

CROSS AND CROWN

A THOMISTIC QUARTERLY OF SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY

EDITED BY THE DOMINICAN FATHERS
OF THE
PROVINCE OF ST. ALBERT THE GREAT

VOLUME

II

1950

R HERDER BOOK CO.

ST. LOUIS 2. MO.

Filishun

Eternal Youth

THE blessed are always thirsting and always filled. Their satiety is ever new, with a newness that does not pass. St. Augustine in Sermon 362, no. 29, deals admirably with this subject in a passage quoted by Bossuet in his fourth Sermon for the feast of All Saints. St. Augustine writes: "Our entire activity will be an *Amen*, an *Alleluia*: in other words, an assent to the truth and the expression of praise in adoration and thanksgiving. Do not grow sad, considering this activity in a completely material manner, and do not say here that if one were to stand, repeating continually *Amen*, *Alleluia*, he would soon be exhausted with boredom and would finally fall asleep repeating these words. This *Amen*, this *Alleluia* will not be expressed by evanescent sounds, but by 't'it sentiments of the soul on fire with love. What does this *Amen* sig'nify? What does this *Alleluia* mean? *Amen*: it is true; *Alleluia*: pra-w (,tou. God is immutable truth knowing no defect, no progress, no falting: o'I. no increase, nor the slightest inclination to falsity: eterami stable truth, remaining fore',er incorruptible.

Thus we shall indeed say *Amen*, but with an insatiable satiety: with satiety, because we shall possess perfect abundance; but with a satiety that is always insatiable, if we may speak in this fashion, because this good, which is always satisfying, will produce in us an ever new pleasure. In the degree, therefore, in which you will be insatiably sated with " 'rur i. in the same degree you will say by this insatiable truth: * . I ■ . :1 :s true. Rest and see; this will be a continual sabbath." It will - m curnd repose in a sovereign action which will not end, and which ' in a way be always new; rest in God eternally possessed and loved 'c 4 * ciðe md more than ourselves. The Greek philosophers dis- - - v aether beatitude is found in pleasure in movement, or in pleas- •ure in repose. Aristotle shows clearly that the highest joy is that which ð me ciMr.picment. the completion of perfect normal activity, which no

longer tends toward its end but possesses it and rests in it. This is realized in an eminent degree in the beatitude of heaven.

The joy found in this beatitude is a continually new satiety, because its newness never ends. The first instant of the beatific vision lasts forever, like an eternal morning, an eternal springtime, an eternal youth. This is explained by consideration of the very beatitude of God. He possesses His life all at once in the single instant of immobile eternity. He cannot grow old; for Him there is no past, no future, but an eternal present which contains eminently all time, as the summit of a pyramid or of a cone contains eminently all the points of the base of this geometric figure, or as the gaze of a man on a mountain embraces the whole valley below. God thus possesses His life all at once, *tata simul*, without beginning or end; this is the definition of eternity.

We can concede this wealth when we are told that Mozart in composing a melody heard it *all at once* in the musical law which produced it; he heard the end while composing the beginning. Thus great scholars embrace all their knowledge in a single glance.

The acation of the saints is likewise measured by the single instant of immortality. As the moment of their entrance into heaven will not pass; its newness, its freshness

Therefore, in this sense, the vision will

50 which will result from it.

In the vision of the saints

increases, because we see ever more clearly the

reception of the divine light; the more we receive it, the more clearly we possess sensible goods.

If a man lives ten, twenty years, 433 more
 always new, may take it as a sign of
 divine origin. Likewise the word of God gives

a man forget temporarily the difficulties of business, the pressing duties of home, the excessively eager search for vain amusements. It is divine truth and supreme goodness that are glimpsed which nourish the soul. As Bossuet says (*Joe. cir.*): "If this divine truth delights us when expressed by evanescent sounds, how greatly will it ravish us when it will speak to us in its own eternally permanent voice. . . . God in heaven does not utter many words; He utters only one, the same for all eternity, His Word, and He has said everything. It is in His Word that we shall see all." "Taste and see that the Lord is sweet," says the Psalmist, and you shall have, as it were, the prelude of the joy of heaven. It will be repose in unceasing action, in an immediate vision of God, which will fill the soul with love and with a continually new *Gaudium de veritate et de bonitate divina*.

St. Thomas,[®] following St. Augustine, says that, whereas man grows weary of sensible goods when he possesses them, the contrary is true of spiritual goods; the more a man possesses spiritual goods, the more he loves them; for they are not consumed, they are not exhausted, and they are of a nature to produce an always new joy in us. This is sometimes experienced in prayer; it is like the realization of the admirable prayer of St. Nicholas of Flüe: "My Lord and my God, take from me all that hinders me from going to Thee; give me that which will lead me to Thee. Take me from myself and give me entirely to Thyself in order that I may belong completely to Thee." It is as if God penetrated more and more deeply the depths of our spiritual will, which desires increasingly to be seized and, as it were, wounded by Him, so that He may possess it fully.

This doctrine is admirably expressed by the author of *Confessions*. "In all things and above all rest in God. O my soul, because He is the eternal repose of the saints. Loving and sweet Jesus, grant that I may rest in Thee more than in all creatures; more than in health, beauty, Honors, and glory; more than in every power and dignity, more than in my knowledge, riches, and arts; more than in all merit and every deservement. more even than in Thy gifts and all the rewards that Thou canst lavish upon me, and the transports that the soul can

£



[®] *Conf.* (a. 10, q. 2. a. 1. ad 1. ¹: "et . . . * . . . 4"

receive and feel; more finally than in the Angels and Archangels and all the heavenly host; above all things visible and invisible, more than in all that is not Thee, O my God! For Thou alone art infinitely good. ... Thus all that Thou dost give me outside of Thyself, all Thou dost reveal to me concerning Thyself is too little and does not suffice me if I do not see Thee, if I do not possess Thee fully, resting in Thee alone.' Such is the joy of heaven, always new, because its newness and its freshness do not pass and will last forever. For this reason we call it not only the future life but eternal life.

SOVEREIGNLY SPONTANEOUS LOVE SUPERIOR TO LIBERTY

In heaven the love of charity will take on new modalities; it will be a love of God superior to liberty, a love nothing will be able to make us lose, which nothing will be able in any way to diminish. On earth our love of God remains free, because we do not see God face to face. Under one aspect He appears very good to us, and under another He may appear too exacting; certain of His commandments may displease the egoism or pride that still remains in us. Consequently our love for Him remains free and at the same time meritorious.

In heaven, on the contrary, we shall see infinite Goodness as it is in itself. It will be impossible for us to find in it the slightest aspect that can displease us or alienate us, the slightest pretext for not loving it above all else. For preferring anything to it, or for suspending for a single instant our act of love in which there will be no shadow of weariness. Infinite Goodness, seen immediately, will so perfectly fill up our capacity that, as St. Thomas, that it will draw our love irresistibly, more even than in ecstasy on earth where the love of God still remains free and meritorious. We shall be in the happy necessity of loving Him alone.

HmajwMy >> d-e d^ths ,f w

'litere will «kl lorgger w i''hrferexe r. ;ilenw-...
exnutig is russe.* c.jrv n'.rrT. i Ui*.. rhe ;r.difK-rencs
r. v l'er , - 'le-' k Ii. .c'a ; ' " 're »>>t and Tor good

of our will, of our capacity for spiritual love, which God alone seen face to face can fill.

In heaven our love of God will, therefore, be supremely spontaneous, not at all forced, but no longer free; we shall be unable not to love God seen face to face. This love will of a certainty not be inferior to liberty and merit like a thoughtless and involuntary act of the sensible appetites; but it will be above liberty and merit like the very spontaneous love which God has for Himself from all eternity, and which is common to the three divine Persons. God necessarily loves His infinite goodness. For the same reason, like the beatific vision of which it will be the necessary consequence, our act of love of God will never be interrupted and will never more be able to lose any of its fervor.

Recently this lofty truth found expression in the writings of a person who has no human culture, but who seems to be advanced in the ways of prayer. "In heaven," she says, "the soul receives God into itself and

ment of God with all its strength and all possible vigor. It possesses God and is possessed by Him, and it experiences this enjoyment as its eternal state." This state is always new in the sense that, like an eternal morning, its newness never fades.

The Impeccability of the Blessed

Another effect of the beatific vision is the impeccability of the blessed. They are impeccable not only because God preserves them from sin as on earth He preserves saints confirmed in grace, but because as soon as in possession of the beatific vision of infinite Goodness, cannot

'Of. Sr. Thomas, la q. h»5.,a- «= "Now the .yH U g..f'.
in- Go, alone sufficiently wd effieM.oWQ = < sufficiently as '...
He alone fills *e of >"r £<l(m of Ae divine ewer.ee.
ôb-i..t... la Ihe, q. 4. a. * iuppiness s of hirn whi sees the wseness o.
's-nq.h n ma very essence of goneness. So «ha. t. i at;on God; p* » the vr
God. of necewiw loves »>><<< whatever he loves wider th*
him who dees nûi see God's essence, of necessio
:w .ira r.rior. of good ^cb he knows. necessity of loving, esen
Tbomi« cL^monfy la The« .Ûl of the bteeed «
< f« as its exercise, foil' d , a n d overwhelmed by the Sosere<f
filled, fitted to capacity, idled to overflow

--

CROSS AND CROW N

away from it by mortal sin, or find the slightest pretext for loving it less for a single moment.® Just as on earth man cannot cease to wish to be happy, although he often seeks happiness where it is not to be found, even at times in suicide, so in heaven the saints cannot cease to will to love God seen face to face, or to will to contemplate Him. However, they remain free to love some finite good, a certain soul in preference to another, to pray for it, and they freely execute God's orders in order to assist us But this liberty never deviates in the direction of evil; it differs from us distantly resembles the divine liberty, which is at one and the same time supreme and impeccable. This was true even here on earth of the

inspired by the beatific vision from the first were free acts Jesus performed on earth
Zr For He Was a traveler?
since they have reached their journey and of merit. Their
m, Xg>> “ 01 , which ha, longer

-^

"from God, it **fdtavTth** vision can nor s' nature, cannot be beatitude by reason of its very
"These wicked shall 7^ * "eternal life" ^csus sa'S:
;no Ufc e crlastine '7 St. P II?° ever"st'nS Punishment: but the just,
?b>ry. ' Sr paci 'n.s A sPcal« of 'a never fajjng crt)Wn of
decurcv F,lr chat which i/ * 'incorruptible'; and he also
'tribulation. wofseth for m ^"" PF"6ΠΠ !nn":enrarv and fight of our
rf glory – The Cre(fo * ' <<<edingly an eternal weight
^•emam." nJs *** words: 'Credo in viram

Rf o ik v d Gkrrwk»v -L«graxgf. θ·P·

r ,M· Timo'h.

- * «,UUI
K,>«arv Coll

•a. l
^WMTWIS. 'j
- u <

The Wanton Stings

LIFE without pain and passion would be a rather dull affair. In fact, it would be something close to tragedy, since pain and passion give us so many occasions of laying up merit. Not that we ever need worry about being without conflict. With human nature shaped as it is, and with the wounds of original sin so manifest in our very vitals, we shall never want for grief and tears. Just so we keep an eye and ear open to the brighter side of things! After all, it is as natural to laugh as to cry. So long as man remains man, a balance of mind and matter, he must be able to see the humor as well as the pathos of life. This goes for all of us: saints and sinners, Jews and Gentiles. "If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?" Perish the thought of tickling father abbot merely to note how he would react. Or of wronging mother general in order to prove the rightness of Shylock's predictions. Yet, so surely as they are human beings, father abbot and mother general would tend to behave as Shylock says. Neither habit nor vows nor even the grace of God can change the essentials of human nature, though they often work miracles in moderating the actions of that nature. That if priests and sisters felt no natural impulse to laugh or cry or wreak revenue, it might warrant some examination of their state of health.

What I am trying to say is that passion is as natural to man as eating and drinking, it is quite as natural as having a material side to his make-up, which is certainly the way almighty God made him. Without the body, there could be no passion in the proper sense or the word. But without the body, there could be no man, either. There is some inevitable implication.

For instance, have you ever stopped to think that you can, in a way, be dead, sick and sad at the sin in the world, but that an angel is not able to share this blessed kind of sympathy with you? Or that you can be stirred