. Here I lie, cold in the ground.
 Thy sins hath me sore bound,
 That I cannot stir.

EVERYMAN. O Good Deeds, I stand in fear;
 I must you pray of counsel,
 For help now should come right well.

GOOD DEEDS. Everyman, I have understanding
 That ye be summoned account to make
 Before Messias, of Jerusalem king;
 And you do by me, that journey with you will I take.

EVERYMAN. Therefore I come to you my moan to make.
I pray you that ye will go with me.

GOOD DEEDS. I would full fain, but I cannot stand verily.

EVERYMAN. Why, is there anything on you full?

GOOD DEEDS. Yea, sir, I may thank you of all!

If ye had perfectly cheered me,
Your book of account now full ready had be.

[*Shows Everyman his Book of Account.*]

Look, the books of your works and deeds eke;
Oh, see how they lie under the feet,
To your soul's heaviness.

EVERYMAN. Our Lord Jesus help me!

For one letter here I can not see.

GOOD DEEDS. Here is a blind reckoning in time of distress!

EVERYMAN. Good Deeds, I pray you help me in this need,

Or else I am forever damned indeed!

Therefore help me to make reckoning

Before the Redeemer of all thing,

That king is, and was, and ever shall.

GOOD DEEDS. Everyman, I am sorry of your fall,

And fain would I help you, and I were able.

EVERYMAN. Good Deeds, your counsel I pray you give me.

GOOD DEEDS. That shall I do verily.

Though that on my feet I may not go,

I have a sister that shall with you also,

Called Knowledge, which shall with you abide

To help you to make that dreadful reckoning.

[*Enter Knowledge.*]

KNOWLEDGE. Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide,

In thy most need to go by thy side.

EVERYMAN. In good condition I am now in every thing,

And am wholly content with this good thing,

Thanked be God my Creator!

GOOD DEEDS. And when he hath brought thee there

Where thou shalt heal thee of thy smart,

Then go you with your reckoning and your Good Deeds together
 For to make you joyful at heart
 Before the blessed Trinity.

EVERYMAN. My Good Deed, gramercy;
 I am well content, certainly,
 With your words sweet.

KNOWLEDGE. Now go we together lovingly
 To Confession, that cleansing river.

EVERYMAN. For joy I weep; I would we were there;
 But, I pray you, give me cognition
 Where dwelleth that holy man, Confession.

KNOWLEDGE. In the house of salvation.
 We shall find him in that place
 That shall us comfort, by God's grace.
 Lo, this is Confession; kneel down and ask mercy,
 For he is in good conceit with God Almighty.

EVERYMAN [*kneeling*]. O glorious fountain,
 that all uncleanness doth clarify.
 Wash from me the spots of vices unclean,
 That on me no sin may be seen.
 I come, with Knowledge, for my redemption,
 Repent with hearty and full contrition;
 For I am commanded a pilgrimage to take,
 And great accounts before God to make.
 Now I pray you, Shrift, mother of salvation,
 Help my good deeds for my piteous exclamation!

CONFESSION. I know your sorrow well, Everyman.
 Because with Knowledge ye come to me,
 I will you comfort as well as I can.
 And a precious jewel I will give thee,
 Called penance, wise voider of adversity;
 Therewith shall your body chastised be
 With abstinence and perseverance in God's service.
 [*Shows Everyman a knotted scourge.*]
 Here shall you receive that scourge of me,
 Which is penance strong that ye must endure,
 To remember thy Saviour was scourged for thee
 With sharp scourges, and suffered it patiently;
 So must thou or thou scape that painful pilgrimage.

Knowledge, keep him in this voyage,
 And by that time Good Deeds will be with thee.
 But in any wise be sure of mercy,
 For your time draweth fast [to a close]. And ye will saved be,
 Ask God mercy, and He will grant truly.
 When with the scourge of penance man doth him bind,
 The oil of forgiveness then shall he find.

EVERYMAN. Thanked be God for his gracious work!
 For now I will my penance begin.
 This hath rejoiced and lighted my heart,
 Though the knots will be painful and hard within.

KNOWLEDGE. Everyman, look your penance that ye fulfill,
 What pain that ever it to you be;
 And Knowledge shall give you counsel at will
 How your accounts ye shall make clearly.

[*Everyman makes his confession.*]

EVERYMAN. O eternal God, O heavenly figure,
 O way of rightwiseness, O goodly vision,
 Which descended down in a virgin pure
 Because he would Everyman redeem,
 Which Adam forfeited by his disobedience:
 O blessed Godhead, elect and high-divine,
 Forgive my grievous offence;
 Here I cry thee mercy in this presence.
 O ghostly treasure, O ransom and redeemer,
 Of all the world, hope and conductor,
 Mirror of joy, and founder of mercy,
 Which illumineth heaven and earth thereby,
 Hear my clamorous complaint, though it late be;
 Receive my prayers; unworthy in this heavy life,
 Though I be, a sinner most abominable,
 Yet let my name be written in Moses' table;
 O Mary, pray to the Maker of all thing,
 Me for to help at my ending,
 And save me from the power of my enemy,
 For Death assaileth me strongly;
 And, Lady, that I may by means of thy prayer
 Of your Son's glory to be partaker,
 By the means of His Passion, I it crave.
 I beseech you help my soul to save.—

[*He rises.*]

Knowledge, give me the scourge of penance;
My flesh therewith shall give a quittance
I will now begin, if God give me grace.

KNOWLEDGE. Everyman, God give you time and space:
Thus I bequeath you into the hands of our Saviour.
Thus may you make your reckoning sure.

EVERYMAN. In the name of the Holy Trinity
My body sore punished shall be.

[*Scourges himself.*]

Take this, body, for the sin of the flesh!
Also thou delight to go gay and fresh,
And in the way of damnation thou did me bring;
Therefore suffer now strokes and punishing.
Now of penance I will wade the water clear,
To save me from purgatory, that sharp fire.

[*Good Deeds rises from the ground.*]

GOOD DEEDS. I thank God, now I can walk and go,
And am delivered of my sickness and woe!
Therefore with Everyman I will go, and not spare:
His good works I will help him to declare.

KNOWLEDGE. Now, Everyman, be merry and glad;
Your Good Deeds cometh now; ye may not be sad.
Now are your Good Deeds whole and sound,
Going upright upon the ground.

EVERYMAN. My heart is light, and shall be evermore.
Now will I smite faster than I did before. [*Continues scourging.*]

GOOD DEEDS. Everyman, pilgrim, my special friend,
Blessed be thou without end!
For thee is prepared the eternal glory.
You have me made whole and sound,
Therefore I will bide by thee in every stroud [time of trial].

EVERYMAN. Welcome, my Good Deeds; now I hear thy voice,
I weep for very sweetness of love.

KNOWLEDGE. Be no more sad, but ever rejoice.
God seeth thy living in his throne above;
Put on this garment to thy behove,

Which is wet with your tears,
Or else before God you may it miss
When you to your journey's end come shall.

EVERYMAN. Gentle Knowledge, what do you it call?

KNOWLEDGE. It is a garment of sorrow.
From pain it will you borrow.
Contrition it is,
That getteth forgiveness;
It pleaseth God passing well.

GOOD DEEDS. Everyman, will you wear it for your heal [salvation]?

[Everyman puts on the robe of contrition.]

EVERYMAN. Now blessed be Jesu, Mary's Son,
For now have I on true contrition.
And let us go now without tarrying.
Good Deeds, have we clear our reckoning?

GOOD DEEDS. Yea, indeed, I have it here.

EVERYMAN. Then I trust we need not fear.
Now, friends, let us not part in twain.

KNOWLEDGE. Nay, Everyman, that will we not, certain.

GOOD DEEDS. Yet must thou lead with thee
Three persons of great might.

EVERYMAN. Who should they be?

GOOD DEEDS. Discretion and Strength they hight,
And thy Beauty may not abide behind.

KNOWLEDGE. Also ye must call to mind
Your Five Wits as for your consellers.

GOOD DEEDS. You must have them ready at all hours.

EVERYMAN. How shall I get them hither?

KNOWLEDGE. You must call them all together,
And they will hear you incontinent.

EVERYMAN. My friends, come hither and be present,
Discretion, Strength, my Five Wits, and Beauty!

[Enter Discretion, Strength, Five Wits, and Beauty.]

BEAUTY. Here at your will we be all ready.
What will ye that we should do?

GOOD DEEDS. That ye would with Everyman go
And help him in his pilgrimage.
Advise ye, will ye with him or not in that voyage?

STRENGTH. We will bring him all thither,
To his help and comfort, ye may believe me.

DISCRETION. So will we go with him all together.

EVERYMAN. Almighty God, loved may thou be!
I give thee laud that I have hither brought
Strength, Discretion, Beauty and Five Wits. Lack I nought.
And my Good Deeds, with Knowledge clear,
All be in company at my will here.
I desire no more to my business.

STRENGTH. And I, Strength, will by you stand in distress,
Though thou would in battle fight on the ground.

FIVE WITS. And though it were through the world round,
We will not depart, for sweet nor sour.

BEAUTY. No more will I, unto death's hour,
Whatsoever thereof befall.

DISCRETION. Everyman, advise you first of all;
Go with a good advisement and deliberation.
We all give you virtuous monition
That all shall be well.

EVERYMAN. My friends, harken what I will tell:
I pray God reward you in his heavenly sphere.
Now harken all that be here,
For I will make my testament
Here before you all present.
In alms half my good I will give with my twain hands
In the way of charity, with good intent,
And the other half still shall remain
In bequest, to be returned where it ought to be.
This I do in despite of the fiend of hell,
To go quite out of his peril
Ever after and this day.

KNOWLEDGE. Everyman, harken what I say:

Go to priesthood, I you advise,
 And receive of him, in any wise
 The holy sacrament and ointment together.
 Then shortly see you return again hither;
 We will all abide you here.

FIVE WITS. Yea, Everyman, hie ye that ye ready were.
 There is no emperor, king, duke, ne baron
 That of God hath commission
 As hath the least priest in the world being;
 For of the blessed sacraments pure and benign
 He beareth the keys, and thereof hath the cure
 For man's redemption—it is ever sure—
 Which God for our soul's medicine
 Gave us out of his heart with great pain.
 Here in this transitory life, for thee and me,
 The blessed sacraments seven there be:
 Baptism, confirmation, with priesthood good,
 And the sacrament of God's precious Flesh and Blood,
 Marriage, the Holy Extreme Unction, and Penance.
 These seven be good to have in remembrance,
 Gracious sacraments of high divinity.

EVERYMAN. Fain would I receive that holy body,
 And meekly to my ghostly father I will go.

FIVE WITS. Everyman, that is the best that ye can do.
 God will you to salvation bring,
 For priesthood exceedeth all other thing.
 To us Holy Scripture they do teach,
 And converteth man from sin, heaven to reach.
 God hath to them more power given
 Than to any angel that is in heaven.
 With five words he may consecrate
 God's Body in Flesh and Blood to make,
 And handleth his Maker between his hands.
 The priest bindeth and unbindeth all bands,
 Both in earth and in heaven.
 Thou ministers all the Sacraments seven;
 Though we kissed thy feet, thou were worthy!
 Thou art surgeon that cureth sin deadly;
 No remedy we find under God
 But all only priesthood.

Everyman, God gave priests that dignity,
 And setteth them in his stead among us to be.
 Thus be they above angels in degree.

[*Everyman goes to receive the sacrament and extreme unction from the priest, while the others await his return.*]

KNOWLEDGE. If priests be good, it is so, surely.
 But when Jesu hanged on the cross with great smart,
 There he gave, out of his blessed heart,
 The same sacraments in great torment.
 He sold them not to us, that Lord Omnipotent!
 Therefore Saint Peter the Apostle doth say
 That Jesu's curse hath all they
 Which God their Saviour do buy or sell,
 Or they for any money do take or tell.
 Sinful priests giveth the sinners example bad:
 Their children sitteth by other men's fires, I have heard;
 And some haunteth women's company
 With unclean life, as lusts of lechery.
 These be with sin made blind.

FIVE WITS. I trust to God no such may we find.
 Therefore let us priesthood honour,
 And follow their doctrine for our soul's succor.
 We be their sheep, and they shepherds be,
 By whom we all be kept in safety.
 Peace, for yonder I see Everyman come,
 Which hath made true satisfaction.

GOOD DEEDS. Methinks it is he indeed.

[*Everyman returns.*]

EVERYMAN. Now Jesu be our alder speed.
 I have received the sacrament for my redemption,
 And then mine extreme unction.
 Blessed be all they that counselled me to take it!
 And now, friends, let us go without longer respite;
 I thank God that ye have tarried so long.
 Now set each of you on this rod your hand,
 And shortly follow me.
 I go before, there I would be. God be our guide!

STRENGTH. Everyman, we will not from you go
 Till ye have gone this voyage long.

DISCRETION. I, Discretion, will bide by you also.

KNOWLEDGE. And though this pilgrimage be never so strong,
I will never part you fro.
Everyman, I will be as sure by thee
As ever I did by Judas Maccabee.

[*They proceed to Everyman's grave.*]

EVERYMAN. Alas, I am so faint I may not stand!
My limbs under me do fold.
Friends, let us not turn again to this land,
Not for all the world's gold;
For into this cave must I creep
And turn to earth, and there to sleep.

BEAUTY. What, into this grave? Alas!

EVERYMAN. Yea, there shall you consume more and less.

BEAUTY. And what, should I smother here?

EVERYMAN. Yea, by my faith, and never more appear.
In this world live no more we shall,
But in heaven before the highest Lord of all.

BEAUTY. I cross out all this! Adieu, by Saint John!
I take my cap in my lap and am gone.

EVERYMAN. What, Beauty, whither will ye?

BEAUTY. Peace, I am deaf; I look not behind me,
Not and thou would give me all the gold in thy chest! [*Exit Beauty.*]

EVERYMAN. Alas, whereto may I trust?
Beauty goeth fast away hie.
She promised with me to live and die.

STRENGTH. Everyman, I will thee also forsake and deny.
Thy game liketh me not at all.

EVERYMAN. Why then ye will forsake me all?
Sweet Strength, tarry a little space.

STRENGTH. Nay, sir, by the rood of grace!
I will hie me from thee fast,
Though thou weep till thy heart brast.

EVERYMAN. Ye would ever bide by me, ye said.

STRENGTH. Yea, I have you far enough conveyed!
 You be old enough, I understand,
 Your pilgrimage to take on hand.
 I repent me that I hither came.

EVERYMAN. Strength, you to displeas I am to blame,
 Yet promise is debt, this ye well wot.

STRENGTH. In faith, I care not.
 Thou art but a fool to complain.
 You spend your speech, and waste your brain.
 Go thrust thee into the ground! [*Exit.*]

EVERYMAN. I had wend surer I should you have found.
 He that trusteth in his Strength
 She him deceiveth at the length.
 Both Strength and Beauty forsaketh me,
 Yet they promised me fair and lovingly.

DISCRETION. Everyman, I will after Strength be gone.
 As for me, I will leave you alone.

EVERYMAN. Why, Discretion, will you forsake me?

DISCRETION. Yea, in faith, I will go from thee,
 For when Strength goeth before
 I follow after evermore.

EVERYMAN. Yet, I pray thee, for the love of the Trinity,
 Look in my grave once piteously!

DISCRETION. Nay, so nigh will I not come.
 Farewell, every one! [*Exit Discretion.*]

EVERYMAN. O all things faileth, save God alone—
 Beauty, Strength, and Discretion;
 For when Death bloweth his blast
 They all run from me full fast.

FIVE WITS. Everyman, my leave now of thee I take.
 I will follow the other, for here I thee forsake.

EVERYMAN. Alas! then may I wail and weep,
 For I took you for my best friend.

FIVE WITS. I will no longer thee keep.
 Now farewell, and there an end. [*Exeunt Five Wits.*]

EVERYMAN. O Jesu, help! All hath forsaken me.

GOOD DEEDS. Nay, Everyman, I will bide with thee.
I will not forsake thee indeed;
Thou shalt find me a good friend at need.

EVERYMAN. Gramercy, Good Deeds! Now may I true friends see.
They have forsaken me, every one;
I loved them better than my Good Deeds alone.
Knowledge, will ye forsake me also?

KNOWLEDGE. Yea, Everyman, when ye to Death shall go;
But not yet, for no manner of danger.

EVERYMAN. Gramercy, Knowledge, with all my heart!

KNOWLEDGE. Nay, yet I will not from hence depart
Till I see where ye shall be come.

EVERYMAN. Methinks, alas, that I must be gone
To make my reckoning and my debts pay,
For I see my time is nigh spent away.
Take example, all ye that this do hear or see,
How they that I loved best do forsake me
Except my Good Deeds, that bideth truly.

GOOD DEEDS. All earthly things is but vanity:
Beauty, Strength, and Discretion do man forsake,
Foolish friends, and kinsmen, that fair spake,
All fleeth save Good Deeds, and that am I.

EVERYMAN. Have mercy on me, God most mighty,
And stand by me, thou Mother and Maid, Holy Mary!

GOOD DEEDS. Fear not; I will speak for thee.

EVERYMAN. Here I cry God mercy!

GOOD DEEDS. Short our end, and minish our pain;
Let us go and never come again.

EVERYMAN. Into thy hands, Lord, my soul I commend.
Receive it, Lord, that it be not lost.
As thou me boughtest, so me defend,
And save me from the fiend's boast,
That I may appear with that blessed host
That shall be saved at the day of doom.
In manus tuas, of might's most
For ever, *commendo spiritum meum!* [Luke 23:46]

[*Everyman and Good Deeds descend into the grave.*]

KNOWLEDGE. Now hath he suffered that which we all shall endure.
 The Good Deeds shall make all sure.
 Now hath he made ending.
 Methinketh that I hear angels sing,
 And make great joy and melody
 Where Everyman's soul received shall be.

THE ANGEL [*above, or within*]. Come, excellent elect spouse to Jesu.
 Hereabove thou shalt go,
 Because of thy singular virtue.
 Now thy soul is taken thy body fro,
 Thy reckoning is crystal clear.
 Now shalt thou into the heavenly sphere,
 Unto the which all ye shall come
 That liveth well before the day of doom.

[*Enter Doctor as epilogue.*]

DOCTOR. This moral men may have in mind.
 Ye hearers, take it of worth, old and young,
 And forsake pride, for he deceiveth you in the end.
 And remember Beauty, Five Wits, Strength, and Discretion,
 They all at the last do Everyman forsake,
 Save his Good Deeds there doth he take.
 But beware; and they be small,
 Before God he hath no help at all.
 None excuse may be there for Everyman.
 Alas, how shall he do then?
 For, after death, amends may no man make,
 For then mercy and pity do him forsake.
 If his reckoning be not clear when he do come,
 God will say: "*Ite, maledicti, in ignem aeternum!*" [Matt 25:41]
 And he that hath his account whole and sound,
 High in heaven he shall be crowned.
 Unto which place God bring us all thither,
 That we may live body and soul together.
 Thereto help the Trinity!
 Amen, say ye, for Saint Charity.
Finis.

*Thus endeth this morality play of Everyman.
 Imprinted at London in Paul's
 Church yard by me
 John Skot.*

St. Teresa of Ávila

St. Teresa of Ávila (1515–82), Spanish Carmelite mystic and Doctor of the Church, is the classic proof that the highest contemplation is not incompatible with great practical achievements.

Her importance is twofold. As reformer of the Carmelite Order, the work she began in the sixteenth century has survived to this day; her spirit is still living in the men and women who embody her ideals as cloistered religious, or as Carmelite tertiaries in the world. But as spiritual writer she has had, if anything, even deeper influence on the lives of untold thousands who have been inspired by Teresian literature.

She wrote her first work, The Way of Perfection, during the quietest time of her life, after she founded the monastery of St. Joseph in Ávila in 1562. During the intervals between her sixteen foundations she wrote, under obedience to her confessors, Foundations, her Life, the Interior Castle, and several shorter books.

The following pages from The Way of Perfection are St. Teresa's classic explanation of the Lord's Prayer. They reveal her mystical insights and prudent realism. On both levels, the key to her spiritual teaching is selfless humility.

THE WAY OF PERFECTION

Reflections on the Lord's Prayer

I

She Dwells on the Great Love Our Lord Shows Us, and the Honour He Gives Us in the First Words of the "Our Father."

“Our Father who art in Heaven.” O my God! how justly do You seem to be the Father of such a Son, and how well does Your Son appear to be the Son of such a Father! May You be blessed for ever. Was it not enough to bestow so great a favour, at the end of the prayer? At the beginning, You fill our hands and bestow so high a favour upon us, that it would be well if the understanding were so filled and the will so taken up therewith, as to be unable to speak one word more to You. O! how well, daughters, would perfect contemplation come in here! O! with what great reason should the soul here enter into herself, the better to be able to ascend above herself, that so this Holy Son may make her understand, what a glorious place that must be where He says His Father is, viz., in Heaven! Let us leave this earth, my daughters, since it is proper such a favour as this should not be so undervalued, as that we should still remain on the earth after we understand how great this favour is.

O Son of God! and my Lord! how is it that You give so much in the first word? How is it, that not only do You humble Yourself exceedingly, so as to unite Yourself with us in our petitions, and make Yourself a Brother of what is so vile and miserable, but You give us, in the name of Your Father, all that can be given, since You wish Him to take us for His sons? Thy word cannot fail: You oblige Him to keep it, which is no small burden; since in being a Father He bears with us, however grievous our offences may be, if we return to Him as the prodigal son did. He has to pardon and to comfort us in our afflictions; He has to support us, as such a Father should do, who must of course be far better than all earthly fathers, since there can be nothing in Him but every perfection;

and after all this, it is Your wish to make us partners and co-heirs with You! Consider, my Lord! that though by reason of the love You have for us, and through Your humility, nothing can hinder You from doing so; (for, O Lord! You were upon earth and were clothed with it; and since You assumed our nature, You seem to have some reason in regarding our benefit)—still, consider Your Father is in heaven: you say so, and therefore it is fit you should have respect for His honour, and since you are exposed to dishonour on our account, leave your Father free; do not oblige Him to so much for one so wicked as I am, and who will so ungratefully repay Him. O! good Jesus! how clearly have You shown that You are one with Him, and that Your will is His, and His yours. What acknowledgment is so clear! How wonderful is the love You have for us. You did endeavour all You could to conceal from the devil that You are the Son of God; and through the ardent desire You have for our good, nothing could hinder You from showing us this excessive favour. Who could do it but You, O Lord? At least, I see clearly, O my Jesus! that You like a darling Son, did speak for Yourself and for us, and that You are powerful to perform in heaven what You say on earth. Blessed for ever be You O my Lord! who are so desirous of giving, that nothing can be too precious for You.

Now, daughters, do you think this is a good Master, who, in order to entice us to learn what He teaches us, begins by bestowing on us so great a favour? Do you think it will now be fit, that though we pronounce this word vocally, we should forbear to apprehend it with our understanding, lest our heart, by seeing such love, should break in pieces? And what son is there in the world that does not endeavour to know who his father is, when he hath a good one, who possesses such majesty and power? If He were not such, I should not wonder at our being unwilling to know ourselves to be His sons; for the world is now in such a state, that if a father has a lower dignity than his son, the latter does not think himself honoured in owning him for his father. This is not the case here; for God forbid that ever there should be any mention of such things in this house; it would then become a hell. But let her who is the most noble by birth seldom or ever mention her father's name; for all must be equal here.

O! sacred College of Christ, wherein St. Peter, who was only a fisherman, had more authority than St. Bartholomew, who was a king's son. His Majesty knew what would happen in the world about precedency, viz., who was the more noble? This is nothing more than to dispute, whether the earth be good for bricks or for mortar. O my God! what an insignificant matter! May His Majesty deliver you, sisters, from such contests as these, though it be but in jest: I trust in His Majesty that He will. When something of this nature shall happen to any one, let a remedy be applied immediately, and let her fear to become a Judas among the apostles; let a penance be given to her, till she thoroughly understand that she deserves not to be even the most vile earth.

Our good Jesus has given you a most excellent Father; let no other Father be

owned or mentioned here; and endeavour, my daughters, to be such that you may deserve to be regaled with Him; cast yourselves into His arms, you know already He will not cast you away, if you be good daughters. Now, who will not take care not to lose such a Father? Daughters, what an opportunity is there here, for your consolation! But not to dwell longer on this point, I will leave you to your own thoughts; for, however distracted your mind may be, between such a Father and such a Son the Holy Spirit must of necessity be; and may He inflame your will, and bind it with the most ardent love, since the great desire you have is not sufficient.

II

On the Words, "Who Art in Heaven." The Saint Also Explains What the Prayer of Recollection Means.

Consider what your Master says next: "Who art in Heaven." Do you think it is of little importance for you to know what heaven is, and where your Most Holy Father is to be sought? I tell you that it is very important for wandering intellects, not only to believe this, but to endeavour to understand it by experience, because it is one of those things which strongly bind the understanding and recollect the soul. You already know that God is in all places; now it is clear, that where the king is, there is the court; in a word, that where God is, there Heaven is: you may also believe without doubting, that where His Majesty is, all His glory is.

Consider what St. Augustine says, that he sought God in many places, and came at last to find Him in himself. Do you think it is of little importance for a distracted soul to understand this truth, and to know that she need not go to heaven to speak with her Eternal Father, or to regale herself with Him? Nor need she speak aloud, for however low she may speak, He is so near, that He will hear us; neither does she require wings to fly and seek Him, but she can compose herself in solitude and behold Him within herself; and let her not separate from so good a Guest, but with great humility speak to Him as a Father, entreat Him as a Father, relate her troubles to Him, and beg a remedy for them, knowing that she is not worthy to be His daughter.

Be on your guard, daughters, against a certain false modesty, to which some persons are addicted, and think it is humility: yet it is *not* humility, if the King is pleased to show you a favour, not to accept of it; but it is humility to accept it, and acknowledge how much it exceeds your merits, and so you may rejoice in it. A fine humility indeed!—that I should entertain in my house the Emperor of heaven and earth, who comes therein to show me kindness and recreate Himself

with me, while I out of humility will neither answer Him, nor stay with Him, nor accept what He gives me, but leave Him there alone; and though He may bid and entreat me to ask Him for something, I through humility must remain poor, and even allow Him to go away, because He sees I have not determined on anything!

Pay no attention to such humility, daughters, but treat with Him as with a father, as with a brother, as with a lord, as with a spouse, sometimes in one way, sometimes in another; for He will teach you what you should do to please Him. Be not too easy, but challenge His word, since He is your Spouse, that He would treat you as such. Consider that you are much concerned in understanding this truth, viz., that God dwells within you, and that there we should dwell with Him.

This kind of prayer, though it be vocal, recollects the understanding much sooner, and is a prayer that brings with it many benefits. It is called the prayer of recollection, because in it the soul recollects all the faculties, and enters within herself with her God; and there her divine master comes much sooner to instruct her, and bestow on her the "Prayer of Quiet," than in any other way; for, placed there with Him, she may meditate with herself on the passion, and represent to herself the Son, and offer Him to the Father; and not weary the understanding by going to seek Him on Mount Calvary, or in the Garden, or at the Pillar. Those that can thus shut themselves up in this little heaven of our soul, where He abides who created heaven and earth; and they who can also accustom themselves not to behold, or stay where these exterior senses distract them, let them believe that they walk in an excellent way, and that they shall not fail of being able to drink water from the fountain, and thus they will advance far in a little time. It is like one who makes a voyage by sea, who by having a little favourable weather gets within a few days of his journey's end; whereas those who go by land are much longer.

Those are already out at sea (as the expression is) who, as they have not quite lost sight of land, do nevertheless what they can, by recollecting their senses, to get quite clear of it.

In like manner we very clearly discover whether the recollection be true, for it produces a certain operation (which I cannot explain, but whoever has it will understand it), so that it seems the soul rises up from her play, for such she sees the things of this world are. She seizes the opportunity, and like one who retires to some strong castle, to be out of the fear of the enemy, she withdraws the senses from these exterior objects, and leaves them in such a manner, that the eyes (though unaware) close up so as not to behold them, in order to open wider the eyes of the soul. Accordingly, whoever walks in this way always keeps his eyes shut in prayer; and it is an admirable custom for many reasons, because it is *forcing* ourselves not to behold things here below. This shutting of the eyes takes place only at the beginning of such recollection, for afterwards it

is useless: then more strength is required to open them. The soul seems to strengthen and fortify herself at the expense of the body, and to leave it all alone and enfeebled, and thence she draws a supply of provisions against it.

And though at first, this retreat should not be understood because not very great (for in this recollection, there is sometimes more and sometimes less); yet, if it grow into a custom (although in the beginning it may cause trouble, for the body disputes its right, not perceiving that it ruins itself by not acknowledging itself to be vanquished)—if, I repeat, it should be practised for some days, and we use this force to ourselves, the benefit therefrom will appear evident; and we shall perceive that, in the beginning of prayer, the bees immediately repair to their hive, and enter to make honey. And this is without any trouble on our part, because our Lord is pleased, that for the time in which they formerly took some pains, the soul and the will should deserve to be possessed of such a command, that by merely an intimation to them, and nothing more, the senses might immediately obey and retire into her. And though afterwards they go forth again, it is a great matter to have already submitted, because they go forth as captives and subjects, and do not the mischief which they could effect formerly; and when the will recalls them, they come with more readiness, till after having often re-entered, our Lord is pleased that they shall rest entirely in perfect contemplation.

Let what I have said be well considered; for though it may seem obscure, yet whoever will practise it shall understand it. Since then these go by sea, and since it is so important for us not to go on so slowly, let us speak a little as to the manner how we may accustom ourselves to so good a way of proceeding. These are much more secure from occasions, and the fire of Divine Love takes hold of them sooner, because they are so near it, that upon the least breath of the understanding, all will be in a flame, if only the smallest spark should fall upon them; and as there is no obstacle from the exterior, the soul remains alone with her God, and so she is quite prepared to be set on fire.

Let us remember, then, that within us there is a palace of immense magnificence: the whole building is of gold and precious stones: in a word, it is every way as it ought to be for such a Lord. Forget not, also, that you are partly the cause that this edifice is such as it is; for truly there is no building of such great beauty as a pure soul, filled with virtues; and the greater these virtues are, the brighter do these stones sparkle; and that in this palace the great King lodges, who has been pleased to become your Guest; and that He sits there on a throne of immense value, which is your *heart*. This may, at first, seem ridiculous (I mean to make use of such a figure to make you understand what I say): still it may be of great help, to *you* especially; for since we women want learning, all this is indeed very necessary to make us understand, that there is within us something else more precious beyond comparison than that which we see outwardly. Let us not imagine we have nothing in our interior. God grant that women only be the

persons guilty of this negligence; for if we remember that we have within us such a guest, I think it is impossible we should be so fond of the things of this world, because we should see how base they are, in comparison with those treasures which we possess within us. What more does a brute beast do, which, on beholding something pleasing to the sight, satisfies its hunger by seizing upon it? Now, should there not be some difference between them and us?

Some persons will, perhaps, laugh at me, and say, "All this is very evident"; and they may have reason for saying so; but for some time it was obscure to *me*. I knew well that I had a soul; but I understood not the dignity of this soul, nor knew who lodged within it, because my eyes being blinded by the vanities of this life, I was prevented from seeing Him. I think, had I then known, as I do at present, that in this little palace of my soul so great a King is lodged, I would not have left him alone so often, but sometimes at least I should have stayed with Him, and have been more careful to prepare a clean lodging for Him.

But what calls for so much admiration as that He who, by His immensity, could fill a thousand worlds, should be enclosed in so small a place! Thus was He pleased to be confined in the womb of His Most Sacred Mother. He being Lord, brings us liberty with Him; and in loving us much, reduces Himself to our nature. When a soul begins to know Him, He does not discover Himself fully at once, lest she might be troubled to see herself so little, and yet containing within herself so great a being. By degrees He enlarges such a soul, according to what He knows is necessary for that which He infuses into her. Therefore, I say that He brings liberty with him, since He has power to enlarge this palace. The point lies in our giving it to Him as His own, with a full and perfect resolution, that so He may either place there, or take away, whatever He pleases, as it is His own. This is His pleasure, and His Majesty has reason: let us not refuse it to Him. Since He is not to force our will, He takes only what we give Him. But He does not give Himself *entirely* to us, till we give ourselves up entirely to Him (this is certain, and because it is of such importance, I so often remind you of it); nor does He operate in the soul so much as He does when without any obstacle she is wholly His: nor do I understand how He could operate there, for He is a lover of order.

Now, if we fill the palace with rabble, and with trifles, how can it receive our Lord, with all His court? He does a great deal in remaining, even for a short time, amidst so much confusion. Do you think, daughters, that He comes alone? Do you not hear what His Son says, "Who art in Heaven"? You may be sure such a King is not left alone by his courtiers; but they attend Him, praying to Him for us, and for our welfare, because they are full of charity. Imagine not that it is the same in this world, where if a king or prelate should visit any one for some particular object, or because he loves the person, envious feelings immediately arise in others, and the poor man is calumniated, without having done the others any injury: hence the honour costs him dear.

III

*She Mentions What Means Are to be Used for
Obtaining the Prayer of Recollection.*

For the love of God, daughters, be not at all anxious for these favours: let each one endeavour to do her duty, and if the superior do not approve of it, she may be sure our Lord will accept and reward it. But have we come here to seek a reward in this life? Let our thoughts be fixed upon that which endures for ever, and let us despise all things here below, since even they do not continue during the period of one's life; for to-day you may be going on well, but to-morrow, if the superior should see more virtue in you, he may like you *better*; if not, it is of little consequence. Do not give way to such thoughts, which sometimes arise from little things, and may disturb you much. Stifle them by considering that your "kingdom" is not in this world, and how quickly all things come to an end.

But even this consideration is a poor remedy, and not a very perfect one. It is better that your cross should continue, that you should fall into disgrace, and be despised: desire this may be so, for the sake of that Lord who is with you. Cast your eyes on yourselves, and behold yourselves interiorly, as I have said already: there you will find your Master, who will not be wanting to you, and the less *exterior* consolation you have, so much the more will He caress you. He is very compassionate, and never fails to help the afflicted and disconsolate, if they trust in Him alone. So says David, "Mercy shall encompass him that hopeth in the Lord." Either you believe these words, or you do not: if you *do*, why do you torment yourselves? O my Lord! if we truly knew You, we should not be anxious for anything, for You give plenty to those who wish to trust in You. Believe me, friends, if we understand this truth, it will be of great assistance towards enabling us to discover that all the favours of this world are a *lie*, even should they hinder the soul but a little from retiring into herself. Would that you could understand this truth. I cannot make you understand it; for though I am obliged, more than any one else, to understand it, yet I cannot understand it as I ought to do.

To return now to what I was saying. I should be glad to know how to explain to you, in what manner the soul finds herself in the company of the King of kings, and the Saint of saints, without any impediment to the solitude which she and her Spouse enjoy, when this soul desires to enter within herself into this Paradise with her God, and locks the door after her against all things of the world. I say, "when the soul desires"; for know that is not a matter

altogether supernatural, but that it depends upon our *will*; and we can do it by the help of God's grace, since without this nothing can be done, nor can we of ourselves have one good thought. Here the powers of the soul are not silent, but only shut up within themselves.

We can acquire this degree in many ways, as we find written in certain books, viz., by disengaging ourselves from everything, in order thereby to approach interiorly to God; and even amidst business, by retiring into ourselves, though it were only for a moment. It is very useful to remember, that we have "company" within us. What I only aim at is, that we see Him, and remain with Him to whom we are speaking, without our turning our backs upon Him; for methinks, we do this, when we remain discoursing with God, and thinking on a thousand vanities at the same time. All the evil comes from our not properly understanding that He is near us; but we imagine He is far off, and how far, if we go to heaven to seek Him! Does not Your countenance then, O Lord, deserve to be looked upon, being so near to us? We think men do not hear us, if, when we are speaking to them, we notice they do not see us; and must we shut our eyes that we may not see You beholding us? How can we know whether You have heard what we say to You? This is only what I would wish to explain; that we should accustom ourselves with facility to quiet the understanding, that so it may know what it says, and to whom it speaks; and for this purpose, it is necessary that we withdraw these exterior senses within ourselves, and there find them something to do; for it is true, that we possess *heaven* within us, since the Lord thereof resides there. In a word, it is necessary that we should accustom ourselves to taste the sweetness of His presence, without our requiring any words to speak to Him, for His Majesty will clearly show us He is there.

Thus we shall be able to pray *vocally* with great quiet, and we shall free ourselves from much trouble; for during the short time that we force ourselves to stay near this Lord, He will understand us (as the saying is) "by signs," so that if we were often to repeat the "Lord's Prayer," He will make us understand, that when we say it only once, He has heard us. He exceedingly loves to deliver us from evil, though we should say but one "Our Father" in an hour, provided we understand that we are with Him, and that we know what we ask, and how willing He is to give, and how glad He is to be with us; He does not wish that we should tire ourselves by speaking too much with Him. May our Lord teach this truth to those among you, who know it not; for myself, I confess I never knew what it was to pray with satisfaction till our Lord taught me this way; and I have always found such great advantage from this practice of recollection and entering within myself, that this is the reason why I have said so much on the subject.

I now conclude. Whoever wishes to arrive at this degree of perfection (and, as I have said, it is in our power to do so), let her not grow weary in accustoming herself to do what I have been saying; and this is, by little and little

to obtain the mastery over one's-self, not losing ourselves for nothing, but recalling our senses within us; and this is not a loss for the soul, but a great gain. If she speak, she should endeavour to remind herself that she is about to speak with One within her; if she listen, she should remember, that she is about to hear One who speaks most intimately to her. In a word, let her understand that, if she wish, she need never separate herself from such good company; and let her grieve, when she has, for any long time, left this her Father there alone, of whom she stands so continually in need.

If she can do this often in the course of the day, let her; if not, let her do it at least sometimes; when she has accustomed herself to it, she will gain great profit thereby sooner or later. After our Lord shall have granted this favour to her, she would not exchange it for any earthly treasure: nothing is learnt then without some little trouble. For the love of God, sisters, consider that care well employed, which you shall bestow on this matter; and I know that if you practise it for a year, or perhaps only for *half* that time, you will reach this degree by the Divine assistance. You see then how inconsiderable this labour is, in comparison with the advantage of establishing this solid foundation, in order that if God wishes to raise you to higher things, He may find you disposed, by seeing you so near Him. Amen.

IV

On Those Words of the "Our Father," "Hallowed Be Thy Name." The Saint Applies Them to the Prayer of Quiet.

Let us now consider how our Good Master goes on (with His prayer), and begins to pray to His Holy Father for us. And what does He ask him? It is proper that we should understand this. Who is there, however stupid he may be, that when he is about to ask something of a great person, considers not beforehand how he should speak to him, that so he may please, and not displease him. And does he not also consider what it is necessary he should ask for, and for what purpose he wants what is to be given to him, especially if he should ask for any important favour, as our good Jesus teaches us to ask? This is a point very worthy of being attended to. Could You not, O my Lord! have in one word included all things, and have said: "Give us, Father, that which is expedient for us," since to one who understands all things so well, nothing more seems requisite? O Eternal Wisdom! between You and Your Father this would be sufficient, and so You prayed in the garden: You manifested Your will

and showed Your fear: but You resigned Yourself to your Father's will. And You know, O my Lord, that we are not so resigned as You were to Your Father, and that it was necessary to ask for particular blessings, that so we might rest upon the consideration, whether what we ask be good for us: if not, we should not ask it. Our nature is such, that unless we receive what we desire, we would not (on account of our free-will) accept what God shall give us, because though it may be better for us in the end, yet we never think we shall be rich unless we see ready money in our hands. O Lord! what is the cause why our faith is so benumbed and so dormant, both as regards the one and the other? Hence, we neither understand how certain a punishment we shall have, nor how certain a reward. It is therefore proper, daughters, that you should understand what it is you ask for in the "Our Father"; take heed, that if the Eternal Father grant your request, you cast it not back in His face; and that you always think very seriously of what you ask, and whether it be good for you; if it be not, do not ask for it; but desire that His Majesty would enlighten you on this point; for we are blind and squeamish, so that we cannot eat those meats which would give us life, but only those which bring death with them, a death so dangerous, because eternal.

Our Good Jesus tells us to say these words, wherein we petition that such a Kingdom should come to us: "Hallowed be thy name: thy Kingdom come." Now, daughters, consider the great wisdom of our Master. Here I consider, and it is fit we should understand, what we ask for in praying for this "Kingdom." As His Majesty sees we should be unable to sanctify, praise, magnify, or glorify this holy name of the Eternal Father, on account of our very poor ability, if His Majesty had not given us the means, by giving us here His Kingdom; so our good Jesus has been pleased to join both together.

In order, then, daughters, that we may understand what we ask for, and how necessary it is that we become *importunate* in our requests, and do all we can to please Him who is to grant our petitions, I will tell you here what I understand: if you do not like it, you may meditate on other considerations; and this our Master will permit, that so we may in all things submit ourselves to the judgment of the Church, as I always do; and even this I will not give you to read, until it has been examined by persons who understand the subject.

The chief happiness which seems to me to be in the Kingdom of Heaven (among many other sources of joy), is this, that there no account is made of any earthly thing; but there is a repose, a glory in the Blessed, a rejoicing that all rejoice, a perpetual peace, a great satisfaction in themselves; and this comes to them, because they see all the inhabitants sanctify and praise God, and bless His name, and that none offend Him. All love Him, and the soul herself minds nothing else but to love Him, and she cannot forbear loving Him because she knows Him. And so we should love Him in this world, did we know Him, though not in such perfection and with such steadfastness: but we should

love Him in a manner *different* from what we do now, did we once know Him.

It seems as if I were going to say, we must be angels, in order to present this petition, and to pray well vocally; this our divine Master wishes us to do, since He commands us to make so sublime a request; and doubtless He bids us not ask for things which are impossible. And why should it be impossible for a soul, placed in this land of exile, to arrive at this point, by God's assistance, though not in such perfection as those others do, who are free from this prison of the body, for we are yet at sea, and on a journey? But there are seasons when our Lord places those who are weary of travelling in a state wherein the powers are tranquil, and the soul is quiet; wherein, as it were by signs, He makes them clearly understand how sweet that is which our Lord gives to those whom He brings to His Kingdom; and on those to whom this is given He bestows certain pledges, that by means of them they may conceive great hope of being enabled to enjoy eternally, what they are only allowed to *sip* here in this world.

If I thought you would not say I was speaking of contemplation, it would in this petition be very proper to say something of the beginning of pure contemplation, which those who are accustomed to it call the Prayer of Quiet. But (as I have said) I am speaking of vocal prayer; and here it may seem that one does not agree with the other. This I will not endure: I know they *do* agree; excuse me in saying so, for I know many persons who pray vocally, and have been advanced by God, without their knowing how, to a high degree of contemplation. Therefore it is that I urge this so much, daughters, in order that you may perform your vocal prayers well.

I know a person who could never reach further than vocal prayer, and yet by practising this, she possessed everything: if she did not pray vocally, her understanding was so distracted that she could not endure it; but would that all of us practised mental prayer so well. In certain "Pater Nosters," which she recited on the several mysteries of the Passion, and in some few other prayers also, she continued to pray vocally for two or three hours. She once came to me exceedingly afflicted, "because she knew not how to practise mental prayer, neither could she contemplate, but only pray vocally." I asked her what she said, and perceived that though she kept to the "Pater Noster," she enjoyed pure contemplation, and God raised her even to the Prayer of Union. And this clearly appeared in her actions, for she led a very good life, so that I praised our Lord, and even desired to have her vocal prayer. If what I say be true (as it is), you who dislike contemplatives must not suppose you have not contemplation, if you say your vocal prayers as they should be said, and keep a pure conscience.

V

*She Continues the Same Subject and Explains
The Prayer of Quiet, etc.*

I wish, daughters, notwithstanding, to explain this Prayer of Quiet to you, according as I have heard it practised, or our Lord has pleased to let me understand it, perhaps in order that I might explain it to you; and it seems to me that our Lord begins to make known that He has heard our prayers, and that He already begins to give us His kingdom here, in order that we may truly praise and sanctify His name, and endeavour that all men may do the same. This is something supernatural, which we cannot acquire by all our diligence, because it is settling the soul in peace; or rather, to speak more correctly, our Lord leads her into peace by His presence, 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; for as holy Simeon saw this glorious little Infant only under the appearance of poverty, and wrapped in swaddling clothes, and with attendants to follow Him, He might rather have supposed He was the son of some mean person, than the Son of the Heavenly Father. But the child made Himself known to him; and so in the same way the soul understands He is there, though not with the like clearness, for she herself knows not how she understands, but that she sees herself in the kingdom (at least, near the King who is to give it to her), and the soul seems impressed with such reverence, that then she dare not ask anything.

It is as it were an interior and exterior fainting away, so that the exterior man (I mean the body, that you may understand me better) does not wish to stir at all; but like a person who has almost arrived at his journey's end, he rests, in order to be the better able to travel again, for here one's strength is redoubled for the purpose. A very great delight is experienced in the body, and a great satisfaction in the soul. She is so delighted at merely seeing herself near the Fountain, that she is already satisfied even without drinking: she seems to have nothing more to desire. The faculties are so quiet, that they will not stir, and everything seems to be an obstacle to her love. And yet the faculties are not lost, for they can think near whom they stand, since two of them are free. 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. The understanding does not wish to understand more than one thing, nor the memory to employ itself about anything more. Here they perceive this alone is necessary, and that all things else disturb them.

They would not have the body move, because they think they should lose that peace, and therefore they dare not stir. Speaking is painful to them: they will sometimes spend an hour in saying only one "Our Father." They are so near, that they perceive they are understood by signs; they are in the palace close by their King, and they see that He already begins here below to bestow upon them His kingdom. Here flow tears without any feelings of grief, and sometimes even they are attended with great delight. They seem not to be in the world, and they wish neither to see nor to hear of it, but only to hear of their God. Nothing troubles them, and it seems nothing can do so. In a word, while this continues, they are so inebriated and absorpt with the delight and satisfaction contained therein, that they remember not there is anything more to desire; and they exclaim with St. Peter, "Lord, let us make here three tabernacles."

In this Prayer of Quiet, God sometimes bestows another favour, very hard to be understood, unless one has great experience; and if he have such experience, those who have it will immediately understand it; and it will afford them great consolation to know what it is, and I believe God often bestows this favour together with the other. When this favour is great, and continues for a long time, it seems to me that unless the will were attached to something, it could not continue so long in that peace; for it happens that we go on a day or two with this satisfaction, and do not understand ourselves: I speak of those who have it. They see, indeed, they are not entirely taken up with what they do; but that they want the chief thing, which is the will; and this seems to me to be united with God, and to leave the other faculties free, that they may attend to things relating to his service; and for this object they have then more ability; but as regards worldly concerns, they are stupid, and sometimes as it were fools. This is a great favour, on whomsoever our Lord bestows it, for the active and contemplative life are united. Our Lord is then served by all, for the will is busy at her work, without knowing how she works, and continues in her contemplation: the other two powers serve to do the office of Martha; so that she and Mary walk together. I know a person whom our Lord often raised to this state; and because she knew not what it was, she asked a great contemplative, who told her, "It was very possible," for the like had happened to him. I think, therefore, that since the soul is so well satisfied in this Prayer of Union, the will must, during most of the time, be united to Him who alone is able to satisfy it.

Now, here it seems to me, it would be well to give some advice for those amongst you, sisters, whom God, in His goodness, has raised to this state, for I know there are some such amongst you. The first is, that when they see themselves in that joy, and know not how it has come upon them (at least they see they could not obtain it of themselves), this temptation presents itself, that they think they can make it continue, and so they do not wish even to breathe. A foolish error is this; for as we cannot make the day break, so neither can we prevent the night from coming on. It is now no act of ours, for it is supernatural, and we are quite unable to acquire it. The surest means of retaining this favour

is to understand clearly that we can neither diminish nor add thereto, but only receive it as being most unworthy of it, and give thanks for it. This we should do, not with many words, but like the publican, not daring to lift up our eyes. It is good to seek for more solitude, in order thereby to make room for our Lord, and let His Majesty work as in something of His own, and to utter, from time to time, some sweet word, like one blows a candle, when he sees it has gone out, in order to light it again; but if the candle be burning, our blowing serves only to extinguish it. This blowing should, in my opinion, be gentle, that it may not trouble the will, by forming many words with the understanding. Pay great attention, my friends, to the advice I will now give you; for you will often find yourselves unable to make use of those other two powers. It may happen, that the soul enjoys very great quiet, and in the meantime the understanding is so distracted, that what happens seems not to be in its house; and so then it seems that it is as a guest in another person's house, and it goes seeking for other lodgings to live in, since that does not please it, for it little knows what it is to continue still in one state. Perhaps this has only been my case, and others may not have been so. I think that sometimes I desire to die, because I am unable to remedy this variety of thoughts: other times they seem to be settled in their house, and they accompany the will, so that when all the three powers agree, it is a kind of heaven; just like two married persons who love each other, for what one desires the other does too: but if the husband be bad, it is soon discovered how troubled the wife is thereat.

When the will, therefore, perceives herself in this quiet, let her not heed the understanding, or thought, or imagination (for I know not which of them it is), any more than she would heed a fool; for if she seek to carry any one of these with her, she must of necessity be occupied, and somewhat disquieted; hence, in this degree of prayer, all will be labour and no gain; but we shall lose that which our Lord gives us without any labour of ours. Pay great attention to this comparison, which our Lord suggested to me when in prayer: it suits me exactly, and I think explains my subject. The soul is like a child that sucks, lying at his mother's breast; and she to please him, without moving his lips, forces the milk into his mouth. Even so is it here; for without any labour of the understanding, the will continues loving, and our Lord is pleased that, without her thinking on it beforehand, she should understand that she is conversing with him, that she only swallows the milk which His Majesty puts in her mouth, and enjoys its sweetness, and that she knows it is our Lord who bestows this favour upon her, and that she exults in the enjoyment of it. But let her not be desirous of knowing *how* she enjoys it, and what that is which she enjoys: let her then have no care for herself, for He who stands near her will not fail to see what is best for her; since if she should contend with the understanding, to give it a share by taking it along with her, she cannot do everything, and must therefore let the milk fall out of her mouth, and so lose that divine nourishment.

This prayer is thus distinguished from that wherein the soul is altogether united with God, for then the soul does not receive this nourishment by swallowing it down; but she finds it within herself, without perceiving how our Lord puts it there. Here it seems He wishes the soul to take a little pains, though this is done with so much ease, that it is scarcely felt. That which torments her here is the understanding, or imagination. This is not the case, however, when there is a union of all the three powers, because He that created them suspends them: and with the delight He then gives them, He employs them all without their knowing *how*, or being able to understand it. Hence, as I have said, when the soul finds in herself this prayer, which is a quiet and great contentedness of the will, without knowing how to judge distinctly what it is, though she sees clearly it differs exceedingly from all pleasures here below, since dominion even over the whole world, with all the delights thereof, would not be sufficient to make a soul feel in herself the satisfaction which the will has in its interior; for other pleasures of this life are, methinks, relished only by the bark or exterior of the will (as we may call it); when the soul, I repeat, finds herself in so high a degree of prayer, which, as I have said, is now very clearly supernatural, if the understanding, or, to speak more correctly, the thought should run after the greatest fooleries in the world, let her laugh at it and leave it as a fool, and remain in her quiet; for it will go and come, because the will being here a powerful mistress, she will recover it without your afflicting yourselves. Yet if she seek by force of arms to bring it to her, she loses the strength which she has against it, and which she obtains by eating and taking that divine nourishment; and neither one nor the other will gain anything, but both will be losers. There is a saying, "that he who strives to grasp at much, loses all at once": just so, methinks, is it in this case. Experience will make this clear, and whoever has it not, no wonder if he consider what I have been saying to be very obscure: but I have already said, that with a little experience he will understand it, and may thereby benefit himself; and you will praise God that He was pleased to direct me to express so much here. Let us draw the conclusion then, that when the soul has arrived at this degree of prayer, it now seems that the eternal Father has granted her request, viz., to give her in this life His kingdom.

O blessed petition! wherein, without our understanding it, we ask for so great a good! O blessed way of praying! I wish you, therefore, sisters, to consider how we should recite this heavenly prayer of the "Our Father," and all our other vocal prayers. For as our Lord has done us this favour, we should forget all the things of this world, because when the Lord of our soul enters, He drives away the love of all creatures. I say not that all those who have it, must necessarily be separated from the world; but I would have them understand, at least, what is wanting to them; and let them humble themselves, and endeavour to be more and more disengaged from every thought, because otherwise they will stop here.

A soul to which God gives such pledges may be assured He intends her for some important service, and unless it be her own fault, she will advance exceedingly. But if He perceive, that when He erects this "kingdom of heaven" in her house, she returns to the earth, He will not only *not* acquaint her with the secrets that are in His kingdom, but He will confer this favour on her very seldom, and only for a short time. Now, I may be mistaken in what I say, yet I see and know that this usually happens; and for my part, I consider this to be the reason why there are not many who are more spiritual; for as they do not correspond in their actions with so great a favour, and do not re-dispose themselves for receiving it, but rather take out of our Lord's hands the will which he already considered His own, and apply it to vile things; so He goes seeking for some who love Him, in order to give them *more*, though He does not altogether take away that which He gave the others, when they live with a good conscience.

But there are some, and I have been one of them, to whom our Lord gives tender feelings and holy inspirations, and light to know the nature of all things here below; and at last, He bestows this "Kingdom" upon them, and places them in this Prayer of Quiet; and yet they make themselves deaf, because they love so much to be speaking, and to repeat many vocal prayers in great haste (like one who wants to get through his task), having formerly bound themselves to say them every day, when, as I have said, our Lord delivers His kingdom into their hands, but they do not accept it, imagining they do better in saying these prayers; and so they forget the great favour our Lord offers them. Do not you, sisters, act in this manner: but watch carefully, when our Lord shall bestow this favour upon you; consider that you lose a great treasure, and that you do much more by leisurely saying one word of the "Our Father," than by often repeating it hastily, without understanding it. He to whom you pray is very nigh: He will not fail to hear you; and believe me, hereby we may truly praise and sanctify His name, for now you glorify our Lord as if you belonged to His house, and you praise Him with more ardent affections and desires; and it seems you cannot help knowing Him much better, when you have tasted "how sweet He is." Thus I exhort you to be careful, since it is very important for you to be so.

VI

*She Explains the Words, "Thy Will Be Done on Earth,
as It Is in Heaven," etc.*

Our good Master having now asked for us, and having also taught us to ask for a favour of such value, which includes all the things which we can desire in this world; and having bestowed so great a favour upon us, as to make us His brethren, let us consider what He wishes us to give to His Father, and what He offers to Him for us, and what He desires of us; since it is proper that we should serve Him by something answerable to such great favours. O good Jesus! who gives so little (little on *our* part), whereas You ask much from us, although if we consider the thing in itself, it is nothing in comparison to what we owe so great a King. But it is certain, my Lord, that since You have given us Your kingdom, You do not deprive us of everything; and we give all that we can, if we give it as we say in the next words, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

You did well, our good Master! in making the above petition, that we may be able to accomplish what You offer to us. Were it not so, O Lord! this seems to me impossible to do: but because Your Father performs what You desire Him, about giving us here His kingdom, I know we shall also find You faithful, in giving Him that which You offer for us. For when earth shall become heaven, it will be possible to accomplish Your will in me; but without this, and in a soil so barren as mine is, I know not, Lord, how it can be possible. It is a great favour which You offer. And when I think of this, I smile at those persons who dare not beg crosses of our Lord, because they think He must needs send them immediately. I speak not of those who wish not to have them out of humility, because they consider themselves unable to bear them; though for my part I consider, that He who gives them such a great love of Him, as to desire so sharp a means of expressing it, will give them strength to bear these crosses also. I would ask those who do not pray for crosses, through fear of their being sent to them immediately, what they say when they beseech our Lord to accomplish His will in them? It is indeed to say that which all say, but not to do it. This, sisters, would not be well. Consider that our good Jesus seems here to be our Emperor, and to be willing to mediate between us and His Father, and this to His no small cost. Now, it would not be proper, that what He offers for us, we in reality should fail to perform: let us rather not say the words.

I will now show it another way. Consider, daughters, this promise must be fulfilled, whether we will or no: take my advice then, and believe me, and make

a virtue of necessity. O! my Lord, what a great consolation is this to me, that You would not leave to so bad a will as mine the accomplishing or not accomplishing of Your will. Were the accomplishment of Your will in heaven and on earth in my hands, what a condition should I be in! I therefore now freely give You mine (although at a time when it is not free from much self-interest), for I have tried, and this by long experience, what gain is obtained by resigning my will to Yours. O! my friends, what a great benefit is acquired here! O! what a great loss, when we do not perform what we promise God in the "Our Father," respecting what we offer Him.

Before I tell you what is gained thereby, I will show you what you offer, lest you afterwards should consider yourselves deceived, and say you did not understand it. Let us not be like certain religious women, who do nothing but promise; and when they do not keep their promise, they give this excuse, and say, "We did not understand what we promised." It may now be the case here; for, to say we will resign our will to that of another, seems very easy, till by trying it we discover it is a most difficult thing to be done, if it be done as it ought to be; it is easy to utter, but hard to execute; and if they thought one was not more important than another, they understood it not. Make those understand it, who shall make their profession in this house, by a long trial of them: let them not suppose they are to bring *words* only: they must bring *works* also. Yet superiors do not always guide us with rigour, because they see we are weak; and sometimes they rule the weak and the strong in the same manner. But here it is not so, for our Lord knows what every one can bear; and when he sees one that has strength, He does not desist till He has accomplished His will in him.

I wish, then, to inform and remind you what this His will is; do not fear that it is to give you riches, pleasures, and honours, or any worldly advantages; our Lord has greater love for you, and He highly values what you give Him, and desires to reward you amply, since even when you are alive, He gives you His Kingdom. Do you wish to see, then, how He acts towards those who say this to Him in sincerity? Ask His glorious Son, who said this when He prayed in the garden; as He uttered it with resolution and an entire will, see if He accomplished in Him, by giving Him such an abundance of troubles, pains, injuries, and persecutions, till at last He ended His life by the death of the cross. Here then you see, daughters, what He gives to Him whom He loved most; and hereby we may know what His will is. Thus these are His gifts in this world. He acts conformably to the love He has for us. To those whom He loves more, He gives these gifts the more; to those less, whom He loves less; and so in proportion to the courage He sees in every one, and to the love he has for His Majesty. He sees that he who loves Him much, can suffer much for Him. To him that loves little, He gives little. For my part I think, that the rule of being able to bear great or little, is that of love. Hence, sisters, if you possess this, endeavour that the words which you address to so great a Lord, be not words of compliment: for *force* yourselves likewise to suffer what His Majesty shall be

pleased to send you. For if you give up your will in any other way, it is like a person who shows you a jewel, and offers it, yea begs of you to take it; and when you stretch out your hand to receive it, he holds it fast and will not give it. These are not jests which we are allowed to put upon one who has endured so many for us; for if there were nothing else, it is no reason why we should mock Him so often; since it is not seldom that we say this to Him in the "Our Father." Let us now, once for all, give Him the jewel freely, which we have so often pretended to give. It is true He gives it to us *first*, in order that we may give it to Him again.

Secular persons will do much, if they have earnest resolution to fulfil it: and you, daughters, will do a great deal also, by saying and by doing in word and work, as indeed it seems we Religious do. And yet sometimes we not only offer to give Him the jewel, but we put it into His hands, and take it again. We suddenly become so generous, and afterwards so parsimonious, that it had been better in some respect we had been more cautious in giving. Now because all that I have advised you to do in this book, is directed to the object of inducing to give yourselves up entirely to your Creator, of resigning our wills to His, and disengaging ourselves from Him (of which you already understand the great importance), I will speak no more about it. But I will mention the reason why our good Master places here those words mentioned above, for He is one who knows how much we shall gain by doing this service to His Eternal Father, since by accomplishing these words, we dispose ourselves, in a very short time, to see ourselves arrived at our journey's end, and drinking of the "living water" of the already mentioned; for without resigning our own will entirely to our Lord, to regulate everything regarding us according to it, He will never allow us to drink of this water.

This is perfect contemplation, which you desired me to write about; wherein, as I have shown, we do nothing on our part: we neither labour, nor negotiate at all, nor is more requisite, for all else disturbs and hinders us, except saying: "Thy will be done." May *Your* will, O Lord! be fulfilled in me. in whatever way You shall please: if You wish it to be fulfilled by afflictions. only grant me strength, and let them come: if by persecutions, sickness, disgrace, and poverty—lo! here I am: I will not turn away my face. O my Father! Nor is it fit I should turn my back. Since Your Son offered, in the name of all this my will also, there is no reason I should fail on my part. But do me the favour to give me Your Kingdom, that I may be able to accomplish Your will, since He asked it of You for me; dispose of me as one entirely Yours, according to Your will.

O my sisters! how powerful is this gift! If it be presented with the resolution it should be, it even induces the Almighty to become one with our baseness: it transforms us into Himself, and unites the Creator with the creature. Consider, whether or no you are well rewarded, and whether you have a good Master, who knowing by what means His Father's affection is to be gained, instructs us how and by what manner we are to serve Him. Now the more resolute the soul

is, and the more she shows by her actions that these are not words of mere compliment, the closer does our Lord unite us with Himself, and exalt us above all things here below, and even above ourselves, in order to dispose us for receiving great favours. For even in this life, He is never tired with rewarding our services, so much does He value them; so that we know not what more to ask, and His Majesty is never weary with giving; for not content with having made such a soul one with Himself, by uniting her with Himself, He begins to regale Himself with her and discover secrets to her, and He is pleased that she should understand what she has gained, and should know something of that which is to be given to her afterwards. He makes her lose the exterior senses, in order that no other object may occupy her attention: (this is a rapture). He also begins to converse with her so very familiarly that He not only restores her will to her, but with it gives her His own; for as our Lord converses so familiarly with her, He is pleased that they "command by turns," as the expression is, and fulfil what the soul requests of Him (as she performs what He requires of her): and this is done so much better, because He is powerful, and can do whatever He wills, and He never ceases to will. In the meantime, the poor soul cannot do what she desires, though she would wish; nor indeed can she do anything, except strength be given to her. And this is her greatest riches, to be the more indebted, the more she serves Him; and oftentimes is she afflicted to see herself exposed to so many inconveniences, obstacles, and bonds, as the prison of this body brings with it, because she would be glad to pay off some part of what she owes. But she is very foolish to afflict herself so much; for though she may do all that lies in her power, what can *we* pay, who, as I have said, have nothing to give but what we receive? We can however know ourselves; and this we do by His assistance, viz., perfectly to resign ourselves to His will. All else is a hindrance to a soul which our Lord has advanced so far; it does harm, and not good.

Observe, that I speak of a soul which our Lord has been pleased to join to Himself by union and perfect contemplation, for humility alone is that which does everything: and this is not acquired by the understanding, but by a clear truth, which comprehends in a moment what the imagination by labouring cannot reach in a long time, that *we* are "a very nothing," and that God is everything. One caution I give you, not to think of reaching this degree by your own strength or diligence, for it is vain: even if you had devotion, you will remain cold, but only say with humility and simplicity, which obtain everything—"Thy will be done."

VII

Of the Words, "Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread."

Since, as I have said, our good Jesus understands how difficult a thing this was which He offered us, and knowing our weakness, how we often make ourselves believe that we do not understand what the will of God is, as we are so weak, and He is so merciful, He saw a remedy for this was necessary; and therefore He asked for us of His Eternal Father this heavenly bread. He saw it was in no way necessary for us, to omit giving what was given, because in this consists all our gain. But to accomplish the object without this favour, He perceived was very difficult. For tell one who fares deliciously, and is rich, that it is God's will he should live moderately, that so others who are even dying with hunger, may at least have bread to eat, He will urge a thousand reasons for not understanding the divine will, except for his own purpose. Tell a detractor that it is God's will he should love his neighbour as he loves himself, he cannot fulfil it with patience, nor can reason make him understand it. In a word, tell a Religious who is accustomed to liberty and excess, that he should consider he is bound to give good example, and that he should remember he ought to fulfil this petition, when he says it, not with *words* merely, but that he has sworn and promised to fulfil it, and that it is God's will he should perform his vows, and that he must consider how directly he goes against them, should he give scandal; and that he has taken a vow of poverty, which he is bound to observe without seeking to be free from it, for such is the will of our Lord: even such considerations cannot induce some of these men to desire to do His will. What would become of us then, had not our Lord performed the principal part by the remedy which he has applied? There had been surely but very few who would have fulfilled these words, which He spoke for us to His Father, "Thy will be done." Our good Jesus, therefore, seeing our necessities, sought out an admirable means, whereby He showed us the extremity of the love He bore us; and in His own, and in the name of His brethren, He made this petition, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Let us, sisters, for the love of God, understand what our good Master prays for, since it is very important that we should not pass over this petition hastily, and consider that to be very little which you have given, since you are to receive so much. It seems to me at present (bowing to another better judgment) — that our good Jesus, seeing what He had given for us, and how the giving of it concerned us, and the great difficulty there would be, as I have said, because we are by nature so inclined to what is base, so exceedingly destitute of love and

courage, that the sight of His ardent love was necessary to awaken us, and that not once but every day, was here obliged to resolve to remain with us. But as it is a matter of such great importance, He wished it to come from the hand of His Eternal Father, because though they are both one, and though He knew that what He did on earth, God would ratify in heaven, and esteem as good, since His will and that of His Father were one; yet such was the humility of our loving Saviour, that (as man) He wished to ask leave as it were for it, though He already knew he was beloved by His Father, and that He delighted in Him. He knew very well that He asked for more in this petition than in the rest, because He knew the death they would make Him suffer, and the disgrace and affronts He would have to endure.

Now, my Lord, what father can be found, who having given us a Son (and such a Son!) who was so ill used, would consent still to remain among us, in order to suffer new injuries? Certainly none, O Lord! but *your* Son would have done so. You know well to whom you pray. O God! what excessive love in the Son! and what immense love is that of the Father! Yet, I am not much surprised at our good Jesus, for having already said, "Thy will be done!" He was to fulfil it, being what He is. I know He is not like us. Remembering, therefore, that He accomplished it by loving us as Himself, He accordingly endeavoured to seek the means of fulfilling this command with greater perfection, though it was to be at His cost. But *how* did You consent, Eternal Father? How could You see Your Son daily in such wicked hands, having permitted it to be done once, and how could You consent thereto? Since then You see how they have used Him, how could Your goodness see Him endure daily such injuries? And how many affronts are now offered to Him in the Most Holy Sacrament? In how many of His enemies' hands must His Father behold Him, and how numerous are the insults of these heretics! O eternal Lord! how can You admit such a petition! How can You consent to it? Look not at His love, who for the perfect accomplishment of Your will, and for our benefit, will even allow Himself every day to be cut in pieces. It is Your part, O my Lord! to consider this, since Your Son does not hesitate at anything. Why must all our good come at His cost? Why does He conceal everything, and seem not to know how to speak for Himself, but only for us? Must there be no one, then, to plead for this most loving Lamb?

I have observed how in this petition only He redoubles the words, for He speaks first, and then prays, "Give us this day our daily bread." As much as to say, that since He gave it to us, He would not take it from us again till the end of the world; but let it serve for our help and service *every day*. Let this consideration, my daughters, melt your hearts, into loving your spouse, since no slave willingly professes himself to be so, and yet our good Jesus thinks Himself honoured by it. O Eternal Father! how exceedingly meritorious is this humility! With what treasures can we purchase your Son! We know how to sell Him, for that was done for thirty pieces of silver; but to buy Him, no price is sufficient. He is

made here one of us, by that portion of our nature which He possesses. And as He is Lord of His own will, He reminds His Father, that since it is His, He can give it to us, and therefore He says, "Our bread." He makes no difference between Himself and us, but makes us one with Himself; that so, by His Majesty daily joining our prayer with His own, ours may obtain from God what we request.

VIII

The Same Subject Is Continued, and Applied to the Reception of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Since these words "every day" seem to mean for ever, I have been considering why our Lord, after He had said "daily," should add, "Give us this day." I will show you my foolishness, for it will appear to be such, by my venturing to speak on this subject. The word "daily," means (it seems to me), that we enjoy Him here on earth, and shall do so in heaven also, if we make good use of His company here in this world, since He has remained with us for no other reason, but to aid, encourage, and sustain us in doing His will, which, as we have said, must be accomplished in us. The saying "this day," seems to me to imply *one day*, viz., while the world lasts, and no more; and indeed it is but one day, as it were, for those wretches who are condemned to hell, who do not enjoy it in the other life. But it is not our Lord's fault, if they allow themselves to be conquered, for He will not fail to animate them to the end of the battle: they will then have nothing whereby to excuse themselves, or to accuse the Eternal Father, because He took it away from them at the best time. Hence, His Son begs of Him, that since it is for no more than one day, He would let Him spend it with His friends, notwithstanding the indignities some persons offer to Him; for since His Majesty has given Him to us, and sent Him into this world through His own goodness and will, He now willingly desires not to desert us, but to stay here with us, for the greater glory of His friends, and the grief of His enemies; so that He now asks nothing more than only for "to-day," because as He has once given us this most sacred bread, we are certain that He has given it to us *for ever*. As I have mentioned, His Majesty gave us this nourishment, and manna of the humanity, that so we may find it when we please, and not die of famine, except through our own fault; for in every way which the soul can desire to feed, she will find in the Most Holy Sacrament sweetness and consolation. There is no poverty, trouble, or persecution, which is not easy to bear, if we once begin to taste and relish His sufferings.

Ask the Father, therefore, daughters, together with this Lord, to let you this day have your spouse, that you may never see yourselves in this world without

Him; and this will be sufficient to moderate so great a pleasure, that He remains thus disguised under these accidents of bread and wine; and this is torment enough for one that has nothing else to love, nor any other comfort; beseech Him not to desert you, but to grant you a disposition to receive Him worthily. Be not solicitous for any other bread, for you have truly resigned yourselves to the will of God; I mean at those times of prayer, when you are treating about more important matters; for there are other times in which you may work and earn your food, though not with solicitude. At no time busy your mind about this: but let the body labour (for you ought to get your living), and let the soul rest: leave this care to your spouse, as I have exhorted you in another place more at length: He will always take it on Himself. Never fear, lest He will forget you, if you fail not in what you have promised about resigning yourselves to the will of God. And truly, my daughters, for myself I tell you, that should I now, through malice, fail in wanting resignation (as I have often done before), I would not entreat Him to give me bread, or anything else to eat: let me die of hunger. For why should I desire to live, if every day I am exposing myself more and more to eternal death? Hence, if you sincerely give yourselves up to God, as you say here, He will take care of you. Just as when a person enters upon a service, he is anxious to please his master in every thing, and the master is bound to find the servant in food while he remains in his house and serves him, except he become so poor that he has nothing, either for himself or for the servant. But here this is not the case, since *our* Master ever is and ever will be powerful and rich. Now, is it fit, a servant should every day be asking for victuals, when he knows his master takes care, and must take care to provide him with food? He might with reason tell him to be careful in serving him and pleasing him, for by fixing his thoughts on what he should not, he does nothing right. Hence, sisters, however anxious others may be in asking for *this* bread, let us beseech the Eternal Father, that we may deserve to ask of Him our eternal bread. And as the eyes of the body cannot take delight in beholding Him, because He is so veiled, let us hope He will discover Himself to those of the soul, and make Himself known to be another kind of pleasant and delicious food, and that He may thus preserve our life.

Do you think that this most holy food is not nourishment for these bodies, and an excellent remedy even against corporal maladies? I know it is, for I am acquainted with one subject to grievous diseases, who being often in great pain, was hereby freed from it, as by the touch of one's hand, and afterwards continued in perfect health. This was very usual, in diseases too which were well known, and which in my opinion could not be counterfeited. And because the wonders which this most holy bread effects on those who worthily receive it are well known, I do not relate many which I could mention, with regard to the person I speak of, and I know they are not false. Our Lord had given her so lively a faith, that when she heard some persons say they wished they had lived

at the time when Christ our Lord (our Sovereign Good) conversed in this world, she smiled to herself, and thought that since men enjoyed Him in the most Holy Sacrament as really as if He were alive, what need they care for any more? I know with regard to this person, though she was not one of the most perfect, that for many years when she communicated, she endeavoured to revive her faith, as much as if she had seen with her corporal eyes our Lord coming into her soul. And this she did (believing that our Lord entered into her poor cottage), in order that she might disengage herself, as much as possible, from all exterior things, and enter in with Him. She endeavoured to recollect her senses, that they might all understand so great a good; I mean, might not hinder the soul from understanding it. She imagined herself to be at His feet, and with blessed Magdalen she wept as much as if she had seen Him with her corporal eyes in the house of the Pharisee; and though she might have felt no devotion, yet faith told her that there she was well; and there she stood discoursing with Him. For unless we wish to make ourselves stupid and blind our understanding, there is no doubt that this is not a representation of the imagination, as when we consider our Lord upon the cross, or in some other stages of His passion: there we represent these things as past. This is now *present*, and is an absolute truth: hence, we need not seek Him out in some remote place; but as we know, that while the natural heat has not consumed the accidents of bread, our good Jesus stays with us, we do not lose so good an opportunity, but join ourselves with Him.

Now, if when He lived in this world, He healed the sick by the mere touch of His garments, what doubt is there but that He will perform miracles, since He is so intimately within us, if we have a lively faith; and that He will grant us what we ask of Him, while He is in our house? His Majesty is not accustomed to be a bad pay-master, if we give Him good entertainment. If you are troubled at not seeing Him with your corporal eyes, consider it is not expedient for us; for it is quite one thing to see Him glorified, and another to see Him as He was, when He lived and conversed on earth. No one would be able to bear it, such is our weak nature; there would be no world, nor would any one be able to stay in it, because by seeing this eternal truth, it would evidently appear that all those things which we value here, are a lie and a cheat. And seeing so great a majesty, how should such a sinner as I am, who have so highly offended Him, dare to be so near Him? He is accessible under those accidents of bread; for if the King be disguised, it seems we are not troubled to converse with Him, without so many ceremonies and reverences; it even appears that He is obliged to suffer this, because He has not made Himself known. Who dare approach Him with such tepidity, such unworthiness, and with so many imperfections?

As we do not know what we ask, how much better has His wisdom ordered it! To those whom He sees likely to profit thereby, He discovers Himself; though they see Him not with their corporal eyes, He has many ways of

disclosing Himself to such a soul, by great internal sentiments, and that in different ways.

Stay willingly with Him: lose not so fair an opportunity of negotiating, for after you have communicated is the time. Consider that this is a great benefit to a soul, and wherein our good Jesus delights much—see that you keep Him company. Make great account, daughters, of your not leaving Him. If obedience enjoin you some other duty, endeavour that your soul may be still with our Lord: He who is your Master will not fail to teach you, though you understand it not; but if you immediately fix your thoughts on something else; and if you mind Him not, nor esteem Him who is within you, then complain of no one but yourselves.

This, then, is the proper time for our Master to teach us, and for us to hear and kiss His feet, because He has been pleased to instruct us; and let us beseech Him not to depart from us. If you make this request on beholding a picture of Christ, it seems to me to be folly, to leave at such a time the Person Himself, in order to see His likeness. Is it not the same, as if possessing the picture of one whom we love dearly, and on the individual coming to visit us, we should neglect to speak to him, but converse entirely with his picture? But do you wish to know at what time this is no less useful than holy, and when I take a very great pleasure in it? When the person himself is absent, and wishes us to understand that he is so by many avidities, *then* it is a great pleasure to see *his* picture, whom we love with such great reason: on whatever side I turn my eyes, I should wish to see it. On what more delightful object can we fix our sight, than on one who loves us to such a degree—on *One* who comprises all good things in Himself? Unhappy heretics, who by their own fault have lost this as well as other consolations.

But after you have received your Lord, endeavour to shut the eyes of the body and open those of the soul, since you possess His very Person within you; for I tell you again (and I wish to tell you often), that if you adhere to this practice every time you communicate, and endeavour to keep such a conscience that you may be admitted frequently to the enjoyment of this good, He will not come so disguised, but as I have said He will make Himself known by many ways, according to the desire we have of seeing Him; and you should earnestly desire, that He may wholly reveal Himself to you. But if we make no account of Him, and after we have received Him, go away from Him to seek after other base objects, what can He do? Must He drag us by force to seek Him, because He loves to be known by us? No, for men did not treat Him well, when He openly exposed Himself to the gaze of all, and told them plainly who He was: there were very few who believed in Him. It is therefore a great mercy which He shows us all, that His Majesty will allow us to understand it is He who is present in the Most Holy Sacrament. But He does not like to be seen openly, nor to communicate His favours and bestow His graces, except on those who

He knows earnestly desire Him, because such as these are His true friends. For let me tell you, whoever is not so, and approaches not to receive Him as such, never let *him* importune our Lord to manifest Himself to him. He does not think the hour goes soon enough, wherein he has fulfilled what the Church commands, when presently he goes out of his house, and endeavours to drive our Lord away also. Hence, such a person seems, by other affairs, and occupations, and tumults of the world, to make all the haste he can, that our Lord may not take possession of his house.

IX

She Concludes This Subject with an Exclamation to the Eternal Father.

I have thus here entered into details (though I have spoken on the subject in the Prayer of Recollection), showing how very important it is thus to enter alone into ourselves with God. And when you do not communicate, daughters, and yet hear mass, you may communicate spiritually, which is a very beneficial practice: you may do the same about retiring afterwards into yourselves, for thus the love of our Lord is deeply imprinted on our heart. When we dispose ourselves to receive, He never fails to give, in many ways unknown to us. Just as when we are coming to a fire, which though very great, yet if you stand at a distance from it and hide your hands, you can hardly get warmth from it, though it gives more heat than is felt where there is no fire at all. But it is another thing for us to desire to come near this fire; since if the soul be well disposed (I mean, if she be desirous of expelling the cold), and if she continue therein for some time, she keeps the heat she gets for many hours, and a small spark flying out from it sets her all on fire. Indeed, it is so important for us to dispose ourselves for this favour, that you should never wonder, daughters, at my repeating it so often.

But remember, sisters, that if you should not succeed well at the beginning, you must not be troubled thereat: for the devil, perhaps, may bring on you some trouble of mind and anguish, because he knows the great harm he receives thereby. He will make you believe there is more devotion in other things than in this: but believe me, do not leave off this method, for thereby our Lord will try how much you love Him. Remember, there are few souls who accompany and follow Him in troubles: let us suffer something for Him, since His Majesty will reward us. And remember, likewise, there will be some who not only love not to stay with Him, but with rudeness drive Him from them. We must, therefore, suffer something, that He may discover we have a desire to see Him

and to be with Him. And since He endures, and will still endure, all things, for the sake of finding only one soul to receive and retain Him in herself with affection, let this soul be yours: because were there none such, with reason would the Eternal Father be unwilling to abide with us. But He is so great a friend to His friends, and so good a Master to His servants, that as He knows the will of His dear Son, He will not hinder so noble a work, wherein His love is so perfectly seen.

Since, then, Holy Father who art in Heaven, Thou willest this, and dost accept it (and it is evident you would not refuse a favour so beneficial to us), there must, as I said at first, be some one who will speak for Your Son.

Let us, daughters, be those persons, though it is a bold attempt, considering what we are: yet, relying on our Lord's command that we should ask, and adhering to this obedience in the name of our Good Jesus, let us beseech His Majesty, that seeing He has left nothing undone, by bestowing on sinners so great a benefit as this, He may in His Goodness be pleased to apply some remedy, that He may not be so unworthily treated here; and that since His Holy Son has proposed so good a means, viz., that we may often offer Him up in sacrifice, so precious a gift may be of service in stopping the further progress of such immense evils and irreverences as are practised in places where this Most Holy Sacrament has been, viz., among the Lutherans, who demolish churches, kill so many priests, and abolish the Sacraments. What an affliction is this, my Lord and my God! I beseech You, O Eternal Father! allow this evil to continue no longer: stop this fire, O Lord! for if You will, You can.

Consider that Your Son is still in the world; through respect for Him, let such foul, filthy, and abominable doings cease; and for the sake of His beauty and purity also let them cease, for He does not deserve to lodge in a house where such things are. Do it not for *our* sakes, O Lord! for we do not deserve it; do it for Your Son's sake, since to beseech You that He should not abide with us, this we dare not ask. He has, however, obtained from You the favour that for "to-day," that is, as long as the world shall last, You would leave Him here: for otherwise, all things would come to an end; and what would become of us? If anything can appease You, it is our possessing here such a pledge.

Since, then, my Lord, some remedy must be found, let Your Majesty apply it. O my God! who could importune You so much, and serve you so much, as to be able to request so great a favour, in recompense for His services, since You send none away unrewarded! But I have not done so, O Lord! but rather I am one, who perhaps have so exasperated You, that through my sins such great evils have happened. What then ought I to do, my Creator! but to present You with this most Sacred Bread? And though You gave it to us, yet I must give it back again, and beseech You, by the merits of Your Son, to do me this favour, since He has merited it by so many ways. Now, O Lord! now do calm this sea. Let not this Ship of the Church be always tossed about in such a tempest: save us, O Lord, or we perish!

X

*She Explains the Words,
"Forgive Us Our Trespasses," etc.*

Our good Master seeing, then, that with this celestial food all things become easy to us (unless it happen otherwise by our own fault), and that we may very easily perform what we have promised the Father in order that His will may be done in us, now beseeches Him that He would forgive us our "trespasses," since we forgive others; and so proceeding in His prayer, He uses these words, "And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." Observe, sisters, He does not say, "As we *shall* forgive," that we may understand whoever asks for so great a gift as the preceding is, and whoever has already resigned his will to God's will, must have done this duty already; and, therefore, He says, "As we forgive them." Hence, whoever truly says these words to our Lord, "Thy will be done," ought to have done it all, at least, in his resolution. You see here how the saints rejoiced at injuries and persecutions, because in forgiving them they had something to present to God, when they prayed to Him. But what shall such a poor wretch as I do, who have so little to forgive, and so much to be forgiven me? O my Lord! if there be any to keep me company, and who never yet understood this point—if there be any such, in Your name I beseech them to remember this, and to make no account of certain trifles which they call injuries; for, like children, we seem to build houses of straw, by taking notice of these punctilios of honour.

Would, sisters, that we understood what a thing honour is, and in what the loss of it consists! I speak not of *you* now (since it would be a great shame, not yet to have understood this), but of myself, when I look back upon the time in which I valued honour so much, not knowing what it was, and following the example of the multitude. O! at how many things was I displeased, of which I am now ashamed! And yet I was not one of those that paid much regard to these things, but I stood not on the main point of honour, because I did care for the honour which brings some advantage with it: this is the honour which benefits the soul. O! how true are the words, "Honour and profit cannot stand together." I know not whether He spoke the words exactly in this way; yet it is quite true to say, that the soul's profit and honour can never agree together. It is astonishing to see in what opposite ways the world goes on. Blessed be God, who has brought us out of it. May His Majesty grant that it may be always as far (as it now is) from this house. God deliver us from monasteries where points of honour are observed, in such there will never be much honour given to God.

But take notice, sisters, that the devil does not forget us: he likewise contrives honours for monasteries, and settles his laws for their rising and falling in dignities, like those of the world; and they place their honour in certain trifling matters, at which I am astonished. The learned must go according to their learning: this I do not understand, viz., that he who has got so far as to read divinity, must not condescend to read philosophy, for this is a point of honour, which honour consists in *ascending*, and not in descending; and even in his own judgment, if it were enjoined him under obedience, he would consider it an affront, and find some to defend him, and say, "It is an injury," and immediately the devil discovers reasons, that even in the law of God there seems to be some ground for it. Even among nuns, she that has been prioress must be thought unfit for any other inferior office; the senior must be considered, and this we never forget: and sometimes it seems that we deserve merit, because the order enjoins it. This is a matter only fit to be laughed at, or rather deplored: I know the order does not forbid our having humility. It commands this, for preserving good order; but I am not to be so strict in this respect, in things concerning my own reputation, so as to take as much care of this point of order, as of other things relating to it, which, perhaps, I observe very imperfectly. Let not all our perfection consist in observing this: others will mind it for me, if I be careless. And in such a case, since we are inclined to ascend higher (even though we should thereby lose our ascent to heaven), it seems we must not think of *descending*.

O my Lord! are You not our pattern and example? Certainly You are. Now, wherein did *Your* honour consist, O honoured Master? Did You not in reality lose it, by being humbled even to death? No! Lord, but You gained it for us all. O! for the love of God, sisters, consider how much we shall lose our way, if we follow this road, since from the beginning it is the wrong one; and God grant no soul may perish for observing these miserable points of honour, without considering in what honour consists, lest afterwards we come to imagine that we have done a great deal if we forgive some little trifle of this kind, which was neither an affront nor injury, nor anything; and like one who has done some extraordinary action, we come and beg of God to forgive us, since we have forgiven others. Make us understand, O my God! that we know not ourselves, and that we come with empty hands; and do You, in your mercy, pardon us.

But how highly must God here value our loving one another, since our good Jesus might have proposed other things to His Father, and have said, "Forgive us, O Lord, because we do great penances, or because we pray and fast much, and have left all things for *You*, and because we love You exceedingly, because we would lose our lives for You." Many other things of the like nature I could mention; and yet our Lord only said, "As we forgive them"; because, perhaps, He knew we were such great lovers of this miserable honour; and because it is a

duty so difficult to be performed by us, He therefore mentioned it, and offered it in our behalf.

Now, observe carefully, my sisters, that He says, "As we forgive," speaking of something as already done. And mark this well, that when some of these things happen to a soul, and she does not rise from the prayer of Perfect Contemplation (of which I have spoken already), firmly resolved to forgive, and when occasion offers, does not actually forgive an injury, however great it may be, though these injuries are only trifles, she need not trust much in such prayers; for these trifles do not affect that soul, which God unites to Himself in such sublime prayer, nor does she pay any more regard to being esteemed than despised. I have not spoken correctly; for *honour* afflicts her more than dishonour, and great delight and repose, than troubles. Since God has given her His kingdom here, she now desires it not in this world; and she understands that, in order to reign more powerfully, this is the true course to pursue. She has also seen by experience the benefit that she gains, and how much a soul advances by suffering from God: for seldom does His Majesty confer so great a favour, except upon such as have cheerfully endured many troubles for His sake; and as I have said elsewhere in this book, great are the afflictions of the "Contemplative," for our Lord selects those who have had experience therein.

Know then, sisters, that those who already sufficiently understand what all things are, should not stay long upon any transitory object. If some grievous cross or injury should trouble them upon the first assault, yet they scarcely feel it thoroughly, when reason on the other hand comes to their assistance, and seems to erect a standard for them, and leaves this trouble defeated, as it were, by the joy which the soul takes in seeing how God has presented her with an opportunity, whereby she gains before His Majesty in one day more graces and lasting favours, than she could possibly gain in ten years by labour voluntarily undertaken by her. This is very common, as far as I can understand, for I have spoken with many contemplatives, who value afflictions as others esteem gold and jewels, for they have learnt that these enrich them the most. These persons are very far from esteeming themselves on any account; they delight in having their sins known, and in mentioning them, when they see others esteem them. They act in like manner with regard to their noble birth, for they know that in the kingdom which never ends they shall gain nothing thereby; should they delight in being of noble descent, it would only be when it might conduce more to the honour of God and His service; if it should not tend thereto, they are troubled for being taken for more than they are, and without any pain, or rather with some delight, they undeceive others herein. The reason must be, because he on whom God bestows the favour of obtaining this humility and great love of God becomes so forgetful of himself, and despises himself so much in whatever tends to his praise, that he cannot even believe that others think differently of him, nor does he consider it an injury.

These effects which I have mentioned above, belong to persons who have arrived at a higher state of perfection, and to whom our Lord very commonly grants the favour of uniting them to Himself by perfect contemplation. As regards the first point, viz., resolving to bear injuries, however painful they may be, I say that he to whom God grants the favour of arriving at union obtains this grace in a very short time; and if he should not obtain it, nor find he has acquired much strength after this prayer, let him believe that this was not a favour from God, but some illusion of the devil, in order that we might esteem ourselves to be the more excellent. It may be, that when our Lord at first confers these favours, the soul has not this strength immediately; but if our Lord continue to bestow them, she will obtain this strength in a short time; and though she may not have it in other virtues, yet she *has* strength to forgive injuries.

I cannot believe, that a soul which has arrived so near to Mercy itself, where she knows what she is, and how many sins God has forgiven her, should not instantly and willingly forgive others, and be pacified and wish well to every one who has injured her, because she remembers the kindness and favours our Lord has shown her, whereby she has seen proofs of exceeding great love, and she is glad to have an opportunity offered to show some gratitude to her Lord.

I say again, I know many persons on whom God has bestowed the favour of exalting them to a supernatural state, bestowing on them this prayer, or the contemplation mentioned above; and though I have noticed many defects and imperfections in them, yet not one have I noticed, when they were in possession of this favour; nor shall I ever notice any, I believe, if these favours come from God, as I have said. Let him observe who receives great favours, how these effects go on increasing in him: and if he find none, let him fear much, and not believe that these favours come from God, since He always enriches the soul to which He comes. This is certain, that though the favour and consolation soon pass away, yet in time they are discovered by the benefits left in the soul. And as our Good Jesus knows this very well, He confidently tells His Father that we forgive those who injure us.

XI

On the Excellence of the "Lord's Prayer," and How We May in Many Ways Receive Consolation from It.

It ought to excite us to praise God exceedingly when we consider the great excellence of this heavenly prayer, composed as it was so well by such a good Master, so that, daughters, every one of us may apply it to our wants. I am

astonished to see how every kind of contemplation and perfection is comprised in such few words; for if we study only this book, we seem to stand in need of no other. Herein our Lord has already taught us every kind of prayer and high contemplation, from that of mental prayer, to the Prayer of Quiet and Union; hence, were I able to express myself well, I could compose a large book on prayer built on such a solid foundation. And here our Lord already begins to let us understand the effects He leaves us, when they are His favours, as you have seen.

I have sometimes thought, why His Majesty did not manifest Himself more in things so high and obscure, that so we might all understand them; and it seemed to me, that because this prayer was intended for all persons, that every one might ask according to his intention and receive comfort (thinking he understands the sense well), our Lord left it thus indefinite, that so contemplatives who seek not after earthly favours, and persons already much devoted to God, may ask heavenly favours, which through God's goodness are attainable here on earth. Those also who yet live in the world (and it is fit they should live according to their respective states) may ask likewise for their daily bread, since they must maintain their families, and this is very just and pious; and so with regard to other things suitable to their necessities. But let them observe, that the two points in this prayer, viz., the resigning our own will, and forgiving injuries, are necessary for all persons. It is true, indeed, there is more and less in it, as I have already mentioned. The perfect will resign their will, because they are perfect, and forgive with the perfection above mentioned: we also, sisters, will do what we can; since our Lord accepts all. And it seems a kind of agreement made on our behalf with His Eternal Father, as if He should say, "O My God! do this, and My brethren will do that."

We may be quite sure that He does not fail on His part; that He is a very good Paymaster, and rewards without measure. We may say this prayer once in such a manner, that our Lord, not discovering any duplicity remaining in us, but that we intend to act as we speak, will make us rich. He loves exceedingly, that we should treat with Him in sincerity, plainness, and clearness, and not speak one thing and mean another. He always gives more than we ask. As, therefore, our Good Master knows that both those who tend to perfection in thus praying, shall rise to so high a degree by reason of the favours which the Eternal Father is to bestow upon them; and understanding that those are already perfect, or that they walk in the way of perfection (who fear nothing, nor ought to fear, as they have the world under their feet) from the effects which He works in their souls, these may entertain very high hopes that His Majesty resides there; and that being inebriated with these delights, they would not willingly remember there is another world, or that they have any adversaries. O Eternal Wisdom, O excellent Instructor! O! what a great blessing, daughters, is a good, prudent, and cautious Master, one who prevents dangers! This is all

the spiritual happiness that a spiritual person can desire in this world, for it gives us great security.

I cannot express in words how important this is. As our Lord, then, sees it was necessary to awaken them, and remind them that they have enemies, and how much more dangerous it is still for them to become careless, and that they stand in need of far greater assistance from the Eternal Father (because they would fall from a higher place); and also that they may not go on “deceived,” without their ever perceiving it, He presents these petitions, so necessary for all men while we live in this land of exile, viz., “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

XII

On the Words, “Lead Us Not into Temptation, but Deliver Us From Evil.”

We must here understand and meditate upon great things, since we ask for such. Now observe, sisters, that I consider it very certain that those who arrive at such perfection do not herein beg of our Lord to free them from afflictions, from temptations, and combats, for this is a very certain sign that it is the Spirit of God, and that there is no illusion in the contemplation and favours which His Majesty bestows on them, since, as I said a little before, they rather *desire* them, and even ask for them and love them. They are like soldiers, who are the most pleased, when there is the most fighting, because they hope to obtain more booty. If there be none, they serve for their pay, but they see they cannot benefit themselves much thereby.

Believe me, sisters, that the soldiers of Christ, I mean those who have arrived at contemplation, long to meet with occasions of fighting. Public enemies they never dread much, because they know them already, and sufficiently understand that by the strength which God gives them they have no power, but are always defeated, and they themselves gain very great profit and never turn their backs. Those indeed whom they fear, and it is proper they should always fear them, and beseech God to be delivered from them, are certain treacherous enemies—the devils, who transform themselves into angels of light: they come in disguise, and will not let themselves be known till they have done much harm in the soul, sucking out our very blood and destroying our virtues, so that we fall into a temptation, and never perceive it. Let us, daughters, often pray in the “Our Father,” and beseech God to deliver us from these enemies, and not permit us to fall into temptation, lest they delude us: let us pray that the poison may be discovered, and that they hide not the light from us. And indeed, with

what great reason does our Good Master teach us to ask this blessing, and He Himself asks it for us! Consider, daughters, that they do evil in many ways; think not this consists in making us believe that the favours and caresses which they can counterfeit in us come from God. This seems to me to be the *least* part of the mischief which they can do us: on the contrary, it may happen that thereby they make some travel faster, because being allured by that pleasure, they spend more time in prayer: and as they are ignorant that it comes from the devil, and seeing themselves unworthy of these caresses, they will never desist from giving thanks to God, and therefore they consider themselves the more obliged to serve Him: they will also strive to dispose themselves, that God may confer more favours upon them, thinking they all come from His hand.

Always endeavour, sisters, to acquire humility; and consider that you are not worthy of these favours, and therefore do not seek them. I am confident, that by this means the devil will lose many souls, while he thinks to bring about their ruin, and our Lord works our good from the evil the devil intends doing. His Majesty beholds our intention, which is, to please and serve Him by remaining with Him in prayer, and our Lord is faithful. It is good to proceed with caution, that so no breach may be made in humility by any vain-glory; and beseech our Lord to deliver you from this; and be not afraid, daughters, that His Majesty will suffer you to be caressed much by any but by Himself. But that by which the devil may do great mischief, without our discovering it, is in making us believe we have virtues which we do *not* possess; this deceit is a very pestilence, for in caresses and favours we seem only to receive something, and we remain so much the more obliged to serve our Lord: but here it seems that we give something, and that our Lord is bound to pay us, and thus by little and little great evil is produced. On the one hand, our humility is awakened, and on the other we neglect to acquire that virtue which we think we already possess. And thus we imagine we go on securely, without perceiving it, and we fall into a ditch from which we cannot get out; and though it may not be evidently a mortal sin, which always leads us to hell, it so disables us that we cannot travel along the road of which I began to speak, for I have not forgotten it.

I tell you that this is a very dangerous temptation. I know by experience a great deal about it, and so I can explain it to you, though not so well as I could wish. And what is the remedy, sisters, for this? The *best*, in my opinion, is that which our Master teaches us, viz., prayer, beseeching our Eternal Father not to suffer us to fall into temptation. I will also tell you another remedy. If we think our Lord has already given us any virtue, we are to understand it is a blessing we have received, and that He may take it from us again, as indeed it happens many times, and not without great providence on the part of God. Have you never perceived this, sisters, in yourselves? I have, and sometimes I think I am very disengaged from earthly things; and indeed, when it comes to the trial, I am so. At other times I find myself so attached, and this to things perhaps, at

which I should have laughed the day before, that I hardly know myself. Another time I seem to have great courage; and as regards anything which would tend to promote God's honour, I would not turn my back upon it, and upon trial I find I have it in some things; the next day it happens that I find I have not so much courage as would be sufficient to kill an ant for God's sake, should I meet with any opposition. Sometimes methinks, I do not care at all for whatever people may say about me, or however much they may detract me; and I have sometimes found it so by experience, and it has rather pleased me. There are days again, when a single word afflicts me, and I would willingly leave this world, since here, it seems, everything disgusts me. And in this respect I am not alone; I have observed this in many persons better than myself, and I know it happens so.

If this then be the case, who can say of himself that he has virtues, or that he is rich, when at the very time that he stands in need of virtue, he finds himself destitute of it? *We* must not say so, sisters; but let us always think ourselves poor, and not run into debt, when we have no means of paying, for our treasures must come from another quarter, and we know not when our Lord may leave us in the prison of our own misery, without giving us any assistance. And if others or we should think ourselves good, because He shows us favours and grants us honours, which I said are only *lent* us, both they and we too shall find ourselves deceived. The truth is, that by our serving with humility, our Lord at last helps us in our necessities; but if this virtue be not really in our soul, our Lord will leave you to yourselves in everything. This is an exceeding great favour on His part, in order that you may greatly esteem this virtue, and understand that we have nothing, except what we receive.

Observe, also, another remark which I will make. The devil makes us believe we have some virtue (suppose the virtue of patience), because we resolve to suffer, and we make frequent acts of suffering much for God's sake, and we think we really should so suffer; and on this account we are greatly pleased, and the devil helps us to believe this. I advise you not to make any account of these virtues, nor let us think we know them except by name, or that God has bestowed them upon us, till we discover some proof of this. It may happen that one word will be spoken which displeases you, and then your patience may fall to the ground. When you suffer often, then praise God, for He begins to teach you this virtue; and strive to suffer, because it is a proof He wishes you to repay it to Him, since He gives it to you: but consider it only as something *deposited*, as I have already told you.

Another temptation the devil makes use of is, to make you believe that you are truly *poor*; and he has some good reason, because in words you have taken a vow of poverty, as every Religious does, or because you desire in your heart to be such, as persons do who practise prayer. Poverty then being thus bound, or if she thinks she is poor, she thus speaks to herself, "I desire nothing: this I have

because I cannot be without it; in a word, I must live to serve God, and He wishes us to support these bodies." A thousand other things I might mention which the devil, disguised as an angel of light, persuades her to believe, because all this is good; and so he makes her believe that she is poor already, and that she has this virtue, and that everything is done which can be done.

Let us now come to the proof, for this cannot be known in any other way than by continually reflecting on our actions; and if we take any care, the temptation will immediately discover itself. One person, for instance, has an estate which is superfluous. I speak of what is necessary, and not that he should keep three servants, when he can do with one: he is sued for some money, or a poor farmer neglects to pay him his rent, and this troubles and afflicts him as much as if he were not able to live without it. He will reply, perhaps, that his trouble arises lest he might lose his estate through his own neglect; and thus there is always some excuse. Now, I do not here mean to say he should neglect his business, but rather he should mind it; so that if it prosper, well and good; and if not, it is well also. For one who is truly poor, esteems these things so little, that though he attends to them for certain reasons, yet they never disturb him, because he never imagines he shall be in want; and even if he *should* be in want, this does not trouble him much. He considers it as a thing accessory, and not the principal; having higher thoughts, he is occupied on the other hand only by force. A religious man or woman who is poor (or, at least, *ought* to be so), possesses nothing, because sometimes they have it not; but if a person bestows anything upon him, it would be a wonder, it would be wonderful, if he were to consider it superfluous; he always loves to have something preserved; and if he can have a habit made of fine stuff, he asks not for a coarse one: he will have some small article, which he can pawn or sell, though it may consist of books, because if sickness comes, he will require better nourishment than usual. Wretched sinner that I am! Is this what you have promised, to forget yourselves, and leave the matter to God, come what may? If you go on providing for the future, you may with less distraction enjoy a fixed revenue. Though this may be done without sin, yet it is proper that we understand these imperfections, in order that we may see how much we want towards possessing this virtue, and that we may ask it of God, and obtain it; for if we imagine we possess it, we grow careless, and (what is worse) are deluded.

The same happens to us with regard to humility, for we think we do not desire honour, nor care for anything; but when an occasion presents itself relating to some trifle, it will immediately appear by what you feel and do, that you are not humble, for if anything should happen which tends more to your honour, you do not reject it; nor do those poor, of whom we spoke, reject what is more beneficial to them, and God grant they may not seek it too. But they have the words so often in their mouths, viz., that they desire nothing (and they really think so), that even the habit of saying this makes them more ready to

believe it. It is very important for this purpose always to watch over ourselves, in order to discover this temptation, and also to be watchful in other matters, as well in the things I have already mentioned. For when our Lord gives only one of these virtues, it seems to draw all the rest after it; this is a truth well known. But I wish to remind you again, that though you may think you possess the virtue, yet you must fear being deceived, for the truly humble man is always doubtful of his own virtues; and those which he sees in his neighbour very frequently appear to him to be the most certain and valuable.

XIII

The Saint Gives Advice to Enable Us to Resist Certain Temptations of the Devil, etc.

Be on your guard, daughters, against certain false humilities, which, with great uneasiness to ourselves, are suggested by the devil, respecting the greatness of our sins; for hereby he is accustomed to disturb souls in many ways, in order to dissuade them from the holy communion, and from using prayer offered up for particular intentions, (for the devil persuades them they are unworthy); and when they approach to receive the most blessed sacrament, the time in which they may receive some favours from God is mostly spent in discussing whether they have been well prepared or not. The enemy prevails so far as to make a soul believe that, because she is such a great sinner, God has forsaken her to such a degree, that she almost doubts of His mercy. Whatever she says seems dangerous, and her actions fruitless, however good they may in reality be. She is quite discouraged, because she has no power to do any good, for that which appears good to her in others, looks *bad* in herself.

Pay very great attention, daughters, to this point, which I shall now tell you; for at one time it may be humility and virtue to consider ourselves to be bad, and at another time it may be a very great temptation; and because I have experienced this, I know it to be true. However great our humility may be, it does not disturb or disorder the soul, but brings peace, delight, and calmness. Should any one, seeing herself to be wicked, clearly understand that she deserves to be in hell, and can scarcely dare ask for mercy, if this be true humility, this grief has a certain sweetness and satisfaction attendant upon it, so that we would not wish to see ourselves without it: it does not disturb nor straiten the soul, but rather enlarges her, and disposes her for serving God the more fervently. But the other kind of grief troubles and disorders everything, and quite throws the soul into confusion, and is very painful. I believe the devil tries to make us think we have humility, and at the same time (if he can) to make

us distrust God. When you find yourselves in this state, avoid, as much as you can, thinking on your own misery, and meditate on the mercy of God, and how much He loves you, and how much He suffered for you. If it be a temptation, you will not be able to do even this; for it will not suffer such thoughts to rest, or fix themselves on anything, unless to torment you the more: it will be much, if you can discover it to be a temptation. The same may be said of indiscreet penances, for thereby the devil tries to make us believe *we* are more mortified than others, and that we do something. If you conceal yourselves from your confessor or superior; or if they command you something, and you do not obey, this is evidently a temptation: endeavour to obey, though it may cost you more trouble, since herein our greater perfection consists.

The devil uses another dangerous temptation likewise, which is a certain security, by which we imagine that on no account shall we return to our former faults, and the delight of the world, for we already know it, and understand how soon all things will end, and that the things of God give us more solid pleasure. If this temptation come at the beginning, it is very bad, because by this security we become careless, and throw ourselves again into the occasions of sin, and thus we fall. God grant the relapse may not be far worse; for when the devil sees there is a soul which can injure him, and do good to others, he does all he can that she may not rise again. Hence, the more caresses and pledges of His love which our Lord gives you, yet never be so secure as not to fear you may fall again, and keep yourselves also from dangerous occasions.

Be very careful to communicate these favours and consolations to one who can give you light, and do not conceal anything: use such care, that in the beginning and end of your prayer, however sublime your contemplation may be, you may always conclude with the knowledge of yourselves; since if it be from God, even though you be not desirous of it, yet you will do it very often, because it brings humility along with it, and leaves us with more light, in order that we may understand what a nothing we are. I will not enter into more details, because you may meet with many books which will give you the same advice: what I have said, I have said from experience, and have sometimes been in such troubles, and all that can be said cannot afford a perfect security.

What then, O eternal Father! are we to do, but to repair to You, and beseech You, that these our enemies lead us not into temptation? Let public assaults come, for by Your aid we shall better defend ourselves; but these treacheries who can understand? O my God, we need continually beg a remedy of You: suggest to us, O Lord, something whereby we may understand ourselves, and assure ourselves; You know already that many do not go this way; and if they must travel amidst so many fears, much fewer will go. A strange case this is! It seems as if the devil would not tempt those who do not go by the way of prayer, and that all should be more terrified and astonished at one whom, when arrived nearer to perfection, he deceives, than at a hundred thousand whom

they see in error and in public sin: one need not examine whether they be good or bad, since this can be seen a thousand leagues off. But indeed they have reason, because there are so very few whom the devil deceives, among those who say the "Our Father," in the manner already mentioned, that like some new and unusual thing, it excites astonishment. It is very usual with men to pass lightly over that which they commonly see, and wonder greatly at that which comes very seldom, or almost never: the devils themselves cause them to wonder, because it suits their purpose well, since they lose many souls by one who has arrived at perfection. I say the miscarriage of such is so astonishing, that I do not marvel at their wondering, because unless it be their own great fault, these go much safer than those who take another way; just as they do who stand on a scaffold to see a bull-fight, rather than those who expose themselves to its horns. This comparison I heard, and it seems to me a very proper one. Be not afraid, sisters, to travel along these ways, of which there are many in prayer, for some will be freed from temptation sooner, by being near our Lord. The way is safe. But you will be sooner free from temptation by being near our Lord, than by being far off. Beg this favour from Him, as you so often do every day in the "Our Father."

XIV

*She Mentions Two Remedies,
Whereby We May Safely Pass Amidst
Our Numerous Temptations, viz.,
the Love and Fear of God.*

O our good Master! give us then some remedy, in order that we may escape the snares of our enemy in so dangerous a war. That which we are able to use, daughters, and which His Majesty has given us, is love and fear; for love will make us quicken our pace, and fear will make us be cautious where we set our feet, in order that we may not fall on the road, where there are so many things to make us stumble, along which we must travel while we live: thus warned, I can safely assure you we shall not be deceived.

You may ask me, by what means you shall discover that you possess these eminent virtues? You have reason for so asking, for a certain and clear proof thereof cannot be given, because were we *sure* that we possessed love, we should be also sure of our being in a state of grace. But observe, sisters, there are some proofs which it seems even the very blind see; they are not secret, and though you may not wish to hear them, they send forth cries that make a great

noise, for there are few who have these in perfection, and therefore they are the more manifest. The love and fear of God are like two strong castles, from which war is made against the world and the devil. Those who really love God, love all good—seek all good—encourage all good—commend all good—always join themselves to the good, and acknowledge and defend the good. They love nothing but truth and things worthy to be loved. Do you think it possible for those who sincerely love God, to love vanities, or riches, or worldly things, or pleasures, or honours? They have no quarrels; they bear no envy—all their object is to please only their Beloved: they are dying with the desire that He would love them, and thus they spend their lives in studying how they may please him most. It is impossible that the love of God, if it be indeed love, should be concealed much. Behold it in St. Paul, in blessed Magdalen. In three days St. Paul began to perceive he was sick with love, and Magdalen perceived it from the first day. And how plainly was it perceived! There is sometimes more and sometimes less; and so love makes itself known, according to its strength: if it be little, it discovers itself a little; if great, it manifests itself greatly: but yet, whether it be little or great, if there be the love of God, it is *always* seen.

But respecting that which we are now speaking of (*viz.*, the deceit and illusions which the devil causes in contemplatives), in them love is strong; their love is ever great, or they could not be contemplatives: and thus love is readily discovered, and in different ways. Being a great fire, it cannot but cast a great light around. If love, then, be wanting in any, let them walk with great caution: let them know they have good reason to fear: let them endeavour to understand what the matter is, and make use of frequent prayer: let them live in great humility, and beseech our Lord not to lead them into temptation; for truly, if we have not this mark, I fear we shall fall into temptation: but by our walking in humility, endeavouring to know the truth, being obedient to our confessor, and treating with him in sincerity and simplicity (as I have said), God will be faithful. Believe me, that if you conceive no malice, nor discover any pride, then the devil is instrumental in giving you life, by that wherewith he thinks to give you death, though he may seek to delude and affright you. But if you feel this love of God, which I have spoken of, and his fear whereof I shall now speak, be cheerful and quiet, for the devil, in order to disturb your soul that it may not enjoy such great blessings, will suggest a thousand false fears, and will also cause others to raise them in you: for as he cannot gain you, he endeavours at least to make you losers in some way, and those to lose likewise who might gain a great deal by believing that such great favours as He bestows on such a wicked creature, come from God; but they consider it impossible for Him to bestow them, because it seems that sometimes we have forgotten His ancient mercies.

Do you think it matters little to the devil to raise these fears? No, for he does two evils hereby: one, by intimidating those who hear it from approaching to prayer, thinking that they also must be deceived; the other, that many would

give themselves more easily to God, by seeing (as I have said), Him to be so good, that it is possible for Him to communicate Himself so much now to sinners. This excites in them a great desire for the like favour; and they have reason, for I know some persons who, encouraged by this, have begun prayer, and in a short time have become true contemplatives, our Lord bestowing on them great favours. Hence, sisters, when you see amongst you one on whom our Lord bestows these favours, praise Him greatly for them; yet do not, therefore, consider her safe, but rather help her with more fervent prayers; for no one can be secure while he lives, being engulfed in the dangers of this tempestuous sea.

Thus you will be sure to discover where this love is, for I do not see how it can be hid. When we love creatures here below, this is said to be impossible, and the more persons endeavour to conceal it, the more it discovers itself; and yet it is a thing so base as not to deserve the name of love, being based upon a mere nothing: it even makes me sick to make use of this comparison; and how then can divine love be concealed, which is so strong? It is a love so just, that it always goes on increasing; and as it has so great an object to love, it sees nothing to induce it to cease loving, and it has many motives to love, all grounded on such a good foundation as that of being rewarded with a return of love. Of this there can be no doubt, for it has been so clearly proved by the great sorrows, and labours and afflictions, and shedding of blood, even to the loss of life, that so we might not have the least doubt of His love!

O my God! What a vast difference must there be, between one love and the other, to a soul who has experienced it! May His Divine Majesty make us understand it, before He takes us out of this life; for it will be a great comfort at the hour of our death, to see we are going to be judged by Him whom we have loved above all things: we may rest secure about the subject of our debts; we are not going to a strange land, but to our own native country, since it is His whom we love so exceedingly, and who loves us: and this love (beyond all the rest) has this advantage over other earthly loves, viz., that in loving Him, we are sure that He loves us.

Remember, my daughters, the gain which this love brings with it, and also what a loss it is when we have not love; for then we fall into the hands of the tempter, into hands so cruel, so hateful of all good, and so bent upon all evil. What will become of the poor soul, which immediately falls into such hands, when she has just been freed from the pains and torments attendant on the pangs of death? What a poor repose does she find! How quickly does she descend into hell, cut into a thousand pieces! What a multitude of serpents surround her in various ways! What a dreadful place it must be! What a miserable lodging must be there! If any trouble can scarcely be endured here in this world, by a rich person delicately brought up (and such as these must go there), how will that unfortunate soul, think you, endure such torments for

ever? Let us not desire delicacies, daughters, for we are well enough in this house. The poor accommodation is, as it were, but for one night: let us praise God, and force ourselves to do penance in this life. But how sweet will death be to one who has done penance for all his sins, and escapes purgatory! Perhaps even from this time he begins to enjoy heavenly glory. He shall find no fear within him, but solid peace. Now if we do not reach this degree, sisters (since it is possible), it will be great cowardice on our part. Let us beg of God, that if we must suffer immediately after death, it may be in a place where we may endure our sufferings willingly, with the hope of being released from them; and where we may not lose His friendship and grace which He gives us in this life, that so we may not fall into temptation without our knowing it.

XV

On the Fear of God, and How by It We May Avoid Venial Sins.

To what a length have I spoken! And yet not so much as I could wish, for it is sweet to speak on such a love: what then will it be to possess it! O my Lord! do give it to me; let me not leave this world till I desire nothing in it, nor be capable of loving anything but You: neither let me apply this name of love to what is nothing, since all things are false: if the foundation be such, the building will not last. I know not why we wonder when we hear it said, "This man has not behaved well to me; that other does not love me." I laugh to myself, and say, "Why should he love you, or how else should he requite you?" Hereby you may learn what the world is, since it afterwards punishes you by that very love which you have for it: and this is what torments you, viz., the will is very much displeased that you have kept her so deeply immersed in children's play.

Let us now speak of the fear of God, though I am not troubled at discoursing for a short time on this love of the world: for I know it well, and wish *you* to know it also, that you may always keep yourselves from it: but because this would be wandering from my subject, I must not enter upon it.

The fear of God is likewise a subject which is well understood by him who has it, and by those that treat of it, though I wish you to understand that in the beginning it is not so perfect, except in some persons, to whom (as I have said) our Lord gives in a short time so much, and whom He raises to such a high degree in prayer, that it is then clearly discovered. But where the favours do not come in such abundance, that the soul (as I said) is enriched, by one approach, with all virtues, then this fear goes on increasing by little and little its strength, and augmenting each day its forces. It is perceived from the very beginning, for

the persons immediately forsake their sins, and the occasions thereof, and their evil company, and other proofs are discovered. But when the soul has already arrived at contemplation (of which we principally speak here), the love as well as the fear of God are very easily discovered; they are not concealed even in the exterior. These persons, though narrowly observed, will not be found to walk carelessly; for however closely we may watch them, our Lord so preserves them that they would not wilfully commit a venial sin, however much it might be for their interest to do so: mortal sins they dread as much as fire. These are the illusions, sisters, which I wish you to fear so much; and continually beseech God that the temptation may not prove so strong, so as to offend Him, but that it may be proportioned to the strength which He shall give us to overcome it; if your conscience be pure, it can do you little or no harm. This is the point to our purpose; this is the fear which I desire may never be taken away from us, and which will avail us in all our wants.

O! how very important is it, in order that we may chain up those infernal slaves, that we should not offend God, since at last all must serve Him, however unwilling they may be; they perhaps are forced to do so: we do it willingly. Hence, if our Lord be pleased, they will all be kept within bounds, and they shall be able to do nothing to hurt us, however much they may bait us with temptations, and lay secret snares for us. Treasure up this instruction in your interior, for it is very necessary that you be not negligent, till you find in yourselves so strong a resolution of not offending God, that you would lose a thousand lives rather than commit one mortal sin; and as to venial sins, be extremely careful not to commit them wilfully. But who does not commit many which are *involuntary*? There is, however, one kind of advertence so deliberate and another so sudden, that committing a venial sin and advertent to it are almost the same thing. But may God deliver us from a wilful sin, however small it may be; for I do not understand how we can have the boldness to act in opposition to so great a Lord, even though it were but in a very small matter: how much more when there is nothing little which offends so immense a Majesty, especially as we see that He stands looking at us: hence this seems to me to be a premeditated sin, as if one said: "Lord, though this sin may displease You, yet I will commit it: I now see You behold it, and You dislike it; this I am well aware of: but I prefer to follow my own fancy and passion rather than do Your will." Now, in a case of this nature, is there anything little? To me the fault seems not little, but great, and *very* great too.

Consider, sisters, for the love of God, that if you wish to obtain this fear of God, it is very important you should understand how grievous it is to offend God; and reflect upon this truth very frequently in your mind, for our eternal life depends upon it. Strive much more to have this virtue deeply rooted in your soul; and till we possess it, we must continually use the greatest care, and withdraw ourselves from all the occasions of sin, and from all company that

does not help us to approach nearer to God. Take care, whatever you do, to subdue your will; and endeavour also, that whatever is spoken may tend to edification: fly from that company, where the discourse is not of God. Much is required on our part, in order deeply to imprint this fear in the soul, though if there be love, it is soon obtained. But when the soul has discovered in herself this strong resolution of which I have spoken, viz., that she would not commit an offence against God for any consideration, though she may sometimes fall afterwards (for we are frail, and have no reason to trust ourselves, since when we seem to be strong, then we ought to be the least confident in ourselves; for whence should our confidence come? It must be from God), let her not be discouraged, but endeavour immediately to ask pardon. When once we perceive in ourselves what I have mentioned, then it is not necessary to be so pensive and scrupulous, since our Lord will assist us, and our good habit will help us not to offend Him; and we shall go on with a holy liberty, treating with whomever it shall be proper, though they may not be good persons; for those who were poison to you, before you had this true fear of God, and were instrumental in destroying the soul, will often give you afterwards an opportunity of loving God and of praising Him for having delivered you from great danger. And if formerly *you* were instrumental in increasing their weaknesses, you will now help them to refrain from them, because they are in your presence; for without your seeking this honour, you will find it.

I often praise our Lord; and considering how it happens that, without speaking a word, a servant of God may sometimes stop the discourses which are uttered against God, I conclude it must be in the same manner as when we have a friend, there is always such respect shown him, as to induce us not to do him, in his absence, any injury before one who is known to be acquainted with him; and since this person here is in the state of grace, that same grace must certainly cause respect to be given him, however poor he may be, and that no rudeness be offered to him in a matter which it is known he feels so much; viz., offending God. The truth is, I know not the reason, but this is very common. Hence, you should not afflict yourselves too much; for if the soul once begin to grow timorous, it is a very bad disposition as to all kinds of good, and sometimes she becomes scrupulous; and lo! here it is unserviceable, both for herself and others; and suppose she fall not into scrupulosity, it may be well for herself, but she will not bring many souls to God, when people see so much fear and anxiety. Such is our nature, that it frightens and stifles persons, and (through fear of the like trouble), they relinquish the desire of taking the course which you take, though they clearly perceive it to be more conducive to virtue.

Hence also another evil arises, viz., that in judging of others (who do not go that way, but with greater sanctity, in order to benefit their neighbours, converse with freedom, and without reservedness), they will immediately seem to you imperfect. If they use a holy alacrity, it will seem a laxity of morals;

especially in *us*, who want learning, and who know not how far we may converse with others without sin, it is a very dangerous thing. It is also very bad to be continually tempted (and this is unpalatable, because it is to the prejudice of our neighbour), and to fancy, that except all persons scruple in the same way that *you* do, they do not go on so well. There is also another evil, viz., that in some matters of which you are to speak, and it is but reasonable you should do so, you will, through a dread of exceeding in something, not dare to speak; or perhaps you will speak well of that, which it were better you should hate and abhor. Endeavour, therefore, sisters, as much as you can, to be affable, without displeasing God; and so conduct yourselves to all persons with whom you may have to speak; that they may love your conversation, and admire your manner of life and discourse, and that they may not be terrified at virtue. This is of great importance for religious women; the more holy they are, the more sociable they should be with the sisters; for though you may be much troubled, because all their discourses are not such as you might desire, yet never be unfriendly with them, and thus you will be loved, and do them much good. We ought to endeavour, as far as we can, to be affable, and to please and content those persons with whom we converse, and especially our sisters.

Endeavour, therefore, my daughters, to understand this truth, that God does not regard such trifles as you imagine; and let not your soul and spirit be too restrained, for they may lose many advantages. Let your intention be right, and the will determined (as I have said) not to offend God: but let not your soul hide herself in a corner; for, instead of acquiring more sanctity, she will contract many imperfections, into which the devil will drive her by other ways; and, as I said, she will not benefit herself or others so much as she might. Here you see how with these two virtues, the love and fear of God, we may travel along this road gently and quietly, though, as the fear must precede, we must not travel *carelessly*; for while we live we cannot enjoy security, because it would be too dangerous: and this our instructor understood, who at the end of this prayer, utters these words to His Father, "But deliver us from evil," being one who well understood their necessity.

XIV

On the Words, "Deliver Us from Evil."

Methinks our good Jesus has reason to desire His Father to deliver us from evil (that is, from the dangers and troubles of this life), both for our own interest, because, while we live, we are exposed to great danger; and for His own interest, since we already see how weary He was of this life, when at His

last supper He said to His apostles, "With desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you": since we see how sweet death was to Him. But now, those who are a hundred years old are not weary of life, but always desire to live: but we do not lead so miserable a life, nor endure such sufferings and such poverty as His Majesty did. What was His whole life but a continual death, as He always had before His eyes that cruel death His enemies were one day to make Him suffer? And yet this was the least part of His sorrow, when compared with the innumerable offences which He saw would be committed against His Father, and with the immense multitude of souls that would be lost. If this consideration be to one of us in this world so great a torment, provided we have any love, what must it have been to the boundless and immense love of our Lord! What great reason, then, had He to beg of His Father to deliver Him now from so many afflictions and evils, and to grant Him eternal repose in His Kingdom, since He was the lawful Heir thereof? Hence it was that He added "Amen"; in which, because by this word all prayers usually end, I think our Lord besought His Father that we might be delivered from all evil for ever: and so I beseech our Lord to deliver me from all evil, since by living longer I do not discharge what I owe; but it may be, I plunge myself deeper every day. And what is not to be endured, O Lord! is this, that I cannot know for certain I love You, or whether my desires are pleasing to You.

O my Lord and my God, deliver me now from all evil, and be pleased to conduct me there, where all good things are. What do those expect here in this world, to whom You have given some knowledge of what a nothing this world is, and who have a lively faith of that glory which their heavenly Father has reserved for them? To ask for this with an intense desire, and a firm resolution to enjoy God, is a sure sign for "Contemplatives" to know, that the favours which they receive in prayer come from God. Hence, let those who have it value it highly. When I ask it, I do not do so in this manner (I mean, it is not to be understood in this sense); but as I have lived so ill, I am now afraid to live any longer and am weary of so many crosses.

No wonder that those who receive Divine consolations long to be there, where they receive them not by drops; and that they do not wish to remain in a world, where so many obstacles prevent them from enjoying so great a good; and that they desire to be there, where the Sun of Justice never sets. Everything will look dark and obscure to them, when they have seen earthly joys: and hence, I wonder how they can live. He cannot surely live with any pleasure, who has begun to enjoy God, and who has already received here the promise of His kingdom, wherein he is to live—not after his own will, but according to the will of his King.

O what a different kind of life must this be, where death is not wished for! How differently inclined is *our* will here, from God's will! His will wishes us to love the truth, and we love a lie; it wishes us to love the Eternal, and we love

things which pass away; it wishes us to love objects which are noble and sublime, and we love things which are base and earthly; it wishes us to seek what is certain, and we love here what is doubtful. All is vanity, daughters, except to beseech God to deliver us for ever from all evil; and though we may not express this desire with very great perfection, yet let us force ourselves to make our demand. And what does it cost us to ask much, since we ask One who is powerful? It would be a shame to ask a great emperor for a farthing. But in order that we may succeed, let us give up our will to His, since we have already surrendered it to our superiors. May His name be always hallowed in heaven and on earth, and may His will always be done in me. Amen.

See now, sisters, how our Lord has relieved me of the trouble, since He Himself teaches both you and me, the "way" which I began to show you; and He has made me understand what great things we ask, when we say this heavenly prayer. May He be blessed for ever, since it is certain I never imagined this prayer comprised such great mysteries. You have already seen how it includes in itself the whole way of perfection, from the very commencement, till God engulfs the soul in Himself, and makes her drink abundantly of the fountain of Living Water, which flows at the end of the road: and it is true, that as I have come out of this fountain (I mean this prayer), I am now unable to go any further. It seems our Lord was pleased to make us, sisters, understand the great consolations which are contained therein, and that this prayer is exceedingly useful for persons who cannot read: did they understand it well they might gain much instruction from it, and much comfort to themselves.

Let us profit then, sisters, by the humility with which our good Master teaches us; let us also beseech Him to pardon me for having presumed to speak on such sublime subjects, since I did so through obedience. His Majesty knows well, that I was not capable of writing on the subject, had He not taught me what I have said. Thank Him for it, you my sisters, since He has certainly assisted me, being moved by the humility wherewith you requested me to write, and desired to be instructed by so miserable a creature. If the Rev. Dr. Bañez, my confessor (to whom I shall deliver the manuscript before you see it), should perceive that it will promote your good, and shall allow you to read it, I shall receive comfort from your consolation. But should the manuscript be unfit for any one's perusal, you will accept my *good-will*, inasmuch as I have endeavoured to comply with your request; and I shall consider myself sufficiently rewarded for the trouble I have taken in *writing* (not certainly in practising) what I have said. May God be eternally blessed and praised, from whom cometh all the good we speak, and think, and do. Amen, Amen.

St. John of the Cross

St. John of the Cross (1542–91), Spanish founder with St. Teresa of the Discalced Carmelites, and Doctor of the Church. He met Teresa of Ávila in 1567, while in Medina del Campo for his first Mass. He collaborated with her in restoring the Carmelite Primitive Rule for the Friars and Nuns.

The opposition he endured from his own brethren is among the most poignant in the Church's history. Among other trials, he was imprisoned by his confreres for nine months in a small cell, with almost no light. Yet, before his apparently miraculous escape, he managed to compose some of his great poems.

St. John's main writings are The Ascent of Mount Carmel—The Dark Night, The Spiritual Canticle, and The Living Flame of Love. The selections which follow are four of his poems and two sets of Counsels and Sayings, which capsulize the spirituality of his longer writings.

COUNSELS AND SAYINGS

Counsels to a Religious for the Attainment of Perfection

In a few words, your Holy Charity has asked a great deal of me, for which much time and paper would be necessary. As I find myself with neither of these things, I will endeavour to be compendious, and to set down only certain points or maxims which contain much in a small space and will lead anyone who observes them perfectly to achieve great perfection. He that would be a true religious and fulfil the duties of the state to which he has vowed before God to conform, and make progress in the virtues and enjoy the consolations and sweetness of the Holy Spirit, will be unable to do this if he strive not with the greatest care to put into practice the four maxims following, which are: resignation, mortification, the practice of virtues, and solitude of body and of spirit.

2. In order to observe the first of these—resignation—he must needs live in the monastery as if no other person lived there; and thus he should never intermeddle, either in word or in thought, with the things that happen in the community, nor with those of individuals, nor must he take note of anything concerning them, be it good or evil, nor of their personal qualities. And, even though the world come to an end, he must neither remark upon them nor intermeddle with them, in order to preserve his tranquillity of soul, remembering Lot's wife, who, because she turned her head on account of the cries and the noise made by those that were perishing, was turned into hard stone. This the religious must observe very straitly, and he will then free himself by its means from many sins and imperfections, and will preserve his tranquillity and quietness of soul, and will make great progress in the sight of God, and in that of men. And let great attention be paid to this, for it is of such importance that many religious, through not observing it, have not only never profited by the other works of virtue and religion that they have performed, but have continually fallen away and gone from bad to worse.

3. In order to put into practice the second thing—mortification—and to

make progress therein, the religious must very truly set in his heart this truth: that he has come to the convent only that he may be fashioned and tried in virtue, and that he is like the stone which has to be polished and fashioned before it can be set in the building. And so he must realize that all who are in the convent are no more than workmen whom God has set there solely that they may fashion and polish him as regards mortification. Some have to fashion him in word, telling him that which he would fain not hear; others in deed, doing in his despite things which he would fain not endure; others in character, being tiresome and troublesome to him both in themselves and in their behaviour; others in thought, so that he feels or thinks that they esteem him not and love him not; and all these mortifications and annoyances he must endure with inward patience, keeping silence for the love of God and realizing that he entered upon the religious life for no other reason than that he might be thus fashioned and made worthy of Heaven. And, if he entered it not with that intent, there was no reason why he should have done so; he should rather have remained in the world, seeking his own comfort, honour, credit and ease.

4. And this second maxim is absolutely necessary for the religious in order that he may fulfil the duties of his state and find true humility, interior quiet and joy in the Holy Spirit. And if he puts it not into practice, nor learns how to be a religious, or even the reason for which he entered the religious life, neither learns to seek Christ, but seeks only himself, he will neither find peace in his soul nor will he fail to sin and to be oftentimes troubled. For occasions of these failings will never be wanting in the religious life, nor would God have them wanting, for, since He brings souls into this life in order to prove and purify them, as gold is purified with fire and hammer, it is meet that there be not wanting trials and temptations of men and of devils, the fire of troubles and afflictions. In these things must the religious exercise himself, endeavouring always to bear them with patience and conformity with the will of God, and not in such a way that, instead of approving him in his time of trial, God will have to reprove him for not having been willing to bear the cross of Christ with patience. Many religious, not realizing that they have entered the religious life for this purpose, endure others with difficulty, and such, when they come to their account, shall find themselves put to great shame and confusion.

5. In order to put into practice the third counsel, which is the exercise of virtues, the religious must needs have constancy in practising the acts of his religious life and of obedience, without any respect to the world, but for God's sake alone. In order that he may do so in this way, and without being deceived, let him never consider the pleasure or the displeasure which he finds in the work, in doing it or refraining from doing it, but only the reason which he has for doing it for God's sake. And so he must do all things, whether delectable or distasteful, with this sole aim of serving God thereby.

6. And in order to put this into practice determinedly, and with this constancy,

and to bring forth the virtues speedily, let him ever have a care to incline himself rather to that which is difficult than to that which is easy, to that which is rough rather than to that which is smooth, and to the grievous and distasteful part of his work rather than to that which is delectable and pleasant in it. Let him not go about selecting that which is but a light cross, for that is an unworthy burden; and the greater the burden, the lighter is it, if borne for God. Let him ever strive likewise that his brothers be preferred to him in all comforts, and set himself ever in the lowest place, and this with a right good will. For this is the way to become great in spirituality, as God tells us in His Gospel: *Qui se humiliat exaltabitur.*¹

7. To put into practice the fourth counsel, which is solitude, the religious must needs consider all the things of the world as ended, so that, when against his will he is obliged to engage in them, he may do so with as great detachment as if they were not.

8. And let him take no account of things without, since God has withdrawn him from them and led him to neglect them. Let him not do any business himself that he can do by means of a third person, for it greatly behooves him to desire to see nobody and to be seen of none. And let him carefully consider that if God will exact from any one of the faithful a strict account of any idle word, how much more will He not exact an account of every such word, on the day of reckoning, from a religious, whose whole life and works are consecrated to God?

9. I mean not by this that a religious should fail to perform the office which he holds, or any other that is required of him by his obedience, with all necessary and possible solicitude; he must do this in such a way that none can attach any blame to him, which neither God nor obedience demands. To this end let him endeavour to be instant in prayer, which he must not abandon even amidst the exercises of the body. Whether he be eating or drinking or speaking or conversing with persons in the world, or whatsoever else he be doing, let him ever be desiring God and having his heart affectioned to Him, for this is a thing most necessary for interior solitude, which demands that the soul let fall no thought that is not directed toward God and that he forget all things which belong to this short and miserable life and which pass away. In no wise let him seek to know aught, save how he may the better serve God and keep His ordinances the more faithfully.

10. If your Charity observe these four things with care, you will very quickly attain perfection, for they are of such mutual assistance to each other that, if a man come short in one of them, he loses thereby that wherein he was gaining and making progress with respect to the rest.

¹ Luke 14:11.

Sayings of Light and Love

PROLOGUE

O my God and my delight, for Your love I have also desired to give my soul to composing these sayings of light and love concerning You. Since, although I can express them in words, I do not have the works and virtues they imply (which is what pleases You more, O my Lord, than the words and wisdom they contain), may others, perhaps, moved by them, go forward in Your service and love—in which I am lacking. I will thereby find consolation, that these sayings prove an occasion that what I lack may be found in others.

Lord, You love discretion, You love light, You love love, these three You love above the other operations of the soul. Hence these will be sayings of discretion for the wayfarer, of light for the way, and of love in the wayfaring. May there be nothing of worldly rhetoric in them nor the long-winded and dry eloquence of weak and artificial human wisdom, which never pleases You. Let us speak to the heart words bathed in sweetness and love, which do indeed please You, removing obstacles and stumbling blocks from the paths of many souls who unknowingly trip and unconsciously walk in the path of error—poor souls who think they are right in what concerns the following of Your Beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and becoming like Him, imitating His life, actions, and virtues, and the form of His nakedness and purity of spirit. Father of mercies, come to our aid, for without You, Lord, we can do nothing.

1. The Lord has always revealed to men the treasures of His wisdom and His spirit, but now that the face of evil more and more bares itself, so does the Lord bare His treasures the more.

2. O Lord, My God, who will seek You with simple and pure love and not find You are all he desires, for You show Yourself first and go out to meet those who desire You?

3. Though the path is plain and smooth for men of good will, he who walks it will not travel far, and will do so only with difficulty if he does not have good feet, courage, and tenacity of spirit.

4. It is better to be burdened and in company with the strong than to be unburdened and with the weak. When you are burdened you are close to God, your strength, who abides with the afflicted. When you are relieved of the

burden you are close to yourself, your own weakness; for virtue and strength of soul grow and are confirmed in the trials of patience.

5. He who wants to stand alone without the support of a master and guide, will be like the tree that stands alone in a field without a proprietor. No matter how much the tree bears, passers-by will pick the fruit before it ripens.

6. A tree that is cultivated and guarded through the care of its owner produces its fruit at the expected time.

7. The virtuous soul that is alone and without a master is like a lone burning coal; it will grow colder rather than hotter.

8. He who falls alone remains alone in his fall, and he values his soul little since he entrusts it to himself alone.

9. If you do not fear falling alone, how do you presume that you will rise up alone? Consider how much more can be accomplished by two together than by one alone.

10. He who falls while heavily laden will find it difficult to rise under the burden.

11. The blind man who falls will not get up alone in his blindness, and if he does, he will take the wrong road.

12. God desires the least degree of purity of conscience in you more than all the works you can perform.

13. God desires the least degree of obedience and submissiveness more than all those services you think of rendering Him.

14. God values in you an inclination to aridity and suffering for love of Him more than all possible consolations, spiritual visions, and meditations.

15. Deny your desires and you will find what your heart longs for. For how do you know if any desire of yours is according to God?

16. O sweetest love of God, so little known, he who has found its veins is at rest!

17. Since a double measure of bitterness must follow the doing of your own will, do not do it even though you remain in single bitterness.

18. The soul that carries within itself the least appetite for worldly things bears more unseemliness and impurity in its journey to God than if it were troubled by all the hideous and annoying temptations and darknesses describable; for, so long as it does not consent to these, a soul thus tempted can approach God confidently, by doing the will of His Majesty, Who proclaims: *Come to Me all you who labor and are heavily burdened and I will refresh you.*¹

19. The person who in aridity and trial submits to the dictates of his reason is more pleasing to God than he who does everything with consolation, yet fails in this submission.

20. God is more pleased by one work, however small, done secretly, with-

¹ Matt 11:28.

out desire that it be known, than a thousand done with desire that men know of them. The person who works for God with purest love not only cares nothing about whether men see him, but does not even seek that God Himself know of them. Such a person would not cease to render God the same services, with the same joy and purity of love, even if God were never to know of them.

21. He who does a pure and whole work for God merits a whole kingdom.

22. A bird caught in birdlime has a twofold task: it must free itself and cleanse itself. And he who satisfies his appetite suffers in a twofold way: he must detach himself and, after being detached, cleanse himself of what has clung to him.

23. He who does not allow his appetites to carry him away will soar in his spirit as swiftly as the bird that lacks no feathers.

24. The fly that clings to honey hinders its flight, and the soul that allows itself attachment to spiritual sweetness hinders its own liberty and contemplation.

25. Withdraw from creatures if you desire to preserve, clear and simple in your soul, the image of God. Empty your spirit and withdraw far from them and you will walk in divine lights, for God is not like creatures.

Prayer of a Soul Taken with Love

Lord God, my Beloved, if You remember still my sins in suchwise that you do not do what I beg of You, do Your will concerning them, my God, which is what I most desire, and exercise Your goodness and mercy, and You will be known through them. And if it is that You are waiting for my good works so as to hear my prayer through their means, grant them to me, and work them for me, and the sufferings You desire to accept, and let it be done. But if You are not waiting for my works, what is it that makes You wait, my most clement Lord? Why do You delay? For if, after all, I am to receive the grace and mercy which I entreat of You in Your Son, take my mite, since You desire it, and grant me this blessing, since You also desire that.

Who can free himself from lowly manners and limitations if You do not lift him to Yourself, my God, in purity of love? How will a man begotten and nurtured in lowliness rise up to You, Lord, if You do not raise him with Your hand which made Him?

You will not take from me, my God, what You once gave me in Your only Son, Jesus Christ, in Whom You gave me all I desire. Hence I rejoice that if I wait for You, You will not delay.

With what procrastinations do you wait, since from this very moment you can love God in your heart?

Mine are the heavens and mine is the earth. Mine are the nations, the just are mine, and mine the sinners. The angels are mine, and the Mother of God, and

all things are mine; and God Himself is mine and for me, because Christ is mine and all for me.

What do you ask, then, and seek, my soul? Yours is all of this, and all is for you. Do not engage yourself in something less, nor pay heed to the crumbs which fall from your Father's table. Go forth and exult in your Glory! Hide yourself in It and rejoice, and you will obtain the supplications of your heart.

26. The very pure spirit does not meddle with exterior attachments or human respect, but it communes inwardly with God, alone and in solitude as to all forms, and with delightful tranquillity, for the knowledge of God is received in divine silence.

27. A soul enkindled with love is a gentle, meek, humble, and patient soul.

28. A soul that is hard because of its self-love grows harder. O good Jesus, if You do not soften it, it will ever continue in its natural hardness.

29. He who loses an opportunity is like the man who lets a bird fly from his hand, for he will never recover it.

30. I didn't know You, my Lord, because I still desired to know and relish things.

31. Well and good if all things change, Lord God, provided we are rooted in You.

32. One thought alone of man is worth more than the entire world, hence God alone is worthy of it.

33. For the insensible, what you do not feel; for the sensible, the senses; and for the spirit of God, thought.

34. Reflect that your guardian angel does not always move your desire for an action, but he does always enlighten your reason. Hence, in order to practice virtue do not wait until you feel like it, for your reason and intellect are sufficient.

35. Man's appetite when fixed on something else leaves no room for the angel to move it.

36. My spirit has become dry because it forgets to feed on You.

37. What you most seek and desire you will not find by this way of yours, nor through high contemplation, but in much humility and submission of heart.

38. Do not tire yourself, for you will not enter into the savor and sweetness of spirit if you do not apply yourself to the mortification of this that you desire.

39. Reflect that the most delicate flower loses its fragrance and withers fastest; therefore guard yourself against seeking to walk in a spirit of delight, for you will not be constant. Choose rather for yourself a robust spirit, detached from everything, and you will discover abundant peace and sweetness, for savory and durable fruit is gathered in a cold and dry climate.

40. Bear in mind that your flesh is weak and that no worldly thing can comfort or strengthen your spirit, for what is born of the world is world and

what is born of the flesh is flesh. The good spirit is born only of the Spirit of God, Who communicates Himself neither through the world nor through the flesh.

41. Be attentive to your reason in order to do what it tells you concerning the way to God. It will be more valuable before your God than all the works you perform without this attentiveness and all the spiritual delights you seek.

42. Blessed is he who, setting aside his own liking and inclination, considers things according to reason and justice before doing them.

43. He who makes use of his reason is like one who eats substantial fruit, and he who is moved by the satisfaction of his will is like one who eats insipid fruit.

44. Lord, You return gladly and lovingly to lift up the one who offends You and I do not turn to raise and honor him who annoys me.

45. O mighty Lord, if a spark from the empire of Your justice effects so much in the mortal ruler who governs the nations, what will Your all-powerful justice do with the righteous and the sinner?

46. If you purify your soul of attachment to and desire for things, you will understand them spiritually. If you deny your appetite for them, you will enjoy their truth, understanding what is certain in them.

47. Lord, my God, You are not a stranger to him who does not estrange himself from You. How do they say that it is You who absent Yourself?

48. He has truly mastered all things who is not moved to joy by the satisfaction these things afford nor saddened by their insipidness.

49. If you wish to attain holy recollection, you will not do so by receiving but by denying.

50. Going everywhere, my God, with You, everywhere things will happen as I desire for You.

51. He will be unable to reach perfection who does not strive to be content with having nothing, in such fashion that his natural and spiritual desire is satisfied with emptiness; for this is necessary in order to reach the highest tranquillity and peace of spirit. Hence the love of God in the pure and simple soul is almost continually in act.

52. Since God is inaccessible, be careful not to concern yourself with all that your faculties can comprehend and your senses feel, so that you do not become satisfied with less and lose the lightness of soul suitable for going to Him.

53. The soul that journeys to God, but does not shake off its cares and quiet its appetites, is like one who drags a cart uphill.

54. It is not God's will that a man be disturbed by anything, or suffer trials, for if he suffers trials in the adversities of the world it is because of his weakness in virtue. The perfect man rejoices in what afflicts the imperfect man.

55. The way of life contains very little business and bustling and demands mortification of the will more than knowledge. The less one takes of things and pleasures the farther one advances along this way.

56. Think not that pleasing God lies so much in doing a great deal as in doing it with good will, without possessiveness and human respect.

57. At the evening of life, you will be examined in love. Learn to love as God desires to be loved and abandon your own ways of acting.

58. See that you do not interfere in the affairs of others, nor even allow them to pass through your memory, for perhaps you will be unable to accomplish your own task.

59. Do not think that, because the virtues you have in mind do not shine in your neighbor, he will not be precious in God's sight for something of which you are not thinking.

60. Man knows neither how to rejoice properly nor how to grieve properly, for he does not understand the distance between good and evil.

61. See that you are not suddenly saddened by the adversities of this world, for you do not know the good they bring, being ordained in the judgments of God for the everlasting joy of the elect.

62. Do not rejoice in temporal prosperity, since you do not know if it gives you assurance of eternal life.

63. In tribulation, immediately draw near to God with confidence, and you will receive strength, enlightenment, and instruction.

64. In joys and pleasures, immediately draw near to God in fear and truth, and you will be neither deceived nor involved in vanity.

65. Take God for your spouse and friend and walk with Him continually, and you will not sin and will learn to love, and the things you must do will work out prosperously for you.

66. You will without labor subject the nations and bring things to serve you if you forget them and yourself as well.

67. Abide in peace, banish cares, take no account of all that happens, and you will serve God according to His good pleasure, and rest in Him.

68. Consider that God reigns only in the peaceful and disinterested soul.

69. Although you perform many works, if you do not deny your will and submit yourself, losing all solicitude about yourself and your affairs, you will not make progress.

70. What does it profit you to give God one thing if He asks of you another? Consider what it is God wants, and then do it. You will as a result better satisfy your heart than with that toward which you yourself are inclined.

71. How is it you dare to relax so fearlessly, since you must appear before God to render an account of the least word and thought?

72. Reflect that many are called but few chosen and that, if you are not careful, your perdition is more certain than your salvation, especially since the path to eternal life is so narrow.

73. Do not rejoice vainly, for you know how many sins you have committed and you do not know how you stand before God, but have fear together with confidence.

74. Since, when the hour of reckoning comes, you will be sorry for not having used this time in the service of God, why do you not arrange and use it now as you would wish to have done were you dying?

75. If you desire that devotion be born in your spirit and that the love of God and the desire for divine things increase, cleanse your soul of every desire and attachment and ambition in suchwise that you have no concern about anything. Just as a sick man is immediately aware of good health once the bad humor has been thrown off and a desire to eat is felt, so will you recover your health, in God, if you cure yourself as was said. Without doing this, you will not advance no matter how much you do.

76. If you desire to discover peace and consolation for your soul and serve God truly, do not be content in this that you have left behind (because in that which now concerns you, you may be as impeded as you were before, or even more), but also leave all these other things and attend to one thing alone, which brings all these with it, namely, holy solitude, together with prayer and spiritual and divine reading, and persevere there in forgetfulness of all things. For if these things are not incumbent upon you, you will be more pleasing to God in knowing how to guard and perfect yourself than by gaining all other things together, for what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and suffers the loss of his soul?²

² Matt 16:26.

POEMS

Songs of the soul in rapture at having
arrived at the height of perfection,
which is union with God by the road
of spiritual negation

Upon a gloomy night,
With all my cares to loving ardours flushed,
(O venture of delight!)
With nobody in sight
I went abroad when all my house was hushed.

In safety, in disguise,
In darkness up the secret stair I crept,
(O happy enterprise)
Concealed from other eyes
When all my house at length in silence slept.

Upon that lucky night
In secrecy, inscrutable to sight,
I went without discerning
And with no other light
Except for that which in my heart was burning.

It lit and led me through
More certain than the light of noonday clear
To where One waited near
Whose presence well I knew,
There where no other presence might appear.

Oh night that was my guide!
Oh darkness dearer than the morning's pride,

Oh night that joined the lover
To the beloved bride
Transfiguring them each into the other.

Within my flowering breast
Which only for himself entire I save
He sank into his rest
And all my gifts I gave
Lulled by the airs with which the cedars wave.

Over the ramparts fanned
While the fresh wind was fluttering his tresses,
With his serenest hand
My neck he wounded, and
Suspended every sense with its caresses.

Lost to myself I stayed
My face upon my lover having laid
From all endeavour ceasing:
And all my cares releasing
Threw them amongst the lilies there to fade.

Song of the soul that is glad to know God by faith

How well I know that fountain's rushing flow
Although by night

Its deathless spring is hidden. Even so
Full well I guess from whence its sources flow
Though it be night.

Its origin (since it has none) none knows:
But that all origin from it arose
Although by night.

I know there is no other thing so fair
And earth and heaven drink refreshment there
Although by night.

Full well I know its depth no man can sound
And that no ford to cross it can be found
Though it be night.

Its clarity unclouded still shall be:
Out of it comes the light by which we see
Though it be night.

Flush with its banks the stream so proudly swells;
I know it waters nations, heavens, and hells
Though it be night.

The current that is nourished by this source
I know to be omnipotent in force
Although by night.

From source and current a new current swells
Which neither of the other twain excels
Though it be night.

The eternal source hides in the Living Bread
That we with life eternal may be fed
Though it be night.

Here to all creatures it is crying, hark!
That they should drink their fill though in the dark,
For it is night.

This living fount which is to me so dear
Within the bread of life I see it clear
Though it be night.

Continuing the Incarnation

Then He summoned an archangel,
Saint Gabriel: and when he came,
Sent him forth to find a maiden,
Mary was her name.

Only through her consenting love
Could the mystery be preferred
That the Trinity in human
Flesh might clothe the Word.

Though the three Persons worked the wonder
It only happened in the One.
So was the Word made incarnation
In Mary's womb, a son.

So He who only had a Father
Now had a Mother undefiled,
Though not as ordinary maids
Had she conceived the Child.

By Mary, and with her own flesh
He was clothed in His own frame:
Both Son of God and Son of Man
Together had one name.

The Birth of Christ

Now that the season was approaching
Of His long-expected birth,
Like a bridegroom from his chamber
He emerged upon our earth

Clinging close to His beloved
Whom He brought along with Him.
While the gracious Mary placed them
In a manger damp and dim.

Amongst the animals that round it
At that season stretched their limbs,
Men were singing songs of gladness
And the angels chanting hymns,

To celebrate the wondrous marriage
By whose bond such two were tied,
But the wee God in the manger
He alone made moan and cried;

Tears were the jewels of the dowry
Which the bride with her had brought.
And the Mother gazed upon them
Nearly fainting at the thought.

The tears of Man in God alone,
The joy of God in men was seen.
Two things so alien to each other,
Or to the rule, had never been.

St. Francis de Sales

St. Francis de Sales (1567–1622) was Bishop of Geneva and one of the leaders of the Counterreformation. With St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Ávila he is one of the great doctors of the spiritual life. In 1603 he met St. Jane Frances de Chantal and became her spiritual director. Through their combined efforts and inspiration, the Order of the Visitation was founded in 1610.

He might be called the heavenly patron of spiritual direction by mail, along with his official title of Patron of the Catholic Press. More than two thousand of his letters are extant. Most of them consist of spiritual guidance, for all occasions and for all classes of people. He taught souls, above all, to listen readily to the Master within, the only real director of the human spirit.

His two best-known works are the *Introduction to the Devout Life* (1608) and the *Treatise on the Love of God* (1616). Both were adapted by him for publication from instructions which he gave to individuals.

St. Francis' counsel was usually meant for the laity in the world, and it was for them that he wrote his *Introduction to the Devout Life*. The devotion to which he calls them is ardent and strong enough to make the soul "strive carefully, often and promptly." In order to acquire this love, the soul must be purified by the practices of the purgative way, treated in the first part. Progress in devotion is ensured by the exercises of the illuminative way, treated in the four following books. Then the author treats of meditation, spiritual exercises, and the sacraments. Following this is some valuable advice on the most necessary virtues, on overcoming temptations and making retreats and resolutions.

It was not easy to choose from the wealth of practical wisdom contained in the *Introduction to the Devout Life*. But the sections chosen were meant especially to show, in the words of St. Francis, that "True devotion is the queen of virtues and the perfection of charity, and it is compatible with every station in life."

INTRODUCTION TO THE DEVOUT LIFE

The Fourth Part of the Introduction Containing Necessary Counsels Against the Most Usual Temptations

I

That We Must Disregard the Censures of Worldly People

As soon as the children of this world perceive that you desire to follow a devout life they will shoot at you a thousand arrows of mockery and detraction. The most malicious will calumniate your change as being hypocrisy, bigotry, and artifice. They will say that the world has frowned on you and that being rejected by it you turn to God. Your friends will make a world of objections which they imagine to be very wise and charitable. They will tell you that you will fall into a melancholy state of mind; that you will lose credit in the world; that you will make yourself insupportable; that you will grow old before your time; that your domestic affairs will suffer; that you must live in the world like one in the world; that salvation may be had without so many mysteries; and a thousand similar trivialities.

My Philothea, all this is nothing but foolish and empty babbling. These people are not interested in your health or in your welfare. "If you had been of the world," says the Savior, "the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you." We have seen gentlemen and ladies pass the whole night, even many nights, together at chess or cards. Is there any concentration more absurd, stupid, or gloomy, than that of gamesters? Yet worldly people do not say a word, nor do their friends ever trouble themselves about them. Should we spend an hour in meditation, or rise in the morning a little earlier than usual in order to prepare ourselves for Communion,

everyone runs for a physician to cure us of hypochondria and jaundice. Such persons can pass thirty nights in dancing without experiencing any inconvenience; but if they watch a single Christmas night, everyone of them coughs and complains that he is sick the next morning. Who does not see that the world is an unjust judge, gracious and favorable to its own children, but harsh and rigorous toward the children of God?

We can never please the world unless we lose ourselves together with the world. It is so whimsical that it is impossible to satisfy it. "John came neither eating nor drinking," says the Savior, and you say, "He hath a devil.' The Son of Man is come eating and drinking," and you say that He is a Samaritan. It is true, Philothea, that if we consent to laugh, play, or dance with the world in order to be agreeable, the world will be scandalized at us. If we do not, it will accuse us of hypocrisy or melancholy. If we dress well, the world will attribute it to some design; if we neglect our dress, it will impute it to meanness of heart. Our good humor will be termed dissoluteness and our mortification sullenness. The world thus looks upon us with an evil eye, and we can never be agreeable to it. It exaggerates our imperfections and proclaims that they are sins, turns our venial sins into mortal and our sins of weakness into sins of malice.

"Charity is kind," says St. Paul, but the world, on the contrary, is malicious. "Charity thinks no evil." The world, on the contrary, always thinks evil, and when it cannot condemn our actions it will accuse our intentions. Whether the sheep have horns or not, whether they be white or black, the wolf will not hesitate to devour them if he can. Whatever we do, the world will wage war against us. If we remain long at confession, it will wonder how we can have so much to say; if we stay but a short time, it will say we have not confessed all our sins. It will observe all our actions, and for one word of anger that we utter, it will protest that our temper is insupportable. The care of our own interests will seem like covetousness, and our meekness, folly. As for the children of the world, their anger is called bluffness; their avarice, economy; their familiarities, legitimate entertainment. Spiders always spoil the work of bees.

Let us turn a deaf ear to this blind world, Philothea. Let it cry as long as it pleases, like a cat who tries to disturb birds in daytime. Let us be constant in our designs and unswerving in our resolutions. Our perseverance will prove whether we have in good earnest sacrificed ourselves to God and dedicated ourselves to a devout life. Comets and planets appear to be almost of an equal light, but comets are only certain fiery masses that pass away and after a short time disappear, whereas planets remain in perpetual brightness. So also hypocrisy and true virtue have a great resemblance in their external appearance, but they are easily distinguished from each other. Hypocrisy cannot long continue, but is quickly dissipated like rising smoke, whereas true virtue is always firm and constant. It is no slight help to the security of devotion for us at the beginning to suffer reproaches and calumny on its account. We thus avoid the dangers of

pride and vanity, which may be compared to the midwives of Egypt, who had been ordered by the cruel Pharaoh to kill the male children of the Israelites on the very day of their birth. We are crucified to the world and the world ought to be crucified to us. The world holds us to be fools; let us hold it to be mad.

II

That We Must Have Good Courage

Though light is beautiful and lovely to our eyes, nevertheless it dazzles them after we have been long in the dark. Before we become familiar with the inhabitants of any country we find ourselves at a loss amongst them, no matter how courteous and gracious they may be. It may well happen, Philothea, that this change in your way of life will cause many disturbances within you. This great and general farewell that you have bid to the follies and vanities of the world may bring to you a feeling of sadness and discouragement. If this should be the case, have a little patience, I pray you, for this will come to nothing. It is but a little strangeness, occasioned by novelty; when it has passed away, you will receive ten thousand consolations. It may perhaps be difficult to you at first to renounce that glory which fools and mockers brought to you in the midst of your vanities. In God's name! Would you forfeit that eternal glory which God will assuredly give to you? The vain amusements in which you have hitherto employed your time in past years will again represent themselves to allure your heart and invite it to return to them. Can you resolve to renounce eternal happiness for such deceitful trivialities? Believe me, if you persevere, you will not be long in receiving consolations so delicious and agreeable that you will acknowledge that the world has nothing but gall in comparison of this honey, and such that one single day of devotion is preferable to a thousand years of a worldly life.

You see that the mountain of Christian perfection is exceedingly high. O my God! you say, how shall I be able to ascend it? Courage, Philothea! When the young bees begin to take shape, we call them nymphs. As yet they are unable to fly to the flowers, the mountains, or the neighboring hills in order to gather honey. Little by little, by continuing to feed on the honey which the old ones have prepared, the little nymphs take on wings and acquire sufficient strength to fly and seek their food all over the country. It is true we are as yet but little bees in devotion. Consequently, we are unable to fly up high in accordance with our plan, which is nothing less than to reach the peak of Christian perfection. Yet, as our desires and resolutions begin to assume a form, and as our wings begin to grow, we hope that we shall one day become spiritual bees and

be able to fly. In the meantime let us feed upon the honey of the many good instructions that devout persons of ancient days have left us. Let us pray to God to give us "wings like a dove," that we may not only be enabled to fly upward during the time of this present life, but also to rest ourselves in the eternity that is to come.

III

Of the Nature of Temptations, and of the Difference between Feeling Temptation and Consenting to It

Imagine to yourself, Philothea, that a young princess is deeply beloved by her spouse and that a wicked man, wishing to debauch her marriage bed, sends a foul messenger of love to discuss with her concerning his abominable designs. First, the messenger proposes to this princess the intention of his master; secondly, the princess is pleased or displeased with the message and the proposal; thirdly, she either consents or refuses. In the same manner, when Satan, the world, and the flesh see a soul espoused to the Son of God, they send her temptations and suggestions. By these: (1) sin is proposed to her; (2) she is either pleased or displeased with the proposal; (3) finally, she either consents or refuses. These are the three steps in the descent into iniquity: temptation, delight, and consent. Although these three actions are not so manifest in all kinds of sins, yet are they clearly seen in great and enormous sins.

Even though the temptation to any sin whatsoever should last all through our life, it could never render us displeasing to the Divine Majesty, provided that we were not pleased with it and did not give our consent to it. The reason is that in temptation we are not active but passive, and inasmuch as we take no pleasure in it, so we cannot incur any guilt. St. Paul long suffered temptations of the flesh. Yet he was far from being displeasing to God on that account, but on the contrary God was glorified by them. The Blessed Angela of Foligno suffered such cruel temptations of the flesh that she moves us to compassion when she relates them. So great were the temptations suffered by St. Francis and St. Benedict that in order to overcome them the one was obliged to cast himself naked on thorns and the other into the snow. Yet for all that, they lost nothing of God's grace but increased very much in it.

You must be very courageous, Philothea, in the midst of temptations. Never think yourself overcome as long as they displease you, observing well this difference between feeling and consenting. That is, we may feel temptations, even though they displease us, but we can never consent to them unless they please us, since to be pleased with them ordinarily serves as a step toward our

consent. Therefore, let the enemies of our salvation lay as many baits and allurements in our way as they please. Let them stand always at our heart's door in order to gain entrance. Let them make as many proposals as they can. Still, as long as we remain steadfast in our resolution to take no pleasure in the temptation, it is utterly impossible that we should offend God, any more than the prince married to the princess of whom I spoke could be displeased with his spouse for the message sent to her if she took no pleasure whatever in it. Yet in this case there is this difference between her and the soul. When the princess hears of the wicked proposition, she may, if she please, drive away the messenger and never suffer him to appear again in her presence. On the other hand, it is not always in the soul's power not to feel the temptation, though it is always in her power not to consent to it. Therefore, no matter how long the temptation may last, it cannot harm us as long as it is displeasing to us.

With respect to the delight that may follow the temptation, it must be observed that there are two parts in the soul, the inferior and the superior. The inferior does not always follow the superior, but acts for itself apart. Hence, it frequently happens that the inferior part takes delight in the temptation without the consent, nay, against the will of the superior. This is that warfare which the apostle describes when he says that "the flesh lusteth against the spirit," and that there is a law of the members and a law of the spirit.

Have you ever seen, Philothea, a large fire covered with ashes? When someone comes ten or twelve hours later in search of fire, he finds but little in the center of the hearth and even that is found with difficulty. Yet there it was, since there it is found, and with it he can again kindle the other coals which had already died. It is the same with charity, which is our spiritual life, in the midst of great and violent temptations. For the temptation casts the delight which accompanies it into the inferior part, covers over the whole soul with ashes, as it were, and reduces the love of God into a narrow compass. It appears nowhere but in the center of the heart and in the interior of the soul. Even there it scarcely seems perceptible, and we find it with great difficulty. Yet it is really there in spite of all the trouble and disorder we feel in our soul and our body; we still retain a resolution never to consent to the sin or to the temptation. Moreover, the delight, which pleases the outward man, displeases the inward. Hence, even though it surrounds the will, it is not within it. By this we see that such delight is involuntary, and as such it cannot be sinful.

IV

Two Good Examples for This Subject

As it is so important for you to understand this matter perfectly, I will not hesitate to explain it at greater length. A young man of whom St. Jerome tells us was fastened down with bands of silk on a delicate, soft bed and was enticed by all sorts of filthy caresses and allurements by a lascivious woman who was placed with him on purpose to shake his constancy. Ah, must not he have felt strange disorders? Must not his senses have been seized with delight and his imagination occupied by the presence of those voluptuous objects? Undoubtedly so, yet among so many conflicts, in the midst of so terrible a storm of temptations and among the many lustful pleasures that surrounded him, he testified that his heart was not vanquished, and that his will gave no consent. Perceiving so general a rebellion against his will, and having now no part of his body under his command but his tongue, he bit it off with his teeth and spat it in the face of that filthy woman who tormented his soul more cruelly by her lust than all the executioners could ever have done by the greatest torments. For the tyrant who despaired to conquer him by suffering had thought to overcome him by these pleasures.

The history of the struggle of St. Catherine of Siena on a like occasion is very admirable. The evil spirit had permission from God to assail the purity of this holy virgin with the greatest possible fury, but was not allowed to touch her. He then made all kinds of impure suggestions to her heart. To move her the more, he came with his companions in the form of men and women and committed in her presence thousands and thousands of carnal and lascivious acts, adding the most filthy words and invitations. Although all these things were exterior, nevertheless by means of the senses they penetrated deep into the virgin's heart. As she herself confessed, her heart was even brimful of them, so that except for the pure higher will nothing remained in her that was not shaken by this tempest of filth and carnal pleasure. This temptation continued for a long time, until one day when our Lord appeared to her, she said to Him: "Where wert Thou, my sweet Lord, when my heart was full of such great darkness and uncleanness?" To this He answered: "I was within thy heart, My daughter." "But how," replied she, "couldst Thou dwell in my heart, in which there was so much impurity? Is it possible that Thou couldst dwell in so unclean a place?" To this our Lord replied: "Tell me, did these filthy thoughts within thy heart give thee pleasure or sadness, bitterness or delight?" And she said, "The most extreme bitterness and sadness." "Who was it, then," He replied, "that

caused this great bitterness and sadness in thy heart but I, who remained concealed in the interior of thy soul? Believe Me, My daughter, had it not been for My presence those thoughts which surrounded thy will would doubtless have conquered and entered in, and, having been received with pleasure by thy free will, would have brought death to thy soul. But being present within thee, I infused this displeasure into thy heart, and it enabled thee to reject the temptation as much as it could. Not being able to do it as much as it desired, it conceived a greater displeasure and hatred both against the temptation and thyself. Thus these troubles have proved occasions of great merit and gain to thee, and have served to increase thy strength and virtue.”

Behold, Philothea, how this fire was covered with ashes and how the temptation and pleasure had even entered the heart and surrounded the will. Assisted by our Savior, it alone held out to the last, making resistance by her aversion, displeasure, and detestation of the evil suggested, and constantly refusing her consent to the sin that besieged her on every side. O God! How distressing must it be to a soul that loves God not to know whether He be within her or not, or whether the divine love for which she fights be altogether extinguished in her or not! It is the fine flower of perfect heavenly love to make the lover suffer and fight for love, without knowing whether he possesses that love for which, and by which, he fights.

V

Encouragement to a Soul in Temptation

These violent assaults and strong temptations, my Philothea, are permitted by God only in those souls whom He desires to elevate to His own pure and surpassing love. Yet it does not follow that they shall afterward attain it. It has often happened that those who have been constant under such violent assaults have been afterward overcome by very slight temptations for want of faithfully corresponding with the divine favor. I tell you this so that if you happen hereafter to be assaulted by great temptations, you may know that God confers an extraordinary favor on you. By it He declares that He desires to make you great in His sight and that nevertheless you must be always humble and fearful. Do not assure yourself that you shall be able to overcome small temptations, even after you have prevailed against great ones, by any other means than a constant fidelity to His Majesty. Whatever temptations may hereafter befall you and with whatever pleasure they may be accompanied, as long as your will refuses her consent not only to the temptation but also the pleasure, do not give yourself the least trouble, for God is not offended.

When a man is so far gone in a stroke as to show no sign of life, they lay their hand on his heart. From the least movement they feel they conclude that he is alive and that by the application of a restorative or poultice he may again recover his strength and senses. Thus it sometimes happens that through the violence of a temptation our soul seems to have fallen into a complete exhaustion of its powers, so as to have no longer any spiritual life or movement. If we desire to know how it is with ourselves let us lay our hand upon our heart and consider whether our will still retains its spiritual motion. That is, let us consider whether it has done its duty by refusing to consent and to yield to the temptation and pleasure. As long as this movement of refusal remains within our heart we may rest assured that charity, the life of our soul, remains in us, and that Jesus Christ, our Savior, although concealed and covered over, is present in our soul. Hence, by means of the continued exercise of prayer, the sacraments, and a confidence in God, our strength will return to us and we will live with a healthful and happy life.

VI

How Temptation and Pleasure May Become Sinful

The princess of whom we have spoken could not prevent the dishonorable proposal that was made to her, because, as was presupposed, it was made against her will. On the contrary, had she given it the least encouragement or betrayed a willingness to give her affection to him that courted her, she certainly would have been guilty with regard to this solicitation. However she might dissemble it, she would deserve both blame and punishment. Thus, it sometimes happens that the temptation alone involves us in sin, because we ourselves are the cause of it. For example, I know that when I gamble I fall voluntarily into rage and blasphemy, and that gambling offers me a temptation to those sins. I sin as often as I play, and I am accountable for all the temptations that befall me at play. In like manner, if I know that certain associations will expose me to the danger of falling into sin, and yet willingly expose myself to them, I am doubtless guilty of all the temptations I may meet in them.

When the pleasure which proceeds from the temptation can be avoided, it is always a greater or less sin to admit it, in proportion as the pleasure we take, or the consent we give to it is great or small, or long or short in duration. The young princess before alluded to would always be culpable if, after having heard the foul and indecent proposal made to her, she should take pleasure in it and entertain her heart with satisfaction in so improper a subject. Although she does not consent to the actual execution of what is proposed to her, nevertheless,

by the pleasure she takes in it she consents to the spiritual application of her heart to the evil. It is always sinful to turn either the heart or the body to anything that is immodest. Yet the sin depends so much on the consent of the heart, that without it even the application of the body could not be a sin. Wherefore, whenever you are tempted to any sin, consider whether you have voluntarily given occasion to the temptation. In that case the temptation itself puts you in a state of sin, on account of the danger to which you have exposed yourself. This is to be understood when you could conveniently have avoided the occasion, and foresaw or ought to have foreseen the approach of the temptation. However, if you have given no occasion to the temptation, it can in no way be charged to you as a sin.

When the pleasure which follows temptation could have been avoided and yet was not avoided, there is always some kind of sin. This is more or less considerable according to the time you have dwelt upon it and according to the pleasure you have taken in it. A woman who has given no occasion to a flirtation, but yet takes pleasure in it, is to be blamed if the pleasure which she takes originates only in the flirtation and not in some other source. But, for example, if the gallant who sues for love plays skillfully upon the lute, and she should take pleasure, not in his attempt to gain her love, but in the harmony and sweetness of his lute, this would be no sin. However, she ought not to indulge this pleasure long for fear that she should pass from it to a desire of being courted. In like manner, let us suppose that someone should propose to me an ingenious stratagem to take revenge on my enemy, and that I should neither delight in, nor consent to, the proposed revenge, but only be pleased with the subtlety of the artful invention. Although this would be no sin, still I ought not to continue long amusing myself with this pleasure, for fear that little by little I might be induced to take some delight in the revenge itself.

We are sometimes surprised by certain symptoms of pleasure that immediately follow the temptation before we are put well on guard against it. This at most can be only a very light venial sin. It becomes greater if, after we have perceived the evil which has befallen us, we delay for some time through negligence and dally with the pleasure, in order to determine whether we shall admit or reject that pleasure. The sin becomes still greater if, after being sensible of the pleasure, we dwell upon it for some time through downright negligence, without being determined to reject it. When we voluntarily and with full deliberation resolve to take pleasure in such delights, this deliberate purpose is of itself a great sin if the objection in which we take delight be also greatly evil. It is a great vice in a woman to be willing to entertain dishonest love, although she never designs actually to yield herself up to her lovers.

VII

Remedies against Great Temptations

As soon as you perceive yourself to be tempted, follow the example of children when they see a wolf or a bear in the country. They immediately run to the arms of their father or mother, or at least they call out to them for help and assistance. Turn in like manner to God, and implore His mercy and His help. This is the remedy that our Lord has taught: "Pray that ye enter not into temptation."

If you find that the temptation still continues or even increases, run in spirit to embrace the Holy Cross, as if you saw Jesus Christ crucified before you. Protest that you will never consent to the temptation; implore His assistance against it; and continue always to protest that you will refuse your consent as long as the temptation shall continue. When you make these protestations and these refusals of consent, do not look the temptation in the face, but look only on our Lord. If you look upon the temptation, especially while it is strong, it may shake your courage.

Turn your thoughts to some good and commendable matter. When good thoughts enter in and occupy your heart, they will drive away every temptation and evil suggestion.

The sovereign remedy against all temptations, whether great or small, is to lay open your heart and communicate its suggestions, feelings, and affections to your director. You must observe that the first condition that the enemy of salvation makes with a soul which he desires to seduce is to keep silence. Thus, those who intend to seduce girls or women from the very first forbid them to communicate their proposals to father or husband. On the other hand, by His inspirations God requires that we should make the temptations known to our superiors and directors.

If the temptation should still continue to harass and persecute us after all this, we have nothing to do on our part but to continue resolute in our protestations never to consent to it. As girls can never be wed as long as they answer no, so the soul, no matter how long the temptation may last, can never sin as long as she says no.

Never dispute with your enemy or make him any reply but that with which our Savior routed him: "Begone, Satan, for it is written, The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve." A chaste wife will never answer a single word to the wicked wretch that makes her a dishonorable proposal, nor will she look him in the face. Without delay or discussion she will

quit him abruptly, and at the same instant she will turn her heart toward her husband and renew the promise of fidelity which she has made to him. So also the devout soul that sees herself assaulted by temptation ought by no means to lose time in dispute and discussion. With all simplicity she must turn toward Jesus Christ, her Spouse, and renew her protestation of fidelity to Him and her resolution to remain solely and entirely His forever.

VIII

That We Must Resist Small Temptations

Although we must oppose great temptations with an invincible courage and although the victory we gain over them is extremely advantageous, it may yet happen that we will profit more in resisting small ones. For as great temptations exceed in quality, so small ones exceed in quantity. Hence, the victory over them may be comparable to that which is gained over the greatest. Wolves and bears are certainly more dangerous than flies; yet they neither give us so much trouble nor exercise our patience so much. It is easy enough to abstain from murder, but it is extremely difficult to restrain all the little sallies of passion, the occasions of which present themselves at every moment. It is easy enough for a man or a woman to refrain from adultery. It is not so easy to refrain from glances of the eyes, from giving or receiving marks of love, from procuring gifts and little favors, or from uttering or listening to flattering words. It is easy enough not to admit a rival to husband or wife as to the body, but not as to the heart. It is easy enough to refrain from defiling the marriage bed, but it is difficult to refrain from everything that may be prejudicial to conjugal affection. It is easy enough not to steal another's goods, but it is difficult not to covet them. It is easy enough not to bear false witness in judgment, but it is difficult not to falsify in conversation. It is easy enough to refrain from drunkenness, but it is difficult to observe perfect sobriety. It is easy enough to refrain from wishing another man's death, but it is difficult to refrain from desiring what may be detrimental to him. It is easy enough to abstain from defaming him, but it is sometimes difficult to refrain from despising him.

In a word, these small temptations of anger, suspicion, jealousy, envy, fond love, levity, vanity, insincerity, affectation, craftiness, and evil thoughts are continually assaulting even those who are the most devout and resolute. We must therefore diligently prepare ourselves, my dear Philothea, for this warfare. Let us rest assured that for as many victories as we shall gain over these trifling enemies, so many precious stones shall be added to the crown of glory that God is preparing for us in His paradise. Wherefore I say, that being ever ready to

fight well and valiantly against great temptations if they come, we must in the meantime diligently defend ourselves against attacks that seem small and weak.

IX

What Remedies We Are to Apply to Small Temptations

Now then, as to these smaller temptations of vanity, suspicion, impatience, jealousy, envy, fond love, and such like tricks, which like flies and gnats continually hover before our eyes, and sometimes sting us on our cheeks or nose. As it is impossible to be altogether free from being plagued by them, the best defense that we can make is not to give ourselves much trouble about them. Although they may annoy us, yet they can never harm us, so long as we continue firmly resolved to dedicate ourselves in earnest to God's service.

Despise these petty assaults and do not deign even to think of what they suggest. Let them buzz about your ears as much as they wish and flit here and there around you like flies. When they try to sting you, and you perceive them in any way to light upon your heart, merely content yourself with quietly removing them. Do this, not by contending or disputing with them, but by performing some actions of a nature contrary to the temptation, especially acts of the love of God. If you follow my advice, you must not persistently oppose the temptation with an act of the contrary virtue, for this would be to dispute with it. After having performed an act of the contrary virtue, if you have had time to observe the nature of the temptation, turn your heart gently towards Jesus Christ crucified and by an act of love kiss His sacred feet.

This is the best means to overcome the enemy, as well in small as in great temptations. As the love of God contains within itself all the perfections of all the virtues, and more excellently than the virtues themselves, so it is also the sovereign antidote against every kind of vice. By accustoming your mind on these occasions to have recourse to this remedy, you need not even consider and examine the kind of temptation by which it is troubled. Upon the simple perception of trouble your mind will be eased by this great remedy. Moreover, this is so terrible to the evil spirit, that as soon as he perceives that his temptation incites us to perform acts of divine love he ceases to tempt us.

Let this suffice with respect to these little ordinary temptations. The man who would contend with them in particular would give himself much trouble and would accomplish nothing.

X

How to Fortify Our Heart against Temptations

Consider from time to time what passions are most predominant in your soul. When you have discovered them, adopt such a mode of life as will be in complete contradiction to them in thought, in word, and in action. If, for example, you find yourself inclined to the passion of vanity, think often on the miseries of this human life. Think of the dismay that these vain deeds will raise in your conscience at the day of your death; of how unworthy they are of a generous heart; of how they are nothing but the toys and amusements of little children: and similar things. Speak often against vanity, and whatever repugnance you may feel, do not cease to cry it down. By this means you will engage yourself, even in honor, to the opposite side. By declaiming against a thing we bring ourselves to hate it, though at first we might have had an affection for it. Perform works of abjection and humility as much as possible, though with ever so great a reluctance. By this means you accustom yourself to humility and you wear down your vanity. Hence, when the temptation comes, you will have less inclination to consent to it and more strength to resist it.

If you are inclined to avarice, think frequently on the folly of a sin that makes us slaves to what was only made to serve us. Remember that at death we must part with it all and leave it in the hands of those who perhaps may squander it away, or to whom it may be a cause of ruin and damnation, and similar thoughts. Speak out loud against avarice and in praise of an utter contempt for the world. Force yourself to give frequent alms and gifts of charity, and neglect to take advantage of certain opportunities of gain.

Should you be inclined to give or receive fond love, think often how very dangerous this kind of amusement is both to yourself and to others; how unworthy a thing it is to profane and to employ in an idle pastime the noblest affection of our soul; how deserving of censure is so extreme a levity of mind. Speak often in praise of purity and simplicity of heart. Let your actions, to the utmost of your power, be ever conformable to your words by avoiding light affections and flirtations.

In short, in time of peace, that is, when temptations to the sin to which you are most inclined do not molest you, make several acts of the contrary virtue. If occasions to do so do not present themselves, endeavor to seek them out. By this means you will strengthen your heart against future temptations.

IX

Of Anxiety

Anxiety is not only a temptation, but a source from which and by which many temptations arise. I will therefore say something concerning it. Sadness is nothing else but that grief of mind which we have over an evil that we experience against our will, whether it be exterior, like poverty, sickness, or contempt, or interior, like ignorance, aridity, discontent, or temptation. When the soul perceives that some evil has befallen her, she is displeased at having it and hence sadness follows. Immediately she desires to be free of it and to have a way of ridding herself of it. Thus far she is right, for everyone naturally desires to embrace good and flies from what he thinks to be evil.

If out of love for God the soul seeks a way to be freed from her troubles, she will seek it with patience, meekness, humility, and tranquillity. She will expect deliverance more from the providence of God than from her own labor, industry, or diligence. If she seeks her deliverance from a motive of self-love, then will she excite and fatigue herself in search of this means, as if the success depended more on herself than on God. I do not say that she thinks so, but that she acts as if she thought so. Now, if she does not succeed immediately according to her wishes, she falls into great anxiety and impatience. Instead of removing the evil, she increases it. It involves her in an excessive anguish and distress, with so great a loss of courage and strength that she imagines her evil incurable. You see, then, that sadness, which is justified in the beginning, produces anxiety. Anxiety again produces an increase of sadness, and this is extremely dangerous.

Anxiety is the greatest evil that can befall the soul, sin only excepted. The seditious and intestine troubles of a commonwealth ruin it completely and prevent it from being able to resist a foreign invasion. So also, when our heart is troubled and disturbed within itself, it loses the strength necessary to maintain the virtues it had acquired. At the same time it loses the means to resist the temptations of the enemy, who then uses his utmost efforts to fish, as they say, in troubled waters.

Anxiety proceeds from an inordinate desire of being delivered from the evil that we feel or of acquiring the good that we hope for. Yet there is nothing that tends more to increase evil and to prevent the enjoyment of good than inquietude and anxiety. Birds remain caught in nets and traps because when they find themselves ensnared, they eagerly flutter about and struggle to extricate themselves and in that way entangle themselves all the more. Whenever you are

pressed with a desire to be freed from some evil or to obtain some good, before all else be careful both to settle your mind in repose and tranquillity and to compose your judgment and will. Then gently and meekly procure the accomplishment of your desire, taking in regular order the means that may be most convenient. When I say gently, I do not mean carelessly, but without hurry, trouble, or anxiety. Otherwise, instead of obtaining the effect you desire, you will mar all and embarrass yourself the more.

“My soul is continually in my hands, O Lord, and I have not forgotten Thy law,” said David. Examine frequently during the day, or at least in the morning and evening, whether you have your soul in your hands, or whether some passion or anxiety has not robbed you of it. Consider whether you have your heart at your command, or whether it has not escaped out of your hands to engage itself to some disorderly affection of love, hatred, envy, covetousness, fear, uneasiness, or joy. If it has gone astray, seek after it before you do anything else and bring it back quietly into the presence of God, subjecting all your affections and desires to the obedience and directions of His divine will. They who are afraid of losing anything which is precious hold it fast in their hands. So also, in imitation of this great king, we should always say, “O my God! My soul is in danger, and therefore I carry it always in my hands; and in this manner I have not forgotten Thy holy law.”

Do not permit your desires, however small or trivial they may be, to disquiet you. For after the little ones, those which are greater and more important may find your heart involved in trouble and disorder. When you perceive that anxiety begins to affect your mind, recommend yourself to God. Resolve to do nothing that your desire demands until it is restored to tranquillity, unless it should be something that cannot be deferred. In that case, you must with a meek and tranquil effort hold back the current of your desires, restraining and moderating them as much as possible. Whereupon, perform the action, not according to your desire, but according to reason.

If you can disclose the cause of your anxiety to your spiritual director, or at least to some faithful and devout friend, be assured that you will quickly find ease. To communicate the heart's grief produces the same effect on the soul as bleeding does in the body of one who is in a continual fever. It is the remedy of remedies. Accordingly, St. Louis the king gave this counsel to his son: “If thou hast any uneasiness in thy heart, tell it immediately to thy confessor or to some good person. Thus thou shalt be enabled to bear thy evil very easily by the comfort he will give thee.”

XII *Of Sadness*

“The sorrow that is according to God,” says St. Paul, “worketh penance steadfast unto salvation, but the sadness of the world worketh death.” Sadness, then, may be good or evil, according to its different effects upon us. It is true that it produces more evil effects than good. It has only two that are good, namely, compassion and repentance, whereas it has six that are evil, namely, anxiety, sloth, indignation, jealousy, envy, and impatience. This caused the wise man to say that “sadness hath killed many, and there is no profit in it.” For two good streams which flow from the source of sadness, there are six that are very evil.

The enemy makes use of sadness in order to practice his temptations on the just. As he endeavors to make the wicked rejoice in their sins, so he strives to make the good grieve in their virtues and in their good works. As he cannot procure the commission of evil but by making it appear agreeable, so he cannot divert us from good but by making it appear disagreeable. The evil one is pleased with sadness and melancholy, because he himself is sad and melancholy and will be so for eternity. Therefore, he desires that everyone should be like himself.

Evil sadness troubles the soul and disturbs it, excites inordinate fears, creates a disgust for prayer, stupefies and oppresses the brain, deprives the mind of counsel, resolution, judgment, and courage, and destroys her strength. In a word, it is like a severe winter, which lays low all the beauty of the country and devours every living creature. It takes away all sweetness from the soul and renders her disabled and impotent in all her faculties.

If you should at any time be seized by this evil of sadness, Philothea, apply the following remedies. “Is any one of you sad?” says St. James. “Let him pray.” Prayer is a sovereign remedy, for it lifts up the soul to God, who is our only joy and consolation. In prayer use words and affections, whether interior or exterior, that tend to confidence in God and to a love of God, such as, O God of mercy! My most good God! My sweet Savior! O God of my heart, my joy and my hope! My dear Spouse! The well-beloved of my soul! and the like.

Oppose virtuously any inclination to sadness. Although it may seem that all you do at this time is done coldly, sadly, and sluggishly, you must nevertheless persevere. If the enemy, who seeks by sadness to make us weary of good works, sees that we do not cease on that account to perform them and that, being performed in spite of his opposition, they become more meritorious, he will

cease to trouble us any longer. Sing spiritual canticles, for the evil one by this means has often desisted from his operations: witness the evil spirit that besieged or possessed Saul, the violence of which was repressed by psalmody.

It is also good to employ ourselves in exterior works and to vary them as much as possible. This is done in order to divert the soul from the melancholy object and to purify and warm our spirits, for sadness is a passion of a cold and dry disposition.

Perform fervent external actions, even though you may perform them without relish, such as embracing the crucifix, clasping it to your breast, kissing the feet and the hands, lifting up your eyes and your hands to heaven, raising your voice to God in words of love and confidence like these: "My Beloved to me, and I to Him." "A bundle of myrrh is my Beloved to me: He shall abide between my breasts." "My eyes have failed after Thee," O my God, saying, "When wilt Thou comfort me?" O Jesus, be Thou a Jesus to me! Live, Jesus, and my soul shall live! "Who shall ever separate me from the love of God?" and the like.

The moderate use of the discipline is also good against sadness, because this voluntary exterior affliction beseeches interior consolation, and the soul, feeling pain without, turns away from the pains that are within her. To receive Holy Communion frequently is excellent, for this heavenly bread strengthens the heart and rejoices the spirit.

Disclose to your director and confessor with humility and sincerity all the feelings, affections, and suggestions that proceed from your sadness. Seek the conversation of spiritual persons, and frequent their company as much as you can during this period. Last of all, resign yourself into the hands of God and prepare yourself to suffer patiently this troublesome sadness as a just punishment of your vain joys. Do not doubt that God, after He has put you to trial, will deliver you from this evil.

XIII

Of Spiritual and Sensible Consolations, and How We Must Behave Ourselves in Them

God maintains this great world in existence in an unending series of changes by which day ever turns into night, spring into summer, summer into autumn, autumn into winter, and winter into spring. One day never perfectly resembles another. Some are cloudy, some rainy, some dry, some windy, a variety that gives great beauty to the universe. It is the same with man, who, according to the saying of the ancients, is an epitome of the world. He never remains in the

same state. His life flows away upon the earth like the waters that float and undulate in a perpetual diversity of motion. Sometimes they lift him up with hope and sometimes they cast him down with fear. Sometimes they carry him to the right hand by consolation, sometimes to the left by affliction. Not one of his days, not even one of his hours, is completely like another.

There is a great lesson for us here. It is necessary that we endeavor to preserve a constant and inviolable equality of heart amidst so great an inequality of events. Although all things turn and change around us, we must always remain unchanging, ever looking, striving, and aspiring toward our God. No matter what course the ship may take; no matter whether it sails toward the east, the west, the north, or the south; no matter by what wind it is driven, never will the mariner's needle point in any other direction than toward the fair polar star. Let everything be in confusion, I say, not only around us but even within us. Let our soul be overwhelmed with sorrow or joy, with sweetness or bitterness, with peace or trouble, with light or darkness, with temptation or repose, with pleasure or disgust, with dryness or tenderness. Let it be scorched by the sun or refreshed by the dew. For all that, ever and always the point of our heart, our spirit, and our higher will, which is our compass, must look unceasingly and tend always toward the love of God, its Creator, its Savior, its sole and sovereign good. "Whether we live or whether we die," says the apostle, "if we are of God, who shall separate us from the love" and charity of God? No, nothing shall ever separate us from this love. Neither tribulation, nor anguish, nor death, nor life, nor present sorrow, nor fear of future troubles, nor the artifices of evil spirits, nor the height of consolations, nor the depth of afflictions, nor tenderness, nor dryness ought ever to separate us from this holy charity which is founded on Jesus Christ.

This absolute resolution never to forsake God and never to abandon His sweet love serves as a counterpoise to our souls to keep them in a holy equilibrium amidst the inequality of the various motions which the condition of this life brings to them. Little bees, caught in the fields by a storm, take hold of small stones so that they may be able to balance themselves in the air and not be so easily carried away by the wind. So also when our soul has by resolution strongly embraced the precious love of its God, it continues constant in the midst of the inconstancy and change of consolation and affliction, whether spiritual or temporal, whether exterior or interior. In addition to this general doctrine, we have need of some particular instructions.

1. I hold that devotion does not consist in the sweetness, delight, consolation, and sensible tenderness of heart, which move us to tears and sighs and cause us to find a certain pleasing and relishing satisfaction in certain spiritual exercises. No, dear Philothea, devotion and all this are not the same thing. There are many souls who experience these tendernesses and consolations, but nevertheless do not cease to be very vicious. Consequently, they do not have a true love

of God, much less true devotion. When Saul was pursuing unto death poor David, who was fleeing before him in the wilderness of Engaddi, he entered alone into a cavern in which David and his men lay concealed. On this occasion David had a thousand chances to kill him but spared his life and would not even put him in fear. After he had permitted Saul freely to depart, he called after him to prove to him his innocence and to convince him that he had been at his mercy. Now upon this occasion what was there that Saul did not do to show that his heart was softened against David? He called him his child; he wept aloud; he praised him; he acknowledged his goodness; and he recommended to him his posterity. What greater display could he make of sweetness and tenderness of heart? Nevertheless, his heart was not changed, nor did he cease to persecute David as cruelly as before.

In like manner, there are some persons who consider the goodness of God and the Passion of our Savior and feel great tenderness of heart. This arouses them to utter sighs, and tears, and prayers, and acts of thanksgiving in so feeling a manner that we say their heart has been seized by an exceeding great devotion. When the trial comes, we see that just as the passing showers of a hot summer, which fall in large drops on the earth but do not sink into it, serve for nothing but to produce mushrooms, so these tender tears fall on a vicious heart and do not penetrate it and are altogether unprofitable to it. Notwithstanding all this apparent devotion, these poor people will not part with a single farthing of the ill-gotten riches they possess; they will not renounce one of their perverse affections; they will not suffer the least temporal inconvenience for the service of the Savior over whose sufferings they have just been weeping. Thus the good affections that they had are no better than spiritual mushrooms. They are not only not a true devotion, but very often great tricks played by the enemy. He charms souls with these trifling consolations in order to make them rest content and satisfied with them, lest they should search any farther after true and solid devotion. This consists in a will that is constant, resolute, prompt, and active to do whatever we know to be pleasing to God.

A child will weep tenderly when he sees his mother bled with a lancet. Yet if that mother for whom he is weeping would at the same time demand the apple or the sugarpum that he held in his hand, he would by no means part with it. Such for the most part are our tender devotions. When we contemplate the stroke of the lance that pierced the heart of Jesus Christ crucified, we weep tender tears. Alas! Philothea, it is well to lament this sorrowful death and Passion of our Father and Redeemer. Why then do we not give Him in earnest the apple that we hold in our hands and that He so urgently asks of us? Why do we not give Him our heart, the only apple of love that this dear Savior begs from us? Why do we not resign to Him so many petty affections, delights, and complacencies, which He wants to pluck out of our hands but cannot, because they are our sweets, for which we feel more affection than for His heavenly

grace? Ah! These are the friendships of little children, tender, indeed, but weak, capricious, and of no effect. Devotion does not consist in these sensible affections, which proceed sometimes from a soft nature that is susceptible to any impression we may wish to give it, and sometimes from the enemy, who to allure us stirs up our imagination to conceive such effects.

2. Yet these tender and delightful affections are sometimes very good and profitable. They excite the affections of the soul, strengthen the spirit, and to a ready devotion they add a holy joy and cheerfulness, which makes our actions lovely and agreeable even in their outward appearance. This relish that we find in the things of God is what made David exclaim, O Lord, "how sweet are Thy words to my palate! more than honey to my mouth." Surely the least consolation of devotion that we receive is in every way preferable to the world's most agreeable diversions. The breasts and the milk, that is, the favors of the Divine Spouse are sweeter to the soul than the most precious wine of earthly pleasures. The man who has once tasted this sweetness esteems all other consolations as gall and wormwood. Those who take the herb scitic into their mouth receive from it so sweet a taste that they feel neither hunger nor thirst. So also those to whom God has given this heavenly manna of interior delight and consolation can neither desire nor accept this world's consolations, at least so far as to fix their desires upon them and to solace their affections with them. They are little foretastes of those immortal delights which God gives to souls that seek Him. They are little delicacies that He gives to His children to allure them. They are cordials that He gives to comfort them, and sometimes they are also an earnest of eternal rewards. It is said that Alexander the Great while sailing on the high seas discovered Arabia Felix because he perceived the fragrant odors that the wind bore thence, and thereupon he encouraged both himself and all his companions. So do we oftentimes receive these sweet consolations on this sea of our mortal life and without doubt they must give us a certain foretaste of the delights of that heavenly fatherland to which we tend and aspire.

3. But, you will tell me, there are certain sensible consolations which are good and come from God, while others are unprofitable, dangerous, and even pernicious, and proceed either from nature or from the enemy himself. How then shall I be able to distinguish the one from the other or know those that are evil or unprofitable from those that are good? It is a general teaching with regard to the affections and passions of our souls, dearest Philothea, that we must know them by their fruits. Our hearts are the trees, the affections and passions are the branches, and their works or actions are the fruits. That heart is good which has good affections, and those affections and passions are good which produce in us good effects and holy actions. If these delights, tender feelings, and consolations make us more humble, patient, tractable, charitable, and compassionate toward our neighbor, more fervent in mortifying our concupiscences and evil inclinations, more constant in our exercises, more

pliant and submissive to those whom we ought to obey, more sincere in our lives, then beyond any doubt, Philothea, they come from God. If these have no sweetness but for ourselves, if they make us selfish, harsh, quarrelsome, impatient, obstinate, haughty, presumptuous, and harsh toward our neighbor, while we already imagine ourselves to be little saints and disdain to be any longer subject to direction or correction, then beyond all doubt they are false and pernicious consolations. A good tree does not bring forth any but good fruit.

4. Whenever we experience these delights and consolations: (1) We must humble ourselves exceedingly before God, and much beware of saying, "Oh, how good am I!" No, Philothea, these good things cannot make us better. As I have said, devotion does not consist in them. Let us say: "Oh, how good is God to them that hope in Him, to the soul that seeketh Him!" One who has sugar in his mouth cannot say that his mouth is sweet, but only that the sugar is sweet. So also, although this spiritual sweetness be very good, and although God who gives it is sovereignly good, yet it does not follow that he who receives it is also good. (2) Let us acknowledge that we are as yet but little children who have need of milk, and that these bits of sugar are given to us because we still have tender and delicate spirits that stand in need of some bait and allurement to entice us to the love of God. (3) Let us afterward, speaking in general and for the usual conditions, humbly accept these graces and favors, and esteem them to be extremely great, not so much because they are such in themselves, but because it is the hand of God that puts them into our hearts, as a mother would do, who, the more to please her child, puts bits of candy one by one into his mouth. If the child has understanding, he sets a greater value on his mother's tender fondling and caresses than on the delicious candy. Thus, Philothea, it is a great matter to taste these delights, but it is the delight of delights to consider that it is His hand, as loving as a mother's, that puts them into our mouth, our heart, our soul, and our spirit. (4) When we thus humbly received them, let us carefully employ them according to the intention of Him who gave them to us. To what end, think you, does God give us these sweet consolations? It is to make us sweet toward everyone and loving toward Him. The mother gives a sweetmeat to her child to induce him to kiss her. Let us, then, kiss the Savior who grants us these delights. But to kiss Him is to obey Him, to keep His commandments, to do His will, to follow His desires, in brief, to embrace Him with a tender obedience and fidelity. Therefore, whenever we receive any spiritual consolation, we must on that very day be more diligent in doing good and in humbling ourselves. (5) Besides all this we must from time to time renounce such delights, tendernesses, and consolations, by withdrawing our heart from them and protesting that although we humbly accept them and love them because God sends them and because they excite us to His love, yet it is not these we seek, but God and His holy love; not the consolations, but the Comforter; not their sweetness, but the sweet Savior; not their tenderness, but

Him who is the delight of heaven and earth. In this spirit we must determine to stand fast in a holy love of God, even though throughout our whole life we were never to meet with any consolation. We must be ready to say, as readily upon Mount Calvary as upon Mount Tabor: "Lord, it is good for me to be with Thee, whether Thou be upon the Cross, or in Thy glory." (6) To conclude, I admonish you that should you experience any great abundance of such consolations, tendernesses, tears, delights, or any other such extraordinary thing, you must confer faithfully with your spiritual director, so that you may learn how to moderate and conduct yourself under them. It is written, "Thou hast found honey, eat what is sufficient for thee."

XIV

Of Spiritual Dryness and Sterility

As long as consolation may last, do as I have just now directed you, dearest Philothea. This fine and agreeable weather will not always continue. Sometimes you will find yourself so deprived and destitute of all devout feelings of devotion that your soul will seem to be a fruitless, barren desert, in which there is no pathway or road to find her God, nor any water of grace to refresh her, on account of the dryness that seems to threaten her with a total and absolute desolation. Alas! how much does a soul in this state deserve compassion, especially when the evil is violent! Then, in imitation of David, she feeds herself with tears night and day. At the same time, to cast her into despair, the enemy mocks her by a thousand suggestions of despondency and says: "Ah! poor wretch, where is thy God? By what path shalt thou be able to find Him? Who can ever restore to thee the joy of His holy grace?"

What will you do at such a time, Philothea? Examine the source from which this evil has come to you. We ourselves are often the cause of our sterility and dryness.

1. As a mother refuses to give sugar to a child that is subject to worms, so God withholds consolations from us when we take a vain complacency in them and are subject to the worms of presumption. "It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me," O my God. Yes, for "before I was humbled I offended Thee."

2. When we neglect to gather the sweetness and delights of the love of God at the proper season, He removes them from us in punishment of our sloth. The Israelite who neglected to gather the manna early in the morning could gather none after sunrise, for it had then all melted.

3. Sometimes we have been lying in a bed of sensual pleasures and fleeting consolations, as was the sacred Spouse in the Canticles. The Spouse of our soul

comes and knocks at the door of our heart and prompts us to return to our spiritual exercises. We put Him off, because we are unwilling to quit these vain amusements and to cut ourselves off from these false satisfactions. For this reason He departs and leaves us to wallow in our idleness. Afterward, when we desire to seek Him, it is with great difficulty that we find Him. Yet this is no more than what we have justly deserved, since we have been so unfaithful and disloyal as to refuse to share His love in order to seek that of the things of the world. Ah! If you still keep the flour of Egypt, you shall not have the manna from heaven. Bees detest artificial odors; and the sweetness of the Holy Spirit is incompatible with the counterfeit delights of the world.

4. The double-dealing and the subtlety that we use in our confessions and spiritual communications with our director may also produce spiritual dryness and sterility. Since you lie to the Holy Ghost, it is no wonder He should refuse His consolations. If you will not be as sincere and plain as a little child, you shall not have the sugarplums of little children.

5. You have glutted yourself with worldly pleasures and it is no wonder that spiritual delights disgust you. When doves are glutted, they find cherries bitter, runs the old saying. "He hath filled the hungry with good things," says our Lady, "and the rich He hath sent away empty." They who are rich with the world's pleasures are not capable of spiritual delights.

6. Have you been careful to preserve the fruits of the consolations that you have received? If you have, you shall receive new ones. To him who has, more shall be given, but from him who has not kept what was given him but has lost it through his own fault shall be taken even that which he does not yet possess. That is, he will be deprived of the graces that were prepared for him. Rain, indeed, enlivens plants that have leaves, but from those that do not it takes away even what life they should have had, for it rots them completely.

For several such reasons we lose the consolations of devotion and fall into spiritual dryness and sterility. Let us examine our conscience, then, to see if any similar defects are found within ourselves. Observe, Philothea, that this examination is not to be made with anxiety or in too much detail. If we find the cause of the evil to be within ourselves after we have faithfully considered our conduct in this regard, let us thank God for the discovery. The evil is half cured when its cause is known. On the contrary, if you can find nothing in particular that may seem to have occasioned this dryness, do not trouble yourself about making any curious inquiry, but with all simplicity and without any further detailed examination, do as I shall now advise you.

1. Humble yourself very much before God in recognition of your own nothingness and misery. Alas! O Lord, what am I when left to myself but a parched soil, which, crevassed in every part, shows its thirst for this heavenly rain, while the wind scatters it and turns it into dust.

2. Call upon God and beg comfort of Him. "Restore unto me the joy of Thy

salvation." "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me." Away, thou barren north wind, who witherest my soul; and come, gentle gale of consolation, and blow upon the garden of my heart, and its good affections will diffuse the odor of sweetness.

3. Go to your confessor; open your heart to him; display to him all the recesses of your soul; take the advice that he will give to you with the utmost simplicity and humility. For God, who has an infinite love for obedience, frequently renders profitable the counsels we take from others, but especially from those who are the guides of our soul, when otherwise there might be no great appearance of success. Thus to Naaman He made beneficial the waters of Jordan, whose use Eliseus had without any appearance of human reason forbidden.

4. After all this, there is nothing so profitable, nothing so fruitful in such states of dryness and sterility as not to long for or too strongly desire to be delivered from them. I do not say that we must not even wish for a deliverance, but that we should not set our heart upon it. Thus we yield ourselves up to the pure mercy and special providence of God that He may use us to serve Him among these thorns and amid these deserts as long as it may please Him. At such a time let us say to God, "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me." But let us also add courageously, "But yet not my will, but Thine, be done." Here let us stop with as much tranquillity as possible. When God beholds this holy indifference, He will comfort us with many graces and favors. Thus, when He saw Abraham resolved to deprive himself of his son Isaac, it was enough for Him to see him in this state of pure resignation. God comforted him with a most pleasing vision and with sweet blessings. Under all kinds of afflictions, whether corporal or spiritual, and amid all the distractions or subtractions of sensible devotion which may happen to us, we must say from the bottom of our hearts and with profound submission, "The Lord has given me these consolations; the Lord has taken them from me; blessed be His Holy Name." If we continue in this humility, He will restore to us his delightful favors as he did to Job, who constantly used similar words in his desolation.

5. Finally, Philothea, in the midst of our spiritual dryness and sterility, let us never lose courage, but wait with patience for the return of consolation, continuing always on our accustomed way. Let us not omit any of our exercises of devotion, but, if possible, let us multiply our good works. Unable to present to our dear Spouse liquid sweets, let us offer Him such as are dry. To Him it is all one, provided the heart that offers them is perfectly fixed in its resolution to love Him. When the spring is fair, the bees make more honey and produce fewer young ones. For when the fine weather favors them, they are so busy in their harvest among the flowers that they forget to produce their young. But when the spring is sharp and cloudy, they produce more young ones and less honey. For when they are unable to go abroad to gather honey, they employ themselves at home to increase and multiply their race. Thus it often happens,

my Philothea, that the soul finds herself in the fair spring of spiritual consolations and amuses herself so much in enjoying their sweetness that in the abundance of these sweet delights she produces fewer good works. On the contrary, in the midst of the asperity and sterility of spiritual dryness, the more destitute she finds herself of the consolations of devotion, the more she multiplies her good works and abounds in the interior generation of the true virtues, of patience, humility, self-contempt, resignation, and renunciation of self-love.

Among many persons, and especially among women, there is the great abuse of believing that the services that we perform for God without relish, tenderness of heart, or sensible satisfaction are less agreeable to His Divine Majesty. On the contrary, our actions are like roses, which when fresh have more beauty but when dry have more strength and sweetness. In like manner, our works performed with tenderness of heart are more agreeable to ourselves—to ourselves, I say, who regard only our own satisfaction. Yet when performed in the time of dryness, they possess more sweetness and become more precious in the sight of God. Yes, dear Philothea, in the time of dryness our will forces us to the service of God as if by violence. Consequently, it must be more vigorous and constant than in the time of consolation. It is not of great merit to serve a prince in the pleasant days of peace and amid the delights of the court. To serve him amid the hardships of war and among troubles and persecutions is a true mark of constancy and fidelity.

The Blessed Angela of Foligno says that the prayer that is most acceptable to God is that which is made by force and constraint. Such is the prayer to which we apply ourselves, not for the pleasure which we find in it, nor by inclination, but purely to please God. To this our will carries us against our inclinations, compelling and forcing aside the aridity and the distastes that oppose it. I say the same of every kind of good works, whether interior or exterior. The more repugnance we feel in performing them, the more are they esteemed and prized in the sight of God. The less we consult our own particular interest in the pursuit of virtue, the more brilliantly does the purity of divine love shine forth in them. A child easily kisses his mother when she gives him sugar, but it is a sign of a great love if he kisses her after she has given him wormwood or aloes.

XV

Confirmation and Clarification of What Has Been Said by a Remarkable Example

To render the whole of this instruction more evident I will here relate an excellent passage from the history of St. Bernard, as I found it in a learned and judicious writer. He writes thus:

It is the usual thing with almost all those who begin to serve God and are not as yet experienced in loss of graces and in spiritual vicissitudes, that when they find themselves deprived of the sweet taste of sensible devotion and that agreeable light which invites them to run forward in the way of God, they presently lose breath and fall into weakness of soul and sadness of heart. Men of good judgment account for this by saying that our rational nature cannot continue for a long time famished and without some kind of delight, either heavenly or earthly. Now, souls that are raised above themselves by the enjoyment of spiritual pleasures easily renounce visible objects. So also when by a divine disposition spiritual joy is withdrawn from them, finding themselves at the same time deprived of corporal consolations and not being as yet accustomed to wait with patience for the return of the true sun, it seems to them as if they were neither in heaven nor on earth and that they shall remain buried in a perpetual night. Thus, like babes who have been weaned from the breast, they languish and moan and become fretful and troublesome to everyone, especially to themselves.

The following incident happened in a journey mentioned in this history to one of the company, named Geoffrey of Peronne, who had lately dedicated himself to the service of God. Being suddenly left arid, deprived of consolation, and overwhelmed with interior darkness, he began to remember his worldly friends, his kindred, and the riches that he had lately forsaken. For this reason he was assailed by so strong a temptation that he was not able to conceal it in his behavior and one of his greatest confidants perceived it. He took an opportunity to accost him with mild words and said to him in private, "What does this mean, Geoffrey? How is it that, contrary to custom, you are so worried and afflicted?" Geoffrey answered with a deep sigh, "Ah, my brother, I shall never again be joyful." The other was moved to pity at these words and went immediately with fraternal zeal to tell it all to their common father, St. Bernard, who, perceiving the danger, went into the nearest church to pray to God for him. In the meantime, Geoffrey was overwhelmed with sadness, and resting his head upon a stone, he fell asleep. Shortly after, both of them arose, the one from prayer, having obtained the favor he had asked for, and the other from a sleep, but with so pleasant and serene a countenance that his dear friend was surprised at so great and sudden a change and could not refrain from gently reproaching him with the answer he had a little before given him. Thereupon Geoffrey replied to him, "If I told thee before that I should never again be happy, now I assure you that I will never again be sad."

Such was the outcome of the temptation of this devout person. Observe in this account, dear Philothea: (1) That God commonly grants some foretaste of heavenly delight to such as enter into His service, in order to withdraw them from earthly pleasures and to encourage them in the pursuit of divine love. He is like a mother who, to allure her babe to her breasts, puts honey upon them.

(2) That it is also this same good God who sometimes, according to His wise decision, withholds from us the milk and honey of consolation, so that, by being weaned in this manner we may learn to feed on the more dry and solid bread of a vigorous devotion, exercised under the trials of disgust and temptation. (3) That sometimes very great storms arise amidst this aridity and sterility. At such times we must constantly fight against these temptations, since they are not from God. Nevertheless, we must patiently suffer the aridity itself, since God has ordained it for the exercise of our virtue. (4) That we must never lose courage amidst those interior troubles. Nor should we say like the good Geoffrey, "I shall never more be joyful"; for during the night we must await the light. On the other hand, in the fairest possible spiritual weather we must not say, "I shall never more be sorrowful." No, as the wise man says, "In the day of good things be not unmindful of evils." We must hope in the midst of afflictions and fear in the midst of prosperity. Moreover, just as much in one of these times as in the other, we must always remain humble. (5) That it is a sovereign remedy to manifest our trouble to some spiritual friend, who may be able to give us comfort.

Finally, as a conclusion to this most necessary counsel, I observe that as in all things, so also here, our good God and our enemy have contrary designs. God seeks to lead us by them to great purity of heart, to an entire renunciation of self-interest in what relates to His service, and to an absolute self-denial. On the other hand, the evil one endeavors by these trials to make us lose courage and to entice us back to sensual pleasures, and lastly to make us troublesome to ourselves and to others in order to decry and defame holy devotion. Still, if you observe the lessons I have given you, you will greatly increase your perfection in the exercises you carry on amidst these interior afflictions. I cannot, however, dismiss this important subject without adding a few words more.

It sometimes happens that distaste, dryness, and sterility proceed from an indisposition of body. It is as when through an excess of watching, labor, or fasting, we find ourselves oppressed by fatigue, drowsiness, lassitude, and the like infirmities. Although these affect the body, yet they are calculated to trouble the spirit also because of the intimate connection that obtains between the two. On such occasions, we must never omit to perform several acts of virtue with all the force of our spirit and with our highest will. Although our whole soul seems to be asleep and overcome by drowsiness and fatigue, yet the actions of the superior part cease not to be very acceptable to God. At the same time we may say with the sacred Spouse, "I sleep, and my heart watcheth." As I have observed before, although there is less satisfaction in work of this sort, there is more merit and virtue. The remedy on such occasion is to recruit our bodily strength and vigor by some kind of lawful relief and recreation. Thus, St. Francis ruled that his religious should use such moderation in their labors as not to oppress the fervor of their spirits.

This glorious father of whom we speak was himself once assaulted and disturbed by so deep a melancholy of spirit that he could not help showing it in his behavior. If he desired to converse with his religious, he was unable to do so. If he withdrew himself from them, it was worse. Abstinence and mortification of the flesh oppressed him, and prayer gave him no relief. He continued two years in this manner, so that he seemed to be quite abandoned by God. At length, after he had humbly suffered this violent storm, the Savior in an instant restored him to a happy tranquillity. This means that the greatest of God's servants are subject to these shocks and that the least of them must not be astonished if they too suffer some of them.

St. Louis de Montfort

St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort (1673–1716), Missionary in Brittany and Vendée, founder of the Sisters of Wisdom and the Company of Mary, was dedicated to the poor, an effective orator, and a zealous apostle of Mary. His True Devotion was published after his death and has been lavishly praised by the modern Pontiffs. Pius X declared, “I heartily recommend True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin, so admirably written by Blessed de Montfort, and to all who read it grant the Apostolic Benediction.” Pius XI said, “I have practiced this devotion ever since my youth,” and Pius XII, who canonized Louis-Marie, affirmed that “the force and unction of the words of Mary’s servant have not only touched but captivated and converted many souls.”

The present text of the True Devotion was translated from the original French by Frederick William Faber, the associate of Cardinal Newman.

TRUE DEVOTION TO MARY

Nature of Perfect Devotion to the Blessed Virgin or Perfect Consecration to Jesus Christ

All our perfection consists in being conformed, united and consecrated to Jesus Christ; and therefore the most perfect of all devotions is, without any doubt, that which the most perfectly conforms, unites and consecrates us to Jesus Christ. Now, Mary being the most conformed of all creatures to Jesus Christ, it follows that of all devotions, that which most consecrates and conforms the soul to our Lord is devotion to His holy Mother, and that the more a soul is consecrated to Mary, the more it is consecrated to Jesus.

Hence it comes to pass that the most perfect consecration to Jesus Christ is nothing else but a perfect and entire consecration of ourselves to the Blessed Virgin, and this is the devotion which I teach; or, in other words, a perfect renewal of the vows and promises of holy Baptism.

ARTICLE I—A PERFECT AND ENTIRE CONSECRATION OF ONESELF TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

This devotion consists, then, in giving ourselves entirely to our Lady, in order to belong entirely to Jesus through her. We must give her (1) our body, with all its senses and its members; (2) our soul, with all its powers; (3) our

exterior goods of fortune, whether present or to come; (4) our interior and spiritual goods, which are our merits and our virtues, and our good works, past, present and future. In a word, we must give her all we have in the order of nature and in the order of grace, and all that may become ours in the future, in the orders of nature, grace and glory; and this we must do without the reserve of so much as one farthing, one hair, or one least good action; and we must do it also for all eternity; and we must do it, further, without pretending to, or hoping for, any other recompense for our offering and service except the honor of belonging to Jesus Christ through Mary and in Mary—even though that sweet Mistress were not, as she always is, the most generous and the most grateful of creatures.

Here we must note that there are two things in the good works we perform, namely, satisfaction and merit; in other words, their satisfactory or impetratory value and their meritorious value. The satisfactory or impetratory value of a good action is that action inasmuch as it satisfies for the pain due to sin, or obtains some new grace; the meritorious value, or the merit, is the good action inasmuch as it merits grace now and eternal glory hereafter. Now, in this consecration of ourselves to our Lady, we give her all the satisfactory, impetratory and meritorious value of our actions; in other words, the satisfactions and the merits of all our good works. We give her all our merits, graces and virtues—not to communicate them to others, for our merits, graces and virtues are, properly speaking, incommunicable, and it is only Jesus Christ Who, in making Himself our surety with His Father, is able to communicate His merits—but we give her them to keep them, augment them and embellish them for us, as we shall explain by and by. Our satisfactions, however, we give her, to communicate to whom she likes, and for the greatest glory of God.

It follows from this that:

1. By this devotion, we give to Jesus Christ in the most perfect manner, inasmuch as it is by Mary's hands, all we can give Him, and far more than by any other devotions in which we give Him either a part of our time, or a part of our good works, or a part of our satisfactions and mortifications; because here everything is given and consecrated to Him, even the right of disposing of our interior goods, and of the satisfactions which we gain by our good works day after day. This is more than we do even in a religious order. In religious orders we give God the goods of fortune by the vow of poverty, the goods of the body by the vow of chastity, our own will by the vow of obedience, and sometimes the liberty of the body by the vow of cloister. But we do not by these vows give Him the liberty or the right to dispose of the value of our good works; and we do not strip ourselves, as far as a Christian man can do so, of that which is dearest and most precious, namely, our merits and our satisfactions.

2. A person who is thus voluntarily consecrated and sacrificed to Jesus Christ through Mary can no longer dispose of the value of any of his good

actions. All he suffers, all he thinks, all the good he says or does, belongs to Mary, in order that she may dispose of it according to the will of her Son and His greatest glory—without, however, that dependence interfering in any way with the obligations of the state we may be in at present or may be placed in for the future; for example, without interfering with the obligations of a priest who, by his office or otherwise, ought to apply the satisfactory and impetratory value of the Holy Mass to some private person. For we make the offering of this devotion only according to the order of God and the duties of our state.

3. We consecrate ourselves at one and the same time to the most holy Virgin and to Jesus Christ: to the most holy Virgin as to the perfect means which Jesus Christ has chosen whereby to unite Himself to us, and us to Him; and to our Lord as to our Last End, to Whom as our Redeemer and our God, we owe all we are.

ARTICLE II—A PERFECT RENEWAL OF THE VOWS OF HOLY BAPTISM

I have said that this devotion may rightly be called a perfect renewal of the vows or promises of holy Baptism.

For every Christian, before his Baptism, was the slave of the devil, seeing that he belonged to him. He has in his Baptism, by his own mouth or by his sponsor's, solemnly renounced Satan, his pomps and his works; and he has taken Jesus Christ for his Master and Sovereign Lord, to depend upon Him in the quality of a slave of love. That is what we do by the present devotion. We renounce, as is expressed in the formula of consecration, the devil, the world, sin and self; and we give ourselves entirely to Jesus Christ by the hands of Mary. Nay, we even do something more; for in Baptism, we ordinarily speak by the mouth of another, our godfather or godmother, and so we give ourselves to Jesus Christ not by ourselves but through another. But in this devotion we do it by ourselves, voluntarily, knowing what we are doing.

Moreover, in holy Baptism, we do not give ourselves to Jesus by the hands of Mary, at least not in an explicit manner; and we do not give Him the value of our good actions. We remain entirely free after Baptism, either to apply them to whom we please or to keep them for ourselves. But by this devotion we give ourselves to our Lord explicitly by the hands of Mary, and we consecrate to Him the value of all our actions.

Men, says St. Thomas, make a vow at their Baptism to renounce the devil and all his pomps. This vow, says St. Augustine, is the greatest and most indispensable of all vows. It is thus also that canonists speak: "The principal vow is the one we make at Baptism." Yet who has kept this great vow? Who is it that

faithfully performs the promises of holy Baptism? Have not almost all Christians swerved from the loyalty which they promised Jesus in their Baptism? Whence can come this universal disobedience, except from our forgetfulness of the promises and obligations of holy Baptism, and from the fact that hardly anyone ratifies, of himself, the contract he made with God by those who stood sponsors for him?

This is so true that the Council of Sens, convoked by order of Louis the Debonair to remedy the disorders of Christians, which were then so great, judged that the principal cause of that corruption of morals arose from the oblivion and the ignorance in which men lived of the obligations of holy Baptism; and it could think of no better means for remedying so great an evil than to persuade Christians to renew the vows and promises of Baptism.

The Catechism of the Council of Trent, the faithful interpreter of that holy Council, exhorts the parish priests to do the same thing; and to induce the people to remind themselves, and to believe, that they are bound and consecrated as slaves to our Lord Jesus Christ, their Redeemer and their Lord. These are its words: "The parish priest shall exhort the faithful people so that they may know that it is most just . . . that we should devote and consecrate ourselves forever to our Redeemer and Lord as His very slaves."

Now, if the Councils, the Fathers and even experience show us that the best means of remedying the irregularities of Christians is by making them call to mind the obligations of their Baptism, and persuading them to renew now the vows they made then, is it not only right that we should do it in a perfect manner, by this devotion and consecration of ourselves to our Lord, through His holy Mother? I say in a perfect manner; because in thus consecrating ourselves to Him, we make use of the most perfect of all means, namely, the Blessed Virgin.

OBJECTIONS AND ANSWERS

No one can object to this devotion as being either a new or an indifferent one. It is not new, because the Councils, the Fathers and many authors both ancient and modern speak of this consecration to our Lord, or renewal of the vows and promises of Baptism, as of a thing anciently practised, and which they counsel to all Christians. Neither is it a matter of indifference; because the principal source of all disorders, and consequently of the eternal perdition of Christians, comes from their forgetfulness and indifference about this practice.

But some may object that this devotion, in making us give to our Lord, by our Lady's hands, the value of all our good works, prayers, mortifications and alms, puts us in a state of incapacity for assisting the souls of our parents, friends and benefactors.

I answer them as follows:

1. That it is not credible that our parents, friends and benefactors should suffer from the fact of our being devoted and consecrated without exception to the service of our Lord and His holy Mother. To think this would be to think unworthily of the goodness and power of Jesus and Mary, who know well how to assist our parents, friends and benefactors, out of our own little spiritual revenue or by other ways.

2. This practice does not hinder us from praying for others, whether dead or living, although the application of our good works depends on the will of our Blessed Lady. On the contrary, it is this very thing which will lead us to pray with more confidence; just as a rich person who has given all his wealth to his prince in order to honor him the more, would beg the prince all the more confidently to give an alms to one of his friends who should ask for it. It would even be a source of pleasure to the prince to be given an occasion of proving his gratitude toward a person who had stripped himself to clothe him and impoverished himself to honor him. We must say the same of our Blessed Lord and of our Lady. They will never let themselves be outdone in gratitude.

Someone may perhaps say, If I give to our Blessed Lady all the value of my actions to apply to whom she wills, I may have to suffer a long time in purgatory.

This objection, which comes from self-love and ignorance of the generosity of God and His holy Mother, refutes itself. A fervent and generous soul who gives God all he has, without reserve, so that he can do nothing more; who lives only for the glory and reign of Jesus Christ, through His holy Mother, and who makes an entire sacrifice of himself to bring it about—will this generous and liberal soul, I say, be more punished in the other world because it has been more liberal and more disinterested than others? Far, indeed, will that be from the truth! Rather, it is toward that soul . . . that our Lord and His holy Mother are the most liberal in this world and in the other, in the orders of nature, grace and glory.

John Henry Newman

John Henry Newman (1801–90), apologist, theologian, and cardinal, entered the Catholic Church in 1845, after years of intellectual struggle through the Oxford Movement in the Anglican Church.

The collected works of Newman are in twenty-five volumes. He wrote about twenty thousand letters. This enormous literary material reveals the genius of a man who has deeply influenced the whole of Western society. This has been especially notable among lay Catholic writers like G. K. Chesterton, Evelyn Waugh, Hilaire Belloc, and Christopher Dawson.

*Three of his books have been frequently reprinted, namely *The Idea of a University*, *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, and *The Grammar of Assent*.*

*Newman's position as theologian and apologist has obscured his important contributions to poetry, the novel, and literary theory. His hymns, e.g., "Lead, Kindly Light," poems like *The Dream of Gerontius*, and novels like *Loss and Gain* are extraordinarily perceptive. "Thought and speech," he states in *The Idea of a University*, "are inseparable from each other" and "the style really cannot be abstracted from the sense."*

The three sermons in this volume were chosen because they reveal Newman's soul, at once deeply in love with God, humbly submitting a giant intellect in simple Faith to His revealed truth, and uniting itself in patient suffering with the Passion of Jesus Christ.

Purity and Love

We find two especial manifestations of divine grace in the human heart, whether we turn to Scripture for instances of it, or to the history of the Church; whether we trace it in the case of Saints, or in persons of holy and religious life: and the two are even found among our Lord's Apostles, being represented by the two foremost of that favoured company, St. Peter and St. John. St. John is the Saint of purity, and St. Peter is the Saint of love. Not that love and purity can ever be separated; not as if a Saint had not all virtues in him at once; not as if St. Peter were not pure as well as loving, and St. John loving, for all he was so pure. The graces of the Spirit cannot be separated from each other; one implies the rest; what is love but a delight in God, a devotion to Him, a surrender of the whole self to Him? What is impurity, on the other hand, but the turning to something of this world, something sinful, as the object of our affections instead of God? What is it but a deliberate abandonment of the Creator for the creature, and seeking pleasure in the shadow of death, not in the all-blissful Presence of light and holiness? The impure then cannot love God; and those who are without love of God cannot really be pure. Purity prepares the soul for love, and love confirms the soul in purity. The flame of love will not be bright unless the substance which feeds it be pure and unadulterate; and the most dazzling purity is but as iciness and desolation unless it draws its life from fervent love.

Yet, certain as this is, it is certain also that the spiritual works of God show differently from each other to our eyes, and that they display, in their character and their history, some of them this virtue more than other virtues, and some that. In other words, it pleases the Giver of grace to endue His Saints specially with certain gifts, for His glory, which light up and beautify one particular portion or department of their souls, so as to cast their other excellences into the shade. And then this special gift of grace becomes their characteristic, and we put it first in our thoughts of them, and consider what they have besides, as included in it, or dependent upon it, and speak of them as if they had not the rest, though we know they really have them; and we give them some title or description taken from that particular grace which is so emphatically theirs. And in this way we may speak, as I intend to do in what I am going to say, of two chief classes of Saints, whose emblems are the lily and the rose, who are bright with angelic purity or who burn with divine love.

The two St. Johns are the great instances of the Angelic life. Whom, my brethren, can we conceive to have such majestic and severe sanctity as the Holy Baptist? He had a privilege which reached near upon the prerogative of the Most Blessed Mother of God; for, if she was conceived without sin, at least without sin he was born. She was all-pure, all-holy, and sin had no part in her: but St. John was in the beginning of his existence a partaker of Adam's curse: he lay under God's wrath, deprived of that grace which Adam had received, and which is the life and strength of human nature. Yet as soon as Christ, his Lord and Saviour, came to him, and Mary saluted his own mother, Elizabeth, forthwith the grace of God was given to him, and the original guilt was wiped away from his soul. And therefore it is that we celebrate the nativity of St. John; nothing unholy does the Church celebrate; not St. Peter's nor St. Paul's, nor St. Augustine's, nor St. Gregory's, nor St. Bernard's, nor St. Aloysius's, nor the nativity of any other Saint, however glorious, because they were all born in sin. She celebrates their conversions, their prerogatives, their martyrdoms, their deaths, their translations, but not their birth, because in no case was it holy. Three nativities alone does she commemorate, our Lord's, His Mother's, and lastly, St. John's. What a special gift was this, my brethren, separating the Baptist off, and distinguishing him from all prophets and preachers, who ever lived, however holy, except perhaps the prophet Jeremias! And such as was his commencement, was the course of his life. He was carried away by the Spirit into the desert, and there he lived on the simplest fare, in the rudest clothing, in the caves of wild beasts, apart from men, for thirty years, leading a life of mortification and of meditation, till he was called to preach penance, to proclaim the Christ, and to baptize Him; and then having done his work, and having left no act of sin on record, he was laid aside as an instrument which had lost its use, and languished in prison, till he was suddenly cut off by the sword of the executioner. Sanctity is the one idea of him impressed upon us from first to last; a most marvellous Saint, a hermit from his childhood, then a preacher to a fallen people, and then a Martyr. Surely such a life fulfils the expectation, which the salutation of Mary raised concerning him before his birth.

Yet still more beautiful, and almost as majestic, is the image of his namesake, the great Apostle, Evangelist, and Prophet of the Church, who came so early into our Lord's chosen company, and lived so long after all his fellows. We can contemplate him in his youth and in his venerable age; and on his whole life, from first to last, as his special gift, is marked purity. He is the virgin Apostle, who on that account was so dear to his Lord, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," who lay on His Bosom, who received His Mother from Him when upon the Cross, who had the vision of all the wonders which were to come to pass in the world to the end of time. "Greatly to be honoured," says the Church, "is blessed John, who on the Lord's Breast lay at supper, to whom, a virgin, did Christ on the Cross commit his Virgin Mother. He was chosen a virgin by the Lord, and

was more beloved than the rest. The special prerogative of chastity had made him meet for his Lord's larger love, because, being chosen by Him a virgin, a virgin he remained unto the end." He it was who in his youth professed his readiness to drink Christ's chalice with Him; who wore away a long life as a desolate stranger in a foreign land; who was at length carried to Rome and plunged into the hot oil, and then was banished to a far island, till his days drew near their close.

O how impossible it is worthily to conceive of the sanctity of these two great servants of God, so different is their whole history, in their lives and in their deaths, yet agreeing together in their seclusion from the world, in their tranquillity, and in their all but sinlessness! Mortal sin had never touched them, and we may well believe that even from deliberate venial sin they were ever exempt; nay, that at particular seasons or on certain occasions they did not sin at all. The rebellion of the reason, the waywardness of the feelings, the disorder of the thoughts, the fever of passion, the treachery of the senses, these evils did the all-powerful grace of God subdue in them. They lived in a world of their own, uniform, serene, abiding; in visions of peace, in communion with heaven, in anticipation of glory; and, if they spoke to the world without, as preachers or as confessors, they spoke as from some sacred shrine, not mixing with men while they addressed them, as "a voice crying in the wilderness" or "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." And therefore it is we speak of them rather as patterns of sanctity than of love, because love regards an external object, runs towards it and labours for it, whereas such Saints came so close to the Object of their love, they were granted so to receive Him into their breasts, and so to make themselves one with Him, that their hearts did not so much love heaven as were themselves a heaven, did not so much see light as were light; and they lived among men as those Angels in the old time, who came to the patriarchs and spake as though they were God, for God was in them, and spake by them. Thus these two were almost absorbed in the Godhead, living an angelical life, as far as man could lead one, so calm, so still, so raised above sorrow and fear, disappointment and regret, desire and aversion, as to be the most perfect images that earth has seen of the peace and immutability of God. Such too are the many virgin Saints whom history records for our veneration, St. Joseph, the great St. Antony, St. Cecilia who was waited on by Angels, St. Nicholas of Bari, St. Peter Celestine, St. Rose of Viterbo, St. Catherine of Siena, and a host of others, and above all, the Virgin of Virgins, and Queen of Virgins, the Blessed Mary, who, though replete and overflowing with the grace of love, yet for the very reason that she was the "seat of wisdom," and the very "ark of the covenant," is more commonly represented under the emblem of the lily than of the rose.

But now, my brethren, let us turn to the other class of Saints. I have been speaking of those who in a wonderful, sometimes in a miraculous way, have been defended from sin, and conducted from strength to strength, from youth

till death; but now suppose it has been the will of God to shed the light and power of His Spirit upon those who have misused the talents, and quenched the grace already given them, and who therefore have a host of evils within them of which they are to be dispossessed, who are under the dominion of obstinate habits, indulged passions, false opinions; who have served Satan, not as infants before their baptism, but with their will, with their reason, with their faculties responsible, and their hearts alive and conscious. Is He to draw these elect souls to Him without themselves, or by means of themselves? Is He to change them at His word, as He created them, as He will make them die, as He will raise them from the grave, or is He to enter into their souls, to address Himself to them, to persuade them, and so to win them? Doubtless He might have been urgent with them, and masterful; He might by a blessed violence have come upon them, and so turned them into Saints; He might have superseded any process of conversion, and out of the very stones have raised up children to Abraham. But He has willed otherwise; else, why did He manifest Himself on earth? Why did He surround Himself on His coming with so much that was touching and attractive and subduing? Why did He bid His angels proclaim that He was to be seen as a little infant, in a manger and in a Virgin's bosom, at Bethlehem? Why did He go about doing good? Why did He die in public, before the world, with His mother and His beloved disciple by Him? Why does He now tell us how He is exalted in Heaven with a host of glorified Saints, who are our intercessors, about His throne? Why does He give us His own Mother Mary for our mother, the most perfect image after Himself of what is beautiful and tender, and gentle and soothing, in human nature? Why does He manifest Himself by an ineffable condescension on our Altars, still humbling Himself, though He reigns on high? What does all this show, but that, when souls wander away from Him, He reclaims them by means of themselves, "by cords of Adam," or of human nature, as the prophet speaks—conquering us indeed at His will, saving us in spite of ourselves—and yet by ourselves, so that the very reason and affections of the old Adam, which have been made "the instruments of iniquity unto sin," should, under the power of His grace, become "the instruments of justice unto God"?

Yes, doubtless He draws us "by cords of Adam," and what are those cords but, as the prophet speaks in the same verse, "the cords" or "the twine of love"? It is the manifestation of the glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ; it is that view of the attributes and perfections of Almighty God; it is the beauty of His sanctity, the sweetness of His mercy, the brightness of His heaven, the majesty of His law, the harmony of His providences, the thrilling music of His voice, which is the antagonist of the flesh, and the soul's champion against the world and the devil. "Thou hast seduced me, O Lord," says the prophet, "and I was seduced; Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed"; Thou hast thrown Thy net skilfully, and its subtle threads are entwined round each affection of my

heart, and its meshes have been a power of God, "bringing into captivity the whole intellect to the service of Christ." If the world has its fascinations, so surely has the Altar of the living God; if its pomps and vanities dazzle, so much more should the vision of Angels ascending and descending on the heavenly ladder; if sights of earth intoxicate, and its music is a spell upon the soul, behold Mary pleads with us, over against them, with her chaste eyes, and offers the Eternal Child for our caress, while sounds of cherubim are heard all round singing from out the fulness of the Divine Glory. Has divine hope no emotion? Has divine charity no transport? "How dear are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!" says the prophet; "my soul doth lust, and doth faint for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God. Better is one day in Thy courts above a thousand: I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners."

So is it, as a great Doctor and penitent has said, St. Augustine: "It is not enough to be drawn by the will; thou art also drawn by the sense of pleasure. What is it to be drawn by pleasure? 'Delight thou in the Lord, and He will give thee the petitions of thy heart.' There is a certain pleasure of heart, when that heavenly Bread is sweet to a man. Moreover, if the poet saith, 'Every one is drawn by his own pleasure,' not by necessity, but by pleasure; not by obligation, but by delight; how much more boldly ought we to say, that man is drawn to Christ, when he is delighted with truth, delighted with bliss, delighted with justice, delighted with eternal life, all which is Christ? Have the bodily senses their pleasures, and is the mind without its own? If so, whence is it said, 'The sons of men shall hope under the covering of Thy wings; they shall be intoxicate with the richness of Thy house, and with the torrent of Thy pleasure shalt Thou give them to drink: for with Thee is the well of life, and in Thy light we shall see light?' 'He, whom the Father draweth, cometh to Me?'" He continues: "Whom hath the Father drawn? Him who said, 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.' You present a green branch to the sheep, and you draw it forward; fruits are offered to the child, and he is drawn; in that he runs, he is drawn, he is drawn by loving, drawn without bodily hurt, drawn by the bond of the heart. If then it be true that the sight of earthly delight draws on the lover, doth not Christ too draw us when revealed by the Father? For what doth the soul desire more strongly than truth?"

Such are the means which God has provided for the creation of the Saint out of the sinner; He takes him as he is, and uses him against himself: He turns his affections into another channel, and extinguishes a carnal love by infusing a heavenly charity. Not as if He used him as a mere irrational creature, who is impelled by instincts and governed by external incitements without any will of his own, and to whom one pleasure is the same as another, the same in kind, though different in degree. I have already said, it is the very triumph of His grace, that He enters into the heart of man, and persuades it, and prevails with

it, while He changes it. He violates in nothing that original constitution of mind which He gave to man: He treats him as man; He leaves him the liberty of acting this way or that; He appeals to all his powers and faculties, to his reason, to his prudence, to his moral sense, to his conscience: He rouses his fears as well as his love; He instructs him in the depravity of sin, as well as in the mercy of God; but still, on the whole, the animating principle of the new life, by which it is both kindled and sustained, is the flame of charity. This only is strong enough to destroy the old Adam, to dissolve the tyranny of habit, to quench the fires of concupiscence, and to burn up the strongholds of pride.

And hence it is that love is presented to us as the distinguishing grace of those who were sinners before they were Saints; not that love is not the life of all Saints, of those who have never needed a conversion, of the Most Blessed Virgin, of the two St. Johns, and of those others, many in number, who are "first-fruits unto God and the Lamb"; but that, while in those who have never sinned gravely love is so contemplative as almost to resolve itself into the sanctity of God Himself; in those, on the contrary, in whom it dwells as a principle of recovery, it is so full of devotion, of zeal, of activity, and good works, that it gives a visible character to their history, and is ever associating itself with our thoughts of them.

Such was the great Apostle, on whom the Church is built, and whom I contrasted, when I began, with his fellow-Apostle St. John: whether we contemplate him after his first calling, or on his repentance, he who denied his Lord, out of all the Apostles, is the most conspicuous for his love of Him. It was for this love of Christ, flowing on, as it did, from its impetuosity and exuberance, into love of the brethren, that he was chosen to be the chief Pastor of the fold. "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?" was the trial put on him by his Lord; and the reward was, "Feed My lambs, feed My sheep." Wonderful to say, the Apostle whom Jesus loved, was yet surpassed in love for Jesus by a brother Apostle, not virginal as he; for it is not John of whom our Lord asked this question, and who was rewarded with this commission, but Peter.

Look back at an earlier passage of the same narrative; there, too, the two Apostles are similarly contrasted in their respective characters; for when they were in the boat, and their Lord spoke to them from the shore, and "they knew not that it was Jesus," first "that disciple, whom Jesus loved, said to Peter, It is the Lord," for "the clean of heart shall see God"; and then at once "Simon Peter," in the impetuosity of his love, "girt his tunic about him, and cast himself into the sea," to reach Him the quicker. St. John beholds and St. Peter acts.

Thus the very presence of Jesus kindled Peter's heart, and at once drew him unto Him; also at a former time, when he saw his Lord walking on the sea, his very first impulse was, as in the passage to which I have been referring, to leave the vessel and hasten to His side: "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the waters." And when he had been betrayed into his great sin, the very

Eye of Jesus brought him to himself: "And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter; and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, and he went out and wept bitterly." Hence, on another occasion, when many of the disciples fell away, and "Jesus said to the twelve, Do ye too wish to go away?" St. Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we have believed and have known that Thou art Christ, the Son of God."

Such, too, was that other great Apostle, who, in so many ways, is associated with St. Peter—the Doctor of the Gentiles. He indeed was converted miraculously, by our Lord's appearing to him, when he was on his way to carry death to the Christians of Damascus: but how does he speak? "Whether we are beside ourselves," he says, "it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for you: for the charity of Christ constraineth us. If, therefore, any be a new creature of Christ, old things have passed away, behold, all things are made new." And so again: "With Christ am I nailed to the cross; but I live, yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." And again: "I am the least of the Apostles, who am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace in me hath not been void, but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God with me." And once more: "Whether we live, unto the Lord we live; whether we die, unto the Lord we die; whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's." You see, my brethren, the character of St. Paul's love; it was a love fervent, eager, energetic, active, full of great works, "strong as death," as the Wise Man says, a flame which "many waters could not quench, nor the streams drown," which lasted to the end, when he could say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; henceforth is laid up for me the crown of justice, which the Lord will render to me at that day, the just Judge."

And there is a third, my brethren, there is an illustrious third in Scripture, whom we must associate with these two great Apostles, when we speak of the saints of penance and love. Who is it but the loving Magdalen? Who is it so fully instances what I am showing, as "the woman who was a sinner," who watered the Lord's feet with her tears, and dried them with her hair, and anointed them with precious ointment? What a time for such an act! She, who had come into the room as if for a festive purpose, to go about an act of penance! It was a formal banquet, given by a rich Pharisee, to honour, yet to try, our Lord. Magdalen came, young and beautiful, and "rejoicing in her youth," "walking in the ways of her heart and the gaze of her eyes:" she came as if to honour that feast, as women were wont to honour such festive doings, with her sweet odours and cool unguents for the forehead and hair of the guests. And he, the proud Pharisee, suffered her to come, so that she touched not him; let her come, as we might suffer inferior animals to enter our apartments, without caring for

them; suffered her as a necessary embellishment of the entertainment, yet as having no soul, or as destined to perdition, but anyhow as nothing to him. He, proud being, and his brethren like him, might "compass sea and land to make one proselyte;" but, as to looking into that proselyte's heart, pitying its sin, and trying to heal it, this did not enter into the circuit of his thoughts. No, he thought only of the necessities of his banquet, and he let her come to do her part, such as it was, careless what her life was, so that she did that part well, and confined herself to it. But, lo, a wondrous sight! Was it a sudden inspiration, or a mature resolve? Was it an act of the moment, or the result of a long conflict?—but behold, that poor, many-coloured child of guilt approaches to crown with her sweet ointment the head of Him to whom the feast was given; and see, she has stayed her hand. She has looked, and she discerns the Immaculate, the Virgin's Son, "the brightness of the Eternal Light, and the spotless mirror of God's majesty." She looks, and she recognizes the Ancient of Days, the Lord of life and death, her Judge; and again she looks, and she sees in His face and in His mien a beauty, and a sweetness, awful, serene, majestic, more than that of the sons of men, which paled all the splendour of that festive room. Again she looks, timidly yet eagerly, and she discerns in His eye, and in His smile, the loving-kindness, the tenderness, the compassion, the mercy of the Saviour of man. She looks at herself, and oh! how vile, how hideous is she, who but now was so vain of her attractions!—how withered is that comeliness, of which the praises ran through the mouths of her admirers!—how loathsome has become the breath, which hitherto she thought so fragrant, savouring only of those seven bad spirits which dwell within her! And there she would have stayed, there she would have sunk on the earth, wrapped in her confusion and in her despair, had she not cast one glance again on that all-loving, all-forgiving Countenance. He is looking at her: it is the Shepherd looking at the lost sheep, and the lost sheep surrenders herself to Him. He speaks not, but He eyes her; and she draws nearer to Him. Rejoice, ye Angels, she draws near, seeing nothing but Him, and caring neither for the scorn of the proud, nor the jests of the profligate. She draws near, not knowing whether she shall be saved or not, not knowing whether she shall be received, or what will become of her; this only knowing that He is the Fount of holiness and truth, as of mercy, and to whom should she go, but to Him who hath the words of eternal life? "Destruction is thine own, O Israel; in Me only is thy help. Return unto Me, and I will not turn away My face from thee: for I am holy, and will not be angry for ever." "Behold we come unto Thee; for Thou art the Lord our God. Truly the hills are false, and the multitude of the mountains: Truly the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel." Wonderful meeting between what was most base and what is most pure! Those wanton hands, those polluted lips, have touched, have kissed the feet of the Eternal, and He shrank not from the homage. And as she hung over them, and as she moistened them from her full eyes, how did her love

for One so great, yet so gentle, wax vehement within her, lighting up a flame which never was to die from that moment even for ever! and what excess did it reach, when He recorded before all men her forgiveness, and the cause of it! "Many sins are forgiven her, for she loved much; but to whom less is forgiven, the same loveth less. And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven thee; thy faith hath made thee safe, go in peace."

Henceforth, my brethren, love was to her, as to St. Augustine and to St. Ignatius Loyola afterwards (great penitents in their own time), as a wound in the soul, so full of desire as to become anguish. She could not live out of the presence of Him in whom her joy lay: her spirit languished after Him, when she saw Him not; and waited on Him silently, reverently, wistfully, when she was in His blissful Presence. We read of her, on one occasion, sitting at His feet, and listening to His words; and He testified to her that she had chosen that best part which should not be taken away from her. And, after His resurrection, she, by her perseverance merited to see Him even before the Apostles. She would not leave the sepulchre, when Peter and John retired, but stood without, weeping; and when the Lord appeared to her, and held her eyes that she should not know Him, she said piteously to the supposed keeper of the garden, "Tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." And when at length He made Himself known to her, she turned herself, and rushed impetuously to embrace His feet, as at the beginning, but He, as if to prove the dutifulness of her love, forbade her: "Touch Me not," He said, "for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren, and say to them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God." And so she was left to long for the time when she should see Him, and hear His voice, and enjoy His smile, and be allowed to minister to Him, for ever in heaven.

Such then is the second great class of Saints, as viewed in contrast with the first. Love is the life of both: but while the love of the innocent is calm and serene, the love of the penitent is ardent and impetuous, commonly engaged in contest with the world, and active in good works. And this is the love which you, my brethren, must have in your measure, if you would have a good hope of salvation. For you were once sinners; either by open and avowed contempt of religion, or by secret transgression, or by carelessness and coldness, or by some indulged bad habit, or by setting your heart on some object of this world, and doing your own will instead of God's, I think I may say you have needed, or now need, a reconciliation to Him. You have needed, or you need, to be brought near to Him, and to have your sins washed away in His blood, and your pardon recorded in Heaven. And what will do this for you, but contrition? and what is contrition without love? I do not say that you must have the love which Saints have, in order to gain your forgiveness, the love of St. Peter or of St. Mary Magdalen; but still without your portion of that same heavenly grace, how can you be forgiven at all? If you would do works meet for penance, they

must proceed from a living flame of charity. If you would secure perseverance to the end, you must gain it by continual loving prayer to the Author and Finisher of faith and obedience. If you would have a good prospect of His acceptance of you in your last moments, still it is love alone which secures His love, and blots out sin. My brethren, at that awful hour you may be unable to obtain the last Sacraments; death may come on you suddenly, or you may be at a distance from a Priest. You may be thrown on yourselves, simply on your own compunction of heart, your own repentance, your own resolutions of amendment. You may have been weeks and weeks at a distance from spiritual aid; you may have to meet your God without the safeguard, the compensation, the mediation of any holy rite; and oh! what will save you in such disadvantage, but the exercise of divine love "poured over your hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to you"? At that hour nothing but a firm habit of charity, which has kept you from mortal sins, or a powerful act of charity which blots them out, will be of any avail to you. Nothing but charity can enable you to live well or to die well. How can you bear to lie down at night, how can you bear to go a journey, how can you bear the presence of pestilence, or the attack of ever so slight an indisposition, if you are ill provided in yourselves with divine love against that change, which will come on you some day, yet when and how you know not? Alas! how will you present yourselves before the judgment-seat of Christ, with the imperfect mixed feelings which now satisfy you, with a certain amount of faith, and trust, and fear of God's judgments, but with nothing of that real delight in Him, in His attributes, in His will, in His commandments, in His service, which Saints possess in such fulness, and which alone can give the soul a comfortable title to the merits of His death and passion?

How different is the feeling with which the loving soul, on its separation from the body, approaches the judgment-seat of its Redeemer! It knows how great a debt of punishment remains upon it, though it has for many years been reconciled to Him; it knows that purgatory lies before it, and that the best it can reasonably hope for is to be sent there. But to see His face, though for a moment! to hear His voice, to hear Him speak, though it be to punish! O Saviour of men, it says, I come to Thee, though it be in order to be at once remanded from Thee; I come to Thee who art my Life and my All; I come to Thee on the thought of whom I have lived all my life long. To Thee I gave myself when first I had to take a part in the world; I sought Thee for my chief good early, for early didst Thou teach me, that good elsewhere there was none. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? whom have I desired on earth, whom have I had on earth, but Thee? whom shall I have amid the sharp flame but Thee? Yea, though I be now descending thither, into "a land desert, pathless and without water," I will fear no ill, for Thou art with me. I have seen Thee this day face to face, and it sufficeth; I have seen Thee, and that glance of Thine is sufficient for a century of sorrow, in the nether prison. I will live on that look of Thine,

though I see Thee not, till I see Thee again, never to part from Thee. That eye of Thine shall be sunshine and comfort to my weary, longing soul; that voice of Thine shall be everlasting music in my ears. Nothing can harm me, nothing shall discompose me: I will bear the appointed years, till my end come, bravely and sweetly. I will raise my voice, and chant a perpetual *Confiteor* to Thee and to Thy Saints in that dreary valley;—“to God Omnipotent, and to the Blessed Mary Ever-Virgin,” (Thy Mother and mine, immaculate in her conception), “and to blessed Michael Archangel,” (created in his purity by the very hand of God), and “to Blessed John Baptist,” (sanctified even in his mother’s womb); and after these three, “to the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul,” (penitents, who compassionate the sinner from their experience of sin); “to all Saints,” (whether they have lived in contemplation or in toil, during the days of their pilgrimage), will I address my supplication, begging them to “remember me, since it is well with them, and to do mercy by me, and to make mention of me unto the King that He bring me out of that prison.” And then at length “God shall wipe away every tear from my eyes, and death shall be no longer, nor mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things are passed away.”

Faith and Doubt

Those who are drawn by curiosity or a better motive to inquire into the Catholic Religion, sometimes put to us a strange question,—whether, if they took up the profession of it, they would be at liberty, when they felt inclined, to reconsider the question of its divine authority; meaning, by “reconsideration” an inquiry springing from doubt of it, and possibly ending in a denial. The same question, in the form of an objection, is often asked by those who have no thoughts at all of becoming Catholics, and who enlarge upon it, as something terrible, that whoever once enters the pale of the Church, on him the door of egress is shut for ever; that, once a Catholic, he never, never can doubt again; that, whatever his misgivings may be, he must stifle them, nay must start from them as the suggestions of the evil spirit; in short, that he must give up altogether the search after truth, and do a violence to his mind, which is nothing short of immoral. This is what is said, my brethren, by certain objectors, and their own view is, or ought to be, if they are consistent, this,—that it is a fault ever to make up our mind once for all on any religious subject whatever; and that, however sacred a doctrine may be, and however evident to us,—let us say, for instance, the divinity of our Lord, or the existence of God,—we ought always to reserve to ourselves the liberty of doubting about it. I cannot help thinking that so extravagant a position, as this is, confutes itself; however, I will consider the contrary (that is, the Catholic) view of the subject, on its own merits, though without admitting the language in which it was just now stated by its opponents.

It is, then, perfectly true, that the Church does not allow her children to entertain any doubt of her teaching; and that, first of all, simply for this reason, because they are Catholics only while they have faith, and faith is incompatible with doubt. No one can be a Catholic without a simple faith, that what the Church declares in God’s name, is God’s word, and therefore true. A man must simply believe that the Church is the oracle of God; he must be as certain of her mission, as he is of the mission of the Apostles. Now, would any one ever call him certain that the Apostles came from God, if, after professing his certainty, he added, that, for what he knew, he might doubt one day about their mission? Such an anticipation would be a real, though latent, doubt, betraying that he was not certain of it at present. A person who says, “I believe just at this moment, but perhaps I am excited without knowing it, and I cannot answer for

myself, that I shall believe to-morrow," does not believe. A man who says, "Perhaps I am in a kind of delusion, which will one day pass away from me, and leave me as I was before;" or, "I believe as far as I can tell, but there may be arguments in the background which will change my view," such a man has not faith at all. When, then, Protestants quarrel with us for saying that those who join us must give up all ideas of ever doubting the Church in time to come, they do nothing else but quarrel with us for insisting on the necessity of faith in her. Let them speak plainly; our offence is that of demanding faith in the Holy Catholic Church; it is this, and nothing else. I must insist upon this: faith implies a confidence in a man's mind, that the thing believed is really true; but, if it is once true, it never can be false. If it is true that God became man, what is the meaning of my anticipating a time when perhaps I shall not believe that God became man? this is nothing short of anticipating a time when I shall disbelieve a truth. And if I bargain to be allowed in time to come not to believe, or to doubt, that God became man, I am but asking to be allowed to doubt or to disbelieve what is an eternal truth. I do not see the privilege of such a permission at all, or the meaning of wishing to secure it:—if at present I have no doubt whatever about it, then I am but asking leave to fall into error; if at present I have doubts about it, then I do not believe it at present, that is, I have not faith. But I cannot both really believe it now, and yet look forward to a time when perhaps I shall not believe it; to make provision for future doubt, is to doubt at present. It proves I am not in a fit state to become a Catholic now. I may love by halves, I may obey by halves; I cannot believe by halves: either I have faith, or I have it not.

And so again, when a man has become a Catholic, were he to set about following out a doubt which has occurred to him, he has already disbelieved. *I* have not to warn him against losing his faith, he is not merely in danger of losing it, he has lost it; from the nature of the case he has already lost it; he fell from grace at the moment when he deliberately entertained and pursued his doubt. No one can determine to doubt what he is sure of; but if he is not sure that the Church is from God, he does not believe it. It is not I who forbid him to doubt; he has taken the matter into his own hands when he determined on asking for leave; he has begun, not ended, in unbelief; his very wish, his purpose, is his sin. I do not make it so, it is such from the very state of the case. You sometimes hear, for example, of Catholics falling away, who will tell you it arose from reading the Scriptures, which opened their eyes to the "unscripturalness," so they speak, of the Church of the Living God. No; Scripture did not make them disbelieve (impossible!); they disbelieved *when* they opened the Bible; they opened it in an unbelieving spirit, and for an unbelieving purpose; they would not have opened it, had they not anticipated—I might say, hoped—that they should find things there inconsistent with Catholic teaching. They begin in self-will and disobedience, and they end in apostasy. This, then, is the

direct and obvious reason why the Church cannot allow her children the liberty of doubting the truth of her word. He who really believes in it now, cannot imagine the future discovery of reasons to shake his faith; if he imagines it, he has not faith; and that so many Protestants think it a sort of tyranny in the Church to forbid any children of hers to doubt about her teaching, only shows they do not know what faith is—which is the case; it is a strange idea to them. Let a man cease to inquire, or cease to call himself her child.

This is my first remark, and now I go on to a second. You may easily conceive, my brethren, that they who are entering the Church, or at least those who have entered it, have more than faith; that they have some portion of divine love also. They have heard in the Church of the charity of Him who died for them, and who has given them His Sacraments as the means of conveying the merits of His death to their souls, and they have felt more or less in those poor souls of theirs the beginning of a responsive charity drawing them to Him. Now, does it stand with a loving trust, better than with faith, for a man to anticipate the possibility of doubting or denying the great mercies in which he is rejoicing? Take an instance; what would you think of a friend whom you loved, who could bargain that, in spite of his present trust in you, he might be allowed some day to doubt you? who, when a thought came into his mind, that you were playing a game with him, or that you were a knave, or a profligate, did not drive it from him with indignation, or laugh it away for its absurdity, but considered that he had an evident right to indulge it, nay, should be wanting in duty to himself, unless he did? Would you think that your friend trifled with truth, that he was unjust to his reason, that he was wanting in manliness, that he was hurting his mind, if he shrank from it? or would you not call him cruel and miserable if he did not? For me, my brethren, if he took the latter course, may I never be intimate with so unpleasant a person; suspicious, jealous minds, minds that keep at a distance from me, that insist on their rights, fall back on their own centre, are ever fancying offences, and are cold, censorious, wayward, and uncertain, these are often to be borne as a cross; but give me for my friend one who will unite heart and hand with me, who will throw himself into my cause and interest, who will take my part when I am attacked, who will be sure beforehand that I am in the right, and, if he is critical, as he may have cause to be towards a being of sin and imperfection, will be so from very love and loyalty, from anxiety that I should always show to advantage, and a wish that others should love me as heartily as he does. I should not say a friend trusted me, who listened to every idle story against me; and I should like his absence better than his company, if he gravely told me that it was a duty he owed to himself to encourage his misgivings of my honour.

Well, pass on to a higher subject. Could a man be said to trust in God, and to love God, who was familiar with doubts whether there was a God at all, or who bargained that, just as often as he pleased, he might be at liberty to doubt

whether God was good, or just or almighty; and who maintained that, unless he did this, he was but a poor slave, that his mind was in bondage, and could render no free acceptable service to his Maker; that the very worship which God approved was one attended with a *caveat*, on the worshipper's part, that he did not promise to render it to-morrow, that he would not answer for himself that some argument might not come to light, which he had never heard before, which would make it a grave moral duty in him to suspend his judgment and his devotion? Why, I should say, my brethren, that that man was worshipping his own mind, his own dear self, and not God; that his idea of God was a mere accidental form which his thoughts took at this time or that, for a long period or a short one, as the case might be, not an image of the great Eternal Object, but a passing sentiment or imagination which meant nothing at all. I should say, and most men would agree with me, did they choose to give attention to the matter, that the person in question was a very self-conceited, self-wise man, and had neither love, nor faith, nor fear, nor anything supernatural about him; that his pride must be broken, and his heart new-made, before he was capable of any religious act at all. The argument is the same, in its degree, when applied to the Church; she comes to us as a messenger from God: How can a man who feels this, who comes to her, who falls at her feet as such, make a reserve, that he may be allowed to doubt her at some future day? Let the world cry out, if it will, that his reason is in fetters; let it pronounce that he is a bigot, unless he reserves his right of doubting; but he knows full well himself that he would be an ingrate and a fool, if he did. Fetters, indeed! Yes, "the cords of Adam," the fetters of love, these are what bind him to the Holy Church; he is, with the Apostle, the slave of Christ, the Church's Lord; united, (never to part, as he trusts, while life lasts,) to her Sacraments, to her Sacrifices, to her Saints, to the Blessed Mary her advocate, to Jesus, to God.

The truth is, that the world, knowing nothing of the blessings of the Catholic faith, and prophesying nothing but ill concerning it, fancies that a convert, after the first fervour is over, feels nothing but disappointment, weariness, and offence in his new religion, and is secretly desirous of retracing his steps. This is at the root of the alarm and irritation which it manifests at hearing that doubts are incompatible with a Catholic's profession, because it is sure that doubts will come upon him, and then how pitiable will be his state! That there can be peace, and joy, and knowledge, and freedom, and spiritual strength in the Church, is a thought far beyond its imagination; for it regards her simply as a frightful conspiracy against the happiness of man, seducing her victims by specious professions, and, when they are once hers, caring nothing for the misery which breaks upon them, so that by any means she may detain them in bondage. Accordingly, it conceives we are in perpetual warfare with our own reason, fierce objections ever rising within us, and we forcibly repressing them. It believes that, after the likeness of a vessel which has met with some accident at

sea, we are ever baling out the water which rushes in upon us, and have hard work to keep afloat; we just manage to linger on, either by an unnatural strain on our minds, or by turning them away from the subject of religion. The world disbelieves our doctrines itself, and cannot understand our own believing them. It considers them so strange, that it is quite sure, though we will not confess it, that we are haunted day and night with doubts, and tormented with the apprehension of yielding to them. I really do think it is the world's judgment, that one principal part of a confessor's work is the putting down such misgivings in his penitents. It fancies that the reason is ever rebelling, like the flesh; that doubt, like concupiscence, is elicited by every sight and sound, and that temptation insinuates itself in every page of letter-press, and through the very voice of a Protestant polemic. When it sees a Catholic Priest, it looks hard at him, to make out how much there is of folly in his composition, and how much of hypocrisy. But, my dear brethren, if these are your thoughts, you are simply in error. Trust me, rather than the world, when I tell you, that it is no difficult thing for a Catholic to believe; and that unless he grievously mismanages himself, the difficult thing is for him to doubt. He has received a gift which makes faith easy; it is not without an effort, a miserable effort, that any one who has received that gift, unlearns to believe. He does violence to his mind, not in exercising, but in withholding his faith. When objections occur to him, which they may easily do if he lives in the world, they are as odious and unwelcome to him as impure thoughts are to the virtuous. He does certainly shrink from them, he flings them away from him, but why? not in the first instance, because they are dangerous, but because they are cruel and base. His loving Lord has done everything for him, and has He deserved such a return? *Popule meus, quid feci tibi?* "O My people, what have I done to thee, or in what have I molested thee? Answer thou Me. I brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and delivered thee out of the house of slaves; and I sent before thy face Moses, and Aaron, and Mary; I fenced thee in, and planted thee with the choicest vines; and what is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard that I have not done to it?" He has poured on us His grace, He has been with us in our perplexities, He has led us on from one truth to another, He has forgiven us our sins, He has satisfied our reason, He has made faith easy, He has given us His Saints, He shows before us day by day His own Passion; why should I leave Him? What has He ever done to me but good? Why must I re-examine what I have examined once for all? Why must I listen to every idle word which flits past me against Him, on pain of being called a bigot and a slave, when, if I did, I should be behaving to the Most High, as you yourselves, who so call me, would not behave towards a human friend or benefactor? If I am convinced in my reason, and persuaded in my heart, why may I not be allowed to remain unmolested in my worship?

I have said enough on the subject; still there is a third point of view in which it may be useful to consider it. Personal prudence is not the first or second

ground for refusing to hear objections to the Church, but a motive it is, and that from the peculiar nature of divine faith, which cannot be treated as an ordinary conviction or belief. Faith is the gift of God, and not a mere act of our own, which we are free to exert when we will. It is quite distinct from an exercise of reason, though it follows upon it. I may feel the force of the argument for the divine origin of the Church; I may see that I ought to believe; and yet I may be unable to believe. This is no imaginary case; there is many a man who has ground enough to believe, who wishes to believe, but who cannot believe. It is always indeed his own fault, for God gives grace to all who ask for it, and use it, but still such is the fact, that conviction is not faith. Take the parallel case of obedience; many a man knows he ought to obey God, and does not and cannot—through his own fault indeed, but still he cannot; for through grace alone can he obey. Now, faith is not a mere conviction in reason, it is a firm assent, it is a clear certainty greater than any other certainty; and this is wrought in the mind by the grace of God, and by it alone. As then men may be convinced, and not act according to their conviction, so may they be convinced, and not believe according to their conviction. They may confess that the argument is against them, that they have nothing to say for themselves, and that to believe is to be happy; and yet, after all, they avow they cannot believe, they do not know why, but they cannot; they acquiesce in unbelief, and they turn away from God and His Church. Their reason is convinced, and their doubts are moral ones, arising in their root from a fault of the will. In a word, the arguments for religion do not compel any one to believe, just as arguments for good conduct do not compel any one to obey. Obedience is the consequence of willing to obey, and faith is the consequence of willing to believe; we may see what is right, whether in matters of faith or obedience, of ourselves, but we cannot will what is right without the grace of God. Here is the difference between other exercises of reason, and arguments for the truth of religion. It requires no act of faith to assert to the truth that two and two make four; we cannot help assenting to it; and hence there is no merit in assenting to it; but there is merit in believing that the Church is from God; for though there are abundant reasons to prove it to us, yet we can, without an absurdity, quarrel with the conclusion; we may complain that it is not clearer, we may suspend our assent, we may doubt about it, if we will, and grace alone can turn a bad will into a good one.

And now you see why a Catholic dare not in prudence attend to such objections as are brought against his faith; he has no fear of their proving that the Church does not come from God, but he is afraid, if he listened to them without reason, lest God should punish him by the loss of his supernatural faith. This is one cause of that miserable state of mind, to which I have already alluded, in which men would fain be Catholics, and are not. They have trifled with conviction, they have listened to arguments against what they knew to be

true, and a deadness of mind has fallen on them; faith has failed them, and, as time goes on, they betray in their words and their actions, the Divine judgment, with which they are visited. They become careless and unconcerned, or restless and unhappy, or impatient of contradiction; ever asking advice and quarrelling with it when given; not attempting to answer the arguments urged against them, but simply not believing. This is the whole of their case, they do not believe. And then it is quite an accident what becomes of them; perhaps they continue on in this perplexed and comfortless state, lingering about the Church, yet not of her; not knowing what they believe and what they do not, like blind men, or men deranged, who are deprived of the eye, whether of body or mind, and cannot guide themselves in consequence; ever exciting hopes of a return, and ever disappointing them. Or, if they are men of more vigorous minds, they launch forward in a course of infidelity, not really believing less, as they proceed, for from the first they believed nothing, but taking up, as time goes on, more and more consistent forms of error, till sometimes, if a free field is given them, they even develop into atheism. Such is the end of those who, under the pretence of inquiring after truth, trifle with conviction.

Here then are some of the reasons why the Catholic Church cannot consistently allow her children to doubt the divinity and the truth of her words. Mere investigation indeed into the grounds of our faith is not to doubt; nor is it doubting to consider the arguments urged against it, when there is good reason for doing so; but I am speaking of a real doubt, or a wanton entertainment of objections. Such a procedure the Church denounces, and not only for the reasons which I have assigned, but because it would be a plain abandonment of her office and character to act otherwise. How can she, who has the prerogative of infallibility, allow her children to doubt of her gift? It would be a simple inconsistency in her, who is the sure oracle of truth and messenger of heaven, to look with indifference on rebels to her authority. She simply does what the Apostles did before her, whom she has succeeded. "He that despiseth," says St. Paul, "despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given in us His Holy Spirit." And St. John: "We are of God; he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth us not; by this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." Take, again, an instance from the Old Testament: When Elias was taken up into heaven, Eliseus was the only witness of the miracle; on his coming back then to the sons of the Prophet, they doubted what had become of his master, and wished to search for him; and, though they acknowledged Eliseus as his successor, they in this instance refused to take his word on the subject. Eliseus had struck the waters of Jordan, they had divided, and he had passed over; here, surely, was ground enough for faith, and accordingly "the sons of the Prophets at Jericho, who were over against him, seeing it, said, The spirit of Elias hath rested upon Eliseus; and they came to meet him, and worshipped him, falling to the ground." What could they require more? they confessed that Eliseus had the

spirit of his great master, and, in confessing it, they implied that that master was taken away; yet, they proceed, from infirmity of mind, to make a request indicative of doubt; "Behold, there are with thy servants fifty strong men, that can go and search for thy master, lest perhaps the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley." Now here was a request to follow up a doubt into an inquiry; did Eliseus allow it? he knew perfectly well that the inquiry would but end, as it really did end, in confirmation of the truth, but it was indulging a wrong spirit to engage in it, and he would not allow it. These religious men were, as he would feel, strangely inconsistent: they were doubting his word whom they had just now worshipped as a Prophet, and, not only so, but they were doubting his supreme authority, for they implied that Elias was still among them. Accordingly he forbade their request; "He said, Send not." This is what the world would call stifling an inquiry; it was, forsooth, tyrannical and oppressive to oblige them to take on his word what they might ascertain for themselves; yet he could not do otherwise without being unfaithful to his divine mission, and sanctioning them in a fault. It is true when "they pressed him, he consented, and said, Send;" but we must not suppose this to be more than a condescension to their weakness, or a concession in displeasure, like that which Almighty God gave to Balaam, who pressed his request in a similar way. When Balaam asked to go with the ancients of Moab, God said, "Thou shalt not go with them;" when Balaam asked Him "once more," "God said to him, Arise and go with them;" then it is added, "Balaam went with them, and God was angry." Here in like manner, the prophet said, Send; "and they sent fifty men, and they sought three days, but found him not;" yet though the inquiry did but prove that Elias was removed, Eliseus showed no satisfaction at it, even when it had confirmed his authority: but "he said to them, Said I not to you, Send not?" It is thus that the Church ever forbids inquiry in those who already acknowledge her authority; but if they will inquire, she cannot hinder it; but they are not justified in doing so.

And now I think you see, my brethren, why inquiry precedes faith, and does not follow it. You inquired before you joined the Church; you were satisfied, and God rewarded you with the grace of faith; were you now determined to inquire further, you would lead us to think you had lost it again, for inquiry and faith are in their very nature incompatible. I will add, what is very evident, that no other religious body has a right to demand such an exercise of faith in them, and a right to forbid you further inquiry, but the Catholic Church; and for this simple reason, that no other body even claims to be infallible, let alone the proof of such a claim. Here is the defect at first starting, which disqualifies them, one and all, from ever competing with the Church of God. The sects about us, so far from demanding your faith, actually call on you to inquire and to doubt freely about their own merits; they protest that they are but voluntary associations, and would be sorry to be taken for anything else; they beg and

pray you not to mistake their preachers for anything more than mere sinful men, and they invite you to take the Bible with you to their sermons, and to judge for yourselves whether their doctrine is in accordance with it. Then, as to the Established Religion, grant that there are those in it who forbid inquiry into its claims; yet still, dare they maintain that it is infallible? If they do not, (and no one does,) how can they forbid inquiry about it, or claim for it the absolute faith of any of its members? Faith under these circumstances is not really faith, but obstinacy. Nor do they commonly venture to demand it; they will say, negatively, "Do not inquire;" but they cannot say positively, "Have faith;" for in whom are their members to have faith? Of whom can they say, whether individual or collection of men, "He or they are gifted with infallibility, and cannot mislead us"? Therefore, when pressed to explain themselves, they ground their duty of continuance in their communion, not on faith in it, but on attachment to it, which is a very different thing; utterly different, for there are very many reasons why they should feel a very great liking for the religion in which they have been brought up. Its portions of Catholic teaching, its "decency and order," the pure and beautiful English of its prayers, its literature, the piety found among its members, the influence of superiors and friends, its historical associations, its domestic character, the charm of a country life, the remembrance of past years—there is all this and much more to attach the mind to the national worship. But attachment is not trust, nor is to obey the same as to look up to, and to rely upon; nor do I think that any thoughtful or educated man can simply believe or confide in the *word* of the Established Church. I never met any such person who did, or said he did, and I do not think that such a person is possible. Its defenders would believe if they could; but their highest confidence is qualified by a misgiving. They obey, they are silent before the voice of their superiors, but they do not profess to believe. Nothing is clearer than this, that if faith in God's word is required of us for salvation, the Catholic Church is the only medium by which we can exercise it.

And now, my brethren, who are not Catholics, perhaps you will tell me, that, if all inquiry is to cease when you become Catholics, you ought to be very sure that the Church is from God before you join it. You speak truly; no one should enter the Church without a firm purpose of taking her word in all matters of doctrine and morals, and that, on the ground of her coming directly from the God of Truth. You must look the matter in the face, and count the cost. If you do not come in this spirit, you may as well not come at all; high and low, learned and ignorant, must come to learn. If you are right as far as this, you cannot go very wrong; you have the foundation; but, if you come in any other temper, you had better wait till you have got rid of it. You must come, I say, to the Church to learn; you must come, not to bring your own notions to her, but with the intention of ever being a learner; you must come with the intention of taking her for your portion and of never leaving her. Do not come as an

experiment; do not come as you would take sittings in a chapel, or tickets for a lecture-room; come to her as to your home, to the school of your souls, to the Mother of Saints, and to the vestibule of heaven. On the other hand do not distress yourselves with thoughts whether, when you have joined her, your faith will last; this is a suggestion of your enemy to hold you back. He who has begun a good work in you, will perfect it; He who has chosen you, will be faithful to you; put your cause into His hand, wait upon Him, and you will surely persevere. What good work will you ever begin, if you bargain first to see the end of it? If you wish to do all at once, you will do nothing; he has done half the work, who has begun it well; you will not gain your Lord's praise at the final reckoning by hiding His talent. No; when He brings you from error to truth, He will have done the more difficult work (if aught is difficult to Him), and surely He will preserve you from returning from truth to error. Take the experience of those who have gone before you in the same course; they had many fears that their faith would fail them, before taking the great step, but those fears vanished on their taking it; they had fears, before the grace of faith, lest, after receiving it, they should lose it again, but no fears (except on the ground of their general frailness) after it was actually given.

Be convinced in your reason that the Catholic Church is a teacher sent to you from God, and it is enough. I do not wish you to join her, till you are. If you are half convinced, pray for a full conviction, and wait till you have it. It is better indeed to come quickly, but better slowly than carelessly; and sometimes, as the proverb goes, the more haste, the worse speed. Only make yourselves sure that the delay is not from any fault of yours, which you can remedy. God deals with us very differently; conviction comes slowly to some men, quickly to others; in some it is the result of much thought and many reasonings, in others of a sudden illumination. One man is convinced at once, as in the instance described by St. Paul: "If all prophesy," he says, speaking of exposition of doctrine, "and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. The secrets of his heart are made manifest; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God, and say that God is among you of a truth." The case is the same now; some men are converted merely by entering a Catholic Church; others are converted by reading one book; others by one doctrine. They feel the weight of their sins, and they see that that religion must come from God which alone has the means of forgiving them. Or they are touched and overcome by the evident sanctity, beauty, and (as I may say) fragrance of the Catholic Religion. Or they long for a guide amid the strife of tongues; and the very doctrine of the Church about faith, which is so hard to many, is conviction to them. Others, again, hear many objections to the Church, and follow out the whole subject far and wide; conviction can scarcely come to them except as at the end of a long inquiry. As in a court of justice, one man's innocence may be proved at once, another's is the result of a

careful investigation; one has nothing in his conduct or character to explain, another has many presumptions against him at first sight; so Holy Church presents herself very differently to different minds who are contemplating her from without. God deals with them differently; but, if they are faithful to their light, at last, in their own time, though it may be a different time to each, He brings them to that one and the same state of mind, very definite and not to be mistaken, which we call *conviction*. They will have no doubt, whatever difficulties may still attach to the subject, that the Church is from God; they may not be able to answer this objection or that, but they will be certain in spite of it.

This is a point which should ever be kept in view: conviction is a state of mind, and it is something beyond and distinct from the mere arguments of which it is the result; it does not vary with their strength or their number. Arguments lead to a conclusion, and when the arguments are stronger, the conclusion is clearer; but conviction may be felt as strongly in consequence of a clear conclusion, as of one which is clearer. A man may be so sure upon six reasons, that he does not need a seventh, nor would feel surer if he had it. And so, as regards the Catholic Church, men are convinced in very various ways: what convinces one, does not convince another; but this is an accident; the time comes anyhow, sooner or later, when a man ought to be convinced, and is convinced, and then he is bound not to wait for any more arguments, though more arguments be producible. He will find himself in a condition when he may even refuse to hear more arguments in behalf of the Church; he does not wish to read or think more on the subject, his mind is quite made up. In such a case it is his duty to join the Church at once; he must not delay; let him be cautious in counsel, but prompt in execution. This it is that makes Catholics so anxious about him: it is not that they wish him to be precipitate; but knowing the temptations which the evil one ever throws in our way, they are lovingly anxious for his soul, lest he has come to the point of conviction, and is passing it, and is losing his chance of conversion. If so, it may never return; God has not chosen every one to salvation: it is a rare gift to be a Catholic; it may be offered to us once in our lives and never again; and, if we have not seized on the "accepted time," nor known "in our day the things which are for our peace," oh, the misery for us! What shall we be able to say when death comes, and we are not converted, and it is directly and immediately our own doing that we are not?

"Wisdom preacheth abroad, she uttereth her voice in the streets: How long, ye little ones, love ye childishness, and fools covet what is hurtful to them, and the unwise hate knowledge? Turn ye at My reproof; behold, I will bring forth to you My Spirit, and I will show My words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused, I stretched out My hand, and there was none who regarded, and ye despised all My counsel and neglected My chidings; I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock when that shall come to you which you feared;

when a sudden storm shall rush on you, and destruction shall thicken as a tempest, when tribulation and straitness shall come upon you. Then shall they call on Me, and I will not hear; they shall rise betimes, but they shall not find Me; for that they hated discipline, and took not on them the fear of the Lord, nor acquiesced in My counsel, but made light of My reproof, therefore shall they eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices."

Oh, the misery for us, as many of us as shall be in that number! Oh, the awful thought for all eternity! Oh, the remorseful sting, "I was called, I might have answered, and I did not!" And oh, the blessedness, if we can look back on the time of trial, when friends implored and enemies scoffed, and say, The misery for me, which would have been, had I not followed on, had I hung back, when Christ called! Oh, the utter confusion of mind, the wreck of faith and opinion, the blackness and void, the dreary scepticism, the hopelessness, which would have been my lot, the pledge of the outer darkness to come, had I been afraid to follow Him! I have lost friends, I have lost the world, but I have gained Him, who gives in Himself houses and brethren and sisters and mothers and children and lands a hundred-fold; I have lost the perishable, and gained the Infinite; I have lost time, and I have gained eternity. "O Lord, my God, I am Thy servant, and the son of Thine handmaid; Thou hast broken my bonds. I will sacrifice to Thee the sacrifice of praise, and I will call on the Name of the Lord."

St. Peter Julian Eymard

St. Peter Julian Eymard (1811–68), religious founder, was born and died near Grenoble, France. After a vain effort to form a group dedicated to adoration of the Eucharist among the Marist Fathers, he received permission to leave that community. In 1856 he founded the Blessed Sacrament Fathers in Paris, and two years later, with Marguerite Guillot, he established the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament, a cloistered contemplative congregation of women.

The main purpose of both congregations was perpetual exposition and adoration of Christ, truly present in the Holy Eucharist. Peter Julian also founded the Blessed Sacrament Confraternity, to promote devotion to the Real Presence among the faithful. He was canonized in 1962.

Besides the Constitutions of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers, he wrote several volumes of conferences that were published after his death. The following selections from these conferences were chosen because they are so representative of his clear understanding of Christ's literal Presence on earth in the Sacrament of His Love.

THE REAL PRESENCE

The Institution of the Eucharist

Cum dilexisset suos qui erant in mundo, in finem dilexit eos.

Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end.

—*John 13:1*

How good is the Lord Jesus! How loving! Not satisfied with having become our Brother by His Incarnation and our Savior by His Passion, not satisfied with having delivered Himself up for us, He wants to strain His love to the point of making Himself our Sacrament of life!

With what joy He prepared this great and supreme gift of His love!

With what happiness He instituted the Eucharist and bequeathed it to us as His last will!

Let us observe this divine wisdom at work preparing the Eucharist. Let us adore His power, exhausting itself in this act of love.

I

Jesus revealed the Eucharist long beforehand.

He was born at Bethlehem, *the house of bread, domus panis*. He lay on the straw which then seemed to bear an ear of the true wheat.

At Cana and in the desert, when He multiplied the loaves, He revealed the Eucharist and also promised it. It was a public and formal promise.

He promised with an oath that He would give us His flesh to eat and His blood to drink. That was the remote preparation.

The time had come for the more immediate preparation of the Eucharist. Jesus wanted to see to these preparations Himself. Love does not unburden itself of its obligations on others. Love does everything itself. That is its boast.

Jesus selected the city: Jerusalem, the city of the sacrifices of the Old Law.

He selected the house: the Cenacle.

He chose His attendants in this undertaking: Peter and John—Peter, the disciple of faith, and John, the disciple of love.

He appointed the time: the last hour of His life He could freely dispose of.

Finally, He came from Bethany to the Cenacle; He was full of joy; He quickened His step; He could not get there soon enough. Love welcomes sacrifice.

II

The time for the institution of the august Sacrament had come. What a moment! The hour of love had struck. The Mosaic Pasch was about to be consummated, the true Lamb to take the place of its figure in the Old Law, and the Bread of life, the Bread from heaven, to be substituted to the manna of the wilderness. Jesus sat down at table with a grave simplicity. They had to eat the new Pasch sitting down, in the repose of God.

A deep silence came over them all; the Apostles looked on very attentively.

Jesus became meditative. He took some bread in His holy and venerable hands, raised His eyes to heaven, gave thanks to His Father for this hour He had so desired, stretched out His hand, blessed the bread. . . .

And while the Apostles, filled with respect, dared not ask the meaning of symbols so mysterious, Jesus pronounced these beautiful words as powerful as the creative word of God: *Take ye and eat. This is My Body. . . . Drink ye all of This. This is My Blood.*

The mystery of love was consummated. Jesus had fulfilled His promise. He had nothing more to give but His mortal life upon the Cross. He would give it and would rise again to be our perpetual Host of propitiation, the Host of our Communion, the Host of our adoration.

Heaven was enraptured at the sight of this mystery. The Most Holy Trinity contemplated it with love. The angels, struck with awe, adored it.

And with what a frantic rage were not the demons seized in hell!

Yes, Lord Jesus, all is consummated! Thou hast now nothing more to give man to prove him Thy love. Thou mayest die now; Thou wilt not leave us, even by dying. Thy love is perpetuated on earth. Go back to the heaven of Thy glory; the Eucharist will be the heaven of Thy love.

O Cenacle! Where art thou? O Holy Table which bore the consecrated Body of Jesus! O divine fire which Jesus kindled on Mount Sion, burn, spread thy flames, and set the world on fire!

Heavenly Father, Thou wilt always love men; they possess Jesus Christ

forever! Thou wilt not lay waste the earth anymore with storms and floods; the Eucharist is our rainbow. Thou wilt love men since Thy Son Jesus Christ loves them so much!

What a love this good Savior had for us! Did He not love us enough to deserve our gratitude? What more do we need to consecrate our affections and our lives to Him in return?

Have we other desires still unsatisfied? Do we require further proofs of our Lord's love?

Alas! If the love of Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament does not win our hearts, Jesus is vanquished! Our ingratitude is greater than His goodness; our malice is more powerful than His charity! Oh! No, my good Savior, Thy charity presses me, torments me, binds me!

I want to devote myself to the service and glory of Thy Sacrament. By dint of love I want to make Thee forget that up to this day I have been so ungrateful; by dint of devotedness I want to obtain forgiveness for having loved Thee so late! . . .

The Testament of Jesus Christ

Hic calix novum testamentum est in meo sanguine.
This chalice is the new testament in My Blood.

—1 Cor: 11:25

Holy Thursday, the eve of our Savior's death, the day on which He instituted the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist!

That was the most beautiful day of our Lord's life. It was the greatest day of His love and tenderness.

Jesus was on the point of perpetuating His Presence in our midst. His love on the Cross was boundless, it is true, but there would be an end to His sufferings, and Good Friday was to last only one day.

Holy Thursday would endure till the end of time. Jesus made Himself the Sacrament of Himself forever.

I

On that day, then, our Lord remembered that He was a father, and He wanted to make His will; He was about to die.

What a solemn act this is in a family!

It is, so to speak, the last act of one's life, and one that extends beyond the grave.

A father gives what he has. He cannot give himself because he does not belong to himself. He bequeathes something to each of his children as well as to his friends. He gives what he prizes the most. But our Lord would give His very Self!

He had neither riches, nor property, nor a home. He had not even "where to lay His head." Those who expect temporal goods from Him will get nothing. His Cross, three nails, His crown of thorns, these are the only material things He had to bequeath.

Ah! If our Lord were to give away estates, how many would be good Christians! All would be His disciples!

But no, He has nothing to give here below, not even glory; the humiliations of the Passion disposed of that.

And, yet, our Lord wanted to make a will. But a will of what? Of His very Self!

He was God and Man. As God, He was master of His sacred humanity. He gave it to us, and with it all that He was.

He really and truly gave it to us; it was not a loan, but a gift.

He immobilized Himself, so to say, and took on the outward semblance of a thing so that we might in very truth possess Him.

He became bread; His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity took the place of the substance of the bread which was offered up. We do not see Him, but we have Him.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is our inheritance. He wants to give Himself to everybody, but not everybody wants Him. There are some who would want Him, but they will not submit to the conditions of good and pure living which He has laid down; and their malice has the power to render God's bequest null and void.

II

See how marvelously inventive is our Lord's love! He alone devised this work of His love.

Who else could have foreseen it, or even dared think of it! . . . It was beyond the angels themselves.

Our Lord devised it all by Himself. "You need bread? I shall be your bread."

And He died happy, because He left us bread, and what bread!

His happiness was that of a father who has worked all his life with one purpose in mind: that his children might have bread after he was gone.

What more could our Lord give us?

In this testament of love our Lord included everything, all His graces and even His glory.

We can say to our Heavenly Father: "Give me the graces I need, and I will pay Thee with Jesus Eucharistic Who belongs to me. He is my property; I can dispose of Him. All Thy graces, Thy glory itself, O Heavenly Father, are not worth as much as He."

If we commit sins, we have a Victim to offer up for them; Jesus belongs to us. "Father, I offer Him to Thee; Thou wilt forgive me through Jesus and for Jesus. He has certainly suffered enough and atoned enough."

No matter what grace God may grant us, He remains always our debtor. Jesus Christ, our treasure, is worth more than all the graces, more than heaven itself.

With Saint Louis in their hands, the Saracens held the whole of France for ransom; with Jesus in our possession, we already possess heaven.

Let us then make practical use of that thought by “investing” in Jesus Christ, as it were. Most people—and how numerous they are—bury Him within themselves or leave Him in His shroud. They do not make use of Him to win heaven for themselves and kingdoms for God. Let us make use of Jesus when praying and atoning. Let us pay with Jesus; His worth is greater than our debt.

III

But how has this inheritance come down to us through more than eighteen centuries?

Jesus gave it in trust to guardians who have administered it, and kept it intact in order to hand it over to us when we should come of age. These guardians were the Apostles, and among them their undying Head. The Apostles handed it over to priests, who bring it to us; they open the will for us and give us the Host which our Lord foresaw at the Last Supper would be consecrated for us. Yes, there is neither past nor present nor future for Jesus Christ. This good Father knew us all at the Last Supper. He consecrated, as it were in thought and in desire, all our Hosts; He loved us personally eighteen centuries before we were born.

Yes, we were present at the Last Supper, and Jesus stored up for us not one Host but a hundred, a thousand, one for every day of our life. Do we realize that? Jesus wanted to love us superabundantly. Our Hosts are ready; let us not lose a single one of them.

Our Lord’s only purpose in coming to us is to do us good; shall we force Him into idleness? No, never! Make Him produce results through Himself. *Negotiamini*. Make Him yield profit. Do not allow any Hosts to be fruitless.

How good our Savior is!

The Last Supper lasted about three hours; it was the Passion of His love.

That bread was so expensive!

People say, “Bread is dear”; but what is that in comparison with the price of the heavenly bread, the bread of life?

Let us therefore eat this bread; it is ours. Our Lord bought it for us and paid for it Himself. He gives it to us; we have but to take it.

What an honor! What love!

The Testimony of the Church

Ecce Agnus Dei.
Behold the Lamb of God.

—*John 1:36*

John the Baptist's mission on earth was to announce the coming of the promised Savior, point Him out to men, and prepare the way for Him. The Church fulfills the same mission with regard to Jesus Eucharistic, a more extensive and lasting mission, which takes in every age and country. She carries out her mission by manifesting Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, by preaching Him by word, and also by the testimony of her faith and works—a silent preaching, but just as eloquent as the first.

I

The Church presents herself before us with the words of Jesus on her lips; she repeats and explains them with an authority equal to that of the Savior: "This is My Body. This is My Blood."

She tells us, and we must believe that, by the divine power of these sacramental words, taken in their direct and natural sense, Jesus Christ becomes truly, really, and substantially present in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar under the appearances of bread and wine.

She tells us, and we must believe that, by His omnipotence, Jesus Christ has changed the substance of bread into His Body and the substance of wine into His Blood, and that His soul and divinity accompany the presence of His Body and of His Blood.

She tells us, and we must believe that the divine work of Transubstantiation is forever being wrought in the Church through the priesthood of Jesus Christ, invested by Him with His own power when He instituted it with these words: "Do this for a commemoration of Me."

And ever since the Last Supper, the Church has been proclaiming this belief down through the ages.

Her Apostles have had but one voice, her teachers but one doctrine, her children but one belief, one love for the God of the Eucharist.

How majestic is the voice of the whole Christian people! How touching and beautiful is the harmony of their praise and their love!

Every true child of the Church wants to bring to the feet of the divine King present on the altar a tribute of homage, a token of his affection—one brings gold, another myrrh, and all bring incense. Every one wants to have a place in the court and at the table of the God of the Eucharist.

The very enemies of the Church, the schismatics, and nearly all the heretics believe in the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. . . . The truth is that one must be quite blind to deny the existence of the sun, quite ungrateful to ignore and despise the love of Jesus perpetuating His Presence in the midst of men.

As for us, we believe in the love of Jesus, and we know that nothing is impossible to the love of a God.

II

To the testimony of her word the Church adds the testimony of her example and practical faith. As John the Baptist, after having pointed out the Messiah, cast himself at His feet to prove the liveliness of his faith, so the Church devotes a solemn worship, her entire worship to the adorable Person of Jesus Whom she manifests to you in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

She adores Jesus Christ as God, present and hidden in the Divine Host. She pays Him the honor due to God alone; she prostrates herself before the Most Blessed Sacrament like the heavenly court before the majesty of God.

Distinctions of rank are not in order here: great and small, kings and subjects, priests and people instinctively fall to their knees before the God of the Eucharist.

It is the Good God!

The Church is not content to attest her faith by adoration alone; to that she adds public and magnificent honors.

The splendid basilicas are the expression of her faith in the Most Blessed Sacrament. She did not wish to build tombs but temples, a heaven on earth in which her Savior and God might find a throne worthy of Him.

With a delicate and jealous attention the Church has regulated Eucharistic worship to its minutest details. She does not rely on anyone to take in hand the matter of honoring her divine Bridegroom; for everything is important, significant, and divine, when there is question of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ.

She wants to consecrate to the royal service of Jesus all the most genuine and precious things in the world.

In her liturgy everything is related to this mystery; everything takes on a

spiritual and heavenly meaning; everything has a property of its own and contains some special grace.

How easy it is for the soul to recollect herself in the solitude and silence of a church! A gathering of saints on their knees before the tabernacle causes us to exclaim: "There is more than Solomon, more than an angel here!" Jesus Christ is here before Whom every knee bends, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.

In the presence of Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament, all greatness disappears, all holiness humbles itself and comes to nothing.

Jesus Christ is there!

The Wonderful Work of God

Memoriam fecit mirabilia suorum. . .

He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works.

—*Psalm 110:4*

The Eucharist is the work of a measureless love that had at its service an infinite power, the omnipotence of God.

Saint Thomas calls the Eucharist the wonder of wonders, the greatest of miracles, *maximum miraculorum*.

To be convinced of this we need but meditate on what the faith of the Church teaches us concerning this mystery.

I

The first of the wonders wrought in the Eucharist is Transubstantiation. Jesus, and after Him His priests—by His command and institution—take bread and wine, pronounce the words of the consecration over them, and immediately all the substance of the bread and all the substance of the wine disappear: they are changed into the Sacred Body and the adorable Blood of Jesus Christ.

Under the appearances of the bread as also under the appearances of the wine the glorified Body of our Savior is truly, really, and substantially present.

Nothing remains of the bread and wine except the appearances: color, taste, and weight. The senses tell us it is bread and wine; faith tells us it is the Body and Blood of Jesus, concealed beneath the appearances which subsist only by a miracle. This is a miracle which the Almighty alone can perform, for it is contrary to the ordinary laws of nature for the qualities of a body to exist without the body itself which sustains them. That is the work of God. Their existence depends on His will just as our own existence does. God can do everything He wills to do. One thing is as easy for Him as another.

That is the first wonder of the Eucharist.

II

A second wonder, included in the first, is that this miracle is renewed at the mere word of a man, the priest, and as often as he wants. For such is the power which God has imparted to him. He commands that God be on the altar, and on the instant, God is there. The priest works absolutely the same wonder that Jesus Christ worked at the Eucharistic Supper. He holds his power from Jesus Christ and acts in His name.

Our Lord has never disobeyed His priest.

O miracle of the power of God! A weak, mortal creature gives birth to our sacramental Jesus!

III

In the desert Jesus took five loaves of bread. He blessed them, and the Apostles had enough to feed five thousand men. This was but a faint idea of the third wonder of the Eucharist, the miracle of its multiplication.

Jesus loves all men. He wishes to give Himself personally and in His entirety to every one of them. Every one will have his share of the manna of life. He must therefore multiply Himself as many times as there are communicants desirous of receiving Him, and as often as they shall so desire it. The Eucharistic Table must, so to speak, cover the world. Through His power this marvel becomes a reality. All receive Him whole and entire, with all that He is. Every consecrated Host contains Him. Divide a Sacred Host into as many fragments as you like; Jesus is present whole and entire in each fragment. Instead of dividing Him, the breaking of the Host multiplies Him.

Who can tell the number of Hosts which Jesus has placed at the disposal of His children since the Cenacle!

IV

Not only is Jesus multiplied with the Sacred Particles, but by a wonder that follows from that of the multiplication, He is present at one and the same time in an infinite number of places.

During the days of His mortal life Jesus was present in one place only; He

dwelt in one house only. Few persons were privileged enough to enjoy His presence and listen to His words. But today in the Most Blessed Sacrament, He is, so to speak, present everywhere at one and the same time. In a way His humanity shares the prerogative of His divine immensity which fills all things. Jesus is present in His entirety in an infinite number of temples and in each one of them. Since all the Christians scattered throughout the world are members of His Mystical Body, it does seem necessary that He, as the soul of it, should be everywhere, present throughout the whole body, giving it life, and sustaining it in each one of His members.

Lord Jesus, we adore Thy power which has multiplied “wonderful works,” thereby enabling Thee to dwell in the midst of Thy children, to come down to their level, and to be all their own.

The Most Blessed Sacrament Is Not Loved!

Tota die expandi manus meas ad populum non credentem, et contradicentem.

All the day long have I spread My hands to a people that believeth not, and contradicteth Me.

—Romans 10:21

I

Alas! It is but too true: our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament is not loved! He is not loved by the millions of pagans, by the millions of Jews and infidels, by the millions of schismatics and heretics who either know nothing of the Eucharist or have wrong notions of it.

Among so many thousands of creatures in whom God has placed a heart capable of loving, how many would love the Blessed Sacrament if they knew it as I do!

Must I not at least try to love it for them, in their stead?

Even among Catholics, few, very few love Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament. How many think of Him frequently, speak of Him, come to adore Him and receive Him?

What is the reason for this forgetfulness and coldness? Oh! They have never tasted the Eucharist, its sweetness, the delights of its love!

They have never known the goodness of Jesus!

They have no idea of the extent of His love in the Most Blessed Sacrament!

Some of them have faith in Jesus Christ but a faith so lifeless and superficial that it does not reach the heart, that it contents itself with what is strictly required by conscience for their salvation. And besides, these last are but a handful among so many other Catholics who live like real pagans, as if they had never heard of the Eucharist.

II

How is it that our Lord is so little loved in the Eucharist?

One reason is that we do not speak enough of it and that we insist only on faith in the presence of Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament instead of speaking about His life and His love therein, instead of calling attention to the sacrifices which His love imposes upon Him, in a word, instead of showing Jesus Eucharistic with the personal and special love He has for each one of us.

Another reason is our behavior, which denotes little love in us. From the way we pray, adore, and visit Him, no one would suspect the presence of Jesus Christ in our churches.

How many among the best Catholics never pay a visit of devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament to speak with Him from the heart, to tell Him their love! They do not love our Lord in the Eucharist because they do not know Him well enough.

But if in spite of knowing Him and His love and the sacrifices and desires of His Heart, they still do not love Him, what an insult!

Yes, an insult!

For it amounts to telling Jesus Christ that He is not beautiful enough, not good enough, not lovable enough to be preferred to what they love.

What ingratitude!

After having received so many graces from this good Savior, made so many promises to love Him, and offered themselves so often to His service, such a treatment of Him is a mockery of His love.

What cowardice!

For if they do not want to know Him too well, to see Him at close quarters, to receive Him, to have a heart-to-heart talk with Him, the reason is they are afraid of being caught by His love. They fear being unable to resist His kindness; they fear being obliged to give in, to sacrifice their heart unreservedly, and their mind and life unconditionally.

They are afraid of the love of Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament, and they avoid Him.

They are disturbed in His presence; they are afraid of yielding. Like Pilate and Herod, they avoid His presence.

III

We do not love our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament because we ignore or do not sufficiently look into the sacrifices made by His love for our sake. They are so amazing that the mere thought of them overwhelms my heart and fills my eyes with tears.

It cost our Savior the whole Passion to institute the Eucharist. How is that? Because the Eucharist is the sacrifice of the New Law. Now, there is no sacrifice without a victim, there is no immolation without the death of the victim, and to share in the merits of the sacrifice we must share in the victim by eating of it. All this takes place in the Eucharist.

It is an unbloody sacrifice because the Victim died once and, by that one death, made sufficient reparation and merited full justification; but the Victim perpetuates itself in its state of immolation so as to apply to us the merits of the bloody Sacrifice of the Cross, which is to last and to be reoffered to God until the end of the world. We must eat our share of the Victim; but if it were not in this state of death, we would be loath to eat it. We do not eat living things.

The Eucharist cost our Lord the agony in the Garden of Olives, the humiliations He had to undergo before the tribunals of Caiphaz and of Pilate, and His death on Calvary. The Victim had to pass through all these immolations in order to reach the sacramental state and come to us.

By instituting His Sacrament, Jesus perpetuated the sacrifices of His Passion. He condemned Himself to undergo desertions as heart-breaking as the one He suffered in the Garden of Olives; the treachery of His friends and disciples who would become schismatics, heretics, and renegades and who would sell the Sacred Host to the Jews and sorcerers.

He perpetuated the denials that distressed Him in the house of Annas; the sacrilegious fury of Caiphaz; the scorn of Herod; the cravenness of Pilate; the shame of seeing a passion, an idol of flesh, preferred to Him, as He had seen Barabbas; the sacramental crucifixion in the body and in the soul of the sacrilegious communicant.

Well, our Lord knew all this beforehand. He was acquainted with all the new Judases; He counted them among His own, among His well-beloved children. But nothing of all this could stop Him; He wanted His love to go further than the ingratitude and malice of man; He wanted to outlive man's sacrilegious malice.

He knew beforehand the lukewarmness of His followers; He knew mine; He knew what little fruit we would derive from Holy Communion. But He wanted to love just the same, to love more than He was loved, more than man could make return for.

Is there anything else? But is it nothing to have adopted this state of death when He has the fullness of life, a glorified and supernatural life? Is it nothing to be treated and considered as one dead? In this state of death Jesus is without beauty, motion or defense; He is wrapped in the Sacred Species as in a shroud and laid in the tabernacle as in a tomb. He is there, however; He sees everything and hears everything. He submits to everything as though He were dead. His love casts a veil over His power, His glory, His hands, His feet, His beautiful face and His sacred lips; it has hidden everything. It has left Him only His Heart to love us and His state of victim to intercede in our behalf.

At the sight of so much love of Jesus Christ for man, who is so thankless for it, the devil seems triumphant; he mocks Jesus. "I give man nothing that is true, good, or beautiful," he says. "I have not suffered for his sake, and I am more loved, more obeyed, and better served than Thou."

Alas! It is but too true; our coldness, our ingratitude are Satan's triumph over God!

Oh! How can we forget our Lord's love, a love that cost Him so much and is so lavish of everything!

IV

It is true also that the world does all in its power to prevent us from loving Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament with a real and practical love, to prevent us from visiting Him, and to cripple the effects of this love.

The world engrosses the attention of souls; it finds and enslaves them with external occupations and good works in order to deter them from dwelling too long on the love of Jesus.

It even fights directly against this practical love and represents it as optional, as practicable at most only in a convent.

And the devil wages incessant warfare on our love for Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

He knows that Jesus is there, living and substantially present; that by Himself He is drawing souls and taking direct possession of them. The devil tries to efface the thought of the Eucharist in us, and the good impression made by it; for in his mind, that should decide the issue of the struggle.

And yet God is all love.

This gentle Savior pleads with us from the Host: "Love Me as I have loved you; abide in My love! I came to cast the fire of love on the earth, and My most ardent desire is that it should set your hearts on fire."

Oh! What shall we think of the Eucharist at the moment of death or after death, when we shall see and know all the goodness and love and riches of it!

O my God, my God! What must Thou think of me, who have known Thee so long, who have communicated so often! Thou hast given me all Thou couldst give me.

Thou wantest me to serve Thee in return, and I have not yet acquired the first virtue of this service.

Thou art not yet the sovereign law, the center of my heart, the goal of my existence.

What then must Thou do to triumph over my heart?

Lord, my mind is made up; henceforth my motto shall be, "Give me the Eucharist, or let me die!"

Gerard Manley Hopkins

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–89) was received from Anglicanism into the Catholic Church by John Henry (later Cardinal) Newman in 1867 and entered the Society of Jesus the next year. By 1875 he was writing poetry with such spiritual depth and moving rhythm that he is acknowledged one of the great poets of the English language.

Except for occasional pieces in anthologies, his poems remained in manuscript until 1918. Since then several editions of his complete writings have been published.

Included here are four poems which express his deep love for the Virgin Mary.

The influence of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius is evident in much of Hopkins' poetry. He saw the value of suffering, even tragedy, as our participation in the redemptive life and death of Christ.

Ad Mariam

When a sister, born for each strong month-brother,
Spring's one daughter, the sweet child May,
Lies in the breast of the young year-mother
With light on her face like the waves at play,
Man from the lips of him speaketh and saith,
At the touch of her wandering wondering breath
Warm on his brow: lo! where is another
Fairer than this one to brighten our day?

We have suffered the sons of Winter in sorrow
And been in their ruinous reigns oppressed,
And fain in the springtime surcease would borrow
From all the pain of the past's unrest;
And May has come, hair-bound in flowers,
With eyes that smile through the tears of the hours,
With joy for to-day and hope for to-morrow
And the promise of Summer within her breast!

And we that joy in this month joy-laden,
The gladdest thing that our eyes have seen,
O thou, proud mother and much proud maiden—
Maid yet mother as May hath been—
To thee we tender the beauties all
Of the month by men called virginal.
And, where thou dwellest in deep-groved Aidenn,
Salute thee, mother, the maid-month's Queen!

For thou, as she, wert the one fair daughter
That came when a line of kings did cease,
Princes strong for the sword and slaughter,
That, warring, wasted the land's increase,
And like the storm-months smote the earth
Till a maid in David's house had birth,
That was unto Judah as May and brought her
A son for King whose name was peace.

Wherefore we love thee, wherefore we sing to thee,
We, all we, through the length of our days,

The praise of the lips and the hearts of us bring to
thee,

 Thee, oh maiden, most worthy of praise;
For lips and hearts they belong to thee
Who to us are as dew to grass and tree,
For the fallen rise and the stricken spring to thee,
 Thee May-hope of our darkened ways!

Rosa Mystica

“The Rose in a mystery”—where is it found?
Is it anything true? Does it grow upon ground?
It was made of earth’s mould, but it went from men’s eyes
And its place is a secret, and shut in the skies.

In the Gardens of God, in the daylight divine
Find me a place by thee, Mother of mine.

But where was it formerly? Which is the spot
That was blest in it once, though now it is not?
It is Galilee’s growth; it grew at God’s will
And broke into bloom upon Nazareth Hill.

In the Gardens of God, in the daylight divine
I shall look on thy loveliness, Mother of mine.

What was its season, then? How long ago?
When was the summer that saw the Bud blow?
Two thousands of years are near upon past
Since its birth, and its bloom, and its breathing its last.

In the Gardens of God, in the daylight divine
I shall keep time with thee, Mother of mine.

Tell me the name now, tell me its name:
The heart guesses easily, is it the same?
Mary, the Virgin, well the heart knows,
She is the Mystery, she is that Rose.

In the Gardens of God, in the daylight divine
I shall come home to thee, Mother of mine.

Is Mary that Rose, then? Mary, the Tree?
But the Blossom, the Blossom there, who can it be?
Who can her Rose be? It could be but One:
Christ Jesus, our Lord—her God and her Son.

In the Gardens of God, in the daylight divine
Shew me thy Son, Mother, Mother of mine.

What was the colour of that Blossom bright?
White to begin with, immaculate white.

But what a wild flush on the flakes of it stood,
When the Rose ran in crimsonings down the Cross-wood!
 In the Gardens of God, in the daylight divine
 I shall worship the Wounds with thee, Mother of mine.

How many leaves had it? Five they were then,
Five like the senses, and members of men;
Five is the number by nature, but now
They multiply, multiply, who can tell how.
 In the Gardens of God, in the daylight divine
 Make me a leaf in thee, Mother of mine.

Does it smell sweet, too, in that holy place?
Sweet unto God, and the sweetness is grace;
The breath of it bathes the great heaven above,
In grace that is charity, grace that is love.
 To thy breast, to thy rest, to thy glory divine
 Draw me by charity, Mother of mine.

The May Magnificat

May is Mary's month, and I
Muse at that and wonder why:

Her feasts follow reason,
Dated due to season—

Candlemas, Lady Day;
But the Lady Month, May,
Why fasten that upon her,
With a feasting in her honour?

Is it only its being brighter
Than the most are must delight her?

Is it opportunist
And flowers finds soonest?

Ask of her, the mighty mother:
Her reply puts this other
Question: What is Spring?—
Growth in every thing—

Flesh and fleece, fur and feather,
Grass and greenworld all together;
Star-eyed strawberry-breasted
Throstle above her nested

Cluster of bugle blue eggs thin
Forms and warms the life within;
And bird and blossom swell
In sod or sheath or shell.

All things rising, all things sizing
Mary sees, sympathising
With that world of good,
Nature's motherhood.

Their magnifying of each its kind
With delight calls to mind
How she did in her stored
Magnify the Lord.

Well but there was more than this:
Spring's universal bliss
 Much, had much to say
 To offering Mary May.

When drop-of-blood-and-foam-dapple
Bloom lights the orchard-apple
 And thicket and thorp are merry
 With silver-surfed cherry

And azuring-over greybell makes
Wood banks and brakes wash wet like lakes
 And magic cuckoocall
 Caps, clears, and clinches all—

This ecstasy all through mothering earth
Tells Mary her mirth till Christ's birth
 To remember and exultation
 In God who was her salvation.

The Blessed Virgin Compared to the Air We Breathe

Wild air, world-mothering air,
Nestling me everywhere,
That each eyelash or hair
Girdles; goes home betwixt
The fleecièst, frailest-flixed
Snowflake; that's fairly mixed
With, riddles, and is rife
In every least thing's life;
This needful, never spent,
And nursing element;
My more than meat and drink,
My meal at every wink;
This air, which, by life's law,
My lung must draw and draw
Now but to breathe its praise,
Minds me in many ways
Of her who not only
Gave God's infinity
Dwindled to infancy
Welcome in womb and breast,
Birth, milk, and all the rest
But mothers each new grace
That does now reach our race—
Mary Immaculate,
Merely a woman, yet
Whose presence, power is
Great as no goddess's
Was deemèd, dreamèd; who
This one work has to do—
Let all God's glory through,
God's glory which would go
Through her and from her flow
Off, and no way but so.

I say that we are wound
With mercy round and round
As if with air: the same
Is Mary, more by name.
She, wild web, wondrous robe,
Mantles the guilty globe,
Since God has let dispense
Her prayers his providence:
Nay, more than almoner,
The sweet alms' self is her
And men are meant to share
Her life as life does air.

If I have understood,
She holds high motherhood
Towards all our ghostly good
And plays in grace her part
About man's beating heart,
Laying, like air's fine flood,
The deathdance in his blood;
Yet no part but what will
Be Christ our Saviour still.
Of her flesh he took flesh:
He does take fresh and fresh,
Though much the mystery how,
Not flesh but spirit now
And makes, O marvellous!
New Nazareths in us,
Where she shall yet conceive
Him, morning, noon, and eve;
New Bethlems, and he born
There, evening, noon, and morn—
Bethlem or Nazareth,
Men here may draw like breath
More Christ and baffle death;
Who, born so, comes to be
New self and nobler me
In each one and each one
More makes, when all is done,
Both God's and Mary's Son.

Again, look overhead
How air is azurèd;
O how! nay do but stand

Where you can lift your hand
Skywards: rich, rich it laps
Round the four fingergaps.
Yet such a sapphire-shot,
Charged, steepèd sky will not
Stain light. Yea, mark you this:
It does no prejudice.
The glass-blue days are those
When every colour glows,
Each shape and shadow shows.
Blue be it: this blue heaven
The seven or seven times seven
Hued sunbeam will transmit
Perfect, not alter it.
Or if there does some soft,
On things aloof, aloft,
Bloom breathe, that one breath more
Earth is the fairer for.
Whereas did air not make
This bath of blue and slake
His fire, the sun would shake,
A blear and blinding ball
With blackness bound, and all
The thick stars round him roll
Flashing like flecks of coal,
Quartz-fret, or sparks of salt,
In grimy vasty vault.

So God was god of old:
A mother came to mould
Those limbs like ours which are
What must make our daystar
Much dearer to mankind;
Whose glory bare would blind
Or less would win man's mind.
Through her we may see him
Made sweeter, not made dim,
And her hand leaves his light
Sifted to suit our sight.

Be thou then, O thou dear
Mother, my atmosphere;
My happier world, wherein
To wend and meet no sin;

Above me, round me lie
Fronting my froward eye
With sweet and scarless sky;
Stir in my ears, speak there
Of God's love, O live air,
Of patience, penance, prayer:
World-mothering air, air wild,
Wound with thee, in thee isled,
Fold home, fast fold thy child.

Francis Thompson

Francis Thompson (1859–1907), English poet and critic, is best known for his classic poem “The Hound of Heaven” (1890).

Thompson entered the seminary in 1870 but finally decided he was not meant to be a priest. Then, in sequence, he studied medicine, abandoned his study, failed as a salesman, was rejected by the army, and lost his mother—all leading to his opium addiction, beginning in 1880, the year of his mother’s death.

Eight years later, Wilfred Meynell, editor of Merry England, sought out the poet, who was near death, and sent him to a sanatorium, where he was cured of his drug addiction.

After this period of purgation, Thompson began to write and publish in earnest. He published his first volume of poetry in 1893. Sister Songs were published in 1895, and New Poems in 1897.

During his last ten years, he wrote nearly five hundred reviews and critical essays and completed two biographies, of St. Ignatius Loyola (1909) and St. John Baptist de la Salle (1911).

The three poems which follow are representative of his genius.

To My Godchild—Francis M. W. M.

This labouring, vast, Tellurian galleon,
Riding at anchor off the orient sun,
Had broken its cable, and stood out to space
Down some frore Arctic of the aërial ways:
And now, back warping from the inclement main,
Its vaporious shroudage drenched with icy rain,
It swung into its azure roads again;
When, floated on the prosperous sun-gale, you
Lit, a white halcyon auspice, 'mid our frozen crew.

To the Sun, stranger, surely you belong,
Giver of golden days and golden song;
Nor is it by an all-unhappy plan
You bear the name of me, his constant Magian.
Yet ah! from any other that it came,
Lest fated to my fate you be, as to my name.
When at the first those tidings did they bring,
My heart turned troubled at the ominous thing:
Though well may such a title him endower,
For whom a poet's prayer implores a poet's power.
The Assisian, who kept plighted faith to three,
To Song, to Sanctitude, and Poverty,
(In two alone of whom most singers prove
A fatal faithfulness of during love!);
He the sweet Sales, of whom we scarcely ken
How God he could love more, he so loved men;
The crown and crowned of Laura and Italy;
And Fletcher's fellow—from these, and not from me,
Take you your name, and take your legacy!

Or, if a right successive you declare
When worms, for ivies, intertwine my hair,
Take but this Poesy that now followeth
My clayey hest with sullen servile breath,
Made then your happy freedman by testating death.
My song I do but hold for you in trust,
I ask you but to blossom from my dust.
When you have compassed all weak I began,

Diviner poet, and ah! diviner man;
The man at feud with the perduring child
In you before Song's altar nobly reconciled;
From the wise heavens I half shall smile to see
How little a world, which owned you, needed me.
If, while you keep the vigils of the night,
For your wild tears make darkness all too bright,
Some lone orb through your lonely window peeps,
As it played lover over your sweet sleeps.
Think it a golden crevice in the sky,
Which I have pierced but to hold you by!

And when, immortal mortal, droops your head,
And you, the child of deathless song, are dead;
Then, as you search with unaccustomed glance
The ranks of Paradise for my countenance,
Turn not your tread along the Uranian sod
Among the bearded counsellors of God;
For if in Eden as on earth are we,
I sure shall keep a younger company:
Pass where beneath their rangèd gonfalons
The starry cohorts shake their shielded suns,
The dreadful mass of their enridgèd spears;
Pass where majestic the eternal peers,
The stately choice of the great Saintdom, meet—
A silvern segregation, globed complete
In sandalled shadow of the Triune feet;
Pass by where wait, young poet-wayfarer,
Your cousined clusters, emulous to share
With you the roseal lightnings burning 'mid their hair;
Pass the crystalline sea, the Lampads seven:—
Look for me in the nurseries of Heaven.

Little Jesus

Ex ore infantium, Deus, et lactentium perfecisti laudem.

Little Jesus, wast Thou shy
Once, and just so small as I?
And what did it feel like to be
Out of Heaven, and just like me?
Didst Thou sometimes think of *there*,
And ask where all the angels were?
I should think that I would cry
For my house all made of sky;
I would look about the air,
And wonder where my angels were;
And at waking 'twould distress me—
Not an angel there to dress me!
Hadst Thou ever any toys,
Like us little girls and boys?
And didst Thou play in Heaven with all
The angels that were not too tall,
With stars for marbles? Did the things
Play *Can you see me?* through their wings?
And did Thy Mother let Thee spoil
Thy robes, with playing on *our* soil?
How nice to have them always new
In Heaven, because 'twas quite clean blue!

Didst Thou kneel at night to pray,
And didst Thou join Thy hands, this way?
And did they tire sometimes, being young,
And make the prayer seem very long?
And dost Thou like it best, that we
Should join our hands to pray to Thee?
I used to think, before I knew,
The prayer not said unless we do.
And did Thy Mother at the night
Kiss Thee, and fold the clothes in right?

And didst Thou feel quite good in bed,
Kissed, and sweet, and Thy prayers said?

Thou canst not have forgotten all
That it feels like to be small:
And Thou know'st I cannot pray
To Thee in my father's way—
When Thou was so little, say,
Couldst Thou talk Thy Father's way?—

So, a little Child, come down
And hear a child's tongue like Thy own;
Take me by the hand and walk,
And listen to my baby-talk.
To Thy Father show my prayer
(He will look, Thou art so fair),
And say: "O Father, I, Thy Son,
Bring the prayer of a little one."

And he will smile, that children's tongue
Has not changed since Thou wast young!

The Hound of Heaven

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.

 Up vistaed hopes I sped;
 And shot, precipitated,
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,
 From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
 But with unhurrying chase,
 And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
 They beat—and a Voice beat
 More instant than the Feet—
“All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.”

 I pleaded, outlaw-wise,
By many a hearted casement, curtained red,
 Trellised with intertwining charities;
(For, though I knew His love Who followèd,
 Yet was I sore adread
Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside).
But, if one little casement parted wide,
 The gust of His approach would clash it to:
 Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to pursue.
Across the margent of the world I fled,
 And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,
 Smiting for shelter on their clangèd bars;
 Fretted to dulcet jars
And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.
I said to Dawn: Be sudden—to Eve: Be soon;
 With thy young skiey blossom heap me over
 From this tremendous Lover—
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!
 I tempted all His servitors, but to find
My own betrayal in their constancy,

In faith to Him their fickleness to me,
 Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.
 To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;
 Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.
 But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,
 The long savannahs of the blue;
 Or whether, Thunder-driven,
 They clanged his chariot 'thwart a heaven,
 Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their
 feet:—
 Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.
 Still with unhurrying chase,
 And unperturbèd pace,
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
 Came on the following Feet,
 And a Voice above their beat—
 "Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me."

I sought no more that after which I strayed
 In face of man or maid;
 But still within the little children's eyes
 Seems something, something that replies,
They at least are for me, surely for me!
 I turned me to them very wistfully;
 But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair
 With dawning answers there,
 Their angel plucked them from me by the hair.
 "Come then, ye other children, Nature's—share
 With me" (said I) "your delicate fellowship;
 Let me greet you lip to lip,
 Let me twine with you caresses,
 Wantoning
 With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,
 Banqueting
 With her in her wind-walled palace,
 Underneath her azured daïs,
 Quaffing, as your taintless way is,
 From a chalice
 Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring."
 So it was done:
I in their delicate fellowship was one—
 Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.

I knew all the swift importings
 On the wilful face of skies;
 I knew how the clouds arise
 Spumèd of the wild sea-snotings;
 All that's born or dies
 Rose and drooped with; made them shapers
 Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine;
 With them joyed and was bereaven.
 I was heavy with the even,
 When she lit her glimmering tapers
 Round the day's dead sanctities.
 I laughed in the morning's eyes.

I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,
 Heaven and I wept together,
 And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine;
 Against the red throb of its sunset-heart
 I laid my own to beat,
 And share commingling heat;
 But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.
 In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's grey cheek.
 For ah! we know not what each other says,
 These things and I; in sound I speak—
Their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.
 Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth;
 Let her, if she would owe me,
 Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me
 The breasts o' her tenderness:
 Never did any milk of hers once bless
 My thirsting mouth.
 Nigh and nigh draws the chase,
 With unperturbèd pace,
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy;
 And past those noisèd Feet
 A voice comes yet more fleet—
 "Lo! naught contents thee, who contents not Me."

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!
 My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,
 And smitten me to my knee;
 I am defenceless utterly.
 I slept, methinks, and woke,
 And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.

In the rash lustihead of my young powers,
 I shook the pillaring hours
 And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,
 I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years—
 My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.
 My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,
 Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.
 Yea, faileth now even dream
 The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist;
 Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist
 I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,
 Are yielding; cords of all too weak account
 For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed.
 Ah, is Thy love indeed
 A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,
 Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?
 Ah! must—
 Designer infinite!—
 Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with
 it?
 My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust;
 And now my heart is as a broken fount,
 Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever
 From the dank thoughts that shiver
 Upon the sighful branches of my mind.
 Such is; what is to be?
 The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?
 I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;
 Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
 From the hid battlements of Eternity;
 Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
 Round the half-glimpsèd turrets slowly wash again.
 But not ere him who summoneth
 I first have seen, enwound
 With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowner;
 His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.
 Whether man's heart or life it be which yields
 Thee harvest, must Thy harvest-fields
 Be dinged with rotten death?

 Now of that long pursuit
 Comes on at hand the bruit;

That Voice is round me like a bursting sea;
 "And is the earth so marred,
 Shattered in shard on shard?
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!
 Strange, piteous, futile thing!
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?
Seeing none but I makes much of naught" (He said),
"And human love needs human meriting:
 How hast thou merited—
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?
 Alack, thou knowest not
How little worthy of any love thou art!
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
 Save Me, save only Me?
All which I took from thee I did but take,
 Not for thy harms,
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
 All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
 Rise, clasp My hand, and come,"
 Halts by me that footfall:
 Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
 "Ah, fondest blindest, weakest,
 I am He Whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me."

Hilaire Belloc

Joseph-Pierre Hilaire Belloc (1870–1953), historian, biographer, essayist, and poet, always called himself Hilaire. Born in France, he spent much of his childhood there. He became an English citizen in 1902 and married an American, Elodie Hogan, from California, who died in 1914 and left him with the responsibility of caring for their five children.

After 1910, when he left politics because of his Liberal Party's alliance with the Socialists, Belloc joined with G. K. Chesterton and his brother Cecil Chesterton to form what came to be called the Chesterbellocs. For the rest of his life, Belloc was a familiar figure in journalism, where he expounded Catholic economic liberalism and upheld the historic values of European civilization as the true descendant of the medieval system.

Belloc wrote more than one hundred and fifty books, ranging from light verse to his four-volume History of England. Central to the latter work is the thesis that "religion is the determining force of society."

In the following chapter, "What Was the Church in the Roman Empire?" from his Europe and the Faith, Belloc lays the groundwork for what runs as a theme through all his writings. The Catholic Church embodies the fullness of Christianity. Thus the Church is no abstraction—"Christianity"—but a living organism whose two millennia of existence are unique in the annals of mankind. According to Belloc, the Catholic Church has not only shaped the history of Europe; she is the history of Europe. Belloc would say that the progress or regression of the Continent can be measured by Europe's loyalty to or departure from the Church of Rome.

Europe and the Faith

What Was the Church in the Roman Empire?

So far I have attempted to answer the question, "What Was the Roman Empire?" We have seen that it was an institution of such and such a character, but to this we had to add that it was an institution affected from its origin, and at last permeated by, *another* institution. This other institution had (and has) for its name "The Catholic Church."

My next task must, therefore, be an attempt to answer the question, "What was the Church in the Roman Empire?" for that I have not yet touched.

In order to answer this question we shall do well to put ourselves in the place of a man living in a particular period, from whose standpoint the nature of the connection between the Church and the Empire can best be observed. And that standpoint in time is the generation which lived through the close of the second century and on into the latter half of the third century: say from A.D. 190 to A.D. 270. It is the first moment in which we can perceive the Church as a developed organism now apparent to all.

If we take an earlier date we find ourselves in a world where the growing Church was still but slightly known and by most people unheard of. We can get no earlier view of it as part of the society around it. It is from about this time also that many documents survive. I shall show that the appearance of the Church at this time, from one hundred and fifty to two hundred and forty years after the Crucifixion, is ample evidence of her original constitution.

A man born shortly after the reign of Marcus Aurelius, living through the violent civil wars that succeeded the peace of the Antonines, surviving to witness the Decian persecution of the Church and in extreme old age to perceive the promise, though not the establishment, of an untrammelled Catholicism (it had yet to pass through the last and most terrible of the persecutions), would have been able to answer our question well. He would have lived at the turn of the tide: a witness to the emergence, apparent to all Society, of the Catholic Church.

Let us suppose him the head of a Senatorial family in some great provincial town such as Lyons. He would then find himself one of a comparatively small class of very wealthy men to whom was confined the municipal government of the city. Beneath him he would be accustomed to a large class of citizens, free

men but not senatorial; beneath these again his society reposed upon a very large body of slaves.

In what proportion these three classes of society would have been found in a town like Lyons in the second century we have no exact documents to tell us, but we may infer from what we know of that society that the majority would certainly have been of the servile class, free men less numerous, while senators were certainly a very small body (they were the great landowners of the neighborhood); and we must add to these three main divisions two other classes which complicate our view of that society. The first was that of the freed men, the second was made up of perpetual tenants, nominally free, but economically (and already partly in legal theory) bound to the wealthier classes.

The freed men had risen from the servile class by the sole act of their masters. They were bound to these masters very strongly so far as social atmosphere went, and to no small extent in legal theory as well. This preponderance of a small wealthy class we must not look upon as a stationary phenomenon: it was increasing. In another half-dozen generations it was destined to form the outstanding feature of all imperial society. In the fourth and fifth centuries when the Roman Empire became from Pagan, Christian, the mark of the world was the possession of nearly all its soil and capital (apart from public land) by one small body of immensely wealthy men: the product of the pagan Empire.

It is next important to remember that such a man as we are conceiving would never have regarded the legal distinctions between slave and free as a line of cleavage between different kinds of men. It was a social arrangement and no more. Most of the slaves were, indeed, still chattel, bought and sold; many of them were incapable of any true family life. But there was nothing uncommon in a slave being treated as a friend, in his being a member of the liberal professions, in his acting as a tutor, as an administrator of his master's fortune, or a doctor. Certain official things he could not be; he could not hold any public office, of course; he could never plead; and he could not be a soldier.

This last point is essential; because the Roman Empire, though it required no large armed force in comparison with the total numbers of its vast population (for it was not a system of mere repression—no such system has ever endured), yet could only draw that armed force from a restricted portion of the population. In the absence of foreign adventure or Civil Wars, the armies were mainly used as frontier police. Yet, small as they were, it was not easy to obtain the recruitment required. The wealthy citizen we are considering would have been expected to "find" a certain number of recruits for the service of the army. He found them among his bound free tenants and enfranchised slaves; he was increasingly reluctant to find them; and they were increasingly reluctant to serve. Later recruitment was found more and more from the barbarians outside the Empire; and we shall see on a subsequent page how this affected the transition from the ancient world to that of the Dark Ages.

Let us imagine such a man going through the streets of Lyons of a morning to attend a meeting of the Curia. He would salute, and be saluted, as he passed, by many men of the various classes I have described. Some, though slaves, he would greet familiarly; others, though nominally free and belonging to his own following or to that of some friend, he would regard with less attention. He would be accompanied, it may be presumed, by a small retinue, some of whom might be freed men of his own, some slaves, some of the tenant class, some in legal theory quite independent of him, and yet by the economic necessities of the moment practically his dependents.

As he passes through the streets he notes the temples dedicated to a variety of services. No creed dominated the city; even the local gods were now but a confused memory; a religious ritual of the official type was to greet him upon his entry to the Assembly, but in the public life of the city no fixed philosophy, no general faith, appeared.

Among the many buildings so dedicated, two perhaps would have struck his attention: the one the great and showy synagogue where the local Jews met upon their Sabbath, the other a small Christian Church. The first of these he would look on as one looks today upon the mark of an alien colony in some great modern city. He knew it to be the symbol of a small, reserved, unsympathetic but wealthy race scattered throughout the Empire. The Empire had had trouble with it in the past, but that trouble was long forgotten; the little colonies of Jews had become negotiators, highly separate from their fellow citizens, already unpopular, but nothing more.

With the Christian Church it would be otherwise. He would know as an administrator (we will suppose him a pagan) that this Church was *endowed*; that it was possessed of property more or less legally guaranteed. It had a very definite position of its own among the congregations and corporations of the city, peculiar, and yet well secured. He would further know as an administrator (and this would more concern him—for the possession of property by so important a body would seem natural enough), that to this building and the corporation of which it was a symbol were attached an appreciable number of his fellow citizens; a small minority, of course, in any town of such a date (the first generation of the third century), but a minority most appreciable and most worthy of his concern from three very definite characteristics. In the first place it was certainly growing; in the second place it was certainly, even after so many generations of growth, a phenomenon perpetually novel; in the third place (and this was the capital point) it represented a true political organism—the *only subsidiary organism which had risen within the general body of the Empire*.

If the reader will retain no other one of the points I am making in this description, let him retain this point: it is, from the historical point of view, the explanation of all that was to follow. The Catholic Church in Lyons would have been for that Senator a distinct organism; with its own officers, its own

peculiar spirit, its own type of vitality, which, if he were a wise man, he would know was certain to endure and to grow, and which even if he were but a superficial and unintelligent spectator, he would recognize as unique.

Like a sort of little State the Catholic Church included all classes and kinds of men, and like the Empire itself, within which it was growing, it regarded all classes of its own members as subject to it within its own sphere. The senator, the tenant, the freed man, the slave, the soldier, in so far as they were members of this corporation, were equally bound to certain observances. *Did they neglect these observances, the corporation would expel them or subject them to penalties of its own.* He knew that though misunderstandings and fables existed with regard to this body, there was no social class in which its members had not propagated a knowledge of its customs. He knew (and it would disturb him to know) that its organization, though in no way admitted by law, and purely what we should call "voluntary," was strict and very formidable.

Here in Lyons as elsewhere, it was under a monarchical head called by the Greek name of *Episcopus*. Greek was a language which the cultured knew and used throughout the western or Latin part of the Empire to which he belonged; the title would not, therefore, seem to him alien any more than would be the Greek title of *Presbyter*—the name of the official priests acting under this monarchical head of the organization—or than would the Greek title *Diaconos*, which title was attached to an order, just below the priests, which was comprised of the inferior officials of the clerical body.

He knew that this particular cult, like the innumerable others that were represented by the various sacred buildings of the city, had its mysteries, its solemn ritual, and so forth, in which these, the officials of its body, might alone engage, and which the mass of the local "Christians"—for such was their popular name—attended as a congregation. But he would further know that this scheme of worship differed wholly from any other of the many observances round it *by a certain fixity of definition.* The Catholic Church was not an opinion, nor a fashion, nor a philosophy; it was not a theory nor a habit; it was a *clearly delineated body corporate based on numerous exact doctrines*, extremely jealous of its unity and of its precise definitions, and filled, as was no other body of men at that time, with passionate conviction.

By this I do not mean that the Senator so walking to his official duties could not have recalled from among his own friends more than one who was attached to the Christian body in a negligent sort of way, perhaps by the influence of his wife, perhaps by a tradition inherited from his father: he would guess, and justly guess, that this rapidly growing body counted very many members who were indifferent and some, perhaps, who were ignorant of its full doctrine. But the body as a whole, in its general spirit, and *especially in the disciplined organization of its hierarchy*, did differ from everything round it in this double character of precision and conviction. There was no certitude left and no definite spirit or

mental aim, no "dogma" (as we should say today) taken for granted in the Lyons of his time, save among the Christians.

The pagan masses were attached, without definite religion, to a number of customs. In social morals they were guided by certain institutions, at the foundation of which were the Roman ideas of property in men, land and goods; patriotism, the bond of smaller societies, had long ago merged in the conception of a universal empire. This Christian Church alone represented a complete theory of life, to which men were attached, as they had hundreds of years before been attached to their local city, with its local gods and intense corporate local life.

Without any doubt the presence of that Church and of what it stood for would have concerned our Senator. It was no longer negligible nor a thing to be only occasionally observed. It was a permanent force and, what is more, a State within the State.

If he were like most of his kind in that generation the Catholic Church would have affected him as an irritant; its existence interfered with the general routine of public affairs. If he were, as a small minority even of the rich already were, in sympathy with it though not of it, it would still have concerned him. It was the only exceptional organism of his uniform time: and it was growing.

This Senator goes into the Curia. He deals with the business of the day. It includes complaints upon certain assessments of the Imperial taxes. He consults the lists and sees there (it was the fundamental conception of the whole of that society) men drawn up in grades of importance exactly corresponding to the amount of freehold land which each possessed. He has to vote, perhaps, upon some question of local repairs, the making of some new street, or the establishment of some monument. Probably he hears of some local quarrel provoked (he is told) by the small, segregated Christian body, and he follows the police report upon it.

He leaves the Curia for his own business and hears at home the accounts of his many farms, what deaths of slaves there have been, what has been the result of the harvest, what purchases of slaves or goods have been made, what difficulty there has been in recruiting among his tenantry for the army, and so forth. Such a man was concerned one way or another with perhaps a dozen large farming centres or villages, and had some thousands of human beings dependent upon him. In this domestic business he hardly comes across the Church at all. It was still in the towns. It was not yet rooted in the countryside.

There might possibly, even at that distance from the frontiers, be rumors of some little incursion or other of barbarians; perhaps a few hundred fighting men, come from the outer Germanies, had taken refuge with a Roman garrison after suffering defeat at the hands of neighboring barbarians; or perhaps they were attempting to live by pillage in the neighborhood of the garrison and the soldiers had been called out against them. He might have, from the hands of a

friend in that garrison, a letter brought to him officially by the imperial post, which was organized along all the great highways, telling him what had been done to the marauders or the suppliants; how, too, some had, after capture, been allotted land to till under conditions nearly servile, others, perhaps, forcibly recruited for the army. The news would never for a moment have suggested to him any coming danger to the society in which he lived.

He would have passed from such affairs to recreations probably literary, and there would have been an end of his day.

In such a day what we note as most exceptional is the aspect of the small Catholic body in a then pagan city, and we should remember, if we are to understand history, that by this time it was already the phenomenon which contemporaries were also beginning to note most carefully.

That is a fair presentment of the manner in which a number of local affairs (including the Catholic Church in his city) would have struck such a man at such a time.

If we use our knowledge to consider the Empire as a whole, we must observe certain other things in the landscape, touching the Church and the society around it, which a local view cannot give us. In the first place there had been in that society from time to time acute spasmodic friction breaking out between the Imperial power and this separate voluntary organism, the Catholic Church. The Church's partial secrecy, its high vitality, its claim to independent administration, were the superficial causes of this. Speaking as Catholics, we know that the ultimate causes were more profound. The conflict was a conflict between Jesus Christ with His great foundation on the one hand, and what Jesus Christ Himself had called "the world." But it is unhistorical to think of a "Pagan" world opposed to a "Christian" world at that time. The very conception of "a Pagan world" requires some external manifest Christian civilization against which to contrast it. There was none such, of course, for Rome in the first generation of the third century. The Church had around her a society in which education was very widely spread, intellectual curiosity very lively, a society largely skeptical, but interested to discover the right conduct of human life, and tasting now this opinion, now that, to see if it could discover a final solution.

It was a society of such individual freedom that it is difficult to speak of its "luxury" or its "cruelty." A cruel man could be cruel in it without suffering the punishment which centuries of Christian training would render natural to our ideas. But a merciful man could be, and would be, merciful and would preach mercy, and would be generally applauded. It was a society in which there were many ascetics—whole schools of thought contemptuous of sensual pleasure—but a society distinguished from the Christian particularly in this, that at bottom it *believed man to be sufficient to himself and all belief to be mere opinions.*

Here was the great antithesis between the Church and her surroundings. It is an antithesis which has been revived today. Today, outside the Catholic Church,

there is no distinction between opinion and faith nor any idea that man is other than sufficient to himself.

The Church did not, and does not, believe man to be sufficient to himself, nor naturally in possession of those keys which would open the doors to full knowledge or full social content. It proposed (and proposes) its doctrines to be held not as opinions but as a body of faith.

It differed from—or was more solid than—all around it in this: that it proposed statement instead of hypothesis, affirmed concrete historical facts instead of suggesting myths, and treated its ritual of “mysteries” as realities instead of symbols.

A word as to the constitution of the Church. All men with an historical training know that the Church of the years 200–250 was what I have described it, an organized society under bishops, and, what is more, it is evident that there was a central primacy at Rome as well as local primacies in various other great cities. But what is not so generally emphasized is the way in which Christian society appears to have *looked at itself* at that time.

The conception which the Catholic Church had of *itself* in the early third century can, perhaps, best be approached by pointing out that if we use the word “Christianity” we are unhistorical. “Christianity” is a term in the mouth and upon the pen of the post-Reformation writer; it connotes an opinion or a theory; a point of view; an idea. The Christians of the time of which I speak had no such conception. Upon the contrary, they were attached to its very antithesis. They were attached to the conception of a *thing*: of an organized body instituted for a definite end, disciplined in a definite way, and remarkable for the possession of definite and concrete doctrine. One can talk, in speaking of the first three centuries, of *stoicism*, or *epicureanism*, or *neoplatonism*; but one cannot talk of “*Christianism*” or “*Christism*.” Indeed, no one has been so ignorant or unhistorical as to attempt those phrases. But the current phrase “Christianity,” used by moderns as identical with the Christian body in the third century, is intellectually the equivalent of “*Christianism*” or “*Christism*”; and, I repeat, it connotes a grossly unhistorical idea; it connotes something historically false; something that never existed.

Let me give an example of what I mean:

Four men will be sitting as guests of a fifth in a private house in Carthage in the year 225. They are all men of culture; all possessed of the two languages, Greek and Latin, well-read and interested in the problems and half-solutions of their skeptical time. One will profess himself Materialist, and will find another to agree with him; there is no personal God, certain moral duties must be recognized by men for such and such utilitarian reasons, and so forth. He finds support.

The host is not of that opinion; he has been profoundly influenced by certain “mysteries” into which he has been “initiated”: That is, symbolical plays show-

ing the fate of the soul and performed in high seclusion before members of a society sworn to secrecy. He has come to feel a spiritual life as the natural life round him. He has curiously followed, and often paid at high expense, the services of necromancers; he believes that in an "initiation" which he experienced in his youth, and during the secret and most vivid drama or "mystery" in which he then took part, he actually came in contact with the spiritual world. Such men were not uncommon. The declining society of the time was already turning to influences of that type.

The host's conviction, his awed and reticent attitude towards such things, impress his guests. One of the guests, however, a simple, solid kind of man, not drawn to such vagaries, says that he has been reading with great interest the literature of the Christians. He is in admiration of the traditional figure of the Founder of their Church. He quotes certain phrases, especially from the four orthodox Gospels. They move him to eloquence, and their poignancy and illuminative power have an effect upon his friends. He ends by saying: "For my part, I have come to make it a sort of rule to act as this Man Christ would have had me act. He seems to me to have led the most perfect life I ever read of, and the practical maxims which are attached to His Name seem to me a sufficient guide to life. That," he will conclude simply, "is the groove into which I have fallen, and I do not think I shall ever leave it."

Let us call the man who has so spoken, Ferreolus. Would Ferreolus have been a *Christian*? Would the officials of the Roman Empire have called him a *Christian*? Would he have been in danger of unpopularity where *Christians* were unpopular? Would *Christians* have received him among themselves as part of their strict and still somewhat secret society? Would he have counted with any single man of the whole Empire as one of the *Christian* body?

The answer is most emphatically *No*.

No Christian in the first three centuries would have held such a man as coming within his view. No imperial officer in the most violent crisis of one of those spasmodic persecutions which the Church had to undergo would have troubled him with a single question. No Christian congregation would have regarded him as in any way connected with their body. Opinion of that sort, "Christism," had no relation to the Church. How far it existed we cannot tell, for it was unimportant. In so far as it existed it would have been on all fours with any one of the vague opinions which floated about the cultured Roman world.

Now it is evident that the term "Christianity" used as a point of view, a mere mental attitude, would include such a man, and it is equally evident that we have only to imagine him to see that he had nothing to do with the *Christian religion* of that day. For the *Christian religion* (then as now) was a thing, not a theory. It was expressed in what I have called an organism, and that organism was the Catholic Church.

The reader may here object: "But surely there was heresy after heresy and thousands of men were at any moment claiming the name of Christian whom the orthodox Church rejected. Nay, some suffered martyrdom rather than relinquish the name."

True; but the very existence of such sects should be enough to prove the point at issue.

These sects arose precisely because within the Catholic Church (1) exact doctrine, (2) unbroken tradition, and (3) absolute unity, were, all three, regarded as the necessary marks of the institution. The heresies arose one after another, from the action of men who were prepared to define yet more punctiliously what the truth might be, and to claim with yet more particular insistence the possession of living tradition and the right to be regarded as the centre of unity. No heresy pretended that the truth was vague and indefinite. The whole gist and meaning of a heresy was that it, the heresy, or he, the heresiarch, was prepared to make doctrine yet more sharp, and to assert his own definition.

What you find in these foundational times is not the Catholic Church asserting and defining a thing and then, some time after, the heresiarch denying this definition; no heresy comes within a hundred miles of such a procedure. What happens in the early Church is that some doctrine not yet fully defined is laid down by such and such a man, that his final settlement clashes with the opinion of others, that after debate and counsel, and also authoritative statement on the part of the bishops, this man's solution is rejected and an orthodox solution is defined. From that moment the heresiarch, if he will not fall into line with defined opinion, ceases to be in communion; and his rejection, no less than his own original insistence upon his doctrine, are in themselves proofs that both he and his judges postulate unity and definition as the two necessary marks of Catholic truth.

No early heretic or no early orthodox authority dreams of saying to his opponent: "You may be right! Let us agree to differ. Let us each form his part of 'Christian society' and look at things from his own point of view." The moment a question is raised it must of its nature, the early Church being what it was, be defined one way or the other.

Well, then, what was this body of doctrine held by common tradition and present everywhere in the first years of the third century?

Let me briefly set down what we know, as a matter of historical and documentary evidence, the Church of this period to have held. What we know is a very different matter from what we can guess. We may amplify it from our conceptions of the *probable* according to our knowledge of that society—as, for instance, when we say that there was probably a bishop at Marseilles before the middle of the second century. Or we may amplify it by guesswork, and suppose, in the absence of evidence, some just possible but exceedingly improbable thing: as, that an important canonical Gospel has been lost. There is an

infinite range for guesswork, both orthodox and heretical. But the plain and known facts which repose upon historical and documentary evidence, and which have no corresponding documentary evidence against them, are both few and certain.

Let us take such a writer as Tertullian and set down what was certainly true of his time.

Tertullian was a man of about forty in the year 200. The Church then taught as an unbroken tradition that a Man who had been put to death about 170 years before in Palestine—only 130 years before Tertullian's birth—had risen again on the third day. This Man was a known and real person with whom numbers had conversed. In Tertullian's childhood men still lived who had met eye witnesses of the thing asserted.

This Man (the Church said) was also the supreme Creator God. There you have an apparent contradiction in terms, at any rate a mystery, fruitful in opportunities for theory, and as a fact destined to lead to three centuries of more and more particular definition.

This Man, Who also was God Himself, had, through chosen companions called Apostles, founded a strict and disciplined society called the Church. The doctrines the Church taught professed to be His doctrines. They included the immortality of the human soul, its redemption, its alternative of salvation and damnation.

Initiation into the Church was by way of baptism with water in the name of The Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Before His death this Man Who was also God had instituted a certain rite and *Mystery* called the Eucharist. He took bread and wine and changed them into His Body and Blood. He ordered this rite to be continued. The central act of worship of the Christian Church was therefore a consecration of bread and wine by priests in the presence of the initiated and baptized Christian body of the locality. The bread and wine so consecrated were certainly called (universally) the Body of the Lord.

The faithful also certainly communicated, that is, ate the Bread and drank the Wine thus changed in the *Mystery*.

It was the central rite of the Church thus to take the Body of the Lord.

There was certainly at the head of each Christian community a bishop: regarded as directly the successor of the Apostles, the chief agent of the ritual and the guardian of doctrine.

The whole increasing body of local communities kept in touch through their bishops, held one doctrine and practiced what was substantially one ritual.

All that is plain history.

The numerical proportion of the Church in the city of Carthage, where Tertullian wrote, was certainly large enough for its general suppression to be impossible. One might argue from one of his phrases that it was a tenth of the

population. Equally certainly did the unity of the Christian Church and its bishops teach the institution of the Eucharist, the Resurrection, the authority of the Apostles, and their power of tradition through the bishops. A very large number of converts were to be noted and (to go back to Tertullian) the majority of his time, by his testimony, were recruited by conversion, and were not born Christians.

Such is known to have been, in a very brief outline, the manner of the Catholic Church in these early years of the third century. Such was the undisputed manner of the Church, as a Christian or an inquiring pagan would have been acquainted with it in the years 160–200 and onwards.

I have purposely chosen this moment, because it is the moment in which Christian evidence first emerges upon any considerable scale. Many of the points I have set down are, of course, *demonstrably* anterior to the third century. I mean by “demonstrably” anterior, proved in earlier documentary testimony. That ritual and doctrine firmly fixed are long anterior to the time in which you find them rooted is obvious to common sense. But there are documents as well.

Thus, we have Justin Martyr. He was no less than sixty years older than Tertullian. He was as near to the Crucifixion as my generation is to the Reform Bill—and he gave us a full description of the Mass.

We have the letters of St. Ignatius. He was a much older man than St. Justin—perhaps forty or fifty years older. He stood to the generations contemporary with Our Lord as I stand to the generation of Gladstone, Bismarck, and, early as he is, he testifies fully to the organization of the Church with its Bishops, the Eucharistic Doctrine, and the Primacy in it of the Roman See.

The literature remaining to us from the early first century and a half after the Crucifixion is very scanty. The writings of what are called “Apostolic” times—that is, documents proceeding immediately from men who could remember the time of Our Lord, form not only in their quantity (and that is sufficiently remarkable), but in their quality, too, a far superior body of evidence to what we possess from the next generation. We have more in the New Testament than we have in the writings of these men who came just after the death of the Apostles. But what does remain is quite convincing. There arose from the date of Our Lord’s Ascension into heaven, from, say, A.D. 30 or so, before the death of Tiberius and a long lifetime after the Roman organization of Gaul, a definite, strictly ruled and highly individual *Society*, with fixed doctrines, special mysteries, and a strong discipline of its own. With a most vivid and distinct personality, unmistakable. And this Society was, and is, called “The Church.”

I would beg the reader to note with precision both the task upon which we are engaged and the exact dates with which we are dealing, for there is no matter in which history has been more grievously distorted by religious bias.

The task upon which we are engaged is the judgment of a portion of history as it was. I am not writing here from a brief. I am concerned to set forth a fact. I

am acting as a witness or a copier, not as an advocate or lawyer. And I say that the conclusion we can establish with regard to the Christian community on these main lines is the conclusion to which any man must come quite independently of his creed. He will deny these facts only if he has such bias against the Faith as interferes with his reason. A man's belief in the mission of the Catholic Church, his confidence in its divine origin, do not move him to these plain historical conclusions any more than they move him to his conclusions upon the real existence, doctrine and organization of contemporary Mormonism. Whether the Church told the truth is for philosophy to discuss: What the Church in fact *was* is plain history. The Church may have taught nonsense. Its organization may have been a clumsy human thing. That would not affect the historical facts.

By the year 200 the Church was—everywhere, manifestly and in ample evidence throughout the Roman world—what I have described, and taught the doctrines I have just enumerated: but it stretches back one hundred and seventy years before that date and it has evidence to its title throughout that era of youth.

To see that the state of affairs everywhere widely apparent in A.D. 200 was rooted in the very origins of the institution one hundred and seventy years before, to see that all this mass of ritual, doctrine and discipline starts with the first third of the first century, and the Church was from its birth the Church, the reader must consider the dates.

We know that we have in the body of documents contained in the "canon" which the Church has authorized as the "New Testament," documents proceeding from men who were contemporaries with the origin of the Christian religion. Even modern scholarship with all its love of phantasy is now clear upon so obvious a point. The authors of the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles, Clement also, and Ignatius also (who had conversed with the Apostles) may have been deceived, they may have been deceiving. I am not here concerned with that point. The discussion of it belongs to another province of argument altogether. But they were *contemporaries* of the things they said they were contemporaries of. In other words, their writings are what is called "authentic."

If I read in the four Gospels (not only the first three) of such and such a miracle, I believe it or I disbelieve it. But I am reading the account of a man who lived at the time when the miracle is *said* to have happened. If you read (in Ignatius' seven certainly genuine letters) of Episcopacy and of the Eucharist, you may think him a wrong-headed enthusiast. But you know that you are reading the work of a man who *personally* witnessed the beginnings of the Church; you know that the customs, manners, doctrines and institutions he mentions or takes for granted were certainly those of his time, that is, of the *origin* of Catholicism, though you may think the customs silly and the doctrines nonsense.

St. Ignatius talking about the origin and present character of the Catholic

Church is exactly in the position—in the matter of dates—of a man of our time talking about the rise and present character of the Socialists or of the rise and present character of Leopold's Kingdom of Belgium, of United Italy, the modern. He is talking of what is, virtually, his own time.

Well, there comes after this considerable body of *contemporary* documentary evidence (evidence contemporary, that is, with the very spring and rising of the Church and proceeding from its first founders) a gap which is somewhat more than the long lifetime of a man.

This gap is with difficulty bridged. The vast mass of its documentary evidence has, of course, perished, as has the vast mass of all ancient writing. The little preserved is mainly preserved in quotations and fragments. But after this gap, from somewhat before the year 200, we come to the beginning of a regular series, and a series increasing in volume, of documentary evidence. Not, I repeat, of evidence of the *truth* of supernatural doctrines, but of evidence to what these doctrines and their accompanying ritual and organization were: evidence to the way in which the Church was constituted, to the way in which she regarded her mission, to the things she thought important, to the practice of her rites.

That is why I have taken the early third century as the moment in which we can first take a full historical view of the Catholic Church in being, and this picture is full of evidence to the state of the Church in its origins three generations before.

I say, again, it is all-important for the reader who desires a true historical picture to seize the *sequence of the dates with which we are dealing*, their relation to the length of human life and therefore to the society to which they relate.

It is all-important because the false history which has had its own way for so many years is based upon two false suggestions of the first magnitude. The first is the suggestion that the period between the Crucifixion and the full Church of the third century was one in which vast changes could proceed unobserved, and vast perversions of original ideas be rapidly developed; the second is that the space of time during which those changes are supposed to have taken place was sufficient to account for them.

It is only because those days are remote from ours that such suggestions can be made. If we put ourselves by an effort of the imagination into the surroundings of that period, we can soon discover how false these suggestions are.

The period was not one favorable to the interruption of record. It was one of a very high culture. The proportion of curious, intellectual, and skeptical men which that society contained was perhaps greater than in any other period with which we are acquainted. It was certainly greater than it is today. Those times were certainly less susceptible to mere novel assertion than are the crowds of our great cities under the influence of the modern press. It was a period astonishingly alive. Lethargy and decay had not yet touched the world of the

Empire. It built, read, traveled, discussed, and, above all, *criticized*, with an enormous energy.

In general, it was no period during which alien fashions could rise within such a community as the Church without their opponents being immediately able to combat them by an appeal to the evidence of the immediate past. The world in which the Church arose was one; and that world was intensely vivid. Anyone in that world who saw such an institution as Episcopacy (for instance) or such a doctrine as the Divinity of Christ to be a novel corruption of originals could have, and would have, protested at once. It was a world of ample record and continual communication.

Granted such a world let us take the second point and see what was the distance in mere time between this early third century of which I speak and what is called the Apostolic period; that is, the generation which could still remember the origins of the Church in Jerusalem and the preaching of the Gospel in Grecian, Italian, and perhaps African cities. We are often told that changes "gradually crept in"; that "the imperceptible effect of time" did this or that. Let us see how these vague phrases stand the test of confrontation with actual dates.

Let us stand in the years 200–210, consider a man then advanced in years, well read and traveled, and present in those first years of the third century at the celebration of the Eucharist. There were many such men who, if they had been able to do so, would have reproved novelties and denounced perverted tradition. That none did so is a sufficient proof that the main lines of Catholic government and practice had developed unbroken and unwarped from at least his own childhood. But an old man who so witnessed the constitution of the Church and its practices as I have described them in the year 200 would correspond to that generation of old people whom we have with us today; the old people who were born in the late twenties and thirties of the nineteenth century; the old people who can just remember the English Reform Bill, and who were almost grown up during the troubles of 1848 and the establishment of the second Empire in Paris; the old people in the United States who can remember as children the election of Van Buren to the office of President; the old people whose birth was not far removed from the death of Thomas Jefferson, and who were grown men and women when gold was first discovered in California.

Well, pursuing that parallel, consider next the persecution under Nero. It was the great event to which the Christians would refer as a date in the early history of the Church. It took place in Apostolic times. It affected men who, though aged, could easily remember Judea in the years connected with Our Lord's mission and His Passion. St. Peter lived to witness, in that persecution, to the Faith. St. John survived it. It came not forty years later than the day of Pentecost. But the persecution under Nero was, to an old man such as I have supposed assisting at the Eucharist in the early part of the third century, no

further off than the Declaration of Independence is from the old people of our generation. An old man in the year 200 could certainly remember many who had themselves been witnesses of the Apostolic age, just as an old man today remembers well men who saw the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. The old people who had surrounded his childhood would be to St. Paul, St. Peter and St. John what the old people who survived, say, to 1845, would have been to Jefferson, to Lafayette, or to the younger Pitt. They could have seen and talked to that first generation of the Church as the corresponding people surviving in the early nineteenth century could have seen and talked with the founders of the United States.

It is quite impossible to imagine that the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the Rite of Initiation (Baptism in the name of the Trinity), the establishment of an Episcopacy, the fierce defence of unity and orthodoxy, and all those main lines of Catholicism which we find to be the very essence of the Church in the early third century could have risen without protest. They cannot have come from an innocent, natural, uncivilized perversion of an original so very recent and so open to every form of examination.

That there should have been discussion as to the definition and meaning of undecided doctrines is natural, and fits in both with the dates and with the atmosphere of the period and with the character of the subject. But that a whole scheme of Christian government and doctrine should have developed in contradiction of Christian origins and yet without protest in a period so brilliantly living, full of such rapid intercommunication, and, *above all, so brief*, is quite impossible.

That is what history has to say of the early Church in the Roman Empire. The Gospels, the Acts, the Canonical Epistles and those of Clement and Ignatius may tell a true or a false story; their authors may have written under an illusion or from a conscious self-deception; or they may have been supremely true and immutably sincere. *But they are contemporary.* A man may respect their divine origin or he may despise their claims to instruct the human race; but that the Christian body from its beginning was not "Christianity" but a Church and that that Church was identically one with what was already called long before the third century the *Catholic* Church, is simply plain history, as plain and straightforward as the history, let us say, of municipal institutions in contemporary Gaul. It is history infinitely better proved, and therefore infinitely more certain than, let us say, modern guesswork on imaginary "Teutonic institutions" before the eighth century or the still more imaginary "Aryan" origins of the European race, or any other of the pseudo-scientific hypotheses which still try to pass for historical truth.

So much for the Catholic Church in the early third century when first we have a mass of evidence upon it. It is a highly disciplined, powerful, growing body, intent on unity, ruled by bishops, having for its central doctrine the

Incarnation of God in an historical Person, Jesus Christ, and for its central rite a Mystery, the transformation of Bread and Wine by priests into the Body and Blood which the faithful consume.

This "State within the States" by the year 200 already had affected the Empire; in the next generation it permeated the Empire; it was already transforming European civilization. By the year 200 the thing was done. As the Empire declined the Catholic Church caught and preserved it.

What was the process of that decline?

To answer such a question we have next to observe three developments that followed: (1) The great increase of barbarian hired soldiery within the Empire; (2) The weakening of the central power as compared with the local power of the small and increasingly rich class of great landowners; (3) The rise of the Catholic Church from an admitted position (and soon a predominating position) to complete mastery over all society.

All these three phenomena developed together; they occupied about two hundred years—roughly from the year 300 to the year 500. When they had run their course the Western Empire was no longer governed as one society from one Imperial centre. The chance heads of certain auxiliary forces in the Roman Army, drawn from barbaric recruitment, had established themselves in the various provinces and were calling themselves "Kings." The Catholic Church was everywhere the religion of the great majority; it had everywhere alliance with, and often the use of, the official machinery of government and taxation which continued unbroken. It had become, far beyond all other organisms in the Roman State, the central and typical organism which gave the European world its note. This process is commonly called "the Fall of the Roman Empire."

St. Thérèse of Lisieux

St. Thérèse of Lisieux (1873–97), French Carmelite nun, is the heavenly patroness of the missions, along with St. Francis Xavier.

On Christmas Day, 1886, Thérèse had her “conversion” to a very intense spiritual life. She immediately made plans to enter Carmel, but had to wait until 1888 because of her age.

In less than ten years, she lived what she called her “Little Way.” Pope Benedict XV said that this manner of approaching God “contained the secret of sanctity for the entire world.” Pope Pius XI, who canonized her, defined the “Little Way” by saying, “it consists in feeling and acting under the discipline of virtue as a child feels and acts by nature.”

During her final illness of tuberculosis, she was severely tried, even with temptations against the Faith. But her final words were, “My God, how I love you.”

After her death, a form of her autobiography was privately circulated to other Carmelite convents, but there was such a demand for more copies that a general printing was ordered. In fifteen years it was translated into many languages and over a million copies were printed.

The Autobiography popularly called The Story of a Soul, comes in three parts. The first was memoirs written as a birthday present for her sister Pauline; the second, a short essay for her sister Marie; and the third, for the prioress, Mother Gonzague. The chapters here quoted are from the third part.

St. Thérèse was canonized less than twenty-eight years after her death in what Pius XI called a “hurricane of glory.”

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Towards the Heart of Charity

What is the novelty of our Lord's New Commandment? He has told us himself, in the Gospel: "You have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy. But I tell you, Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you."¹ Of course, you don't meet enemies in Carmel; but when all is said and done you have your sympathies. One sister attracts you; another sister—well, you'd go a good long way round to avoid meeting her; without knowing it, she is your persecutress. Good; then Jesus tells me this is the sister I've got to love, the sister I've got to pray for. Her behaviour, to be sure, suggests that she isn't any too fond of me; yes, but, "What credit is it to you, if you love those who love you? Even sinners love those who love them."² And just loving her isn't enough; you've got to prove it. We find a natural satisfaction in making presents, especially if they're surprise presents, to people we are fond of, but that's not charity—sinners find the same. Another point in our Lord's teaching; he says: "Give to every man who asks, and if a man takes what is thine, do not ask him to restore it."³ Giving what one's asked for—how much less enjoyable than offering something of one's own accord, out of the goodness of one's heart! Moreover, people have different ways of asking for a thing; if they do it nicely, the gift doesn't cost you much, but if they don't succeed in wording the request so tactfully, your pride is up in arms at once—unless your soul is well grounded in charity. You hit upon a thousand reasons for refusing it altogether; first of all, you have to impress on the wretched woman a sense of her great tactlessness, and only after that do you do what she asks, as a special favour—probably some tiny service which wouldn't have taken a twentieth of the time you spent in airing your imaginary grievance!

And when it comes to letting people take away what belongs to you, without asking to have it back—that's much harder than giving things to

¹ Matt 5:43–44.

² Luke 6:32.

³ Luke 6:30.

people who ask for them. Of course, Mother, when I say it's more difficult I really mean it *seems* more difficult. The Lord's yoke, after all, is a light and easy yoke, and once you have taken it on your shoulders you feel the charm of it—those words of the Psalmist came to your lips: "Do but open my heart wide, and easy lies the path thou hast decreed."⁴ What is going to open my heart wide? Nothing but love. Once the heart has been melted down in this gentle flame, what a pleasure it is, dear Jesus, to run along this new path you've traced for us, your *new* commandment! I mean to go on running like that, till the blessed day comes when you let me join the retinue of virgins that escorts you to the marriage-feast; then, with no narrow path, but infinite space at my feet, I shall be able to follow you with a *new* song; what song will it be? It can only be the song of love.

What was I saying? Oh yes, Jesus tells me not to claim the restoration of my own property; surely I ought to find that easy and natural enough—it isn't as if there were anything I could call *mine*. I've taken a vow of poverty, renouncing all worldly goods; so I've no right if somebody takes away a thing which doesn't belong to me; how nice to feel really poor! Arguing like that, I used to imagine that I was completely free from all attachments, it's only since I've begun to understand what Jesus meant that I've realised how bad I am at rising to the occasion. When I'm painting, for instance, I know perfectly well that none of the things belong to me. Then I sit down to work, and find the brushes and the colours all jumbled up anyhow; or there's something missing, a ruler or a pen-knife; and there I am, all at once, at the end of my patience! I have to hold myself in with both hands, or I'm sure to make myself unpleasant when I ask if I can have the missing things back. Naturally, one has to ask for them sometimes, if one can't get on without them; but that's all right—it's not disobeying Jesus if you do it humbly. The thing is to behave like a beggar, holding your hand out (because you've got to make a living), but not being in the least surprised if people refuse—after all, you've no rights.

Oh, how peace comes flooding into the soul, when once it learns to rise above its natural sensitiveness! To be really poor in spirit—there's no joy like it. You ask, with complete unconcern, for something you really need, and the other person not only refuses, but wants you to hand over something you've got already; what do you do? Why, what our Lord advises us to do: "If a man is ready to go to law with thee over thy coat, let him have it and thy cloak with it."⁵ I suppose the idea of giving up one's cloak is renouncing the last shred of dignity, treating oneself as everybody's drudge, everybody's slave. Well, now that you've taken off your coat, you're in a good position for walking—running, if you want to; so our Lord goes on: "If he compels thee to attend him on a

⁴ Ps 118:32.

⁵ Matt 5:40.

mile's journey, go two miles with him of thy own accord.”⁶ You see, it's not enough to give people what they ask for; we've got to go one better. When I do a service to other people, they ought to get the impression that I'm grateful and honoured to have the opportunity; when they take away something I'm wanting to use, there must be no show of reluctance; I must look as if I was glad to be rid of it. Of course, dear Mother, when I tell you that I've got these ideas, I don't mean for a moment that I carry them out. But somehow I get peace merely from wanting to carry them out.

To-day, more than ever, I seem to have expressed myself very badly; I've written a sort of sermon about charity, and it must have been uphill work for you reading it. Please forgive me, dear Mother; you've got to consider that the infirmarian sisters, at the moment, are treating me just in the way I've been describing—they don't hesitate to walk a mile where twenty yards would do; so I'm in a good position for watching charity in action! This devotion of theirs, which ought of course to be balm to my soul, has a rather paralysing effect on my brain; so that my pen has lost something of its briskness. I can't put down my thoughts properly unless I'm as lonely as a sparrow on the house-top, and this isn't a common experience. The moment I take up my pen to write, one of the dear sisters comes along with a pitchfork on her shoulder, passing close by me—a little chat, she thinks, would do me good. First it's the hay-making, then it's the ducks, then it's the chickens, then it's a visit from the doctor, one thing after another. It doesn't really last long, but there are quite a lot of the sisters who are kind to me like this. . . . Sudden appearance of another hay-maker, who puts down some flowers in my lap, presumably by way of giving me some ideas for writing poetry! But I'm not wanting to write poetry just now, and I'd rather the flowers were left to wave on their stalks. So it goes on; at last I get tired of opening and shutting the famous autobiography, and open a book instead (not that it will stay open), with the intimation that now I'm going to copy out some texts from the Psalms and the Gospels, for our Lady's feast—that's quite true, because I'm always free with my quotations.

It would make you laugh, Mother, if I told you about all my adventures in the tangled undergrowth of Carmel; I don't think I've ever managed to write ten lines without being interrupted. No laughing matter, you'd think, for me; but I'm so grateful to God, and to the dear sisters themselves for all their charity to me, that I do try to look pleased and above all to *be* pleased about it. . . . What's this? A hay-making nun has just taken leave of me with the words: “Poor little sister, it must be very tiring for you to be writing like that all day.” “Don't worry about that,” I said, “I look as if I were writing a great deal, but there's hardly anything to shew for it.” She seemed rather relieved at that. “A good thing too,” she said, “but all the same it's just as well we're getting the hay in; a

⁶ Matt 5:41.

bit of a distraction for you." I should think it did distract me, quite apart from the infirmarians' visits; it was no exaggeration to say that I hardly got anything written.

Fortunately, it takes a lot to discourage me. In proof of that, Mother, I'm going to go on telling you about the light Jesus has given me on the subject of charity. So far, I've only spoken of its outward manifestation; now I want to let you know my ideas about a charity which is wholly spiritual. I'm certain to get the two kinds mixed up before I know where I am; but it's you I'm talking to, and I'm perfectly certain you'll be able to see what I mean—it won't be the first time you've taken my skein out of tangle.

In Carmel, one can't always carry out the gospel precepts to the letter; sometimes you've got work to do, and an act of kindness has to be refused. But if charity is deep-rooted in the soul, it shews up for all that. If you've got to say No, there are more ways of doing it than one; a refusal can be so gracious as to afford almost more pleasure than the gift. . . . If you are an obliging sort of person, the other sisters will have less compunction about asking you to do things for them; but don't forget that our Lord has told us we mustn't *turn away* from the borrower: it wouldn't do to edge away from the sister who's always wanting something, merely on the excuse that you would have to refuse this time in any case.

Another thing: you mustn't shew obligingness merely so as to create an impression, perhaps in the hope that your good offices will be repaid in kind. Our Lord has said: "What credit is it to you, if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much in exchange. No, you must lend without any hope of return; then your reward will be a rich one."⁷ A rich one, even here on earth. . . . on this path of generosity, it's only the first step that takes it out of you. To lend without expecting to see your money back—that does go against the grain; you would rather give the thing outright, and see it pass out of your possession. Someone comes up to you and says, with an air of complete assurance: "Dear sister, could you give me some help for an hour or two? It's all right, I've got Reverend Mother's leave to give you some of my own time in return; I know how busy you are." Knowing, as you do, that she won't really repay the loan of your time, you're tempted to say: "Not at all; I'll make you a gift of it." That would gratify one's self-esteem; a gift is more generous than a loan—and besides, it would shew the sister exactly how much confidence you have in her offer.

Ah yes, our Lord's teaching does run counter to the instincts of nature; without his grace, we shouldn't merely be unable to carry them out—we shouldn't even understand them. Charity, Mother, has mysterious depths; and if our Lord has given a daughter of yours the grace to get to the bottom of them,

⁷ Luke 6:34, 35.

it ought to sound like heavenly music in your ears when she tells you about them. But from me, unfortunately, you only get childish prattling; if his own words didn't lend me support, I would be tempted to ask if you would excuse me, and throw away my pen. Never mind; I started under obedience, and under obedience I'll go on.

Dear Mother, I was saying yesterday that if somebody robs me of any worldly possession, I mustn't ask to have it back again. I ought to be able to do without it, because it doesn't really belong to me. That's true about the good things of earth; what about the good things of heaven? They don't belong to me either; they're only loans from God, and I've no right to complain if he takes them back. But . . . there are certain movements of the mind and the heart, certain deep-reaching thoughts, that go to form a treasury of your very own; nobody else, you feel, has a right to tamper with it. For instance, I tell one of the sisters, when we have leave to talk, about some light that has been given to me in prayer; and she, quite soon afterwards, mentions it to a third party in conversation as if it were an idea of her own, isn't that pilfering? Or again, in recreation, I whisper some remark to the person next me, a good remark, absolutely to the point; and she repeats it aloud without mentioning where it came from; isn't that a theft of my property? I can't say so at the time, but I'd like to; and if opportunity arises, I determine to let it be known, with all the delicacy in the world, that somebody's been misappropriating my thoughts.

If I can describe them so exactly, Mother, these deplorable instincts of our nature, it is because I have felt them in my own heart. How gladly I would have nourished the illusion that I was the only person affected by them! But it was no good, because you put me in charge of these dear novices, and I had to hear all about their temptations too. I can't tell you how much I've learnt from doing this work for you; and, best of all, I've had to practise what I preach! I really think I can say, now, that our Lord's given me the grace to care as little about gifts of the mind and the heart as about worldly possessions. An idea occurs to me, and I say something which is well received by the other sisters—why shouldn't they adopt it as their own? I find it quite natural. You see, this idea doesn't belong to me, it belongs to the Holy Spirit. Doesn't St. Paul tell us that we can't even say "Father" to our Father in heaven without the aid of his loving Spirit?⁸ Surely, then, he can make use of me if he wants to convey to any soul some profitable thought? To suppose that this "thought" belongs to me would be to make the same mistake as the donkey carrying the relics, which imagined that all the reverence shewn to the Saints was meant for its own benefit!

Don't think that I undervalue them, these deep-reaching thoughts which help to feed the soul and unite it to God. But it has been borne in upon me, long since, that you must never make them the ground of your confidence; perfec-

⁸ Rom 8:15.

tion has nothing to do with receiving a whole lot of lights in prayer! They don't amount to anything by themselves; action is what counts. To other people, of course, they may be very useful; people who are humble enough to thank God for letting them share in such a treat, and for enriching a soul with such dainties. But the person so enriched mustn't take credit to herself for these profitable thoughts, plume herself on them like the Pharisee in the temple. That would be like a man dying of hunger in full sight of his own well-stocked table, while his guests, helping themselves generously, looked round with envy at a man who was so well off!

How true it is that only God can see into the depths of our hearts, and all our human views are short-sighted! The moment we see a soul more highly gifted than others, we say to ourselves: "Jesus doesn't love me as he loves that soul; I can't be called to the same level of perfection as that!" Really? And since when has our Lord lost the right to use one of his creatures for his own purposes, to provide the souls he loves with their appropriate nourishment? He hadn't in Pharaoh's time; this is what he says to Pharaoh: "This is the very reason why I have made thee what thou art, so as to give proof, in thee, of my power, and to let my name be known all over the earth."⁹ Since those words were spoken, century after century has gone by, and still he has not altered his way of dealing with us; he is always using this or that creature of his to produce an effect in the lives of others.

⁹ Rom 9:17.

Thérèse as Novice-Mistress

If the canvas on which an artist is working could think and speak, it obviously wouldn't be annoyed with the brush that kept on touching and retouching it; and it wouldn't be envious either, because it would know perfectly well that all its beauty came from the artist who held the brush, not from the brush itself. And on the other side, the brush couldn't claim any credit for the masterpiece on which it was at work, because it would know quite well that artists are never at a loss; they are the sort of people who enjoy coming up against difficulties, and find it amusing, sometimes, to make use of shoddy and imperfect instruments.

Well, dear Mother, I'm the poor little brush our Lord has picked out to be the means of imprinting his image on the souls which you have entrusted to me. An artist isn't content to work with one brush, he'll need at least two; there's the really valuable one with which he sketches in the general colour-scheme, covering the whole canvas in no time, and then there's the little tiny one which fills in the details. I see you, Mother, as the favourite brush which Jesus takes up, oh so lovingly, when he wants to produce some important effect in the lives of your children; I'm the little tiny brush which he uses afterwards, to put in the extra flourishes.

When did he first make use of it? About the eighth of December, in the year 1892; a time I shall always remember as one when special graces were granted me. I had the privilege of being admitted to Carmel when I was only fifteen; and I found there a fellow-novice, who had entered a few months before me, eight years my senior, but so child-like in character that the difference of age didn't seem to make any difference. It wasn't long, Mother, before you had the satisfaction of seeing that these two young novices of yours hit it off perfectly, and had become inseparable friends. This growing affection, you felt, might have useful results; so you allowed us to meet, now and again, and have a talk about spiritual things. She was so innocent, so confiding, this fellow-novice of mine, that you couldn't help loving her; but at the same time she puzzled me. Her affection for you was so different from mine; and I thought her behaviour towards the other sisters left room for improvement.

By that time, God had already taught me one important lesson—that with some souls he shews great patience, waits for them, and lets his illumination come to them by degrees. So I wasn't going to forestall the hour of grace; I would wait quietly until Jesus shewed me that it had come. Then, one day, I

was thinking about the permission you had given us to have these talks, by way of “fanning” (as our holy rule says) “the flame of our love for the heavenly Bridegroom”; and I had to admit, ruefully enough, that they weren’t getting us anywhere. Then God let me see that the moment had come; either I must speak out bravely, or I must give up these conversations which might just as well have been conversations between two worldly friends. That was on a Saturday; and the next day, in my thanksgiving, I asked God to put the words into my mouth, words that would be quite gentle and yet bring conviction; or rather, I asked him to speak through me. Our Lord answered my prayer; indeed, he allowed the results to surpass all my expectations. How true it is that those who look to him will be enlightened; that light dawns in the darkness for those who are true at heart!¹ The first of those quotations applied to me, the second to my friend; what a true heart she had! When the time came for us to meet she, poor thing, saw at a glance that there was something different about me. She blushed as she sat down by me; and I, making her rest her head close to my heart, told her just what I thought. There were tears in my voice, and I spoke with such tender expressions, made my affection for her so clear, that her tears were soon mingling with mine. Very humbly, she admitted the truth of all I said, promised to begin a new way of life, and asked me as a favour always to warn her of her faults. In the end, when we parted, our affection for one another had reached an entirely spiritual level, it wasn’t a human thing any longer. It was true of us, what Scripture says: “When brother helps brother, theirs is the strength of a fortress.”²

Of course, it was only the little brush at work—the effect of all this would have been obliterated in no time if our Lord hadn’t made use of you, Mother, as well; it was for you to realise his design fully in this soul which was to be all his own. This meant a trying time for my poor friend, who found it a bitter experience; but your firm methods triumphed in the end. It was my task to console her, this sister whom you had made my sister in a very special sense; and in doing so I managed to explain to her about what love really means. I pointed out that it was herself, not you, she was loving all the time; my own love for you was something quite different. From the very beginning of my religious life I had had to sacrifice my own inclinations, for fear of getting attached to you in the wrong way—the merely natural attachment which a dog has for its master. The food of real love is sacrifice; just in proportion as you deny yourself any kind of self-indulgence, your affection for the other person becomes something stronger, and less self-regarding.

How well I remember the violent temptations I had, when I was a postulant, to make my way into your room, just for the pleasure it gave me; a crumb of

¹ Cf. Ps 33:6 and Ps 111:4.

² Prov 18:19.

comfort now and again! I had to pass the business-room at full speed, and cling tight to the banisters. Couldn't I go and ask leave to do this and that? Such thoughts crowded into my mind; I can't tell you, Mother, what a lot of excuses occurred to me for getting my own way. And how grateful I am now that I kept myself in hand during those early days! There's a reward promised to people who fight bravely, and I'm glad to say I've got it already. I don't find it necessary any longer to turn away from any consolation my heart craves, because I made up my mind to love our Lord above anything else, and my soul is now fixed in that resolve. I find, to my great delight, that when you love him the capacities of your heart are enlarged, so that your feelings towards those who are dear to you are infinitely more tender than they would have been, if you had devoted yourself to a selfish kind of love which remains barren.

Well, dear Mother, that was the first piece of work on which you, or rather our Lord, made use of me. It was only a beginning; plenty more were to be entrusted to me. I was to work in the hallowed ground of human souls. I saw at once that this was beyond my powers, so I went to God in the spirit of a child that throws itself into its father's arms, and nestles its head against his shoulder. "Lord," I said, "I'm such a poor thing—I haven't got it in me to give these children of yours their food. If you want each of them to get what she needs, you'll have to put it here, in my hand. I'm not going to leave your arms, I'm not going to turn my head and look at them: I'll simply pass on what you give me to each soul that comes to me for its food. Some will find it to their taste; so much the better—I shall know that it's thanks to you, not to me. Some will complain, and make sour faces over it; that won't worry me—I shall do my best to make them understand that it comes from you, and I shan't dream of offering them any other food instead."

It hasn't seemed difficult any longer, Mother, this work you gave me to do, since I realised that I couldn't do anything in my own strength. I came to see that only one thing matters: uniting myself more closely to our Lord all the time; whatever else I want will be given me "without the asking." That's my experience—that my hopes haven't once been disappointed; whenever my sisters were in need of spiritual food, God has seen fit to put it in my unworthy hands. I assure you, dear Mother, that if I had had to depend in the slightest degree on my own strength, I should have handed in my papers long since. When you look at it from a distance, it all seems plain sailing; what's the difficulty about doing good to souls, making them love God better—in a word, turning them out on your own pattern, according to your own ideas? But when you look at it from close to, it's not plain sailing at all, nothing of the kind. You discover that trying to do good to people without God's help is no easier than making the sun shine at midnight. You discover that you've got to abandon all your own preferences, your own bright ideas, and guide souls

along the road our Lord has marked out for them; you mustn't dragoon them into some path of your own choosing.

But that's not the real difficulty; what takes it out of me most is having to mark down every fault in them, even the slightest imperfection, and declare war on it, war to the death. Unfortunately for me—no, that's a cowardly way of looking at it; fortunately for these sisters of mine, ever since I put myself in the arms of Jesus I've been like a sentry on the watch-tower of a fortress, keeping a look-out for hostile attack. Nothing escapes me; I've been astonished, again and again, at the clear view I get. I begin to sympathise with the prophet Jonas in his desire to run away,³ sooner than warn Ninive of its downfall! I would so much rather be blamed myself than have to find fault with other people! But I realise it's a good thing that it *should* go against the grain with me. If it comes natural to you, telling other people about their faults, you're no use as a Novice-mistress. Instead of seeing what's wrong with her, the offender has only one thought: "Here's the Novice-mistress in a bad temper, so she's taking it out on *me*, a thoroughly well-meaning person like me!"

Of course, they think I'm terribly strict with them, these lambs of your flock. If they read what I'm writing now, they would say: "That's all very well, but she doesn't *seem* to mind it much, running about after us and lecturing us." Oh dear, the spots I have to point out on those white fleeces, the wool that gets caught in wayside hedges for me to retrieve! Never mind; let them say what they will, at the bottom of their hearts, they know that I really do love them; I'm not like the hireling, who runs away and deserts the flock when he sees the wolf coming. I'm quite ready to lay down my life for them;⁴ but my love for them is on such a rarefied level that they're not allowed to feel it. Never, by God's grace, have I made any attempt to engage their affection for myself; I know well enough that my business is to bring them to God, and to tell them that if our Lord is to have a visible representative on earth, all their love and respect must be kept for you.

³Jonah 1:3.

⁴John 10:11, 12.

On Prayer

I said just now, dear Mother, that in teaching others I've learnt a lot myself. One thing I've noticed is this; all souls, more or less, have to put up the same sort of fight, but on the other hand no two souls are alike. One sees what Père Pichon meant when he said: "Souls differ more than faces do." You can't therefore treat them all in the same way. With some, I can see that I've got to fold myself up small; I mustn't scruple to humiliate myself by telling them about my own conflicts, my own defeats. Once they've realised that I've got the same weaknesses myself, these younger sisters of mine are ready to admit the faults that lie on their consciences, glad to think that I know what it's like by experience. Others, I saw from the first, needed the opposite treatment; you've got to be quite firm with them, and never go back on what you've said. In dealing with people like that, you mustn't come down to their level; it would be weakness, not humility. God has given me one grace—I'm not afraid of a fight; I have to do my duty, come what may. More than once these people have protested: "If you want to get anything out of me, you'll have to go gently; blustering won't get you anywhere." Unfortunately, I haven't to be told that nobody is a good judge in his own cause! When some doctor decides that a child has got to have a painful operation, there will be plenty of screaming, and he will be told that it's hurting worse than the pain did; but how glad the child is, a day or two later, to be well again, able to play and run about! And so it is with souls; they soon come to realise that a dose of medicine does more good than sugar, sugar all the time; and they aren't afraid to admit it.

Sometimes I can't help having a quiet smile to myself over the magical change that comes over these people between one day and the next. They come to me and say: "You were quite right to be strict with me. It put my back up at the time, but, thinking it over, I've come to see that you were quite justified. Do you know what? When I left you yesterday, I thought I'd had enough of it; I told myself I'd go to Reverend Mother and say I wasn't going to have anything more to do with Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus. But I realised, afterwards, that it was the devil who was putting that into my head; and then I got the idea that you were praying for me, and I quieted down. A sort of light has begun to dawn on me, but I want you to get the whole thing cleared up properly; that's what I've come about." That sort of thing is a good opening for conversation;

and I'm glad, this time, to follow my natural instincts, and leave out the scolding.

Yes, I know; but I soon see that we mustn't go ahead too fast; one unguarded word, and the whole structure it cost so many tears to build will come down in ruins. If I'm unlucky enough to use a single phrase which seems to take the edge off what I said yesterday, I can see my novice finding a loop-hole there. When that happens, I breathe a short, silent prayer, and always the truth comes out uppermost. What should I do without prayer and sacrifice? They are all the strength I've got; the irresistible weapons our Lord has granted me. I've proved it again and again—they touch souls much more surely than any words could. Here's one instance out of many, which comforted me a lot and made a deep impression on me.

It was during Lent; we had only one novice then to claim my attention—I was a sort of guardian angel to her. One morning she came to see me, beaming all over: "You'd never guess," she said, "what a wonderful dream I had last night! I was with my sister, and I was trying to turn her mind away from the worldly vanities she is so fond of. By way of doing that, I gave her an interpretation of those lines of yours in *All My Life Love*:

Jesus, thou dost repay a hundredfold
All that we lose in loving thee;
Take, then, the perfume of my life,
Nor give it back to me!

I could tell that everything I said was sinking into the depths of her soul, and I was in transports of joy. When I woke up this morning, I was wondering if God does really mean to make me a present of this soul? Couldn't I write to her, when Lent is over, and describe the dream, and tell her that our Lord wants her all to himself?"

I didn't give the matter much thought; I just told her that she could try, but she'd have to get Reverend Mother's leave. Lent had still a long way to go; and I imagine, dear Mother, that you were a bit surprised at the request, which must have seemed premature. You said—and it was obviously God who inspired you to say it—that Carmelites are meant to save souls by prayer, not by writing letters. When I heard about your decision I saw at once that it came from our Lord, and I suggested to Sister Mary of the Trinity: "We'll have to put our noses to the grindstone; let's pray hard about it. How wonderful it would be if at the end of Lent our prayers were granted!" There's no limit, is there, to the Lord's mercies, listening as he does to the prayers of his children—sure enough, at the end of Lent one more soul gave itself to God. A real miracle of grace, secured by the devotion of one humble novice!

What an extraordinary thing it is, the efficiency of prayer! Like a queen, it has access at all times to the Royal presence, and can get whatever it asks for.

And it's a mistake to imagine that your prayer won't be answered unless you've something out of a book, some splendid formula of words, specially devised to meet this emergency. If that were true, I'm afraid I should be in a terribly bad position. You see, I recite the Divine Office, with a great sense of unworthiness, but apart from that I can't face the strain of hunting about in books for these splendid prayers—it makes my head spin. There are such a lot of them, each more splendid than the last; how am I to recite them all, or to choose between them? I just do what children have to do before they've learnt to read; I tell God what I want quite simply, without any splendid turns of phrase, and somehow he always manages to understand me. For me, prayer means launching out of the heart towards God; it means lifting up one's eyes, quite simply, to heaven, a cry of grateful love, from the crest of joy or the trough of despair; it's a vast, supernatural force which opens out my heart, and binds me close to Jesus. I don't want you to think, dear Mother, that when we are saying prayers together in choir, or at one of our shrines, I say those without any devotion. No, I love prayers said in common; hasn't our Lord told us that he'll be in our midst when we gather in his name?¹ On those occasions, I'm conscious that the warmth of my sisters' piety is making up for the coldness of my own. But when I'm by myself . . . it's a terrible thing to admit, but saying the rosary takes it out of me more than any hair-shirt would; I do say it so badly! Try as I will to put force on myself, I can't meditate on the mysteries of the rosary; I just can't fix my mind on them.

For a long time I was in despair about it, this want of devotion. I couldn't understand it, because I've such a love for the Blessed Virgin that there ought to be no difficulty about saying prayers in her honour; her own favourite prayers, too! Now I don't distress myself so much; it seems to me that the Queen of heaven, being my Mother, must be aware of my good intentions, and that's enough for her. Sometimes, when I'm in such a state of spiritual dryness that I can't find a single thought in my mind which will bring me close to God, I say an Our Father and a Hail Mary very slowly indeed. How they take me out of myself then; what solid satisfaction they give me then! Much more than if I'd hurried through them a hundred times over. Meanwhile, the Blessed Virgin isn't angry with me; she shews that by always coming to my rescue the moment I ask her to. Any anxiety, any difficulty, makes me turn to her at once, and you couldn't have a more loving Mother to see you through. Again and again I've appealed to her, and found out the advantage of having a mother like that, when I've been trying to talk to the novices.

The novices themselves can't understand it; they often ask me: "How do you manage to have an answer for everything? I did think I'd got you guessing that time. Where do you go for these inspirations of yours?" Some of them have

¹ Matt 18:20.

such nice natures that they really believe I can read their hearts, just because I sometimes know what they're going to say before they've said it. One night, one of them had gone to bed in real anguish of mind, but she was determined to keep it dark from me; so she met me next morning with a smile on her face as she talked to me. And I, taking no notice of her remark, just said to her, as if I knew all about it: "Something is worrying you." She couldn't have been more surprised if I'd made the moon drop down at her feet. Indeed, her amazement was so complete that it communicated itself to me; just for a moment I felt an uncanny sense of alarm. I knew perfectly well that I hadn't the gift of reading people's hearts, and yet it had all fallen out so pat! Then of course I realised that God was there, at my elbow, and I'd simply used, like a child repeating its lesson, words that came from him, not from me.

The novices, Mother, as you're aware, are quite free to tell me exactly what they think, pleasant or unpleasant, without the least restraint. That comes easy to them, because they don't feel bound to treat me with respect, as if I were a real Novice-mistress. Does our Lord, then, give me a path of public humiliation to tread? No, I can't say that; the humiliation all takes place in the depths of my soul—outwardly, to all human appearance, everything goes well with me. It's a kind of triumphant progress, as far as that's possible in religion! A dangerous path, you would think; but then, I quite see why I've got to tread it—for other people's sake, not for my own. After all, if the community here saw me for what I am, a religious full of defects, incompetent, without either a clear brain or a good judgement, you'd find it difficult, Mother, to find any use for me. So God has thrown a veil over my defects, inward and outward alike; and this disguise of mine does sometimes bring me compliments from the novices. I'm sure there's no intentional flattery; it's just the way their innocent minds see the thing. And quite honestly it doesn't make me vain, because my mind is continually haunted by the thought of what I really am.

All the same, I sometimes get a terrible longing to hear something said about me which isn't praise! As you know, Mother, I prefer savouries to sweets; and my soul is like my palate—it gets tired of food which has too much sugar in it! When that happens, our Lord arranges for somebody to give me what I call a nice little salad. Plenty of vinegar, plenty of spice about it; nothing left out except the oil, and that makes it all the more tasty. These nice little salads are served up to me by the novices at the moment when I least expect it. God lifts the veil that hides my imperfections, and these dear young sisters of mine see me just as I am; they don't care for that very much. They tell me, with delightful frankness, all about the rough time I give them, and my unpleasant habits, with so little embarrassment that you would imagine they were talking about somebody else. You see, they know they're giving me an enormous amount of pleasure by doing it; indeed, pleasure isn't a strong enough word; it's a delicious treat that simply fills my heart with joy. How a thing which runs counter to all

one's natural instincts proves a source of such happiness is more than I can explain; it's a thing I couldn't believe if I hadn't experienced it. One day, when I was particularly anxious to be humiliated like that, one of the novices carried out my wishes so conscientiously that it reminded me, all at once, of Semei cursing King David. "Yes," I said to myself, "sure enough, she must have had her orders from Heaven, to talk to me like that."² No stint, there, of well-seasoned food, in which my soul took an epicure's delight! That's the sort of way in which God, mercifully, keeps me going. He can't be always supplying me with the food that really gives me strength—I mean, public humiliation of this kind—but every now and then there are crumbs falling from the nursery table³ to sustain me. His mercy is so wonderful that I shall have to be in heaven before I can tell the full story of it.

² 2 Kgs 16:11.

³ Mark 7:28.

Thérèse and Her Brothers on the Mission

When our Lord means to send me trials, he gives me warning of them and a desire for them beforehand. That applies to other things as well as trials. To have a brother a priest—that was a longing of mine for years, and one, it seemed, that could never be fulfilled. If only, I thought, those two little brothers of mine hadn't been carried off to heaven, I might have seen them going up to the altar! As it was, God had decided to make little angels of them, so my dream could never be more than a dream. And now, not content with granting me the grace I'd longed for, our Lord has linked me by a spiritual bond to *two* apostolic missionaries of his, who have become my brothers. I'd like to give you the details, dear Mother, of the way in which our Lord satisfied my longing, and went further than that. I wanted a priest who would remember me every day at the altar—what, only one?

The first of these younger brothers was a present from our holy Mother St. Teresa for my feast day, in the year 1895. I was helping with the washing and hard at work when Mother Agnes of Jesus took me aside and read me a letter she'd just had by the post. It was from a young seminarist acting (so he claimed) under inspiration from St. Teresa, who wanted to have a sister devoting herself to the cause of his salvation, and helping him later on, when he went out to the missions, by her prayers and sacrifices, so that he could be the means of saving many other souls as well. He promised, on his side, that he would remember this sister of his continually when it became possible for him to offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

Well, Mother Agnes told me I was the person she wanted to be a sister to this missionary in the making. I simply can't explain, Mother, the happiness I felt over that. It was such a strange fulfilment of my wish! I can only describe it as a childish joy; I had to go back to my childhood to recover the memory of joys like that, so keen that the soul isn't big enough to contain them. Not for years had I experienced happiness of this kind; I felt as if my soul had taken fresh roots, as if chords of music, long forgotten, had stirred within me. Meanwhile, I realised the responsibility I was taking on, and set to work trying to say my prayers with redoubled fervour. I must confess that I didn't get much encouragement at first, to keep me up to the mark. My young brother wrote a charming

letter of thanks to Mother Agnes, full of cordiality and fine sentiments, but he didn't give any other sign of life till the next July, apart from a card I got in November to say that he was off to the barracks!

So it was left for you, dear Mother, in God's Providence, to put the finishing touch to this undertaking. Prayers and sacrifices, no doubt, are the best help one can give to missionaries; but when our Lord sees fit to bring about a union between two souls, for his greater glory, he does *sometimes* allow them to exchange ideas and to kindle the love of God in one another's hearts; and this can only be done at the express direction of those in authority. (Otherwise, I fancy, such correspondence would do more harm than good. Whatever may be said of the missionary, a Carmelite nun leads a life which is meant to throw her back on herself; and if she invited a correspondence of this kind, even at a distance, it would divert her mind instead of helping her to achieve union with God. She would imagine that she was making history, when she was only mistaking a love of useless distractions for a love of souls. Here, as everywhere, I'm afraid of self-indulgence; if my letters are to do any good, they must be written under obedience, and there must be more pain than pleasure in writing them. It's the same when I'm talking to one of the novices; my own mortification has to be kept in view. I never ask questions to satisfy my own curiosity; and if she starts talking about something interesting and then, without finishing up, passes on to some subject which bores me, I don't try to steer her back to the original topic. Nothing's done well when it's done out of self-interest.)

Oh dear Mother, I'm quite incorrigible; who's going off at a tangent now? Myself, as usual, with all these long dissertations. Please forgive me, and let's talk about the next incident I was going to mention; I have to tell my story this way. You know, Mother, talking to you is rather like talking to God; he never gets tired of listening to the tale of my joys and griefs as if he didn't know about them already. It's the same with you, Mother; you've had plenty of opportunity to know all about my way of looking at things, and about the leading events in my life; I've got nothing new to tell you. I can't help laughing at myself for writing down so carefully a whole lot of things you know just as well as I do. But there it is, dear Mother; I'm under your orders. Perhaps if you don't find this very interesting at the moment, later on it'll cheer up your old age, and then you can put it on the fire; I shan't have written in vain. I write as children do, for amusement; so you mustn't imagine that I'm concerned to know how such poor stuff can possibly be of any use. I'm under orders, and that's all that matters; if you burn it under my eyes without reading it, I shan't mind.

Well, it's really time I got back to my story, and talked about these brothers of mine who are now such an important feature in my life. It was, as I remember, at the end of May last year that you sent for me just before we went into refectory. I can tell you, Mother, my heart was beating pretty fast when I came into your room; what could you possibly have to say to me? It was the

first time I had ever been summoned like this. Well, you told me to sit down, and asked whether I would make myself responsible for forwarding the spiritual aims of a missionary, who was to be ordained and sent abroad almost at once? And you shewed me the young priest's letter, so as to let me know just what it was he wanted.

I was overjoyed at first; then I felt frightened. I explained to you that I'd already offered such poor merits as I have on behalf of one apostle-to-be; surely it wouldn't be possible to do it all over again for the intentions of a second? And anyhow there were plenty of the sisters who were much better nuns than I was; couldn't one of them do what he wanted? But you overruled all my objections, telling me that it wasn't impossible, after all, to have more than one brother. And when I suggested that perhaps my obedience to your orders would give my actions a double value, you said Yes, it would, and added several other considerations which suggested that I ought to have no scruple about adopting a new brother.¹ In my heart I already agreed with you; indeed, since (as we are told) a Carmelite's zeal ought to encircle the earth, I don't see why I shouldn't manage, with God's grace, to be of use to more than two missionaries at the same time. How can I cease to pray for all missionaries everywhere? Not to mention those ordinary parish priests whose work is sometimes quite as uphill work as preaching to the heathen. No, I mean to be a true daughter of the Church, like our Mother St. Teresa, and pray for the intentions of the Pope, which after all include the whole universe. Such is my aim in general; but if my brothers had lived to become priests instead of becoming angels, that wouldn't have prevented me from praying specially for them, associating myself especially with their apostolic work.

Well, that's the story of how I came to be linked up spiritually with these two missionaries our Lord had given to me as brothers. All that I have belongs equally to them, and to each of them; God is so good, it wouldn't be good enough for him to start working out fractions; God is so rich, he can give me what I ask for in any quantity he chooses. Not that I waste my time in drawing up long lists of the things I want! Here am I with two brothers, and all these novices for my younger sisters; if I started praying for all their needs in detail, the day wouldn't be long enough for it, and I should always be worrying about having left out something important. Complicated methods of prayer are all very well, but they're not meant for simple souls like me. So, one morning, during my thanksgiving, our Lord gave me a quite simple recipe for satisfying my obligations. He let me into the meaning of that phrase in the Canticles: "Draw me after thee where thou wilt; see, we hasten after thee, by the very fragrance of those perfumes allured."² Dear Jesus, you don't even expect us to

¹ This last clause cannot be deciphered with certainty in the manuscript.

² Cant 1:3.

say: "Please attract all those I love, not just me"; the expression "Draw me" is all that's wanted. As I understand you, Lord, there is a fragrance about the thought of you, and when I allow that fragrance to cast its spell over me, I don't hasten after you in the first person singular—all those whom I love come running at my heels. This happens without effort or constraint; it is the automatic consequence of that attraction which you exercise over me. Just so, the swirling river rushing down to the sea bears along with it everything it has met in its course. Your love, Jesus, is an ocean with no shore to bound it; and if I plunge into it, I carry with me all the possessions I have. You know, Lord, what those possessions are—the souls you have seen fit to link with mine; nothing else.

Her Apostolate of Prayer

They are possessions with which you yourself have entrusted me; and when I think of them, I am emboldened to make your words my own—those words which you addressed to your heavenly Father, on the last evening that saw you on earth, a pilgrim, a mortal still. Dear Jesus, I don't know how long it will be before my banishment comes to an end; there may be many evenings yet that will find me telling the tale of your mercies, still in exile. But for me, too, there will be a last evening; and then, my God, I would like to be able to offer to you the same prayer. "I have exalted thy glory on earth, by achieving the task which thou gavest me to do. I have made thy name known to those whom thou hast entrusted to me, they belonged to thee, and now they are mine by thy gift. Now they have learned to recognise all the gifts thou gavest me as coming from thee; I have given them the message which thou gavest me, and they, receiving it, recognised it for truth that it was thou who didst send me. I am praying for those whom thou hast entrusted to me; they belong to thee. I am remaining in the world no longer, but they remain, while I am on my way to thee. Holy Father, keep them true to thy name, thy gift to me. Now I am coming to thee, and while I am still in the world I am telling them this, so that the joy which comes from thee may reach its full measure in them. I am not asking that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them clear of what is evil. They do not belong to the world, as I, too, do not belong to the world. It is not only for them that I pray; I pray for those who are to find faith in thee through their word. This, Father, is my desire, that all those whom thou hast entrusted to me may be with me where I am, and that the world may know that thou hast bestowed thy love upon them, as thou hast bestowed it upon me."¹

Those are the words I would like to repeat after you, dear Lord, before I take refuge in your arms. Am I being rash? I don't think so; you've allowed me to take liberties with you this long time past. You've said to me what the father said in the parable of the Prodigal Son: "Everything that I have already is thine";² and as these are your words, dear Jesus, they belong to me. So I'm at liberty to use them, in the hope of bringing down on the souls that are linked

¹ John 17:4–24, with many omissions and some adaptation.

² Luke 15:31.

with mine whatever blessings our Heavenly Father has to give. But of course when I ask that the people you've entrusted to my care may be "where I am," I'm not suggesting that they may not reach a much higher degree of glory than you see fit to give me. I'm merely asking that we may all meet, one day, to share with you the splendours of heaven.

My God, you know that the only thing I've ever wanted is to love you; I have no ambition for any other glory except that. In my childhood, your love was there waiting for me; as I grew up, it grew with me; and now it is like a great chasm whose depths are past sounding. Love breeds love; and mine, Jesus, for you, keeps on thrusting out towards you, as if to fill up that chasm which your love has made—but it's no good; mine is something less than a drop of dew lost in the ocean. Love you as you love me? The only way to do that is to come to you for the loan of your own love; I couldn't content myself with less. Dear Jesus, I can have no certainty about this, but I don't see how you could squander more love on a human soul than you have on mine! That's why I venture to ask that these souls you've entrusted to me may experience your love as I have. One day, maybe, in heaven, I shall find out that you love them better than me, and I shall be glad of that, glad to think that these people earned your love better than I ever did. But, here on earth, I just don't find it possible to imagine a greater wealth of love than the love you've squandered on me without my doing anything to earn it.

Dear Mother, it's time I came back to you. I can't think how I came to write what I've written above; I never meant to, but there it is, so it had better stay there. Only, before I go back to the story of my brothers, I do just want to explain two things. When I talk about handing on the message God has given to me, I'm not thinking of them, only of the novices. I don't, after all, set up to teach missionaries; it's a good thing I'm not conceited enough for that. And indeed, if I've managed to give some advice to these sisters of mine, it's to you, Mother, as God's representative, that I owe the grace for it. On the other hand, when I say that I don't want them taken out of the world, or pray for those who will come to believe through their words, I'm only thinking of those others, spiritual sons of yours, spiritual brothers of mine. I can't help praying for the souls that will be saved, in those distant mission-fields, by their preaching.

And now, Mother, about that passage in the Song of Songs: "Draw me after thee; we hasten"—I think some further explanation is called for, because what I've tried to write about it is a bit difficult to follow. Our Lord says: "Nobody can come to me without being attracted towards me by the Father who sent me."³ Then, by those splendid parables of his, and often by less popular ways of talking, he teaches us about the door that will be opened if we only knock, about finding what we want if we only look for it, getting what we ask for if

³John 6:44.

we only stretch out our hands in humble supplication.⁴ Again, he tells us that if we ask the Father for anything in his name, it will be granted to us.⁵ All that, surely, explains why the Holy Spirit, long before our Lord came into the world, looked on ahead and prescribed to us this formula of prayer: "Draw me after thee; we hasten."

When we ask to be "drawn" we mean, surely, that we want to be united as closely as possible with the object which has cast its spell over our hearts. Suppose that fire and iron were capable of reason; suppose that a piece of iron says to the fire: "Draw me to yourself"; doesn't that mean that it wants to be identified with the fire, to be penetrated with it, steeped in it, this burning force, till the two seem to be merged into one? My prayer, Mother, is like that; I want our Lord to draw me into the furnace of his love, to unite me ever more closely with himself, till it is he who lives and acts in me. Still, as that flame kindles, I shall cry out to be drawn closer, closer; and its effect on those around me will be the same, although I am only a poor piece of iron filing, that outside the furnace would be inert. They will be as active as I am—like those women of the Canticles who ran, allured by his perfumes, where the royal lover went. The soul that it enfolded by Divine love can't remain inactive; though it may, like Mary, sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to those words of his, so full of fire, so full of comfort; not appearing to contribute anything, but really contributing so much! More than Martha, as she hurries distractedly to and fro, and wishes her sister would do the same. (Not that our Lord has any fault to find with Martha's exertions; his own Mother, Mother of God though she was,⁶ put up with humble work of that kind all her life; didn't she get the meals ready for the Holy Family? Martha is a devoted hostess, but she won't keep calm, that's the trouble.) All the Saints have seen the importance of Mary's attitude, and perhaps particularly the ones who have done most to fill the world with the light of Gospel teaching. Surely those great friends of God, people like St. Paul and St. Augustine and St. John of the Cross and St. Thomas and St. Francis and St. Dominic, all went to prayer to find the secret of their wisdom; a Divine wisdom which has left the greatest minds lost in admiration.

"Give me a lever and a fulcrum," said the man of science, "and I'll shift the world." Archimedes wasn't talking to God, so his request wasn't granted; and in any case he was only thinking of the material world. But the Saints really have enjoyed the privilege he asked for; the fulcrum God told them to use was himself, nothing less than himself, and the lever was prayer. Only it must be the kind of prayer that sets the heart all on fire with love; that's how the Saints shift the world in our own day, and that's how they'll do it to the end of time.

⁴ Matt 7:7.

⁵ John 16:23.

⁶ By a slip of the pen, the Saint here wrote, "his divine Mother." She never revised these last few paragraphs, written just before she went into the infirmary.

And now, dear Mother, I must just tell you what I understand by these “perfumes” which tempt the soul to set out on its loving search. Our Lord has ascended into heaven, so I can only follow him by means of the traces he has left behind him. But they’re so full of light, so full of fragrance! One glance at the holy Gospel, and the life of Jesus becomes a perfume that fills the very air I breathe; I know at once which way to run. Oh, I don’t try to jostle into the front rank, the last is good enough for me; I won’t put myself forward, like the Pharisee, I’ll take courage from the humble prayer of the publican. But the Magdalen, she, most of all, is the model I like to follow; that boldness of hers, which would be so amazing if it weren’t the boldness of a lover, won the heart of Jesus, and how it fascinates mine! I’m certain of this—that if my conscience were burdened with all the sins it’s possible to commit, I would still go and throw myself into our Lord’s arms, my heart all broken up with contrition; I know what tenderness he has for any prodigal child of his that comes back to him. No, it’s not just because God, in his undeserved mercy, has kept my soul clear of mortal sin, that I fly to him on the wings of confidence and of love. . . .

G. K. Chesterton

Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874–1936), journalist, apologist, and illustrator, entered the Catholic Church in 1922. He had already published *Heretics* (1905) and *Orthodoxy* (1908). His conversion at forty-eight had been gradual and deeply reasoned. Yet long before he converted, his “innate” Catholicism was so evident that the reader could not tell from merely internal evidence that the author had not yet formally entered the Church.

One of the most prolific writers in modern times, he wrote over three thousand pieces of prose and verse for *G. K.’s Weekly* alone, which meant up to ten thousand words per week. In 1936, Pope Pius XI bestowed on him the unique title of “Defender of the Catholic Faith.”

Although his writings are so numerous and their range so broad, they reflect certain basic themes that are typically Chestertonian. He taught the primacy of the intellect, the purposefulness of human conduct, and his religious teaching insisted on commitment based on possession of the truth. He opposed doubt in mind and lack of commitment in the will. And he strenuously fought secularism with an apologia that took religion—and Christianity—as the only sure guide for modern society.

The following selection is taken from *The Everlasting Man*.

The Everlasting Man

The Riddles of the Gospel

To understand the nature of this chapter, it is necessary to recur to the nature of this book. The argument which is meant to be the backbone of the book is of the kind called the *reductio ad absurdum*. It suggests that the results of assuming the rationalist thesis are more irrational than ours; but to prove it we must assume that thesis. Thus in the first section I often treated man as merely an animal, to show that the effect was more impossible than if he were treated as an angel. In the sense in which it was necessary to treat man merely as an animal, it is necessary to treat Christ merely as a man. I have to suspend my own beliefs, which are much more positive; and assume this limitation even in order to remove it. I must try to imagine what would happen to a man who did really read the story of Christ as the story of a man; and even of a man of whom he had never heard before. And I wish to point out that a really impartial reading of that kind would lead, if not immediately to belief, at least to a bewilderment of which there is really no solution except in belief. In this chapter, for this reason, I shall bring in nothing of the spirit of my own creed; I shall exclude the very style of diction, and even of lettering, which I should think fitting in speaking in my own person. I am speaking as an imaginary heathen human being, honestly, staring at the Gospel story for the first time.

Now it is not at all easy to regard the New Testament as a New Testament. It is not at all easy to realise the good news as new. Both for good and evil familiarity fills us with assumptions and associations; and no man of our civilisation, whatever he thinks of our religion, can really read the thing as if he had never heard of it before. Of course it is in any case utterly unhistorical to talk as if the New Testament were a neatly bound book that had fallen from heaven. It is simply the selection made by the authority of the Church from a mass of early Christian literature. But apart from any such question, there is a psychological difficulty in feeling the New Testament as new. There is a psychological difficulty in seeing those well-known words simply as they stand and without going beyond what they intrinsically stand for. And this difficulty must indeed be very great; for the result of it is very curious. The result of it is that most modern critics and most current criticism, even popular criticism, makes a comment that is the exact reverse of the truth. It is so completely the

reverse of the truth that one could almost suspect that they had never read the New Testament at all.

We have all heard people say a hundred times over, for they seem never to tire of saying it, that the Jesus of the New Testament is indeed a most merciful and humane lover of humanity, but that the Church has hidden this human character in repellent dogmas and stiffened it with ecclesiastical terrors till it has taken on an inhuman character. This is, I venture to repeat, very nearly the reverse of the truth. The truth is that it is the image of Christ in the churches that is almost entirely mild and merciful. It is the image of Christ in the Gospels that is a good many other things as well. The figure in the Gospels does indeed utter in words of almost heart-breaking beauty his pity for our broken hearts. But they are very far from being the only sort of words that he utters. Nevertheless they are almost the only kind of words that the Church in its popular imagery ever represents him as uttering. That popular imagery is inspired by a perfectly sound popular instinct. The mass of the poor are broken, and the mass of the people are poor, and for the mass of mankind the main thing is to carry the conviction of the incredible compassion of God. But nobody with his eyes open can doubt that it is chiefly this idea of compassion that the popular machinery of the Church does seek to carry. The popular imagery carries a great deal to excess the sentiment of "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild." It is the first thing that the outsider feels and criticises in a Pietà or a shrine of the Sacred Heart. As I say, while the art may be insufficient, I am not sure that the instinct is unsound. In any case there is something appalling, something that makes the blood run cold, in the idea of having a statue of Christ in wrath. There is something insupportable even to the imagination in the idea of turning the corner of a street or coming out into the spaces of a marketplace, to meet the petrifying petrification of *that* figure as it turned upon a generation of vipers, or that face as it looked at the face of a hypocrite. The Church can reasonably be justified therefore if she turns the most merciful face or aspect towards men; but it is certainly the most merciful aspect that she does turn. And the point is here that it is very much more specially and exclusively merciful than any impression that could be formed by a man merely reading the New Testament for the first time. A man simply taking the words of the story as they stand would form quite another impression; an impression full of mystery and possibly of inconsistency; but certainly not merely an impression of mildness. It would be intensely interesting; but part of the interest would consist in its leaving a good deal to be guessed at or explained. It is full of sudden gestures evidently significant except that we hardly know what they signify; of enigmatic silences; of ironical replies. The outbreaks of wrath, like storms above our atmosphere, do not seem to break out exactly where we should expect them, but to follow some higher weather-chart of their own. The Peter whom popular Church teaching presents is very rightly the Peter to whom Christ said in forgiveness,

"Feed my lambs." He is not the Peter upon whom Christ turned as if he were the devil, crying in that obscure wrath, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Christ lamented with nothing but love and pity over Jerusalem which was to murder him. We do not know what strange spiritual atmosphere or spiritual insight led him to sink Bethsaida lower in the pit than Sodom. I am putting aside for the moment all questions of doctrinal inferences or expositions, orthodox or otherwise; I am simply imagining the effect on a man's mind if he did really do what these critics are always talking about doing; if he did really read the New Testament without reference to orthodoxy and even without reference to doctrine. He would find a number of things which fit in far less with the current unorthodoxy than they do with the current orthodoxy. He would find, for instance, that if there are any descriptions that deserved to be called realistic, they are precisely the descriptions of the supernatural. If there is one aspect of the New Testament Jesus in which he may be said to present himself eminently as a practical person, it is in the aspect of an exorcist. There is nothing meek and mild, there is nothing even in the ordinary sense mystical, about the tone of the voice that says, "Hold thy peace and come out of him." It is much more like the tone of a very business-like lion-tamer or a strong-minded doctor dealing with a homicidal maniac. But this is only a side issue for the sake of illustration; I am not now raising these controversies; but considering the case of the imaginary man from the moon to whom the New Testament is new.

Now the first thing to note is that if we take it merely as a human story, it is in some ways a very strange story. I do not refer here to its tremendous and tragic culmination or to any implications involving triumph in that tragedy. I do not refer to what is commonly called the miraculous element; for on that point philosophies vary and modern philosophies very decidedly waver. Indeed the educated Englishman of to-day may be said to have passed from an old fashion, in which he would not believe in any miracles unless they were ancient, and adopted a new fashion in which he will not believe in any miracles unless they are modern. He used to hold that miraculous cures stopped with the first Christians and is now inclined to suspect that they began with the first Christian Scientists. But I refer here rather specially to unmiraculous and even to unnoticed and inconspicuous parts of the story. There are a great many things about it which nobody would have invented, for they are things that nobody has ever made any particular use of; things which if they were remarked at all have remained rather as puzzles. For instance, there is that long stretch of silence in the life of Christ up to the age of thirty. It is of all silences the most immense and imaginatively impressive. But it is not the sort of thing that anybody is particularly likely to invent in order to prove something; and nobody so far as I know has ever tried to prove anything in particular from it. It is impressive, but it is only impressive as a fact; there is nothing particularly popular or obvious about it as a fable. The ordinary trend of hero-worship and myth-making is

much more likely to say the precise opposite. It is much more likely to say (as I believe some of the gospels rejected by the Church do say) that Jesus displayed a divine precocity and began his mission at a miraculously early age. And there is indeed something strange in the thought that he who of all humanity needed least preparation seems to have had most. Whether it was some mode of the divine humility, or some truth of which we see the shadow in the longer domestic tutelage of the higher creatures of the earth, I do not propose to speculate; I mention it simply as an example of the sort of thing that does in any case give rise to speculations, quite apart from recognised religious speculations. Now the whole story is full of these things. It is not by any means, as baldly presented in print, a story that it is easy to get to the bottom of. It is anything but what these people talk of as a simple Gospel. Relatively speaking, it is the Gospel that has the mysticism and the Church that has the rationalism. As I should put it, of course, it is the Gospel that is the riddle and the Church that is the answer. But whatever be the answer, the Gospel as it stands is almost a book of riddles.

First, a man reading the Gospel sayings would not find platitudes. If he had read even in the most respectful spirit the majority of ancient philosophers and of modern moralists, he would appreciate the unique importance of saying that he did not find platitudes. It is more than can be said even of Plato. It is much more than can be said of Epictetus or Seneca or Marcus Aurelius or Apollonius of Tyana. And it is immeasurably more than can be said of most of the agnostic moralists and the preachers of the ethical societies; with their songs of service and their religion of brotherhood. The morality of most moralists, ancient and modern, has been one solid and polished cataract of platitudes flowing for ever and ever. That would certainly not be the impression of the imaginary independent outsider studying the New Testament. He would be conscious of nothing so commonplace and in a sense of nothing so continuous as that stream. He would find a number of strange claims that might sound like the claim to be the brother of the sun and moon; a number of very startling pieces of advice; a number of stunning rebukes; a number of strangely beautiful stories. He would see some very gigantesque figures of speech about the impossibility of threading a needle with a camel or the possibility of throwing a mountain into the sea. He would see a number of very daring simplifications of the difficulties of life; like the advice to shine upon everybody indifferently as does the sunshine or not to worry about the future any more than the birds. He would find on the other hand some passages of almost impenetrable darkness, so far as he is concerned, such as the moral of the parable of the Unjust Steward. Some of these things might strike him as fables and some as truths; but none as truisms. For instance, he would not find the ordinary platitudes in favour of peace. He would find several paradoxes in favour of peace. He would find several ideals of non-resistance, which taken as they stand would be rather too pacific for any

pacifist. He would be told in one passage to treat a robber *not* with passive resistance, but rather with positive and enthusiastic encouragement, if the terms be taken literally; heaping up gifts upon the man who had stolen goods. But he would not find a word of all that obvious rhetoric against war which has filled countless books and odes and orations; not a word about the wickedness of war, the wastefulness of war, the appalling scale of the slaughter in war and all the rest of the familiar frenzy; indeed not a word about war at all. There is nothing that throws any particular light on Christ's attitude towards organised warfare, except that he seems to have been rather fond of Roman soldiers. Indeed it is another perplexity, speaking from the same external and human standpoint, that he seems to have got on much better with Romans than he did with Jews. But the question here is a certain tone to be appreciated by merely reading a certain text; and we might give any number of instances of it.

The statement that the meek shall inherit the earth is very far from being a meek statement. I mean it is not meek in the ordinary sense of mild and moderate and inoffensive. To justify it, it would be necessary to go very deep into history and anticipate things undreamed of then and by many unrealised even now; such as the way in which the mystical monks reclaimed the lands which the practical kings had lost. If it was a truth at all, it was because it was a prophecy. But certainly it was not a truth in the sense of a truism. The blessing upon the meek would seem to be a very violent statement; in the sense of doing violence to reason and probability. And with this we come to another important stage in the speculation. As a prophecy it really was fulfilled; but it was only fulfilled long afterwards. The monasteries were the most practical and prosperous estates and experiments in reconstruction after the barbaric deluge; the meek did really inherit the earth. But nobody could have known anything of the sort at the time—unless indeed there was one who knew. Something of the same thing may be said about the incident of Martha and Mary; which has been interpreted in retrospect and from the inside by the mystics of the Christian contemplative life. But it was not at all an obvious view of it; and most moralists, ancient and modern, could be trusted to make a rush for the obvious. What torrents of effortless eloquence would have flowed from them to swell any slight superiority on the part of Martha; what splendid sermons about the Joy of Service and the Gospel of Work and the World Left Better Than We Found It, and generally all the ten thousand platitudes that can be uttered in favour of taking trouble—by people who need take no trouble to utter them. If in Mary the mystic and child of love Christ was guarding the seed of something more subtle, who was likely to understand it at the time? Nobody else could have seen Clare and Catherine and Teresa shining above the little roof at Bethany. It is so in another way with that magnificent menace about bringing into the world a sword to sunder and divide. Nobody could have guessed then either how it could be fulfilled or how it could be justified. Indeed some

freethinkers are still so simple as to fall into the trap and be shocked at a phrase so deliberately defiant. They actually complain of the paradox for not being a platitude.

But the point here is that if we *could* read the Gospel reports as things as new as newspaper reports, they would puzzle us and perhaps terrify us much *more* than the same things as developed by historical Christianity. For instance: Christ, after a clear allusion to the eunuchs of eastern courts, said there would be eunuchs of the kingdom of heaven. If this does not mean the voluntary enthusiasm of virginity, it could only be made to mean something much more unnatural or uncouth. It is the historical religion that humanises it for us by experience of Franciscans or of Sisters of Mercy. The mere statement standing by itself might very well suggest a rather dehumanised atmosphere; the sinister and inhuman silence of the Asiatic harem and divan. This is but one instance out of scores; but the moral is that the Christ of the Gospel might actually seem more strange and terrible than the Christ of the Church.

I am dwelling on the dark or dazzling or defiant or mysterious side of the Gospel words, not because they had not obviously a more obvious and popular side, but because this is the answer to a common criticism on a vital point. The freethinker frequently says that Jesus of Nazareth was a man of his time, even if he was in advance of his time; and that we cannot accept his ethics as final for humanity. The freethinker then goes on to criticise his ethics, saying plausibly enough that men cannot turn the other cheek, or that they must take thought for the morrow, or that the self-denial is too ascetic or the monogamy too severe. But the Zealots and the Legionaries did not turn the other cheek any more than we do, if so much. The Jewish traders and Roman tax-gatherers took thought for the morrow as much as we, if not more. We cannot pretend to be abandoning the morality of the past for one more suited to the present. It is certainly not the morality of another age, but it might be of another world.

In short, we can say that these ideals are impossible in themselves. Exactly what we cannot say is that they are impossible for us. They are rather notably marked by a mysticism which, if it be a sort of madness, would always have struck the same sort of people as mad. Take, for instance, the case of marriage and the relations of the sexes. It might very well have been true that a Galilean teacher taught things natural to a Galilean environment; but it is not. It might rationally be expected that a man in the time of Tiberius would have advanced a view conditioned by the time of Tiberius; but he did not. What he advanced was something quite different; something very difficult; but something no more difficult now than it was then. Then, for instance, Mahomet made his polygamous compromise we may reasonably say that it was conditioned by a polygamous society. When he allowed a man four wives he was really doing something suited to the circumstances, which might have been less suited to other circumstances. Nobody will pretend that the four wives were like the

four winds, something seemingly a part of the order of nature; nobody will say that the figure four was written for ever in stars upon the sky. But neither will anyone say that the figure four is an inconceivable ideal; that it is beyond the power of the mind of man to count up to four; or to count the number of his wives and see whether it amounts to four. It is a practical compromise carrying with it the character of a particular society. If Mahomet had been born in Acton in the nineteenth century, we may well doubt whether he would instantly have filled that suburb with harems of four wives apiece. As he was born in Arabia in the sixth century, he did in his conjugal arrangements suggest the conditions of Arabia in the sixth century. But Christ in his view of marriage does not in the least suggest the conditions of Palestine in the first century. He does not suggest anything at all, except the sacramental view of marriage as developed long afterwards by the Catholic Church. It was quite as difficult for people then as for people now. It was much more puzzling to people then than to people now. Jews and Romans and Greeks did not believe, and did not even understand enough to disbelieve, the mystical idea that the man and the woman had become one sacramental substance. We may think it an incredible or impossible ideal; but we cannot think it any more incredible or impossible than they would have thought it. In other words, whatever else is true, it is not true that the controversy has been altered by time. Whatever else is true, it is emphatically not true that the ideas of Jesus of Nazareth were suitable to his time, but are no longer suitable to our time. Exactly how suitable they were to his time is perhaps suggested in the end of his story.

The same truth might be stated in another way by saying that if the story be regarded as merely human and historical, it is extraordinary how very little there is in the recorded words of Christ that ties him at all to his own time. I do not mean the details of a period, which even a man of the period knows to be passing. I mean the fundamentals which even the wisest man often vaguely assumes to be eternal. For instance, Aristotle was perhaps the wisest and most wide-minded man who ever lived. He founded himself entirely upon fundamentals, which have been generally found to remain rational and solid through all social and historical changes. Still, he lived in a world in which it was thought as natural to have slaves as to have children. And therefore he did permit himself a serious recognition of a difference between slaves and free men. Christ as much as Aristotle lived in a world that took slavery for granted. He did not particularly denounce slavery. He started a movement that could exist in a world with slavery. But he started a movement that could exist in a world without slavery. He never used a phrase that made his philosophy depend even upon the very existence of the social order in which he lived. He spoke as one conscious that everything was ephemeral, including the things that Aristotle thought eternal. By that time the Roman Empire had come to be merely the *orbis terrarum*, another name for the world. But he never made his

morality dependent on the existence of the Roman Empire or even on the existence of the world. "Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away."

The truth is that when critics have spoken of the local limitations of the Galilean, it has always been a case of the local limitations of the critics. He did undoubtedly believe in certain things that one particular modern sect of materialists do not believe. But they were not things particularly peculiar to his time. It would be nearer the truth to say that the denial of them is quite peculiar to our time. Doubtless it would be nearer still to the truth to say merely that a certain solemn social importance, in the minority disbelieving them, is peculiar to our time. He believed, for instance, in evil spirits or in the psychic healing of bodily ills; but not because he was a Galilean born under Augustus. It is absurd to say that a man believed things because he was a Galilean under Augustus when he might have believed the same things if he had been an Egyptian under Tuten-kamen or an Indian under Gengis Khan. But with this general question of the philosophy of diabolism or of divine miracles I deal elsewhere. It is enough to say that the materialists have to prove the impossibility of miracles against the testimony of all mankind, not against the prejudices of provincials in North Palestine under the first Roman Emperors. What they have to prove, for the present argument, is the presence in the Gospels of those particular prejudices of those particular provincials. And, humanly speaking, it is astonishing how little they can produce even to make a beginning of proving it.

So it is in this case of the sacrament of marriage. We may not believe in sacraments, as we may not believe in spirits, but it is quite clear that Christ believed in this sacrament in his own way and not in any current or contemporary way. He certainly did not get his argument against divorce from the Mosaic law or the Roman law or the habits of the Palestinian people. It would appear to his critics then exactly what it appears to his critics now; an arbitrary and transcendental dogma coming from nowhere save in the sense that it came from him. I am not at all concerned here to defend that dogma; the point here is that it is just as easy to defend it now as it was to defend it then. It is an ideal altogether outside time; difficult at any period; impossible at no period. In other words, if anyone says it is what might be expected of a man walking about in that place at that period, we can quite fairly answer that it is much *more* like what might be the mysterious utterance of a being beyond man, if he walked alive among men.

I maintain therefore that a man reading the New Testament frankly and freshly would *not* get the impression of what is now often meant by a human Christ. The merely human Christ is a made-up figure, a piece of artificial selection, like the merely evolutionary man. Moreover there have been too many of these human Christs found in the same story, just as there have been too many keys to mythology found in the same stories. Three or four separate

schools of rationalism have worked over the ground and produced three or four equally rational explanations of his life. The first rational explanation of his life was that he never lived. And this in turn gave an opportunity for three or four different explanations; as that he was a sun-myth or a corn-myth, or any other kind of myth that is also a monomania. Then the idea that he was a divine being who did not exist gave place to the idea that he was a human being who did exist. In my youth it was the fashion to say that he was merely an ethical teacher in the manner of the Essenes, who had apparently nothing very much to say that Hillel or a hundred other Jews might not have said; as that it is a kindly thing to be kind and an assistance to purification to be pure. Then somebody said he was a madman with a Messianic delusion. Then others said he was indeed an original teacher because he cared about nothing but Socialism; or (as others said) about nothing but Pacifism. Then a more grimly scientific character appeared who said that Jesus would never have been heard of at all except for his prophecies of the end of the world. He was important merely as a Millenarian like Dr. Cumming; and created a provincial scare by announcing the exact date of the crack of doom. Among other variants on the same theme was the theory that he was a spiritual healer and nothing else; a view implied by Christian Science, which has really to expound a Christianity without the Crucifixion in order to explain the curing of Peter's wife's mother or the daughter of a centurion. There is another theory that concentrates entirely on the business of diabolism and what it would call the contemporary superstition about demoniacs; as if Christ, like a young deacon taking his first orders, had got as far as exorcism and never got any further. Now each of these explanations in itself seems to me singularly inadequate; but taken together they do suggest something of the very mystery which they miss. There must surely have been something not only mysterious but many-sided about Christ if so many smaller Christs can be carved out of him. If the Christian Scientist is satisfied with him as a spiritual healer and the Christian Socialist is satisfied with him as a social reformer, so satisfied that they do not even expect him to be anything else, it looks as if he really covered rather more ground than they could be expected to expect. And it does seem to suggest that there might be more than they fancy in these other mysterious attributes of casting out devils or prophesying doom.

Above all, would not such a new reader of the New Testament stumble over something that would startle him much more than it startles us? I have here more than once attempted the rather impossible task of reversing time and the historic method; and in fancy looking forward to the facts, instead of backward through the memories. So I have imagined the monster that man might have seemed at first to the mere nature around him. We should have a worse shock if we really imagined the nature of Christ named for the first time. What should we feel at the first whisper of a certain suggestion about a certain man?

Certainly it is not for us to blame anybody who should find that first wild whisper merely impious and insane. On the contrary, stumbling on that rock of scandal is the first step. Stark, staring incredulity is a far more loyal tribute to that truth than a modernist metaphysic that would make it out merely a matter of degree. It was better to rend our robes with a great cry against blasphemy, like Caiaphas in the judgment, or to lay hold of the man as a maniac possessed of devils like the kinsmen and the crowd, rather than to stand stupidly debating fine shades of pantheism in the presence of so catastrophic a claim. There is more of the wisdom that is one with surprise in any simple person, full of the sensitiveness of simplicity, who should expect the grass to wither and the birds to drop dead out of the air, when a strolling carpenter's apprentice said calmly and almost carelessly, like one looking over his shoulder: "Before Abraham was, I am."

Christopher Dawson

*Christopher Dawson (1889–1970), historian and convert, wrote extensively on the relation of culture and religion. His first book, *The Age of the Gods* (1928), reflects the basic theme of all his writing: that religious faith in a transcendent Being is the root of every society. In Dawson's judgment, central to modern secularism is the belief in the inevitability of temporal progress. Moreover, as the distinctively Christian values of the Western world became eroded, Western culture regressed accordingly. In fact, the survival of Euro-American society depends on a renewal and, if need be, rediscovery of the Christian faith.*

*The following pages from *Progress and Religion* are a penetrating analysis of the role that Christianity played in the origin of Western civilization. Implicit in this analysis is the condition for the restoration of Western society—namely, a return to the principles enunciated in the Gospels.*

Progress and Religion

Conclusion

We have followed the development of human culture through the ages, and have seen how at every step the religion of a society expresses its dominant attitude to life and its ultimate conception of reality. Religion is the great dynamic force in social life, and the vital changes in civilization are always linked with changes in religious beliefs and ideals. The secularization of a society involves the devitalization of that society, for, as Péguy said, the passing of a religion is not a sign of progress, but a token of social decay. Our own civilization to an even greater extent than those of the past has been the creation of a religious tradition, for it is to Christianity that Europe owes its cultural unity. And for fifteen hundred years the spiritual dynamic of Western culture has been drawn from the same source, whether directly in the traditional Christian form, or indirectly through the survival of Christian ideals in Liberalism and the Religion of Progress.

But the religious tradition is not identical with that of our culture in the sense in which Hinduism embraces the whole civilization of India, or Mohammedanism that of the Islamic peoples. Our civilization has a peculiar duality which is not found among the simpler and more homogeneous cultures of the East, or those of the ancient world. There is a second element—the scientific tradition—which is even older than Christianity, since it has its origins in the Hellenic culture of classical times, and which has, to some extent, followed an independent line of development. It does not possess that dynamic social power which is the peculiar characteristic of religion, but nevertheless it has conditioned the whole development of our culture and has given Europe a power of material organization and control over nature that no other civilization has possessed. Nor is this tradition limited to physical science; its influence is seen also in the development of Western philosophy, in mediaeval scholasticism, in Roman law and in modern political and social organization. Everywhere it seeks to bring order and intelligibility alike into the material world and into the world of thought.

It is not surprising that there should be a tendency in modern times to regard this second element as the true European tradition, and to treat Christianity as an alien religious tradition which had temporarily deflected the normal develop-

ment of our culture. As a matter of fact, neither the religious nor the scientific tradition of the West is the result of a spontaneous *native* development in the same way that Confucianism was the product of China, or the philosophy of the Vedanta was the creation of India. Western Europe was first incorporated into a cultural unity by the coming of Christianity, and it was only in consequence of that development that the West became capable of inheriting also the rational tradition of the Hellenic culture. The scientific tradition has never been the dynamic force in our civilization, and we have seen that the naïve 19th century belief in modern physical science as a substitute for religion, as expressed, for example, by Renan in *L'Avenir de la Science*, is founded on a misapprehension of the nature of science itself.

Nevertheless, since the two traditions are distinct in origin, there still remains the possibility that they are not mutually consistent, and that a more complete synthesis might be achieved if a more rational and naturalistic religious doctrine was substituted for the supernaturalism of Christian dogma. In this sense, there is nothing illogical in the idea of a "religion of science," provided that it be clearly recognised that it belongs to the realm of religion and not to that of science. In the past, as we have seen, it is the rule rather than the exception for religion to concern itself with the knowledge of nature. The very origins of science are to be found among the medicine men and priesthoods of primitive people, and at a higher stage of civilization cosmological speculation occupies a considerable place in the development of the great religions.

The religion of China, for example, is founded on a theory of the order of nature and of the positive and negative principles whose alternation produces the cosmic process, and this theory also forms the foundation of Chinese science. So, too, in Greece, the religion of Plato was essentially a religion of science, since he regarded scientific knowledge, and above all mathematics, as a religious discipline and a pathway to spiritual perfection. Indeed, he went further in this direction than any other thinker by his bold attempt to rationalize the popular religion, and to substitute astronomy for mythology as the basis of a new state cultus.

But a philosophic religion of the Platonic type is not at all the kind of thing which the modern seekers after a religion of science have in view. It is just the Platonic attitude to religion and life which is most antipathetic to them, and their criticism of the existing forms of religion is largely directed against the metaphysical element in them. They demand that religion shall come back to earth—to an immediate contact with nature and man, and give up its vain pursuit of the mirage of the Absolute. Indeed, there are not wanting those who believe that the whole movement of the world religions has been a mistake—a blind alley on the path of human development—and that we must return to the older attitude to nature and life which the higher civilization abandoned more than two thousand years ago. From this point of view the religion of the future

will be a kind of neo-paganism which will consist in the worship of the vital forces of nature in place of spiritual abstractions or of a transcendent divinity. The religious attitude to nature will be the same as in the paganism of the past, but scientific law will take the place of the system of ritual magic on which the old civilizations relied in order to bring human life into communion with the cosmic order. Some experiments in this direction have actually been made—for example, at Indore, a few years ago, the Diwali festival was utilized as a means of sanitary propaganda, and the spirit of Dirt, personified as the demon Narakasur, the enemy of Rama, was solemnly burnt. But though such attempts may succeed in cases where the traditional nature worship still exists, it is very unlikely that they can ever meet with acceptance where this element is lacking. The religion of Comte, with its worship of Humanity, the Great Being, and of the Earth, the Great Fetish, was an utter failure, in spite of the powerful philosophic synthesis on which it was based. When man has once tasted of the Tree of Knowledge, he cannot go back to the paradise of the primitive. It was possible for the latter to divinize the forces of nature and to adopt a truly religious attitude towards them, because they still belonged to the realm of mystery, and were regarded as manifestations of a power that was not merely natural. But as soon as man had gained a certain measure of control over his environment and had learnt to regard nature as amenable to human reason and will, the old naïve attitude of awe and worship was gone for ever. Henceforward man was the master in his own house, and he could no longer admit the supremacy of any non-rational power. And it is well that he cannot, since to do so would be to wipe out half the experience of the race.

A religious movement which attempted to turn its back on the spiritual achievement of the last three thousand years would be far more retrograde than any antiscientific reaction to the historic religions of the past.

Yet it must be admitted that the modern criticism of the great world religions is not altogether devoid of foundation. Their intellectual absolutism and their concentration on metaphysical conceptions have tended to turn men's minds away from the material world, and from practical social activity. But this preoccupation with the Eternal and the Absolute and the spirit of "other-worldliness" which it generates is antipathetic to the modern mind, since it seems ultimately to destroy the value and signification of relative knowledge—that is to say of natural science—and of human life itself. The present age seems to demand a religion which will be an incentive to action and a justification of the material and social progress which has been the peculiar achievement of the last two centuries.

An attempt to supply this need is to be found in the new theories of evolutionary vitalism which are so popular in philosophic circles at the present time. The movement originated with Bergson's philosophy of creative evolution, but it has had a much wider development in this country than on the Continent.

It is represented, on the one hand, by the doctrine of "Emergent Evolution" put forward by Professor Alexander and Professor Lloyd Morgan, and on the other by the pantheistic vitalism of scientists like Professors Julian Huxley and J. H. Haldane. According to the theory of the former, the spiritual values on which the world religions were based are not illusory. They have a real place in the universe, but they are not absolute and transcendental realities, as the old religions believed. They are, no less than material things, the result of an evolutionary process. Thus God is not the creator of the world, he is himself created with the world, or rather he "emerges" as part of the cosmic process. In Professor Alexander's words, "God as an actual existent is always becoming deity, but never attains it. He is the ideal God in embryo. The ideal when fulfilled ceases to be God."

Professor Huxley's position, on the other hand, is not a philosophical one. He professes a complete Spencerian agnosticism with regard to metaphysical problems, and seeks to find the material for a religious interpretation of reality in natural science and in human nature itself. His aim is a strictly religious one, and he is concerned to a far greater extent than any of the other writers that we have mentioned with the discovery of a religious solution which will satisfy the moral and social needs of modern civilization.

Nevertheless, in spite of this difference of standpoint, his religious ideal is not unlike that of Professor Alexander. Science, he believes, teaches us that the world is advancing in a spiritual direction. The process of evolution has no spiritual creative power behind it, but in man matter has flowered in spirit, and spiritual values have "emerged" from the blind movement of material forces. Consequently the religious impulse must find its satisfaction in a conscious co-operation with this cosmic trend. God is the human ideal, but inasmuch as man is the vanguard of nature's advance, his ideal is an earnest of future achievement. "It is Incarnate Spirit," he says, "embodied in Life the Mediator." Or again in one of his earlier sonnets:

The Universe can live and work and plan
At last made God within the mind of Man.

It is clear that Professor Huxley's religious ideal is simply that of the Religion of Progress in a new form. But though his theory of a divine ideal, immanent in the life process itself, avoids the external dogmatism of the Deist creed, it brings fresh difficulties in its train. The old teleological interpretation of nature has been abandoned only to be replaced by an attempt to read spiritual values into biology and the evolutionary process. Such an interpretation will always tend to reflect the metaphysical and theological preconceptions of its author. The *élan vital* of Bergson, for example, is not a pure generalization of biological facts, it is rather the explanation of those facts by a quasi-theological hypothesis,

halfway between the Stoic theory of a World Soul and the Christian doctrine of the Holy Ghost. In the case of Professor Huxley's interpretation, the derivation of his religious symbolism from the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is quite conscious and deliberate. But although he has attempted to free it from all theistic or metaphysical connotations, it is obviously something more than a mere symbolic formula. It involves a real contact with the religious attitude and the spiritual tradition of Christianity.

For the conception of the progressive spiritualization of nature—the embodiment of a divine principle in the order of time—is not the only or the most obvious deduction to be drawn from the contemplation of the evolutionary process. In the presence of the same facts, a Hindu would see, not the gradual emergence of the human ethical ideal, but the manifestation of a universal cosmic energy which is no less divine in its destructive and malevolent aspects than in its beneficent ones—in which all values are alike because they are all the expressions of a single creative fecundity. It is Shiva, the Terrible One, dancing his cosmic dance amidst the birth and death of the worlds. And this interpretation of life which finds God in the whole cosmic process is at least as logical as that of the European idealist who sees God only in the human mind—that is in the mental processes of a single species of mammalia. Moreover, it seems equally capable of evoking intense religious emotion, as we see in countless Shivaite and Saktist prayers and hymns.

To us these conceptions are unacceptable. They seem definitely lower and less true than the idea of the world process as a gradual ascent in a spiritual direction. But this is because we view the evolutionary process through Christian eyes, even when, like Professor Huxley, we profess the most complete religious agnosticism.

For the moral idealism which is still so characteristic of the Western mind is the fruit of an age-long tradition of religious faith and spiritual discipline. Humanitarianism is the peculiar possession of a people who have worshipped for centuries the Divine Humanity—apart from all that even our humanism would have been other than it is. It is from this Christian moral tradition that both the older Deist movement and the new movement of evolutionary vitalism have derived whatever positive religious value they possess. Nevertheless this element cannot continue to exist indefinitely, if it is divorced from the historic religious beliefs on which it is really founded.

The Deist attempt to found a natural religion broke down because it was the result of a superficial synthesis, which only succeeded in uniting the etiolated ghost of historic Christianity with the phantasm of a pseudo-scientific rationalism. It claimed to be the Religion of Nature, when it was as abstract and artificial as any metaphysical system. It professed to base itself on purely rational grounds, when it really drew its spiritual vitality from the religious tradition that it

rejected. It was neither truly religious nor completely rational, and consequently it was rejected alike by the most living religion and by the most serious scientific thought of the new age.

But if the Religion of Progress failed to establish itself, after it had captured public opinion, and had the whole tendency of the new age in its favour, it is hardly likely that it will be more successful in this age of disillusionment in its new form of evolutionary vitalism. For the latter suffers from the same fundamental weaknesses and inconsistencies, while it lacks the power of popular appeal which was the main strength of the older movement.

The day of the Liberal Deist compromise is over, and we have come to the parting of the ways. Either Europe must abandon the Christian tradition and with it the faith in progress and humanity, or it must return consciously to the religious foundation on which these ideas were based. The modern world has not lost its need for religion—indeed the value and the necessity of a religious interpretation of life are felt more strongly than they were fifty years ago, and science no longer attempts, as it did then, to deny their legitimacy. But the religious impulse must express itself openly through religious channels, instead of seeking a furtive, illegitimate expression in scientific and political theories to the detriment alike of religion and science. It must be recognized that our faith in progress and in the unique value of human experience rests on religious foundations, and that they cannot be severed from historical religion and used as a substitute for it, as men have attempted to do during the last two centuries.

It is true that there still exists a widespread prejudice against any religion which claims to rest on divine or supernatural revelation. The old 18th century ideal of a purely rational religion—a Religion without Revelation—has not lost its attractiveness to the modern mind.

But a religion without Revelation is a religion without History, and it is just the historical element in Christianity which gives it its peculiar character, and differentiates it from the unprogressive metaphysical religions of the East. A purely rational religion must inevitably become a metaphysical religion, for the religious impulse can find no nourishment for itself in the arid and narrow region of the discursive reason, and it is only in the metaphysical sphere—in the intuition of absolute and eternal truth—that religion and reason can meet.

On the other hand the religious instinct finds its fullest and most concrete satisfaction in the historical field—through faith in an historical person, an historical community, and an historical tradition.

No religion can entirely dispense with this element. Even in so abstract and metaphysical a faith as that of Buddhism, an intense religious emphasis is attached to the historical personality of the Buddha himself. Nevertheless in all the oriental religions, as well as in the abstract philosophical religious movements of the West, this element is subordinated to the metaphysical aspect of religion. It is only in Christianity that the historic element acquires such

importance that it can be wholly identified with the transcendent and eternal objects of religious faith. The Christian, and he alone, can find a solution to the paradox of the inherence of eternity in time, and of the absolute in the finite which does not empty human life and the material world of their religious significance and value.

Hence it is in historic Christianity, far more than in any purely rational creed, that the Religion of Progress finds its satisfaction. For here we have not an abstract intellectualized progress, but the emergence of new spiritual values in a concrete historical sense. A new *kind* of life has inserted itself into the cosmic process at a particular point in time under definite historical circumstances and has become the principle of a new order of spiritual progress.

The creative process which has reached its end in man starts off again *from* man in a second ascent, the possibilities of which are as yet unrealized, and which are to be grasped not by Reason, which lives on the systematization of the past, but by Faith, which is the promise of the future.

Nor is it only in regard to these ultimate problems that the Religion of Progress finds its fulfilment in Christianity. The practical humanitarian aims of that movement, which are responsible for the social reforms of the last two centuries, also need the support of a positive religious tradition. The ideal of a social order based on justice and goodwill between men and nations has not lost its attraction for the European mind, but with the disappearance of the old Liberal optimism it is in danger of being abandoned as a visionary illusion, unless it is reinforced by a renewal of spiritual conviction. For it is a religious ideal and cannot exist without some religious foundation.

The return to the historic Christian tradition would restore to our civilization the moral force that it requires in order to dominate external circumstances and to avoid the dangers that are inherent in the present situation. We have seen that science is unable to realize all its vast potentialities for the organization and transformation of human existence, unless it is directed by a moral purpose which it does not itself possess. And it can find this dynamic in a true historic religion such as Christianity as well, or even better than, in an artificial "religion of science," which is a mere *deus ex machina* for solving a temporary intellectual problem and possesses no spiritual vitality of its own.

It is true that the great historic religions of the East do seem to justify in some measure the rationalist's view of the incompatibility of religion with science, since they deny the reality or the importance of the material world. They tend to withdraw themselves to the heights of pure intelligence and leave the sensible world in confusion and anarchy. But Christianity is not committed to this oriental and metaphysical tradition, however far certain periods and schools of thought may have gone in that direction. It has always resisted the Gnostic or Manichaean tendency to regard the material world as intrinsically evil. It seeks not the destruction or the negation of nature, but its spiritualization and its

incorporation in a higher order of reality. Consequently the organization of the material world by science and law which has been the characteristic task of modern European culture is in no sense alien to the genius of Christianity. For the progressive intellectualization of the material world which is the work of European science is analogous and complementary to the progressive spiritualization of human nature which is the function of the Christian religion. The future of humanity depends on the harmony and co-ordination of these two processes.

Hitherto, it must be admitted, this harmony has never been fully achieved by any historic civilization. During the Middle Ages Europe was still largely dominated by the semi-oriental traditions of the Byzantine culture, and it was only in the age of St. Francis and St. Thomas Aquinas that the West began to attain spiritual and intellectual independence. And since the Renaissance, our civilization has increasingly lost touch with the religious tradition, and has become absorbed in its task of material organization to the detriment of its moral and spiritual unity. Nevertheless, it is to the co-existence of these two elements that Europe owes the distinctive character of its culture. From Christianity it has derived its moral unity and its social ideals, while science has given it its power of material organization and its control over nature. Without religion, science becomes a neutral force which lends itself to the service of militarism and economic exploitation as readily as to the service of humanity. Without science, on the other hand, society becomes fixed in an immobile, unprogressive order, like that of the Byzantine culture and the Oriental civilizations in general. It is only through the co-operation of both these forces that Europe can realize its latent potentialities and enter on a new phase of civilization which is equally removed from the sterile inaction of the ancient East and the aimless material activity of the modern West.

And the return to the Christian tradition would provide Europe with the necessary spiritual foundation for the social unification that it so urgently needs. We have seen that Europe has never possessed the natural unity of the other great cultures. It has owed its unity, and its very existence as a distinct civilization, to its membership of a common spiritual society. And perhaps that is the reason why it has never been able to be satisfied with a purely political unification. No doubt a giant supernational state would bring Europe relief from many of her practical problems, but it would also involve the sacrifice of many of the ideals that she has most prized. But this is not the only solution. It is possible that the ideal form of international unity for Europe is not a political one at all, but a spiritual one. After all, the state is not the only form of social unity. "Let us not forget," wrote Nietzsche, "in the end what a Church is, and especially in contrast to every 'state': a Church is above all an authoritative organization which secures to the most *spiritual* men the highest rank, and *believes* in the power of spirituality so far as to forbid all grosser appliances of authority.

Through this alone the Church is under all circumstances a *nobler* institution than the State."

At the present moment such a solution appears inconceivable. We have come to take it for granted that the unifying force in society is material interest, and that spiritual conviction is a source of strife and division. Modern civilization has pushed religion and the spiritual elements in culture out of the main stream of its development, so that they have lost touch with social life and have become sectarianized and impoverished. But at the same time this has led to the impoverishment of our whole culture. It has borne fruit in that "plebeianism of the European spirit" which Nietzsche regarded as the necessary consequence of the disappearance of the spiritual power.

This, however, is but a temporary phenomenon; it can never be the normal condition of humanity. For, as we have seen, the vital and creative power behind every culture is a spiritual one. In proportion as the spiritual element recovers its natural position at the centre of our culture, it will necessarily become the mainspring of our whole social activity. This does not, however, mean that the material and spiritual aspects of life must become fused in a single political order which would have all the power and rigidity of a theocratic state. Since a culture is essentially a spiritual community, it transcends the economic and political orders. It finds its appropriate organ not in a state, but in a Church, that is to say a society which is the embodiment of a purely spiritual tradition and which rests, not on material power, but on the free adhesion of the individual mind. It has been the peculiar achievement of Western Christianity in the past to realize such an ideal in an organized spiritual society, which could co-exist with the national political units without either absorbing or being absorbed by them. The return to this tradition would once more make it possible to reconcile the existence of national independence and political freedom, which are an essential part of European life, with the wider unity of our civilization, and with that higher process of spiritual integration which is the true goal of human progress.

Fulton J. Sheen

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He taught at the Catholic University of America from 1926 to 1950. He became national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in 1950, was consecrated bishop in 1951, and continued his speaking and writing almost to the day of his death.

Described as “the most persuasive speaker for Roman Catholicism in America,” he drew audiences numbering in the millions.

His writing is clear and forceful, his logic often brilliant; the intellectual workout brooks no distractions.

Preface to Religion (1946) is a good example of one of Sheen’s main preoccupations: to show that Christianity is consistent with sound reason.

Preface to Religion

Faith

Regardless of your religious background, you have doubtless observed the tremendous disparity of points of view between those who possess Divine Faith through God's grace and those who have it not. Have you ever noticed when discussing important subjects, as pain, sorrow, sin, happiness, marriage, children, education, the purpose of life and the meaning of death, that the Catholic point of view is now poles apart from what is called the modern view?

You who have the faith probably have often felt a sense of inadequacy in dealing with those who have no faith, as if there were no common denominator. You and that person without faith seem to be living in different worlds. You feel powerless to penetrate the natural mentality of the modern pagan whom you meet on the street. It is like telling a blind man about color. You are not talking the same language. Like workmen on the Tower of Babel, there is no common understanding.

It was not so many years ago that those who rejected many Christian truths were considered off the reservation; e.g., the divorced who remarried, the atheists, the enemies of the family, or those who held that law was a dictate of the will, not of reason. Today, it is we who are considered off the reservation. It is they who are on it. The Christian is today on the defensive if for no other reason than because he is the exception.

The clarity of vision and certitude of those who have the gift of faith is sometimes misunderstood even by those who have faith. Hence, a Catholic is sometimes impatient with one who has not the faith, wrongly thinking that the reason he sees the truth so clearly is because of his own innate cleverness, and the reason his neighbor does not see it is due either to his stupidity or his stubbornness. Faith, it must be remembered, is not due to our wisdom, and the lack of faith is not due to their ignorance. Faith is solely a gift of God. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven."¹

If you have not the faith, have you not often considered as utterly foolish,

¹ Matt 16:17.

absurd and superstitious the judgments, the philosophy of life, and the outlook of those who live by faith? You think a Catholic, for instance, has surrendered both his freedom and his reason by obeying the laws of the Church and by accepting the truth of Christ in His Church.

Your judgment, then, is very much like one who looks at the windows of a church from outside, where they seem to be a meaningless confusion of leaden lines and dull colors. Once inside the church, and the leaden lines fade away as the pattern reveals itself vibrant with colors and life. In like manner, the Church may seem bewildering to those who are outside, but once you enter it, you will discover an order and harmony and a "beauty that leaves all other beauty plain."

The world today seems much more united in its negation of belief, than in its acceptance of a belief. The older generation could give you at least ten reasons for a wrong belief, such as a belief in materialism, but the modern man cannot give even one bad reason for total unbelief.

It is shockingly true that there is more in common today between a Christian in the state of grace, and a Chinaman, or Orthodox Jew, or a Mohammedan than there is between the true Christian and the average so-called Christian person you are apt to meet at a night club, or even at the table in your neighbor's house.

When the Christian talks about God, the Chinaman or Orthodox Jew or Mohammedan can understand him, for they, too, believe that God is Sovereign and Judge of all men. But to the average pagan who believes man came from beast and, therefore, must act like one, all this is as so much fatuous nonsense and senile stupidity. A striking confirmation of this is that in the face of Anti-God crusades of Russia, Christians, Jews and Moslems presented a common front.

Why this difference between those who have the faith, and those who have it not? It is due to the fact that a soul in the state of grace has its intellect illumined, which enables it to perceive new truths which otherwise would be beyond its powers. Divine grace supernaturalizes that which makes us human, namely, our intellect and our will, giving them the power of higher action. The intellect still continues to know truth, but through grace operating in it as faith, it knows higher truths than those of reason. The human will in like manner retains its love of good, but by grace, operating on it, it can now rely more on God or love Him more than by its unaided efforts:

	<i>Faculty</i>	<i>Theological Virtues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Object</i>		
Soul	{	Intellect	Faith	To believe	God	
		Will	{	Hope	To hope	God
				Charity	To love	God

You have exactly the same eyes at night as you have in the day, but you cannot see at night, because you lack the additional light of the sun. So, too, let two minds

with identically the same education, the same mental capacities, and the same judgment, look on a Host enthroned on an altar. The one sees bread, the other sees Christ, not, of course, with the eyes of the flesh, but with the eyes of faith. Let them both look on death: one sees the end of a biological entity, the other an immortal creature being judged by God on how it used its freedom. The reason for the difference is: one has a light which the other lacks, namely, the light of faith.

This light of faith operates on human problems somewhat like an X-ray. You look at a box with the naked eye and it appears to be of wood and tinsel and cheap wrapping paper, and, therefore, of no great value. You look at it later with an X-ray and you see the contents of the box to be diamonds and rubies. In like manner, those who live only by the light of reason gaze upon a sick and feverish body, and see pain as valueless as a curse. But the mind endowed with the extra light of faith sees through the pain: to him it is either a means for reparation for sins, or as a stepping stone to greater unity with His Master, whom "Life made love, and love made pain, and pain made death."

If you have not the light of faith, you may be very educated, but can you correlate your knowledge into a unified philosophy of life? Does your psychology jibe with your ethics? Does your emphasis on the dignity of man click with your denial of a soul? Rather is not your mind like a flattened Japanese lantern, a riot of colors without pattern or purpose? What you need to do is to have the candle of faith lighted on the inside of that lantern that you may see all your different lines of knowledge meet into one absorbing pattern leading to God.

Education is not the condition of receiving this additional light of faith, although an educated person can understand the faith better. Since the light of faith is from God and not from us, we cannot supply it, any more than we can restore vision if we lost our eyes. Being a true Christian, therefore, does not require an education. *It is an education!*

A little child who today is telling a sister in school that God made him, that he was made to know, love and serve God, and to be happy with Him in the next world, knows more, and is more profoundly educated, than all the professors throughout the length and breadth of this land, who babble about space-time deities, who prattle about new ethics to fit unethical lives, who negate all morality to suit their unmoral thinking, but who do not know, therefore, that beyond time is the timeless, beyond space is the spaceless, the Infinite Lord and Master of the Universe.

No wonder Our Lord prayed: "I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight."² St. Paul later on clearly distinguished between these two kinds of wisdom: the false wisdom which uses reason to negate the God who gave

² Luke 10:21.

reason, and the higher wisdom born of the grace of God: "For the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."³

That is why those who live by the higher light of faith are so insistent that education be religious for, after all, if one does not know *why* he is living, there is not much purpose in living. There are those who would suggest that there be no religious training until the child is old enough to "decide for himself." They should also consistently suggest a child in a slum should not be removed to a better environment until he was old enough to decide for himself. Unfortunately, when that time comes he may already have contracted tuberculosis. Why not also argue that no infant should be born into the world until he is old enough to decide who his parents should be, to what economic class he will belong, and to what code he will subscribe, or even to decide whether he wants to come into the world at all.

Though faith is a gift of God, and though God will give it to those that ask it, there is one very human obstacle why more minds do not receive it, and that is Pride. Pride is the commonest sin of the modern mind, and yet the one of which the modern mind is never conscious. You have heard people say: "I like drink too much," or "I am quick-tempered," but did you ever hear anyone say: "I am conceited?"

Pride is the exaltation of self as an absolute standard of truth, goodness and morality. It judges everything by itself, and for that reason everyone else is a rival, particularly God. Pride makes it impossible to know God. If I know everything, then not even God can teach me anything. If I am filled with myself, then there is no place for God. Like the inns of Bethlehem, we say to the Divine Visitor: "There is no room."

Pride is of two kinds: it is either the pride of omniscience or the pride of nescience. The pride of omniscience tries to convince your neighbor you know everything; the new pride of nescience tries to convince your neighbor that he knows nothing. The latter is the technique used by "sophomores" who pride themselves on the fact that man can know nothing. Hence, they doubt everything, and of this they are very sure. They seem to forget that the doubting of everything is impossible, for doubt is a shadow, and there can be no shadow without light.

If pride is the great human obstacle to faith, it follows that, from the human side, the essential condition of receiving faith is humility. Humility is not an underestimation of what we are, but the plain, unadulterated truth. A man who is 6 feet tall is not humble if he says: "No, really, I am only 5 feet tall."

If there ever came a moment in your life when you admitted you did not know it all, or said: "Oh! What a fool am I," you created a vacuum and a void which God's grace could fill. Before you accept the gift of faith, there may be a

³ 1 Cor 1:25.

moment when you will think that you are giving up your reason; but that is only seeming, not real.

Your eye does not constantly look out at the light. Every few seconds it blinks, that is, it goes into temporary darkness; the blink apparently destroys vision. Really, the blink is the condition of better vision. So with your reason in relation to faith. There comes a time in conversion when you blink on your reason, that is, you doubt about its capacity to know everything, and you affirm the possibility that God could enlighten you. Then comes the gift of faith. Once that is received, you find out that instead of destroying your reason, you have perfected it. Faith now becomes to your reason what a telescope is to your eye; it opens up new fields of vision and new worlds which before were hidden and unknown.

Think not either that you lose your freedom by accepting the faith. A few years ago, I received a letter from a radio listener who said: "I imagine that you from your earliest youth were surrounded by priests and nuns who never permitted you to think for yourself. Why not throw off the yoke of Rome and begin to be free?"

I answered him thus: "In the center of a sea was an island on which children played and danced and sang. Around that island were great high walls which had stood for centuries. One day, some strange men came to the island in individual row boats, and said to the children: Who put up these walls? Can you not see that they are destroying your freedom? Tear them down!"

"The children tore them down! Now if you go there, you will find all the children huddled together in the center of the island, afraid to play, afraid to sing, afraid to dance—afraid of falling into the sea."

Faith is not a dam which prevents the flow of the river of reason and thought; it is a levee which prevents unreason from flooding the countryside. Our senses were meant by God to be perfected by reason. That is why a man who loses his reason deliberately by drunkenness no longer sees as well as an animal, nor behaves as well as an animal. We say: "He has lost his senses."

Once the human senses have been deprived of reason, which is their perfection, they no longer function even as well as the sense of an animal. In like manner, once the human reason has lost faith, which is the perfection God freely intended it to have, then reason does not function as well without faith as it does with it. That is why reason alone is unable to get us out of the mess we are in today. Of and by itself, it cannot function well enough to handle the problems created by loss of faith and by misuse of reason and sin.

The following facts about faith are important:

1. Faith is not believing that something will happen, nor is it the acceptance of what is contrary to reason, nor is it an intellectual recognition which a man might give to something he does not understand or which his reason cannot

prove, e.g., relativity. Faith is the acceptance of a truth on the authority of God revealing.

Faith is a supernatural virtue, whereby, inspired and assisted by the grace of God, we believe as true those things which He revealed, not because the truth of these things is clearly evident from reason alone, but because of the authority of God who cannot deceive nor be deceived.

Before faith, one makes an investigation by reason. Just as no business man would extend you credit without a reason for doing so, neither are you expected to put faith in anyone without a reason. Before you have faith, you study the motives of believing, e.g., why should I put faith in Christ?

Your reason investigates the miracles He worked, the prophecies which preannounced Him and the consonance of His teaching with your reason. These constitute the preambles of faith, from which you form a judgment of credibility: "This truth, that Christ is the Son of God, is worthy of belief." Passing to the practical order, you add: "I must believe it."

From then on, you give your assent: "I believe He is the Son of God, and this being so, whatever He reveals I will accept as God's truth." The motive for your assent in faith is always the authority of God who tells you it is true. You would not believe unless you saw that you must believe.

You believe the truths of reason because there is intrinsic evidence; you believe in the truths of God because there is extrinsic evidence. You believe the sun is 92,000,000 miles away from the earth though you never measured it; you believe that Moscow is the capital of Russia, though you never saw it. So you accept the Truths of Christianity on the authority of God revealing in His Son Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

Faith, therefore, never is blind. Since your reason is dependent on uncreated Reason or Divine Truth, it follows that your reason should bow down to what God reveals. You believe now, not because of the arguments; they were only a necessary preliminary. You believe because God said it. The torch now burns by its own brilliance.

The nature of the act of faith was revealed by Our Lord's attitude toward the unbelieving Pharisees. They had seen miracles worked and prophecies fulfilled. They were not lacking in motives for belief. But they still refused to believe. Our Lord took a little child in His midst and said: "Amen, I say to you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall not enter into it."⁴

By this He meant that the act of faith has more in common with the trusting belief of a child in his mother than with the assent of a critic. The child believes what the mother tells him because she said it. His belief is an unaffected and trusting homage of love to his mother.

When the Christian believes, he does so, not because he has in the back of his

⁴ Mark 10:15.

mind the miracles of Christ, but because of the authority of one who can neither deceive nor be deceived. "If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. For this is the testimony of God, which is greater, because He hath testified of his Son. He that believeth in the Son of God, hath the testimony of God in himself. He that believeth not the Son, maketh him a liar; because he believeth not in the testimony which God hath testified of his Son."⁵

2. You cannot argue, or study, or reason, or hypnotize, or whip yourself into faith. Faith is a gift of God. When anyone instructs you in Christian doctrine, he does not give you faith. He is only a spiritual agriculturist, tilling the soil of your soul, uprooting a few weeds and breaking up the clods of egotism. It is God who drops the seed. "For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God."⁶

If faith were a will to believe, you could produce your own faith by an act of the will. All you can do is to dispose yourself for its reception from the hands of God. As a dry stick is better disposed for burning than a wet stick, so a humble man is better disposed for faith than a know-it-all. In either case, as the fire which burns must come from outside the stick, so your faith must come from outside yourself, namely, from God.

When you try to make everything clear by reason, you somehow only succeed in making everything confusion. Once you introduce a single mystery, everything else becomes clear in the light of that one mystery. The sun is the "mystery" in the universe; it is so bright you cannot look at it; you cannot "see" it. But in the light of it, everything else becomes clear. As Chesterton once said: "But you can see the moon and things under the moon, but the moon is the mother of lunatics."

3. Faith is unique and vital. There are not many faiths. There is only one faith: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."⁷ Out of the millions and millions of men who walked this earth, there is only One who is the Incarnate Lord; out of the millions of lights in the heaven, there is only one sun to light a world. "Upon this Rock I will build my Church"—not my churches.

Faith is like life; it must be taken in its entirety. Two mothers appeared in the court of Solomon. Both claimed a babe as their own. Solomon said that he would divide the child and give each claimant a half. One of the women protested and said: "Give the babe to her." Wise Solomon thereupon decided that the babe belonged to the one who protested, for she was the real mother. The Church is like that: it insists on the whole Truth.

Hence, you may not pick and choose among the words of the Blessed Lord

⁵ I John 5:9-10.

⁶ Eph 2:8.

⁷ Eph 4:5.

and say: "I will accept the Sermon on the Mount, but not your words about hell." Or, "I believe in your doctrine of motherhood, but I cannot accept your teaching that it is unlawful for a man to divorce and marry again." The truths of God are like that babe: it is either the whole babe, or nothing.

Every religion in the world, I care not what it is, contains some reflection of one Eternal Truth. Every philosophy, every world religion, every sect, contains an arc of the perfect round of the Natural and Revealed Truth. Confucianism has the fraction of fellowship; Indian asceticism has the fraction of self-abnegation; each human sect has an aspect of Christ's Truth.

That is why, in approaching those who have not the faith, one should not begin by pointing out their errors, but rather by indicating the fraction of truth they have in common with the fulness of Truth. Instead of saying to the Confucian: "You are wrong in ignoring the Fatherhood of God," one should say: "You are right in emphasizing brotherhood, but to make your brotherhood perfect, you need the Fatherhood of God and the Sonship of Christ, and the vivifying Unity of the Holy Spirit."

So, with every other religion and sect in the world. Today, men are starving. One should not go to them and say: "Do not eat poisons; they will kill you." We need only to give bread. In religion, in like manner, there is too much emphasis on the errors of unbelievers and not enough on the affirmation of Truth by believers. Break the bread of affirmation and teaching, and the grace of God will do the rest.

This is the great beauty of the Catholic Faith; its sense of proportion, or balance, or should we say, its humor. It does not handle the problem of death to the exclusion of sin, nor the problem of pain to the exclusion of matter; nor the problem of sin to the exclusion of human freedom, nor the social use of property to the exclusion of personal right; nor the reality of the body and sex to the exclusion of the soul and its function, nor the reality of matter to the forgetfulness of the Spirit.

It never allows one doctrine to go to your head, like wine to an empty stomach. It keeps its balance, for truth is a precarious thing. Like the great rocks in the Alps, there are a thousand angles at which they will fall, but there is only one at which they would stand.

It is easy to be a "pink" in this century, as it was easy to be a "liberal" in the 19th; it is easy to be a "materialist" today, as it was easy to be an "idealist" in the 19th century; but to keep one's head in the midst of all these changing moods and fancies, so that one is right, not when the world is right, but right when the world is wrong, is the thrill of a tight-rope walker, the thrill of the romance of orthodoxy.

4. The acceptance of the fulness of Truth will have the unfortunate quality of making you hated by the world. Forget for a moment the history of Christianity, and the fact that Christ existed. Suppose there appeared in this

world today a man who claimed to be Divine Truth; and who did not say: "I will teach you Truth," but "I am *the Truth*." Suppose he gave evidence by his works of the truth of his statement. Knowing ourselves as we do, with our tendency to relativism, to indifference, and to the fusing of right and wrong, how do you suppose we would react to that Divine Truth? With hatred, with obloquy, with defiance; with charges of intolerance, narrow-mindedness, bigotry, and crucifixion.

That is what happened to Christ. That is what Our Lord said would happen to those who accept His Truth. "If you had been of the world, the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember my word that I said to you: The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my word, they will keep yours also."⁸

Hence, I believe that if the grace of God did not give me the fulness of Truth, and I were looking for it, I would begin my search by looking through the world for a Church that did not get along with the evil in the world! If that Church [were] accused of countless lies, hated because it refused to compromise, ridiculed because it refused to fit the times and not all time, I would suspect that since it was hated by what is evil in the world, it therefore was good and holy; and if it is good and holy, it must be Divine. And I would sit down by its fountains and begin to drink the Waters of everlasting life.

What will faith do for you?

A. It will preserve your freedom. You still live in a world in which you are free to ask questions. Unless you build up some resistance to the organized propaganda which is more and more falling into the hands of pinks and reds, you will become the prey of their law and their authority whose very end is the extinction of your liberty.

Our Blessed Lord said, "the truth will make you free." Turning His words around, they mean that if you do not know the Truth, you will be enslaved. If you do not know the truth about addition or subtraction, you will not be free to do your bookkeeping; if you do not know that zebras have stripes, you will not be free to draw them. If you do not know the truth of the nature of man, you will not be free to act as a man.

That is why as men become indifferent to right and wrong, disorder and chaos increase, and the State steps in to organize the chaos by force. Dictatorships arise in such a fashion. Such is the essence of Socialism, the compulsory organization of chaos.

That is why the Church is in full sympathy today with the multitude of

⁸ John 15:19-20.

people who, stirred by war, at first vaguely and then unyieldingly, believe that had there been the possibility of censuring and correcting the actions of public authority the world would not have been dragged into war.

Hence, democracy worthy of the name can have no other meaning than to place the citizen increasingly in a position to hold his own personal opinion, to express it and even to make it prevail for the common good.

B. Faith will answer the principal problems of your life: Why? Whence? Whither? If you are without faith, you are like a man who lost his memory and is locked in a dark room waiting for memory to come back. There are a hundred things you can do: scribble on the wall paper, cut your initials on the floor and paint the ceiling. But if you are ever to find out why you are there, and where you are going, you will have to enlarge your world beyond space and time. There is a door out of that room. Your reason can find it. But your reason can not create the light that floods the room, nor the new world in which you move, which is full of signs on the roadway to the City of Peace and Eternal Beatitude with God.

C. Faith will enlarge your knowledge, for there are many truths beyond the power of reason. You can look at a painting and from it learn something of the technique of the artist, his skill, and his power; but you could look on it from now until the crack of doom and you could never know the inmost thoughts of the artist. If you were to know them, He would have to reveal them to you. In like manner, you can know something of the power and wisdom of God by looking at His universe, but you could never know His thoughts and life unless He told them. His telling of His inner life is what is called Revelation.

Why should we go on saying, "I am the only judge; I am the only standard of truth"? These statements remind one of the tourists who, passing through one of the galleries of Florence, remarked to the guide: "I don't think much of these pictures." To which the guide answered: "These pictures are not here for your judgment; they are your judges." So, too, your rejection of the truths beyond reason [is] the judge of your humility, your love of truth and your knowledge.

D. Faith will preserve your equality. Have you not noticed that as a man ceases to believe in God, he also ceases to believe in man? Have you observed that, if you have worked for or with a person of deep faith in Christ, you have always been treated with gentleness, equality and charity? You could not point to a single person who truly loves God and is mean to his fellow-man.

Have you noticed that as men lose faith in God, they become selfish, immoral and cruel? On a cosmic scale, as religion decreases, tyranny increases; as men lose faith in Divinity, they lose faith in humanity. Where God is outlawed, there man is subjugated.

In vain will the world seek for equality until it has seen men through the eyes of faith. Faith teaches that all men, however poor, or ignorant, or crippled,

however maimed, ugly, or degraded they may be, all bear within themselves the image of God, and have been bought by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. As this truth is forgotten, men are valued only because of what they can *do*, not because of what they *are*.

Since men cannot do things equally well, e.g., play violins, steer a plane, or teach philosophy, or stoke an engine, they are and must remain forever unequal. From the Christian point of view, all may not have the same rights to do certain jobs, because they lack the capacity; e.g., Toscanini has not a right to pitch for the New York Yankees, but all men have the right to a decent, purposeful and comfortable life in the structure of the community for which God has fitted them, and first and foremost of all, because of what they are: persons made to the image and likeness of God.

The false idea of the superiority of certain races and classes is due to the forgetfulness of the spiritual foundations of equality. We of the Western world have been rightly proud of the fact that we have a civilization superior to others. But we have given the wrong reason for that superiority. We assume that we are superior because we are white. We are not. We are superior because we are Christians. The moment we cease to be Christian, we will revert to the barbarism from which we came.

In like manner, if the black, brown and yellow races of the world become converted to Christ, they will produce civilization and culture which will surpass ours if we forget Him who truly made us great. It is conceivable, if we could project ourselves a thousand years in the future, and then look back in retrospect over those 1,000 years, that we might see in China the record of a Christian civilization which would make you forget Notre Dame and Chartres.

E. Finally, faith will enable you to possess the "Mind of Christ." "For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."⁹ Though you must meditate on the earthly life of Our Lord, you should not allow your mind to dwell exclusively on past events for by faith your minds are lifted upon the temporal and the contemporary to the eternal mind of Christ.

Everything in the universe fits into the larger rhythm of the Divine Pattern, which is denied to mortal eyes. From now on, you cease trying to find God in creatures, and begin seeing creatures in God and, therefore, all of value, and worthy of your love. In the multitudinous duties of modern life, you will do nothing which you cannot offer to God as a prayer; you will see that personal sanctity has more influence on society than social action; your sense of values will change.

You will think less of what you can store away, and more about what you can take with you when you die. Your rebellious moods will give way to resignation. Your tendency to discouragement, which was due to pride, will

⁹ Phil 2:5.

become an additional reason for throwing yourself like a wounded child into the Father's loving arms. You will cease to be an isolationist and begin to draw strength from the fellowship of the saints and the Body of Christ.

You will think of God's love, not as an emotional paternalism, but as an unalterable dedication to goodness, to which you submit even when it hurts. You will be at peace, not only when things go your way, but when they go against you, because whatever happens you accept as God's will. You will rebuke within yourself all immoderate desires, all presumptuous expectations, all ignoble self-indulgence because they bar the way to Him who is your Way, your Truth, and your Life.

With Paul you will say in the strength of a great faith: "I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."¹⁰

¹⁰ Rom 8:38.

Hope

It is not so much what happens in life that matters; it is rather how we react to it. You can always tell the character of a person by the size of the things that make him mad. Because modern man lives in a world which has reference to nothing but itself, it follows that when depression, war and death enter into his two-dimensional world, he tumbles into the most hopeless despair.

A man can work joyfully at a picture puzzle, so long as he believes the puzzle can be put together into a composite whole. But if the puzzle is a hoax, or if it was not made by a rational mind, then one would go mad trying to work it out. It is this absence of purpose in life which has produced the fear and frustration of the modern mind.

To escape from such fear and despair, the modern man usually does one of three things:

A. He sometimes flees from existence by taking his own life. The great numerical increase in suicide, which merits to be called suicidism, is symptomatic of a spiritual disintegration, a sapping of the will to live, a plunge into the irrational and the meaningless self-destruction.

B. He sometimes develops a neurosis due to the disturbance of a godless heart. Neurosis is the common disease of every man who has no hope except in himself. Being "fed up" with life, he becomes cynical, self-centered, asserts himself in loud, boorish, boasting tones to atone for his own inner hunger, nakedness and ignorance.

Forever trying to lift himself by his own bootstraps, eternally playing the role of his own redeemer, he develops "kinks" and "psychoses" and becomes eccentric because he is out of his center, which is God. The increase of alcoholism is due to a great extent to neurosis and psychosis.

C. While not taking his physical life, he sometimes seeks to kill his psychological life, by losing it in the crowd. Cosmopolitanism, or the flight from the country, is to a great extent due to the quest [for] anonymity.

The modern man hates to be alone with himself; it makes him think; it reveals the awful cleavage in the depths of his soul. Hence, he seeks noise, excitement, crowds and the thousand and one other desperate hectic devices of self-conscious beings to become unconscious. The terror of a crowded tenement and its hand-to-mouth existence is preferable to the terror of the inner

depths of a soul without God. It is no wonder today we speak of the “common-man,” the “mass-man” and the “man without personality.”

There is another way out than suicide, frustration and anonymity, and that is the way of hope, not natural hope, but supernatural hope which settles your soul in God, and directs your will toward Him. Natural hope, because based exclusively on external circumstances, by its nature is temperamental; it fluctuates, is moody, is high when things go our way, low when things go wrong.

Supernatural hope, on the contrary, is constant and invariable; it believes in the light of the sun even when the sun does not shine because it is based on a sustained collaboration with the Will of God. It may be retorted that such religion is “escapism,” and “opium of the people,” by creating a disinterest in the problems of this life, through concentration on pie in the sky.

This is not true! Who has done most for the world? He who serves this world only, or he who serves God first and the world through Him? Which man loves a woman more: the one who sees in her a thing of the opposite sex, or the one who loves her virtue more? Who makes the best soldier, the one who loves his life above all, or the one who loves his country more than his life? St. Francis of Assisi never produced any work of art, but who has inspired more art?

The great truth hidden behind these questions is: love of neighbor, the righting of social wrongs, zeal for political justice and equality are all byproducts of something higher. The best way to be healthy is not to spend your life trying to be healthy. There is not only sound theology, but profound human psychology in the words: “Seek ye therefore first the Kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.”¹ In our modern language, aim at Heaven and you will get earth thrown in!

Just as natural hope makes the will tend toward an object of its desires, e.g., it makes the farmer cultivate his crops in hope of harvest, so supernatural hope makes the will strive toward God, and incidentally its own happiness.

How do you react to the vicissitudes of life? Do you rebel because God does not answer your prayers to become rich? Do you deny God because He called away your husband, your wife, your child? In the midst of a war, do you summon God to judgment as the criminal who started it all and ask “Why does He not stop it?”

These considerations may help you to build up a firm hope in God.

1. *Everything that happens has been foreseen and known by God from all eternity, and is either willed by Him, or at least permitted.*

God’s knowledge does not grow as ours does, from ignorance to wisdom. The Fall did not catch God napping. God is Science, but He is not a scientist. God knows all, but He learns nothing from experience. He does not look down on you from Heaven as you look down on an ant-hill, seeing you going in and

¹ Matt 6:33.

out of your house, walking to work, and then telling an angel-secretary to record the unkind word you said to the grocer-boy.

Why is it we always think of God as watching the bad things we do, and never the good deeds? God does not keep a record of your deeds. You do your own bookkeeping. Your conscience takes your own dictation. God knows all things merely by looking into Himself, not by reading over your shoulder.

An architect can tell you how many rooms will be in your house, and the exact size of each, before the house is built because he is the cause of the becoming of that house. God is the cause of the *being* of all things. He knows all before they happen.

As a motion picture reel contains the whole story before it is thrown upon the screen, so God knows all. But before it is acted on the stage of history, God knows all the possible radii that can be drawn from a point in the center to the circumference. He, therefore, knows all the possible directions your human will can take.

Do not think that because God knows all that, therefore He has predetermined you to Heaven and hell independently of your merits and irrespective of your freedom.

Remember that in God there is no future. God knows all, not in the succession of time, but in the "now standing still" of eternity, i.e., all at once. His knowledge that you shall act in a particular manner is not the immediate cause of your acting, any more than your knowledge that you are sitting down caused you to sit down, or prevents you from getting up, if you willed to do it.

Our Blessed Mother could have refused the dignity of becoming the Mother of God, as Judas could have resisted the temptation to betray and repented. The fact that God knew what each would do did not make them act the way they did. Since you are free, you can act contrary to God's will. If a doctor knows that it is all for your good to undergo an operation, you must not blame him, if you refuse to have the operation and lose your health. Free will either cooperates with or rebels against predestination; it does not "surmount" it.

Because there is no future in God, foreknowing is not forecausing. You may know the stock market very well, and in virtue of your superior wisdom foretell that such and such a stock will sell for 50 points in three months. In three months it does reach 50 points. Did you *cause* it to reach 50 points, or did you foreknow it?

You may be in a tower where you can see advancing a man in the distance who has never been over that terrain before. You know that before he reaches the tower he must cross that ditch, wade that pond, tramp those bushes, and climb that hill. You foresee all the possibilities, but you do not cause him to cross those obstacles. The pilot is free to drive his ship, but he is not free to drive the waves.

While God has given to each of us the power to act, He has left us free to

exercise the power. Why then blame God when we abuse our freedom? God will not destroy your freedom. Hell is the eternal guarantee of our freedom to rebel, or of the power to make fools out of ourselves.

The following story illustrates the fallacy of predestination without freedom: In the Colonial days of our country, there was a wife who believed in a peculiar kind of predestination which left no room for human freedom. Her husband, who did not share her eccentricities, one day left for the market. He came back after a few minutes saying he forgot his gun. She said: "You are either predestined to be shot, or you are not predestined to be shot. If you are predestined to be shot, the gun will do you no good. If you are not predestined to be shot, you will not need it. Therefore, do not take your gun."

But he answered: "Suppose I am predestined to be shot by an Indian on condition I do not have my gun?" That was sound religion. It allowed for human freedom. We are our own creators. To those who ask: "If God knew I would lose my soul, why did He make me?" the answer is: "God did not make you as a lost soul. You made yourself." The universe is moral and, therefore, conditional: "Behold I stand at the door and knock!" God knocks! He breaks down no doors. The latch is on our side, not God's.

2. *God permits evil things for the reason of a greater good related to His Love and the salvation of our souls.*

God does permit evil. In the strong language of Scripture: "He that spared not even his own Son; but delivered Him up for us all."² Our Lord told Judas: "This is your hour."³ Evil does have its hour. All that it can do within that hour is to put out the lights of the world. But God has His day.

The evil of the world is inseparable from human freedom, and hence the cost of destroying the world's evil would be the destruction of human freedom. Certainly none of us want to pay that high a price, particularly since God would never permit evil unless He could draw some good from it.

God can draw good out of evil because, while the power of doing evil is ours, the effects of our evil deeds are outside our control, and, therefore, in the hands of God. You are free to break the law of gravitation, but you have no control over the effects of throwing yourself from the top of the Washington Monument.

The brethren of Joseph were free to toss him into a well, but from that point on Joseph was in God's hands. Rightly did he say to his brethren: "You intended it for evil, but God for good." The executioners were free to nail Our Lord to the cross, Judas was free to betray, the judges were free to misjudge, but they could not prevent the effect of their evil deed, viz., Crucifixion being used by God as the means of our redemption.

² Rom 8:32.

³ Luke 22:53.

St. Peter spoke of it as an evil deed, as known and permitted by God. "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him, in the midst of you, as you also know: The same being delivered up, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up, having loosed the sorrows of hell, as it was impossible that he should be holden by it."⁴

The evil which God permits must not be judged by its immediate effects, but rather by its ultimate effects. When you go to a theatre, you do not walk out because you see a good man suffering in the first act. You give the dramatist credit for a plot. Why can not you do that much with God?

The mouse in the piano cannot understand why anyone should disturb his gnawing at the keys by making weird sounds. Much less can our puny minds grasp the plan of God. Martha could not understand why Lazarus should die, particularly because Lazarus was the friend of Our Lord. But Our Lord told her it was in order that God's power might be revealed in the resurrection from the death. The slaughter of the Innocents probably saved many boys from growing up into men who on Good Friday would have shouted "crucify."

3. *We must do everything within our power to fulfil God's will as it is made known to us by His Mystical Body, the Commandments and our lawfully constituted superiors, and the duties flowing from our state in life. Everything that is outside our power, we must abandon and surrender to His Holy Will.*

Notice the distinction between *within our power*, and *outside our power*. There is to be no fatalism. Some things are under our control. We are not to be like the man who perilously walked the railing of a ship in a storm at sea saying: "I am a fatalist! I believe that when your time comes, there is nothing you can do about it." There was much more wisdom in the colored preacher who said: "You run up against a brick wall every now and then during life. If God wants you to go through that wall, it is up to God to make the hole."

We are here concerned with those things outside your power, e.g., sickness, accident, bumps on buses, trampled toes in subways, the barbed word of a fellow-worker; rain on picnic days, death of Aunt Ellen on your wedding day, colds on vacation, the loss of your purse and moth balls in your suit.

God could have prevented any of these things. He could have stopped your headache, prevented a bullet from hitting your boy, forestalled cramps during a swim and killed the germ that laid you low. If He did not, it was for a superior reason. Therefore, say: "God's will be done."

If you tell a citizen of Erin it is a bad day, nine times out of ten he will answer: "It's a good day to save your soul." Maybe there is no such thing in God's eyes as bad weather; perhaps there are only good clothes.

⁴ Acts 2:22-24.

I broadcast to you. There is an engineer in a glass booth who does what is technically called the "mixing." While I talk, he has his fingers on the dial. He controls the tone, the volume and the register of my voice. He does these things not to make my broadcast poor, but to make it good. God does something of that kind with our actions. We are free to perform them, but He "mixes" them with other actions and other people for the good of the universe and the salvation of souls.

We must not think that God is good because we have a fat bank account. Providence is not the Provident Loan. Sanctity consists in accepting whatever happens to us as God's will, and even thanking Him for it. "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."⁵

Do not become impatient with God because He does not answer your prayers immediately. We are always in a hurry; God is not. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why so few Americans like Rome: they heard it was not built in a day. Evil things are generally done quickly. "What thou dost, do quickly."

In a certain sense there is no unanswered prayer. Is there a father in the world who ever refused the request of his son for a gift which would not be good for him, who did not pick him up and give him a sign of love that made him forget the request?

Every moment comes to you pregnant with a Divine Purpose; time being so precious that God deals it out only second by second. Once it leaves your hands and your power to do with it as you please, it plunges into eternity, to remain forever whatever you made it.

Does not the scientist gain more control over nature by humbly sitting down before the facts of nature and being docile to its teachings? In like manner, surrender yourself to God, and all is yours. It is one of the paradoxes of creation that we gain control by submission. You will thus learn to appreciate the advantages of disadvantages.

Your very handicaps will not be reasons for despair, but points of departure for new horizons. When caught within circumstances beyond your control, make them creative of peace by surrender to the Divine Will. From prison St. Paul wrote: "Be mindful of my bonds. Grace be with you."⁶ Others would have said: "I am in prison. God give me grace."

Circumstances must not control you; you must control circumstances. *Do* something to them! Even the irritations of life can be made stepping stones to salvation. An oyster develops a pearl because a grain of sand irritated it. Cease talking about your pains and aches. Thank God for them! An act of thanksgiving

⁵ Matt 7:21.

⁶ Col 4:18.

ing when things go against our will, then a thousand acts of thanksgiving when things go according to our will.

“Giving thanks always for all things in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father.”⁷ God does not will the sin of those who hate you, but He does will your humiliation. Things happen against your will but nothing, except sin, happens against God’s will. When the messenger came to Job saying that the Sabeans had stolen his livestock and killed his sons, Job did not say: “The Lord gave me wealth; the Sabeans took it away.” He did say: “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord.”⁸

When anyone asks you “How are you?” remember it is not a question, but a greeting!

If you trust in God and surrender to His will, you are always happy, for “to them that love God, all things work together unto good.”⁹ “Whatsoever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad.”¹⁰

Discouragement is a form of pride; sadness is often caused by our egotism. If you will whatever God wills, you always have exactly what you want. When you want anything else, you are not happy before you get it, and when you do get it, you do not want it. That is why you are “up” today and “down” tomorrow.

You will never be happy if your happiness depends on getting solely what you want. Change the focus. Get a new center. Will what God wills, and your joy no man shall take from you. “So also you now indeed have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you. And in that day you shall not ask me anything. Amen, amen I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto you have not asked any thing in my name. Ask, and you shall receive; that your joy may be full.”¹¹

Be not afraid! “For this is the will of God, your sanctification.”¹² Think not that you could do more good if you were well, or that you could be more kind if you had more money, or that you could exercise more power for good if you had another position! What matters is not what we are, or what we are doing, but whether we are doing God’s will!

Place not your trust in God because of your merits! He loves you despite your unworthiness. It is His love which will make you better rather than your betterment which will make Him love you. Often during the day say: “God loves me, and He is on my side, by my side.”

⁷ Eph 5:20.

⁸ Job 1:21.

⁹ Rom 8:28.

¹⁰ Prov 12:21.

¹¹ John 16:22–24.

¹² 1 Thess 4:3.

Believe firmly that God's action toward you is a masterpiece of partiality and love. Be not like a child who wants to help his father fix the car before he is trained to do it! Give God a chance to love you, to show His will, to train you in His affection. Rejoice! I say again, rejoice: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Charity

America's greatest enemy is not from without, but from within, and that enemy is hate: hatred of races, peoples, classes and religions. If America ever dies, it will be not through conquest but suicide.

It is heartening to know that there are many attempts to heal these wounds of hate. Principal among them are: pleas for tolerance, for the substitution of new hates, for example, Naziism, for the violent denunciation of groups as bigots. None of these remedies will eradicate hate. Tolerance pleas will not, for why should any creature on God's earth be tolerated? Substitution of other hatreds will not work, for you cannot cure small hates by big hates.

There is more tragedy than we suspect in the fact that we have become most united as a nation at a moment when we have developed a hate against certain foreign countries. Calling other people "bigots" is only a proof of our own bigotry, for most generally we ascribe to others our own hidden faults.

Perhaps that is why some politicians call one another "crooked." They proclaim their own innocence by pointing to the mud on the neighbor's escutcheon. Name-calling merely rationalizes our own insincerities, and particularly those names which have never been defined, like "Fascist." Typical of its use is the case of the little girl who, on being asked why she called another little girl a Fascist, answered: "I call anyone I don't like a Fascist." That is perhaps the best definition that has yet been given.

All these remedies are ineffective because they leave our heart unchanged with all its hidden uneasiness. Hate can be eradicated only by creating a new focus, and that brings us to the third of the virtues, namely, charity.

By charity we do not mean kindness, philanthropy, generosity, or big-heartedness, but a supernatural gift of God by which we are enabled to love Him above all things for His own sake alone, and, in that love, to love all that He loves. To make it clear, we here set down the three principal characteristics of charity or supernatural love: 1. It is in the will, not in the emotions. 2. It is a habit, not a spasmodic art. 3. It is a love-relationship, not a contract.

First: Supernatural love is in the will, not in the emotions or passions or senses. In human love, feelings have their places, but unless they are subordinated to reason, will, and faith, they degenerate into lust, which wills not the good of the one loved, but the pleasure of the one loving.

Because charity is in the will, you can command it, which you cannot do

with natural likes or dislikes. A little boy cannot help disliking spinach, as perhaps you cannot help disliking sauerkraut, and as I cannot help disliking chicken. The same is true of your reactions to certain people. You cannot help feeling an emotional reaction against the egotistical, the sophisticated, and the loud, or those who run for first seats or snore in their sleep.

Though you cannot *like* everyone because you have no control over your physiological reactions, you can *love* everyone in the Divine sense, for that kind of love, being in the will, can be commanded or elicited. That is why love of God and neighbor can be commanded: "A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another."¹

Over and above your dislikes and your emotional reactions to certain people, there can coexist a genuine love of them, for God's sake. Charity is a consequence not of anything which affects our senses, but of Divine faith. Outwardly, your neighbor may be very unlikable; but inwardly he is one in whom the image of God can be recreated by the kiss of charity.

You can only *like* those who like you, but you can *love* those who dislike you. You can go through life liking those who like you without the love of God, but you cannot love those who hate you without the love of God. Humanism is sufficient for those of our set, or for those who like to go slumming from ivory towers, but it is not enough to make us love those who apparently are not worth loving. To will to be kind when the emotion is unkind requires a stronger dynamic than "love of humanity."

To love them, we must recall that we who are not worth loving are loved by Love. "For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans this? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? Do not also the heathens this? Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect."²

Second: Charity is not identical with kind acts. There is a tremendous amount of sentimental romanticism associated with much human kindness. Remember the great glow you got from giving your overcoat to the beggar on the street, for assisting a blind man up the stairs, for escorting an old woman through traffic, and for contributing a ten-dollar bill to relieve an indigent widow. The warmth of self-approval surged through your body, and though you never said it aloud, you did inwardly say: "Gee! I'm swell," or "Well, I've done my good deed for today." These good deeds are not to be reprov'd but commended.

What we wish to emphasize is that nothing has done so much harm to a healthy friendliness as the belief that we ought to do one good act a day. Why

¹ John 13:34.

² Matt 5:46-48.

one good act? What about all the other acts? Charity is a habit, not an isolated act. A husband and a wife are out driving. They see a young blonde along the roadside changing a tire. The husband gets out to help her. Would he have done it if the blonde were fifty? He changes the tire, dirties his clothes, cuts his finger, but is all politeness, overflowing sweetness, and exuding charm. When he gets back into his own car, his heart aglow with the good deed, his wife says: "I wish you would talk that nice to me when I ask you to mow the lawn. Yesterday when I asked you to bring in the milk, you said: 'Are you a cripple?'"

See the difference between one act and a habit? Charity is a habit, not a gush, or sentiment; it is a virtue, not an ephemeral thing of moods and impulses; it is a quality of the soul, rather than an isolated good deed.

How do you judge a good piano player? By an occasional right note or by the *habit* or *virtue* of striking right notes? An habitually evil man every now and then may do a good deed. Gangsters endowed soup kitchens and the movies glorified them. But in Christian eyes, this did not prove they were good.

Occasionally, an habitually good man may fall, but evil is the *exception* in his life; it is the *rule* in the life of the gangster. Whether we know it or not, the actions of our daily life are fixing our character for good or for evil. The things you do, the thoughts you think, the words you say, are turning you either into a saint or a devil, to be placed at either the right or the left side of the Divine Judge.

If love of God and neighbor becomes a habit of our soul, we are developing Heaven within us. The difference then between earth and Heaven will be that of the acorn and the oak. Grace is the *seed* of glory. But if hatred and evil become the habit of our soul, then we are developing hell within us. Hell will be related to our evil life as death to poison. In Heaven there will be no faith, for then we will see God; in Heaven there will be no hope, for then we will possess God. But in Heaven there will be charity, for "love endureth forever."

Third: Charity is a love-relationship rather than a commercial contract. There are many who think that religion is a kind of business relationship between God and the soul, and that if I give to God, He ought to give something to me; or since I owe Him worship in justice, He owes me prosperity in return.

That is exactly the attitude of the Pharisee who went up to the front of the Temple and told Our Lord that he was an honest man, the husband of one wife, and gave 10 percent of his earnings to the Church. The assumption was that by doing these things He was putting God in His debt, as some moderns do when they say: "I can't understand why God should do this to me. I always said my prayers," or "Well, I have done my bit to religion. I send the church a check every year." In other words: "I do my part, O Lord! Now, you do yours."

If your religion is of this kind, you have no religion. Religion is a relationship; not a contract. Hence it begins not with *doing good*; it begins with a supernatu-

ral relation between God and your soul and your neighbor. A right relationship with God, initiated by grace, will inspire you to do good things, but doing good things does not make you a child of God.

Eric Gill once said that "a thief who loves God is a more religious man than an honest man who does not love God." This startling statement has truth in it when understood to mean that the love relationship with God can make the thief honest, but honesty in business does not establish a love relationship with God.

Religion begins with love. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself."³ The word "neighbor" here means, not the one who lives next door, but your enemy. Conceivably, it could be both simultaneously, as Our Lord implied in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Translating Charity's commandment into the concrete, it means that you must love your enemy as you love yourself. Does that mean that you must love Hitler as you love yourself, or Kasio, or the thief who stole your tires, or the woman who said you had so many wrinkles that you had to screw on your hat? It means just that. But how can you love that kind of enemy as you love yourself?

Well, how do you love yourself? Do you like the way you look? If you did, you would not try to improve it out of a box. Did you ever want to be anyone else? Why do you lie about your age? Do you dislike your dish-pan hands, your pink toothbrush, your athlete's foot? Do you hate yourself when you miss the golf ball? Do you like yourself when you spread gossip, run down your neighbor's reputation, are irritable and moody?

You do not like yourself in these moments. At the same time, you do love yourself, and you know you do! When you come into a room you invariably pick out the softest chair; you buy yourself good clothes, treat yourself to nice presents; when anyone says you are intelligent or beautiful, you always feel that such a person is of very sound judgment. But when people say you are "catty" or selfish, you feel they have not understood your good nature, or maybe they are "Fascists."

Thus, you love yourself, and yet you do not love yourself. What you love about yourself is the person that God made; what you hate about yourself is that God-made person whom you spoiled. You like the sinner, but you hate the sin. That is why when you do wrong, you ask to be given another chance, or you promise to do better, or you find excuses. But you never deny there is hope.

That is just the way Our Lord intended that you should love your enemies: Love them as you love yourself, hating their sin, loving them as sinners;

³Luke 10:27.

disliking that which blurs the Divine image, liking the Divine image which is beneath the blur; never arrogating to yourself a greater right to God's love than they, since deep in your own heart you know that no one could be less deserving of His love than you. And when you see them receiving the just due of their crimes, you do not gloat over them, but say: "There I go, except for the grace of God."

In this spirit we are to understand the words of Our Lord: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that calumniate you. And to him that striketh thee on the *one* cheek, offer also the other. And him, that taketh away from thee thy cloak, forbid not to take thy coat also."⁴ It is Christian to hate the evil of anti-Christians, but not without praying for these enemies that they might be saved, for "God commendeth his charity towards us; because when as yet we were sinners, Christ died for us."⁵

If, then, you bear a hatred toward anyone, overcome it by doing that person a favor. You can begin to like classical music only by listening to it, and you can make friends out of your enemies only by practising charity. "If anyone strike you on the right cheek, turn your left"—for that kills hate! Hate dies in the germ.

Your knowledge will get out of date; your statistics will be old next month; the theories you learned in college are already antiquated. But love never gets out of date. Love, therefore, all things, and all persons in God.

So long as there are poor, I am poor;
 So long as there are prisons, I am a prisoner;
 So long as there are sick, I am weak;
 So long as there is ignorance, I must learn the truth;
 So long as there is hate, I must love;
 So long as there is hunger, I am famished.

Such is the identification Our Divine Lord would have us make with all whom He made in love and for love. Where we do not find love, we must put it. Then everyone is lovable. There is nothing in all the world more calculated to inspire love for others than this Vision of Christ in our fellow man: "For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: Naked, and you covered me: sick and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me."⁶

⁴ Luke 6:27-29.

⁵ Rom 5:8.

⁶ Matt 25:35-36.

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