

# THE SHINING OCEAN

A Treatise on the Primordial Substance of  
Out-of-Body Travel

By Marilyn Hughes  
An Out-of-Body Travel Book

*The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation!*

<http://outofbodytravel.org>





# THE SHINING OCEAN

A Treatise on the Primordial Substance of  
Out-of-Body Travel

By Marilyn Hughes

An Out-of-Body Travel Book

*The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation!*

<http://outofbodytravel.org>





Copyright 2015, Marilynn Hughes

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this work or portions thereof in any form whatsoever without permission in writing from the publisher and author, except for brief passages in connection with a review.

All credits for quotations are included in the Bibliography.

For information, write to:

*The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation!*

**<http://outofbodytravel.org>**

**[MarilynnHughes@outofbodytravel.org](mailto:MarilynnHughes@outofbodytravel.org)**

If this book is unavailable from your local bookseller, it may be obtained directly from the Out-of-Body Travel Foundation by going to [www.outofbodytravel.org](http://www.outofbodytravel.org).

Having worked primarily in radio broadcasting, Marilynn Hughes spent several years as a news reporter, producer and anchor before deciding to stay at home with her three children. She's experienced, researched, written, and taught about out-of-body travel since 1987.

### **Books by Marilynn Hughes:**

**Come to Wisdom's Door**

**How to Have an Out-of-Body Experience!**

**OUT-OF-BODY EXPERIENCES**

**What you Need to know**

*The Hammer of Mysticism*

Encyclopedic Journey into Mystical Processes and Terms

*The Fragrance of the Mystical  
Rose*

The Revelation of the Celestial Mysteries from the Enclosed  
Garden of God

*The Mysteries of the Redemption*

*A Treatise on Out-of-Body Travel and Mysticism*

*The Mysteries of the Redemption Series in Five  
Volumes*

*(Same Book - Choose Your Format!)*

**Prelude to a Dream**  
**Passage to the Ancient**  
**Medicine Woman Within a Dream**  
**Absolute Dissolution of Body and Mind**  
**The Mystical Jesus**

*The Mysteries of the Redemption*  
**Prayer Book**

*The Mysteries of the Redemption*  
**Devotional**

**GALACTICA**

*A Treatise on Death, Dying and the Afterlife*

**THE PALACE OF ANCIENT KNOWLEDGE**

*A Treatise on Ancient Mysteries*

*Touched by the Nails*

*(Watch and Wait)*

*A Karmic Journey Revealed!*

**PRINCIPLES OF THE WORLD BEYOND DEATH**

**Books of Terror**

**Evil Exists, it's Closer than you Think**

Based on the Visions of Mary Hughes

**By Marilyn Hughes**

**EVERGREEN**

**THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A MYSTIC**

**The Mystical Captive**  
**The Mystical Freeborn**

## **The Royal Question**

### THE SOLITARY

*In my Aloneness, I Feel the Wind.  
It has Consciousness, it has Breath.  
And it Speaks.*

### THE EMISSARY

*Sister Silence as Sacrament*

### THE POTENTATE

*Crown Him with Many Crowns*

### THE SHINING OCEAN

**A Treatise on the Primordial Substance of  
Out-of-Body Travel**

**Michael Jackson:**

**The Afterlife Experiences**

*A Theology of Michael Jackson's Life and Lyrics*

**Michael Jackson:**

**The Afterlife Experiences II**

*Michael Jackson's American Dream to Heal the World*

**Michael Jackson:**

**The Afterlife Experiences III**

*The Confessions of Michael Jackson*

**Comparative Religious Mystical Theology**

*Out-of-Body Travel in World Religion*

**Forgotten Mystics in World Religions**

*Lesser Known Out-of-Body Experiences*

Selfishness and Self-Will  
The Path to Selflessness in World Religions

A Life of Cultivation

Near Death and Out-of-Body Experiences  
(Auspicious Births and Deaths)  
Of the Prophets, Saints, Mystics and Sages in World Religions

The Voice of the Prophets  
Wisdom of the Ages - Volumes 1 - 12

At the Feet of the Masters

Teaching Stories of the Prophets in World  
Religions

World Religions and their Prophets

Miraculous Images:  
Photographs Containing God's Fingerprints

*Suffering:*

*The Fruits of Utter Desolation*

**We are all Shadows**

**The Overview Series**

The Oral Transmissions of the 52 Soto Zen Buddhist Ancestors  
The Doctors of the Catholic Church  
The General Councils of the Catholic Church  
Marian Apparitions in the Catholic Church  
Heresies in the Catholic Church  
Miraculous Phenomena in the Catholic Church  
Fascinating Figures in World Religion  
Practices, Prayer, Ritual, Liturgy, Sacraments and Theology in the  
Catholic Church  
Writers of the Philokalia  
Protestant Reforms  
Bridal Mysticism

**Mystic Knowledge Series:**



**Out-of-Body Travel  
Ghosts and Lost Souls  
Spirit Guides and Guardian Angels  
Reincarnation and Karma  
Spiritual Warfare, Angels and Demons  
Death, Dying and the Afterlife  
Heaven, Hell and Purgatory  
ExtraTerrestrials  
Destiny and Prophecy  
Initiations into the Mysteries  
Visions of Jesus and the Saints  
Ascension  
Suffering and Sickness  
Mystical Poetry**

## CHILDREN'S BOOKS

*The Former Angel! - A Children's Tale*  
(Ages 2 - 8)

**The Mystery of the Key to Heaven!**  
(Ages 2 - 10)

*Streams in the Willow*

*The Story of One Family's Transformation from Original Sin*

## COMPILATIONS

**Out-of-Body Travel and Near Death Experiences:**  
Compiled Works through 2006

**World Religions and Ancient Sacred Texts: Compiled**  
Compiled Works through 2006

**The Voice of the Prophets:**  
**Abridged Lesser Known Texts**

**The Mystical Captive Series:**  
**A Trilogy in One Volume**

**THE SOLITARY SERIES:**

## A Trilogy in One Volume

### Michael Jackson's Afterlife Experiences A Trilogy in One Volume

#### *The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation Journals*

- Journal One: The Importance of the Seven Virtues and Vices in Understanding the Practice of Out-of-Body Travel!*
- Journal Two: My Out-of-Body Journey with Sai Baba, Hindu Avatar!*
- Journal Three: The History of 'The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation!'*
- Journal Four: A Menage of Wonderful Writers and Artists!*
- Journal Five: The Stories of Cherokee Elder, Willy Whitefeather!*
- Journal Six: Discerning your Vocation in Life by Learning the Difference Between Knowledge and Knowing!*
- Journal Seven: When Tragedy Strikes*
- Journal Eight: Comparing the Buddhist Avalokiteswara's Descent into Hell with that of Jesus Christ!*
- Journal Nine: Huzur Maharaj Sawan Singh - Sant Mat (Sikh) Master Guru and Grandson Maharaj Charan Singh - Sant Mat (Sikh) Master Guru*
- Journal Ten: The Great Beyond*
- Journal Eleven: Ghosts and Lost Souls: Our Responsibility*
- Journal Twelve: The 800th Anniversary of Jalalludin Rumi, and the True Spiritual Heritage of Afghanistan and the Middle East*
- Journal Thirteen: Pensatia - Forgotten Rosicrucian Mystic*
- Journal Fourteen: Reverend John Macgowan - Forgotten Protestant Mystic*
- Journal Fifteen: A. Farnese - Forgotten Mystic Amanuensis (to Franchezzo)*
- Journal Sixteen: Comte St. Germain - Forgotten Immortal Mystic of the Mystery Schools*
- Journal Seventeen: Franz Hartmann - Forgotten Mystical Adept*
- Journal Eighteen: SA'D UD DIN MAHMÛD SHABISTARĪ -Forgotten Islamic Sufi Mystic*
- Journal Nineteen: Dionysius - Forgotten Christian Mystic of the Early Church*
- Issue Twenty: Acvaghosha - Forgotten Buddhist Mystic of the Mahayana Path*
- Issue Twenty One: Bishop Shelemon of Armenia - Forgotten Nestorian Christian Mystic*
- Issue Twenty Two: Abû Sa'id Ibn Abi 'l-Khayr- Forgotten Islamic Mystic*
- Issue Twenty Three: Rev. G. Vale Owen - Forgotten Christian Mystic*
- Issue Twenty Four: Swami Abhedânanda- Forgotten Hindu Mystic*
- Issue Twenty Five: Moses Maimonides - Forgotten Jewish Mystic*
- Issue Twenty Six: The Bab - Forgotten Baha'i Mystic*
- Issue Twenty Seven: Shinran Shonin - Forgotten Mystic of Pure Land Buddhism*
- Issue Twenty Eight: Bustan of Sadi - Forgotten Persian Islamic Mystic*
- Issue Twenty Nine: John Bunyan - Forgotten Protestant Christian Mystic*
- Issue Thirty: Ixtlilxochitl and Nezahualcoyotl - Forgotten Aztec Mystics and Myth Bearers*

## *Mystics Magazine*

*Issue One – Christian Mystical Theology, Conversations with Jacob Boehme*  
*Issue Two – Buddhist Mystical Theology, Conversations with Charaka and Acvagasha*  
*Issue Three – Islamic Mystical Theology, Conversations with Imam Ghazzali*  
*Issue Four – Egyptian Mystical Theology, Conversations with W. Marsham Adams*  
*Issue Five – Hindu Mystical Theology, Conversations with Sri Ramakrishna*  
*Issue Six – Jewish Mystical Theology, Conversations with Rabbi Simeon*  
*Issue Seven – Sikh Mystical Theology, Conversations with Guru Nanak*  
*Issue Eight – Zoroastrian Mystical Theology, Conversations with Charles William King*  
*Issue Nine – Bahai Mystical Theology, Conversations with Bahauallah*

**Go to our Web-Site:**

*The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation!*

**[Http://outofbodytravel.org](http://outofbodytravel.org)**

I dedicate this book to two 19<sup>th</sup> century priests whom I've never met but who have changed my life forever . . . Fr. Augustin Poulain, S.J., and Fr. Dom Prosper Gueranger, O.S.B. May their work never be lost or forgotten and inspire many generations to come.

CONTENTS:

# THE SHINING OCEAN

A Treatise on the Primordial Substance of  
Out-of-Body Travel

By Marilyn Hughes

**INTRODUCTION - 14**

**CHAPTER ONE - 15**  
**How Did We Get Here?**

**Vision**

**Teaching**

**Prayer**

**CHAPTER TWO - 55**  
**Nobody Wants their Life to go Badly, it's Just the  
Nature of Things**

**Vision**

**Teaching**

**Prayer**

**CHAPTER THREE - 118**  
**And the Lord Said, "I Will Protect You"**

Vision  
Teaching  
Prayer

**CHAPTER FOUR - 165**

All things came out from God, all things go back to  
God  
Teaching  
Prayer

**CHAPTER FIVE - 183**

"I am the bread of the strong. . . . Thou wilt not  
convert Me into thee, as the food of thy flesh; but  
thou shalt be converted into Me."  
Teaching  
Prayer

**CHAPTER SIX - 232**

"The Eucharist is "the source and summit of the  
Christian life."  
Teaching  
Prayer

**CHAPTER SEVEN - 394**

The Heights and Depths of Mystical Experiences  
Teaching  
Prayer

**SOURCES - 780**

# THE SHINING OCEAN

A Treatise on the Primordial Substance of  
Out-of-Body Travel

By Marilyn Hughes

## INTRODUCTION

(Sequel to 'Out-of-Body Travel and Mysticism,' 'The Hammer of Mysticism,' and 'The Fragrance of the Mystical Rose') Where have you been? To where do you go? Come with me, allow me to take you on an out-of-body travel journey into the deepest recesses of human consciousness and religious thought. This out-of-body travel journey is not meant to be simple, nor is it meant to be quick . . . it is meant to be savoured. It is a distant and remote journey to the deepest recesses of the heart of God which can only be known through the mightiest of mystical experience.

It is okay if you feel moved to flip through the pages and try to get a feel for the out-of-body adventure to come ahead of time, but I ask that after you have done this, that you make a resolved effort to bring your spirit forward and gather it unto itself. For this out-of-body travel journey requires much of you, and it will not relent its seeking. Come . . .

## CHAPTER ONE

### How did we get here?

(Bolded items are Additional Comments or Commentaries  
Added by Marilyn Hughes)



## Vision

"Hark!  
The glistening  
Harrowed by night's fall  
For thence  
The ocean of being shines

And brings forth its light

Hark, I say

Hark, I say

Lo, Behold

How did we get here?" – Marilyn Hughes

(Marilynn's Vision) The harrowing mists enveloped me in sorrow and total despair. My soul had been taken to embark upon the earthly wars which continued to plague humankind even in my own era. They were relentless and beyond the scope of what evil I could understand.

It was horrible. All of us had been drafted to the horrid scene to fight the war in shifts. So we would go out into the battlefield as bombs, bullets and chemicals flew in all manner of disarray. All was dark, dank, smoky and filled with deposits of flesh and the stench of rotting souls.

Each one of us bore the scars of battling these forces over and over again . . . each one of us had been sent into battle repeatedly, over and over again, with only short respites.

Returning to our place of rest which was just outside the battlefields of earth, the souls of the just who continued to wage the fight against evil were worn, transparent, dusty, hopeless, dark, bending over with the burden of so much war neverending . . . every few moments, another line of the embattled warriors walked by my spirit in a line of despair, their tattered,



worn and dirty clothing a sign of the wounds they had endured and the 'hits' they had taken on behalf of humankind.

I was overwhelmed with the poverty of despair as were the others who try as they might, could barely lift their souls to stand again to face yet another battle. The goal had been simple. But yet, how had it gone so wrong? A part of me knew . . . but I could not express it.

### *From the Liturgical Year*

"Now, how is charity to be perfected in them? It must abound, more and more in knowledge and all understanding of salvation, that is, in faith. It is faith that constitutes the basis of all supernatural virtue. A restricted, a diminished, faith could never support a large and high-minded charity. Those men, therefore, are deceiving themselves whose love for revealed truth does not keep pace with their charity! Such Christianity as that believes as little as it may; it has a nervous dread of new definitions; and out of respect for error, it cleverly and continually narrows the supernatural horizon. Charity, they say, is the queen of virtues; it makes them take everything easily, even lies against truth; to give the same rights to error as to truth is, in their estimation, the highest point of Christian civilization grounded on love! They quite forget that the first object of charity, *God who is substantial Truth, has no greater enemy than a lie*; they

cannot understand how it is that a Christian does not do a work of love by putting on the same footing the Object beloved and His mortal enemy!"

*The Liturgical Year, Fr. Dom Prosper Gueranger,  
O.S.B., Volume, XI, Twenty Second Sunday after  
Pentecost, Loreto Publications, 2013*

(Marilynn's Vision) - I, too, was greatly wounded, overwhelmed and not certain how I could continue fighting such a losing battle against the dark forces which had been such a huge part of the history of the mortal world. But I had to go in again, it was required of me . . . and as I swept into the battlefield, my strength had been so worn and weakened, that I took upon myself many, many 'hits.' The bombs and the bullets permeated my spirit like shrapnel and it was impossible not to be hit on many fronts all at the same time. After my time in the fight, I again retreated to our place of rest.

Another female soldier who was so weakened by the battle she literally had fallen to the floor in a heap of damaged flesh upon the ground, was begging to be relieved of duty. She wished to leave the battle, and she had earned such a right.

But, you see, this battle was not something we could abandon. And however much the Divine Essence might wish to give us rest, we could not do so. To do so would be to hand over the remaining remnant of

the souls of the earth to the dark side, to Satan and his minions; and to give up on their eternal salvation and their redemption. How could God allow this?

No matter how desperate the remnant of the spiritual warriors had become, God could not release us from our burden. For we had come to fight this battle although none of us had realized how hard fought it would become, nor did we know the depth of the individual sacrifice it would require of us on our sojourn to the earthly sphere.

The young woman gave up, breathed her last and returned to her heavenly homeland. Her choice was not judged but understood. She had nothing left to give to a world so devoid of spiritual seeking.

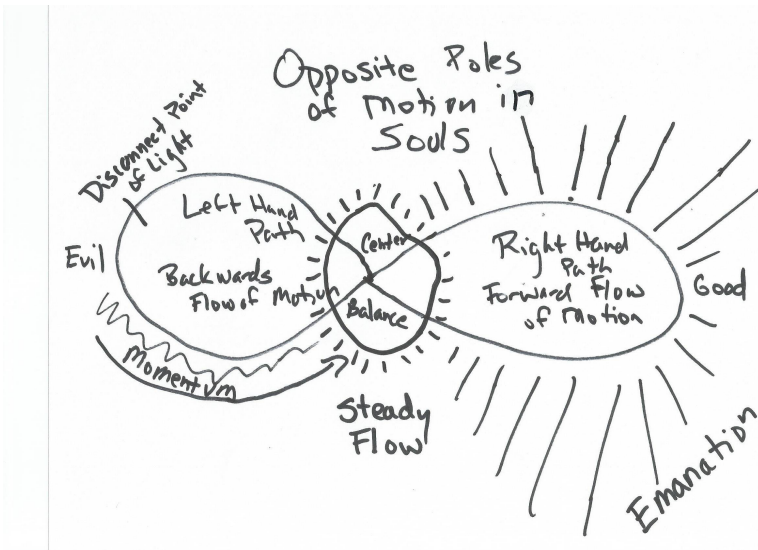
But we had to continue for the battle was never ending and raged like a fire in the night as the shambles of civilization were embered into the realms of destruction and hopeless loss.

In order to continue fighting in this war which had many aeons past held my own soul in bondage, I had to remind myself of the nature of God as a continuing unfoldment.

But I had to also remember that the souls of the lost for whom we fought were our brothers and sisters who had gotten lost in the opposing poles of good and evil.

Although they had been so powerfully swept away

into the evil pole of creation, it remained our duty to help swing the integrity of those souls back to the good.



(Marilynn's Vision) Any forward motion could bring them into the movement and momentum which would cast them away from their lot and force their momentum towards its opposite. And by thus traveling, their souls would achieve the quality of *balance*.

*From the Secret Teachings of All Ages*

“Of Hegel it has been said that he began with nothing and showed with logical precision how everything had proceeded from it (intellectual intuition) in logical order. Hegel elevated logic to a position of supreme importance, in fact as a quality of the Absolute itself. God he conceived to be a process of unfolding which never attains to the condition of unfoldment. In like manner, thought is without either beginning or end. Hegel further believed that all things owe their existence to their opposites and that all opposites are actually identical. Thus the only existence is the relationship of opposites to each other, through whose combinations new elements are produced. As the Divine Mind is an eternal process of thought never accomplished, Hegel assails the very foundation of theism and his philosophy limits immortality to the everflowing Deity alone. Evolution is consequently the never-ending flow of Divine Consciousness out of itself; all creation, though continually moving, never arrives at any state other than that of ceaseless flow.”

*The Secret Teachings of All Ages, Manly P. Hall,  
Readers Version, Philosophical Research Society,  
2003*

(Marilynn’s Vision) Without warning and without a sound, another evil remnant entered the battlefield and, in an instant, changed everything.

They had with them a digital device which could

instill within humankind a sort of demonic mesmerization en masse. Instantly, all of us realized this was a major game-changer and if we were unable to somehow capture this device from them, we would lose the majority of the souls of humanity within a single moment.

The evil remnant brought with them literally hundreds of thousands of soldiers of the deep and dark, hordes really . . . Multitudes descended upon us, and within an instant, I found myself alone.

I did not know if this meant that I was the only one of the spiritual warriors who had been fighting who was left, or if we had all been somehow separated. It seemed possible that the digital signal being projected by the evil remnant could have isolated us each to our own.

And as I watched in horror, I witnessed the hordes of demonic forces instantly program demonic mesmerization into the soul of humanity.

The people of the world instantly lined up like armies and became minions of the puppeteers of darkness without even realizing what they had just done.

Because humanity rides the line between good and evil with such casuality, any type of input from below can target them and contain them within the confines of the hellish fantasy. Good becomes evil, and evil good.

It appeared without question beyond hope.

The signal had pulled what appeared to be almost all if not all of humanity into a synchronistic alignment with the demonic. And by all appearances, there was nothing further any of us could do, these souls were lost and beyond hope of retrieval.

In despair, I wandered quietly the abandoned dwellings and streets of the earth trying to stay out of sight of the mass of the people who were now set to destroy along with the satanic forces who had overcome them any spiritual warrior they might come across.

Thankfully, they didn't seem to realize that any of us were left. And I knew not if I was alone, or if the others had been isolated through a projected frequency, as well.

I sat down on a concrete wasteland, wept and gave up . . .

But before I could even begin to lament, an angel appeared before me. She was eminent in the virtue of hopefulness, and she reminded me of my obligation to pray for wisdom.

*From the Holy Bible*

"I prayed and prudence was given me; I pleaded, and the spirit of wisdom came to me. I preferred her to

scepter and throne, and deemed riches nothing in comparison with her, nor did I liken any priceless gem to her; because all gold, in view of her, is a little sand, and before her, silver is to be accounted mire. Beyond health and comeliness I loved her, and I chose to have her rather than the light, because the splendor of her never yields to sleep. Yet all good things together came to me in her company, and countless riches at her hands.”

*The Holy Bible, Old Testament, The Book of Wisdom,  
7:7-11*

(Marilynn’s Vision) And as it was so, she took me on a grand journey away from the wastelands of the mortal realms to a singular room located somewhere in the vast cosmos of which I was not allowed to know.

It was a humble dwelling, it actually looked somewhat old. A white and very simple one room cell in the form of a small building for someone that the angel insisted I turn to for assistance. It lay quietly on a flat, but green, grassy field. A single very tall tree towered above it and gave it shade.

The windows were not small but not big enough to make it any easier for me to know of whom she might be speaking. They were split with rectangular dividers and each window had nine segments.



Immediately, I remembered that there are nine choirs of angels and three orders.

Orders of the First Choir are:  
Seraphim - Cherubim - Thrones

Orders of the Second Choir are:  
Dominations - Virtues - Powers

Orders of the Third Choir are:  
Principalities - Archangels - Angels

The angel began to pray very quietly within the confines of her heart. I tried to hear her words, but struggled because she was whispering. But I could hear that she was praying a novena to St. Michael the Archangel. And as she did, a being of infinite majesty instantly appeared before us.

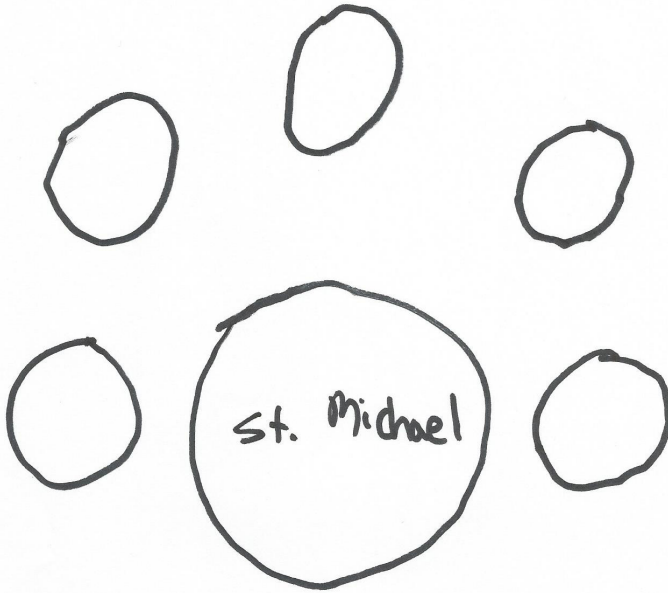
“Saint Michael the Archangel,  
loyal champion of God and His People.  
I turn to you with confidence  
and seek your powerful intercession.  
For the love of God,  
Who made you so glorious in grace and power,  
and for the love of the Mother of Jesus, the  
Queen of the Angels,  
be pleased to hear our prayer.  
You know the value of our souls in the eyes of  
God.  
May no stain of evil ever disfigure its beauty.  
Help us to conquer the evil spirit who tempts  
us.

We desire to imitate your loyalty to God and  
Holy Mother Church  
and your great love for God and people.  
And since you are God's messenger for the  
care of His people,  
we entrust to you these special intentions:  
The salvation of the world  
Lord, hear and grant our special intentions for  
this Novena.  
Amen."

St. Michael the Archangel was dressed in a blue garment and his wings were torrential in their splendor and height. White of the purest snow, they towered above us like the silken heavenly ethers which were misty and fluid, yet solid and strong in their appearance. His arms were extremely muscular, I hadn't noticed this feature of him in previous visions wherein I had deigned to be honored by his presence, but I noticed it now and it would prove to be of import as the journey would indeed progress.

He said nothing.

St. Michael was standing in the center of two large balls of light in the front row, and three balls of light in the back row, a formation of some kind of his heavenly ministers.



(Marilynn's Vision) Still, I hesitated, for I knew that it was St. Michael and his heavenly assistants against hundreds of thousands - perhaps millions - who had detained their souls to evil, darkness and the backwards flow.

But before I could even think to take my eyes off of him and the balls of light bearing heavenly assistance, the ravages of the long fought war appeared in our midst, on this shore, in this sacred place wherein God had deigned to retreat his most holy archangel.

Unbeknownst to me, hundreds of thousands of dark forces had followed us to this sacred location. And

before I could even realize that this had happened, they viciously went towards St. Michael and his light guard.

My surprise could not be bound when I saw that St. Michael merely lifted one of his very large arms and they were destroyed, banished, gone, inert, vacuous, conquered. I watched in awe as several more armies came in his direction, and with a fierce movement of his arms, they were defeated.

### *From the Liturgical Year*

“Leo the First, a Tuscan by birth, governed the Church at the period when Attila, the king of the Huns, surnamed the Scourge of God, was invading Italy. Attila pillaged and burned the city of Aquileia, which he took after a three years siege. This done, he rushed on Rome like a wild firebrand. He had reached the place where the Mincio joins the Po, and was on the point of ordering his troops to pass the river, when he was met by Loe, who was moved with compassion at the misfortunes that were threatening Italy. Such was his superhuman eloquence, that he induced Attila (**the Hun**) to retrace his steps. When asked by his people how it was that, contrary to his custom, he (**Attila**) had yielded such ready obedience to the demands of the Roman Pontiff, the king answered, that he behld, whilst Leo was speaking, a personage clad in priestly robes, who stood near, with

a naked sword in his hand, and threatened him with death unless he obeyed the Pontiff.”

*The Liturgical Year, Dom Prosper Gueranger, O.S.P.,  
Volume VIII, St. Leo the Great*

*From the Liturgical Year*

“ . . . the pontiff won the battle, not so much by arms as by prayers. By divine revelation he knew of the victory the moment it was won, and announced it to his household.

*The Liturgical Year, Dom Prosper Gueranger, O.S.P.,  
Volume VIII, St. Pius V*

(Marilynn’s Vision) After destroying those forces which had so boldly followed us to this sacred isle, St. Michael lifted up into the ethers and flew towards the earthly and mortal realms, freeing all the souls who had been taken in the wake of the demonic mesmerization. And within those souls, he heralded the movement required to turn from the backwards flow and enter into the momentum towards balance and center.

He went around the world and freed the souls of humanity.

I was stunned to silence. It all meant something. That

which appeared hopeless had proven to be nothing to the strength and power of God. And it had come about through a simple prayer. How powerful prayer has shown itself to be?

*From the Book of Kings*

“So, he [The King of Syria] sent there horses and chariots and a great army; and they came by night, and surrounded the city. When the servant of the man of God [Elisha] rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was round about the city. And the servant said, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?” He said, “Fear not, for those are with us are more than those who are with them.” Then Elisha prayed, and said, “O Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see.” So the Lord *opened the eyes* of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”

*The Holy Bible, Old Testament, 2 Kings 6:14 - 17*

(Marilynn’s Vision) St. Michael turned my direction and gave me a stern reprisal, “Go, make the ocean shine . . . ” I knew he spoke of the ocean of being. Inherently, I understood that prayer was mechanism through which light was brought within it.

In my error of hopelessness, I had stood in despair relying on my own strength. But in the shining glory

of wisdom and prayer, I had remembered that we do nothing except it be in God.

*From the Carmelite Directory of the Spiritual Life*

“May the Lord divest you of the old man with his deeds, and may He clothe you with the new man who has been created according to God in the justice and sanctity of truth.”

*The Carmelite Directory of the Spiritual Life,  
Translated from the Latin, 1950*

## Teaching

*From the Inner Way*

“SERMON XXIV

*On the Feast of St Michael and All Angels*

*On the various and especial works of the nine choirs of Holy Angels in man, in his threefold state and being; that is in the outer man, his powers of reason, and in his being, formed in the image of God. How, by their care and supervision, he may be enabled to attain to the very highest degree of Perfection in a spiritual life.*

*Angeli eorum semper vident faciem Patris mei, qui in caelis est*

“Their angels always see the Face of My Father Who is in heaven.”

To-day is the Feast of St Michael and all Angels. We have already read to-day how this festival first arose, in consequence of the revelation on the mountain; therefore we will not refer to that now. The Gospel says: “Their Angels do always behold the Face of My Father Who is in heaven.” I know not with what words I can, or ought, to speak of these pure spirits, for they have neither hands nor feet, neither image, nor form, nor substance; neither can we understand the nature of their being; so how can we speak of them? We know not what they are; and that is not surprising, for we do not know ourselves, nor our souls by which we are made men, and from which we receive all that is good in us. How then can we understand these transcendent spirits, whose nobility far surpasses all the nobility that the world can show? Therefore let us discuss their behaviour towards us, and not the nature of their being. Their work is always to behold us, and to look upon us in the mirror of the Godhead regularly, effectually and truly, with discrimination; and they have a special and definite work to do in us; but God works unceasingly in us, much more truly and nobly; and they work with God in us, in the same way that the sun exercises a constant influence over the earth, while the stars co-operate with the sun in that influence on the earth, and on every creature in it. The



stars always look at the sun and reflect his rays, while the sun turns his face to them; and thus their works become indivisible; so that, were it possible for the least star to be removed from the heavens, all creatures, men and cattle would be destroyed.

Now, there are nine choirs of Angels, forming three hierarchies, in each of which there are three choirs. Now, these three hierarchies have each their own peculiar and different effect on the three parts of man. The first is the outer man, the second is his reason, and the third is his likeness to God; and yet all these three form one man. In all three the Angels have their work to do. And, besides this, every man has an Angel, who at his baptism was especially appointed to watch over him, into whose care he was committed, who stands by him, and helps him unceasingly, guarding him when sleeping and waking, in all places and in all his works and ways, whether evil or good. Were there nothing else for which we ought to love God dearly, and thank Him, surely this would be enough; that God has so closely united these exalted and invisible beings with us, that they may discipline us unceasingly. But, on the other hand, every man has also to deal with a peculiarly wicked angel, the Devil, who works against him unceasingly, and tries him as constantly as the good Angel. If we were wise and industrious, the Devil's opposition and his discipline would be more useful to us than those of the good Angels; for, were there no conflict, there could be no victory.

Now we must speak of the hierarchies. The lowest of

the hierarchies are called Angels; one with another they serve the outer man; they exhort and warn him, they help him and guide him towards that which is good; they watch over him with steady and constant discipline. If they did not thus watch over us, what innumerable evils do ye imagine, might not befall us? for numberless devils follow us perpetually, desiring to destroy us, either sleeping or waking. But these noble Angels anticipate them and prevent them.

The Archangels form the second choir. They are represented as priest, whose active employment is to serve at the Holy Sacrament; they thus serve, counsel, and help man in the efficacious reception of the Holy Sacrament of our Lord's Body.

The third choir consists of Virtues. They serve, counsel and admonish us to seek after natural and moral virtues, and they win for us the divine virtues of faith, hope and love. The men who follow them and commune much with them, are so virtuous that virtue becomes as easy and pleasant to them, as though it were part of their very nature and being. All the enemies, who have fallen from this choir, set themselves with all imaginable cunning against these men, desiring to entice them away, so that they may not reach that place, from which they themselves have been cast out. The stratagems to which they constantly have recourse, are incredible. Man ought to be very diligent in keeping guard against the hostile wickedness, which so marvellously surrounds him; for these enemies often make use of much secret dexterity in things which seem good; and, for the

most part, they strive to lead men into all kinds of diversions; and, when they find they are not succeeding, they place him in a position which seems good, that he may be content therewith, and may not strive to advance. Now, this is a most perilous condition in which to find ourselves, and now more than it ever was. As St Bernard says: "To stand still in the way of God, is to go backwards." All are in this condition who have worldly and self-satisfied hearts, and who say, "We do as many good works as other men, and we are well-pleased with ourselves; we shall fare better than they, and we will go on with our own ways and customs, as those did who were before us." But when great plagues come, those who imagine now that they are doing well will seem to be in great misery. Then the wicked angels, whom they have followed, will wonder and lament with them, and finally lead them away unopposed. Cases such as these are taking place even now. But when these horrible downfalls and plagues have passed away, then the holy Angels will make themselves known to men who have been purified, and will walk with them and commune with them openly.

Now we come to the second hierarchy. The Angels of which it is composed here an active supervision over the second division of man's nature; his reasoning powers, which place him far above all other creatures with animal nature, and make him like unto the Angels. The first choir is called *Potestates*, the second *Principatus*, and the third *Dominationes* signifying the mighty, the princes and the rulers. All these work in men, who, they find, have progressed

in virtue, so that they can control, both outwardly and inwardly, their senses and the outward expression of them, in all things; and in the inner man, their thoughts and intentions. These men are free and reign supreme over vice. Thus, we read of St Francis, that he had such power over the outer man, that directly he thought of some discipline, his body sprang forward, and said, "See, here am I." Such men are truly like the princes of the world, who are free and have none to control them. Thus these men are enabled in spirit to rule over all the actions of the outer and inner man. When the wicked angels see this, they are filled with vehement hatred against them, because they fear that these men will take their places. So they exercise all their ingenuity to bring them into the most awful temptations that can be conceived, and of which those who serve the world and the Evil One never heard nor imagined. Of these ways there are many, for they so earnestly desire to drag down the good. When they become so importunate that the poor man imagines he must lose either his life or his senses, then the noble Angels come, the Principatus, and drive them away, and the man has gained the victory. When they have been thus overcome, they never dare to attack the same man again; for they are too proud to do it; and they are terrified and give way before these powerful people, and before those who rule over this hierarchy. Then the rulers, Dominationes, come and enable these men to become so wise and prudent, that they can see through the stratagems of the enemy. At St Paul says, that neither the devil, the world, the flesh, nor any creature could gain a victory over him.

We now come to the third hierarchy; these Angels work and look into the innermost part of man; into that which was formed in the Image of God. The first choir of these is formed by the Thrones, the second by the Cherubim, and the third by the Seraphim.

The Thrones work in the innermost heart of man, so that he becomes like unto a kingly throne, where God delights to dwell, to reign and to judge, to reward and to work all His works in him and through him. These men's hearts are so irrevocably rooted in Divine Peace, that neither love nor sorrow, severity nor tenderness, can disturb them; as St Paul has said: "Neither death nor life." A hundred deaths would not move or terrify such men. In the same way that a dying man cares nothing for all the honour or shame that could be heaped upon him, because his thoughts are elsewhere, so also, when a man in his innermost heart is turned to God, he is a strong Throne of God, nothing can affright him, neither love nor sorrow, for he rests in that essential peace, which is the Dwelling-place of God; as David says: "*In pace factus est locus ejus.*" Preserve and guard peace, dear children, that no man take it from thee, and that the Dwelling-place of God may not be destroyed. O, dear child, preserve this, be silent, suffer, abstain from evil and rest in peace. Rest and trust and keep to thyself; do not run about too much; be not agitated, preoccupied or impulsive; but realise the Presence of thy Lord of Lords in thy heart, where He sits on His throne glorious and powerful, so that He may not be disturbed and His peace diminished.

Now, when men are resting in this peace, then the Cherubim come in all their brightness, and lighten up men's hearts with their godlike light as with a sudden glance. This glance pierces the men through and through; and their hearts are so filled with light, that, were it necessary, they could judge all men; and yet this illumination is but a glance; the quicker it is, the truer, the nobler and the surer.

Then come the burning Seraphim, with their flaming love, and they kindle love in the hearts of men; and this, too, is done in a moment, so that the love of man becomes so broad and wide that it embraces within itself the love of all things. It seems to him as though he would set all men alight; and all is so sudden and quick, that it seems to him as though he would be consumed himself. This flame is kindled in the innermost thoughts of the glorified man; and yet it lights up also the other two parts of man, his soul and the outer man. Such men become so godlike and so well-regulated, so truly resigned, virtuous, peaceful and calm, that no one is ever conscious of any infirmity in them, either in words or deeds; and yet they look upon themselves as nothing, and heed all as little as if it had taken place in some one a thousand miles away. They look upon all that God may work by them, or in them, as apart from themselves, taking no credit for it; for they think of nothing but their own absolute nothingness, and regard themselves as lower than all men. These verily are the heavens in which the Father dwells, as the Gospel says: "Their Angels always see the Face of My Father Who is in heaven." May God help us all thus to attain. Amen"

*Inner Way, John Tauler*

## Prayer

*From the Roman Raccolta*

"One day, after celebrating Mass, the aged Pope Leo XIII was in conference with the Cardinals when suddenly he sank to the floor in a deep swoon. Physicians who hastened to his side could find no trace of his pulse and feared that he had expired. However, after a short interval the Holy Father regained consciousness and exclaimed with great emotion: "Oh, what a horrible picture I have been permitted to see!"



Pope Leo XIII, 1884

He had been shown a vision of evil spirits who had been released from Hell and their efforts to destroy the Church. But in the midst of the horror the archangel St. Michael appeared and cast Satan and his legions into the abyss of hell.

Soon afterwards Pope Leo XIII composed the following prayer to Saint Michael, which is the original version:

### **Prayer to Holy Michael the Archangel**

Holy Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the power of God cast into hell Satan and all the other evil spirits who wander through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

### **Original - Prayer to St. Michael**

“O Glorious Prince of the heavenly host, St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in the battle and in the terrible warfare that we are waging against the principalities and powers, against the rulers of this world of darkness, against the evil spirits. Come to the aid of man, whom Almighty God created immortal, made in His own image and likeness, and redeemed at a great price from the tyranny of Satan.

“Fight this day the battle of the Lord, together with the holy angels, as already thou hast fought the leader of the proud angels, Lucifer, and his apostate host,



who were powerless to resist thee, nor was there place for them any longer in Heaven. That cruel, ancient serpent, who is called the devil or Satan who seduces the whole world, was cast into the abyss with his angels. Behold, this primeval enemy and slayer of men has taken courage. Transformed into an angel of light, he wanders about with all the multitude of wicked spirits, invading the earth in order to blot out the name of God and of His Christ, to seize upon, slay and cast into eternal perdition souls destined for the crown of eternal glory. This wicked dragon pours out, as a most impure flood, the venom of his malice on men of depraved mind and corrupt heart, the spirit of lying, of impiety, of blasphemy, and the pestilent breath of impurity, and of every vice and iniquity.

“These most crafty enemies have filled and inebriated with gall and bitterness the Church, the spouse of the immaculate Lamb, and have laid impious hands on her most sacred possessions. In the Holy Place itself, where the See of Holy Peter and the Chair of Truth has been set up as the light of the world, they have raised the throne of their abominable impiety, with the iniquitous design that when the Pastor has been struck, the sheep may be.

“Arise then, O invincible Prince, bring help against the attacks of the lost spirits to the people of God, and give them the victory. They venerate thee as their protector and patron; in thee holy Church glories as her defense against the malicious power of hell; to thee has God entrusted the souls of men to be established in heavenly beatitude. Oh, pray to the

God of peace that He may put Satan under our feet, so far conquered that he may no longer be able to hold men in captivity and harm the Church. Offer our prayers in the sight of the Most High, so that they may quickly find mercy in the sight of the Lord; and vanquishing the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, do thou again make him captive in the abyss, that he may no longer seduce the nations. Amen.

V. Behold the Cross of the Lord; be scattered ye hostile powers.

R. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has conquered, the root of David.

V. Let Thy mercies be upon us, O Lord.

R. As we have hoped in Thee.

V. O Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come unto Thee.

Let us pray.

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we call upon Thy holy Name, and as supplicants, we implore Thy clemency, that by the intercession of Mary, ever Virgin Immaculate and our Mother, and of the glorious St. Michael the Archangel, Thou wouldst deign to help us against Satan and all the other unclean spirits who wander about the world for the

injury of the human race and the ruin of souls. Amen.

### **The Litany of St. Michael the Archangel**

Lord, have mercy on us.  
*Christ, have mercy on us.*

Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, hear us.  
*Christ, graciously hear us.*

God the Father of Heaven,  
*Have mercy on us.*

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,  
*Have mercy on us.*

God the Holy Spirit,  
*Have mercy on us.*

Holy Trinity, One God,  
*Have mercy on us.*

Holy Mary, Queen of the Angels, *pray for us.*  
St. Michael the Archangel, *pray for us.*  
Most glorious attendant of the Triune Divinity,  
*\*Pray for us is repeated after each invocation*

Standing at the right of the Altar of Incense,  
Ambassador of Paradise,  
Glorious Prince of the heavenly armies,  
Leader of the angelic hosts,  
Warrior who thrust Satan into Hell,  
Defender against the wickedness and snares of the  
devil,

Standard-bearer of God's armies,  
 Defender of divine glory,  
 First defender of the Kingship of Christ,  
 Strength of God,  
 Invincible prince and warrior,  
 Angel of peace,  
 Guardian of the Christian Faith,  
 Guardian of the Legion of St. Michael,  
 Champion of God's people,  
 Champion of the Legion of St. Michael,  
 Guardian angel of the Eucharist,  
 Defender of the Church,  
 Defender of the Legion of St. Michael,  
 Protector of the Sovereign Pontiff,  
 Protector of the Legion of St. Michael,  
 Angel of Catholic Action,  
 Powerful intercessor of Christians,  
 Bravest defender of those who hope in God,  
 Guardian of our souls and bodies,  
 Healer of the sick,  
 Help of those in their agony,  
 Consoler of the souls in Purgatory,  
 God's messenger for the souls of the just,  
 Terror of the evil spirits,  
 Victorious in battle against evil,  
 Guardian and Patron of the Universal Church

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world,  
*Spare us, O Lord.*

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world,  
*Graciously hear us, O Lord.*

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world,

*Have mercy on us.*

Pray for us, O glorious St. Michael,  
*That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.*

### **Let Us Pray**

Sanctify us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, with Thy holy blessing, and grant us, by the intercession of St. Michael, that wisdom which teaches us to lay up treasures in Heaven by exchanging the goods of this world for those of eternity, Thou Who lives and reigns, world without end. *Amen.*

Relying, O Lord, upon the intercession of Thy blessed Archangel Michael, we humbly beg of Thee, that the Holy Eucharist in whose presence we kneel, may make our soul holy and pleasing to Thee. Through Christ Our Lord. *R. Amen."*

### **For Help Against Spiritual Enemies**

O Glorious St Michael, Prince of the heavenly hosts, who art ever ready to assist the people of God; who fought with the Dragon, the Old Serpent, and cast him out of heaven, and now dost valiantly defend the Church of God so that the gates of Hell may never prevail against her: I earnestly entreat thee to assist me also in the painful and dangerous conflict I must sustain against the same formidable foe. Be with me, O Mighty Prince! that I may courageously fight and wholly vanquish that proud spirit whom thou, by the divine power, have overthrown, and whom our powerful King, Jesus Christ, in our nature so completely overcame; so that, triumphing over the

enemy of my salvation, I may, with thee and the holy Angels, praise the clemency of God, who, though refusing mercy to the rebellious angels after their fall, has granted repentance and forgiveness to fallen man. Amen.

### **Prayer for Perseverance**

O God, Who made blessed Michael, Thine Archangel, victorious over the proud Lucifer and all the wicked spirits, we beseech Thee that, fighting under the Cross and ever adopting his maxim, "Who is like unto God," we may be victorious over all our enemies and be delivered from all evils. Do Thou regulate our lives according to Thy Will and Commandments. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

### **For the Reign of the Sacred Heart**

O Mary Immaculate, great Queen of Heaven and earth and our gentle advocate, deign, we beseech thee, to intercede for us. Ask God to send St Michael and the holy Angels to ward off all the obstacles contrary to the reign of the Sacred Heart in our souls, our families, our country, and in the whole world.

And thou, O holy Michael, Prince of the Heavenly Hosts, from our hearts we beg thee to come to our aid.

Defend us against the rage of Satan, and through the divine power bestowed upon thee by God, after

securing victory for the Church here below, guide our souls to our eternal home. Amen.

St Michael, First Champion of the Kingship of Christ, pray for us!

### **Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel for Personal Strength through Trials**

O Glorious Prince of the heavenly hosts and victor over the rebellious spirits, be mindful of me who am so weak and sinful and yet so prone to pride and ambition. Lend me, I pray, thy powerful aid in every temptation and difficulty, and above all do not forsake me in my last struggle with the powers of evil. Amen.

### **The Angelic Trisagion**

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, the heavens and the earth are full of Thy glory.  
St Michael, the Archangel, defend us in the battle, that we may not perish in the dreadful judgement. Amen.

### **The Chaplet of St. Michael**

O God, come to my assistance. O Lord, make haste to help me. Glory be to the Father, etc.

[Say one Our Father and three Hail Marys after each of the following nine salutations in honor of the nine Choirs of Angels]

1. By the intercession of St. Michael and the celestial

Choir of Seraphim may the Lord make us worthy to burn with the fire of perfect charity.

Amen.

2. By the intercession of St. Michael and the celestial Choir of Cherubim may the Lord grant us the grace to leave the ways of sin and run in the paths of Christian perfection.

Amen.

3. By the intercession of St. Michael and the celestial Choir of Thrones may the Lord infuse into our hearts a true and sincere spirit of humility.

Amen.

4. By the intercession of St. Michael and the celestial Choir of Dominations may the Lord give us grace to govern our senses and overcome any unruly passions.

Amen.

5. By the intercession of St. Michael and the celestial Choir of Virtues may the Lord preserve us from evil and falling into temptation.

Amen.

6. By the intercession of St. Michael and the celestial Choir of Powers may the Lord protect our souls against the snares and temptations of the devil.

Amen.



7. By the intercession of St. Michael and the celestial Choir of Principalities may God fill our souls with a true spirit of obedience.

Amen.

8. By the intercession of St. Michael and the celestial Choir of Archangels may the Lord give us perseverance in faith and in all good works in order that we may attain the glory of Heaven.

Amen.

9. By the intercession of St. Michael and the celestial Choir of Angels may the Lord grant us to be protected by them in this mortal life and conducted in the life to come to Heaven.

Amen.

Say one Our Father in honor of each of the following leading Angels: St. Michael, St. Gabriel, St. Raphael and our Guardian Angel.

### **Concluding prayers:**

O glorious prince St. Michael, chief and commander of the heavenly hosts, guardian of souls, vanquisher of rebel spirits, servant in the house of the Divine King and our admirable conductor, you who shine with excellence and superhuman virtue deliver us from all evil, who turn to you with confidence and enable us by your gracious protection to serve God more and more faithfully every day.

Pray for us, O glorious St. Michael, Prince of the Church of Jesus Christ, that we may be made worthy of His promises.

Almighty and Everlasting God, Who, by a prodigy of goodness and a merciful desire for the salvation of all men, has appointed the most glorious Archangel St. Michael Prince of Your Church, make us worthy, we ask You, to be delivered from all our enemies, that none of them may harass us at the hour of death, but that we may be conducted by him into Your Presence. This we ask through the merits of Jesus Christ Our Lord.

**Amen."**

*Roman Raccolta, July 23, 1898, supplement approved  
July 31, 1902, London: Burnes, Oates & Washbourne  
Ltd., 1935, 12th edition*

*From the Office and Hymns of St. Michael*

"This is Michael the Archangel, the chief of the angelic host: He repays by blessings the honour shown him by the faithful; and his prayer leads us to the kingdom of heaven, alleluia.

The Archangel Michael is set over Paradise, and is honoured by the citizens of heaven. He repays by blessings the honour shown him by the faithful, and his prayer leads us to the kingdom of heaven, alleluia.

ANTIPHON: The Archangel Michael came with a multitude of angels; God confided unto him the souls of the Saints, that he might lead them to the Paradise of bliss, alleluia.

ANTIPHON: Michael the Archangel came unto the aid of God's people; he stood as a help to the souls of the just, alleluia.

ANTIPHON: O MOST GLORIOUS PRINCE! Michael The Archangel! Be mindful of us: here and in all places ever pray for us to the Son of God. Alleluia, alleluia.

#### FIRST HYMN

In the presence of the angels, who obey thee, we praise thee, O Jesus, thou brightness and power of the Father, thou life of our hearts.

'Tis for thee that fights this army of a thousand thousand princes, at whose head is Michael the Conqueror, the standard bearer of salvation, who unfurls the Cross.

It was Michael that cast the cruel dragon into the depths of hell, and drove the rebels, with their chief, from the heavenly city.

Let us follow this prince against the king of pride; that we may deserve to receive, from the throne of the Lamb, a crown of glory.

#### SECOND HYMN

O Christ! The glory of the angels, the Creator and Redeemer of mankind! Grant that we may ascend to the happy thrones of the heavenly citizens.

May Michael, the angel of peace, come from heaven into this our temple, bring us sweet peace, and drive dismal war back again to hell.

May Gabriel, the angel of strength, come and rout our ancient foe; may he often visit the heaven-loved temples which the triumphant Jesus has placed throughout the world.

May Raphael, our heavenly physician, descend and visit us, that he may heal all that are infirm and direct our faltering steps in the path of life.

May the Virgin Queen of peace, the Mother of light; may the holy choir of angels; may the bright court of heaven ever assist and protect us.

May the Godhead ever blessed of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, whose glory is proclaimed through the whole world, grant us this our prayer. Amen.

## SEQUENCE

O King of heaven! May our whole assembly and choir now sound forth its instruments of sweet music and sing hymns in thy praise.

For this is the day of Michael's most glorious feast, which fills the whole earth with great joy.

Thou dividest the spirits created by thee, into nine choirs; yet are they all flames of fire when thou wilt to seek their ministry.

They were the first creatures of thy hands; whereas we are the last, but made after thine image.

This triple division of the heavenly spirits, according to their special offices, reveals to us the mysterious design of God.

First comes the angelic army; then the phalanx of Archangels; then the host of the Principalities.

After these follow the heavenly Virtues, the sweet-sounding Powers.

The spiritual Dominations, the divine Thrones, the ethereal Cherubim, the burning Seraphim.

O Michael, prince of the heavenly court! Gabriel, messenger of the Incarnate Word! Raphael, our guide through life! Lead us to the company of the citizens of Paradise.

By you are fulfilled all the commands of the Father, the Son who is his Wisdom, and the co-equal Spirit, the Three, One in essence, the God before whom ye stand thousands of thousands in number, as ministering spirits.

Ye stand in his court, ten thousand times a hundred thousand; and hither did the King, the Father of the Word, bring the hundredth sheep, and the tenth

groat, that they might share in your bliss.

Ye in the high heavens, and we the elect flock on earth, give forth our tuneful praise on sweet sounding harps.

Thus after Michael's glorious battles, may our incense, when set on the golden altar, be acceptable to God.

Thus, when united in the same eternal glory, may we sing together our Alleluia!"

*The Liturgical Year, Dom Prosper Gueranger, O.S.P.,  
Volume VIII, Apparition of St. Michael*



## CHAPTER TWO

**Nobody Wants their Life to go Badly, it's Just the  
Nature of Things**



### Vision

*“In a pungent mist  
The gallows are unleashed;*

Without censure or advice  
 Longing to be . . .  
 And yet forced into non-being.

The avalanche of emotion  
 Gathers around the essence  
 Of the primordial substance,  
 Unleashed before its revelation  
 Lost within the tribunal of vengeance.  
 Harvested now by the sons of heaven's aroma  
 Who in horror betwixt such contraindicating forces;  
 Release from the evil yoke  
 Which has brought about  
 Such early fall." – Marilyn Hughes

*From the Gospel of John*

"My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord, I know them, and they follow me."

*The Holy Bible, New Testament, Gospel of John 10:27*

(Marilynn's Vision) In a succored act of hubris, the man who I immediately understood to be a warlock, had thrown the body of his wife over the ravine and into a culvert below. She had been draped with a light blue cloth, tied with a rope at her neck and feet. Her body fell into a muddy, filthy place.



*From the Holy Bible*

“Walk while you still have the light, or the darkness will cover. While you have the light, believe in the light so that you may become sons of light.”

*The Holy Bible, New Testament, John 12:35 - 39*

*From George Fox*

“In this I saw the infinite love of God. I saw also, that there was an ocean of darkness and death; but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness. In that also I saw the infinite love of God, and I had great openings.”

*The Journal of George Fox, Friends United Press, 1963*

(Marilynn’s Vision) In the dark mists, you could feel the energy of evil in this place. It was gruesome, horrific, and profoundly uncomfortable for me to be present for this moment which had overshadowed the galleries of timelessness in its wake of brutality within the confines of time. However, it appeared my presence was also necessary, and thus, I paid attention.

*From St. Hilarion*

“We cannot live in such a way that no one grieves or offends us, for the Apostle Luke writes: *we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God* (Acts 14:22), and *bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ* (Gal. 6:2). Let us therefore ask that we may bear sorrows with self-reproach and humility and not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good, and with the Prophet say: *With them that hate peace I was peaceable* (Ps. 119:6).”

### *St. Hilarion*

(Marilynn’s Vision) Looking up, I saw that a dark mist overshadowed this man who had just so viciously murdered his own wife. And a young boy of about six years stood beside him, terrified and alone. At that moment in time, the young child was ‘of the light.’ But this was not to last. This moment defined his future, and the evil ways of his father would eventually become his own.

Turning my attention back to the young woman who had just been thrust without any care or concern into the muddy flats of the earth, my focus became on the issue at hand, that of gathering up her soul into the primordial substance wherein it would be moved, transformed, healed and accelerated.

Two spirits took hers from my arms as again my attention was brought to the evil man and his son.

As if lightning struck the pitch dark sky, my spirit was taken through a series of subsequent births and deaths of these souls throughout an infinity of time.

Each of these methods or epochs of primordial substance moved and flowed through receptacles of energy which moved and bent into alterations of the original seed of evil in and throughout time. As they moved, the souls began to metamorphosize in a slow and somewhat oozing manner into slightly higher and yet ever ascending myriads of evolutionary manifestations regarding their previous condition.

*From Anaximander of Miletus*

“The Non-Limited (Primordial Substance) is the original material of existing things; further, the source from which existing things derive their existence is also that to which they return at their destruction, according to necessity; for they give justice and make reparation to one another for their injustice, according to the arrangement of *Time*.”

*Anaximander of Miletus*

(Marilynn Hughes’s Vision) At a further point the spirit matter of the murdered woman again merged with the spirit matter of the father and son who had in aeons past deigned to manifest and propound evil.

But yet, the evildoer and the one to whom the evil had been perpetrated, had found a point of merging.

As my hands waved and moved across the spirit; elements, soul and physical matter encompassed by this interiorized strain of non-melodious discord, aeons passed and something unusual began to happen.

They began to merge into a harmony, of sorts.

*From St. Padre Pio*

“Our present life is given only to gain the eternal one and if we don’t think about it, we build our affections on what belongs to this world, where our life is transitory. When we have to leave it we are afraid and become agitated. Believe me, to live happily in this pilgrimage, we have to aim at the hope of arriving at our Homeland, where we will stay eternally. Meanwhile we have to believe firmly that God calls us to Himself and follows us along the path towards Him. He will never permit anything to happen to us that is not for our greater good. He knows who we are and He will hold out His paternal hand to us during difficulties, so that nothing prevents us from running to Him swiftly. But to enjoy this grace we must have complete trust in Him. The more you are afflicted, the more you ought to rejoice, because in the fire of tribulation the soul will become pure gold, worthy to be placed and to shine in the heavenly

palace.”

*St. Padre Pio*

(Marilynn’s Vision) Illuminations later, as the three souls had gathered unto their number hundreds more of similar vibration, we looked back together upon the epochs of time which had come to pass.

Looking at the now frail old man who had undergone great retribution through many cycles of time, he started to laugh. At first it was a chuckle, but then it proceeded forth into a bursting stream of hilarity. Before we realized what was happening, the sounds of hysterical laughter had overcome the primordial space and the hundreds of souls whose primordial substance had merged into a similar vibration and frequency of time, joining him in his merriment.

For a moment, it seemed odd to go through so many aeons of evil and horror with such souls and then to suddenly emerge onto the mount of detachment.

But they were responding to the impetus of the primordial substance which urged them forward. In looking backwards upon his transient nature, passions and cravings, he had found humor in the journey.

And there was indeed humor to a soul reaching liberation when gazing upon the misdeeds of the

past. How silly it seemed to be, how ironic.

And as the subsequent aeons passed, the laughter slowly withdrew itself into the primordial substance which beckoned the spirit and matter forth into a quieter sphere. For again, all is one and one is all.

After the final reckoning in the constructs of time, my spirit was thrust into a kneeling position upon the ground and these three souls along with the hundreds of others who had followed this primordial journey into the substance of that time-defying divinity, all fell to their knees as a set of two, ornate, very tall, large doors remonstrated before us.

As the doors creaked open slowly, we all became completely silent . . . silence had enveloped us. A bishop awaited us at the front of the church bearing within his hands holy communion which he intended to give to myself and our travelers, but who among us would have the boldness to set forth as soon as we realized the holy sacredness of some of those who had come before us through the center aisle of this church?

*From St. Mother Teresa*

“The Simple Path

In the silence of the heart God speaks. If you face God in prayer and silence, God will speak to you. Then

you will know that you are nothing. It is only when you realize your nothingness, your emptiness, that God can fill you with Himself. Souls of prayer are souls of great silence.

Silence is Prayer  
 Prayer is Faith  
 Faith is Love  
 Love is Service  
 The Fruit of Service is Peace"

*Mother Teresa*

(Marilynn's Vision) St. Mother Teresa and twenty of her nuns were praying very quietly on their knees behind the back pew in the church. To their right, kneeling alone on the back of a pew, was St. Padre Pio, the stigmatist. He wore a brown cowl, although his head remained uncovered, and he never looked up. And in the far corner of the church was St. Hilarion, the ascetic monk who had so fervently vowed to follow the desert mystic life set before him by St. Anthony the great. Thin and emaciated, his withered cowl covered his head although his lengthy and grayish beard was easily seen because it had grown unattended for such a long time.

Observing their manner, I didn't know what to do. To go beyond them would be an insulting gesture. To assume that we who had just wandered through and emerged from the primordial substances of the

universe in such a mismatch of ways could deign to step before these holy saints seemed to be the utmost in disrespect.

So as I continued to ponder what it was that we should do, our harried group of travelers had been (from the light of a single molecular emanation) gathered into a line and simultaneously placed before the bishop who awaited us. As I was leading this group to the grand altar, I was the first to approach.

Inherently, I knew that I was about to receive the Holy Eucharist from the hands of a bishop who had gone beyond the confines of the material world. And I knew this was a great honor. "The Body of Christ" he said. "Amen," said I. And those who had travelled the mighty journey through the aeons followed in like fashion.

We had accepted the primordial substance which had originated from the unoriginated God the Father and had now emanated into the world of matter to become the actual body and blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

And as we did so, it began to *quicken* within each one of us.

In so doing, several truths became apparent to us.

- 1.) God is able in His primordial substance to bring good from evil and to allow evil to come from good.



- 2.) Out-of-Body Travelers, although aware of that which is good and evil within the spectrum of knowledge, should hold back their discomfort with certain states of spirit and soul because the only manner in which we can be of use is by the ability to be *present* with all states and tending towards its good.
- 3.) The secrets of scripture are not hidden from man, but rather, from the profane. Once the soul has retrieved the proper vibration of interpretation, the meaning of scripture lays atop the words, rather than beneath them. It is overt to the mystic, but unclear to another. Therefore, the full meaning is concealed in plain view, but not hidden.
- 4.) Primordial substance consists of many aspects of seeing and knowing which have manifested throughout the ages and aeons of time from the mystery religions, to the philosophers to the great religions of yesterday and today. These ideas are the genesis, but not the fruition of truth. The history of primordial substance as it has moved and swayed through the mind of mankind is legitimate, but the conclusions are not necessarily always accurate. For that fruition came with Christ.
- 5.) And as such, the ability to discern God from God's creation becomes a quintessential element of knowledge; in that, they are *not* one in the same.

*From Egyptian Mythology and Egyptian Christianity*

“The Hebrew writer, however, is never misled, so far as to think that any part of the creation was its own creator . . . .”

*Egyptian Mythology and Egyptian Christianity, The Religion of Lower Egypt, Samuel Sharpe & London  
J.R. Smith, 1863*

- 6.) (Marilynn’s Vision) One emanates from the other. God outbreathes Himself into creation which continually inbreathes God into itself. This primordial substance, then, must continually inbreathe and outbreathe the mechanism of life which originates from within the Creator in constant cycle in order for the evolution, regeneration and transmutation to occur within the world of substantial being.

*From the Vishnu Purana*

“Triumph to the essence of all wisdom, to the unchangeable, the imperishable: triumph to the eternal; to the indiscrete, to the essence of discrete things: to him who is both cause and effect; who is the universe; the sinless lord of sacrifice; triumph. Thou art sacrifice; thou art the oblation; thou art the mystic . . . thou art the sacrificial fires; thou art the . . . object

of all worship. The sun, the stars, the planets, the whole world; all that is formless, or that has form; all that is visible, or invisible.”

*Vishnua Purana, Translated by Horace Hayman  
Wilson, 1840*

## Teaching

### *From the Secret Doctrine*

“Ether, this hypothetical Proteus (Early Oceanic Bodies of Water Used in Consonance with the Ocean of Being or Mind which can be Assimilated to an ancient idea of God from which Sprung Outward Phenomena), one of the “representative Fictions” of modern Science — which, nevertheless, was so long accepted — is one of the lower “principles” of what we call primordial substance (Akasa, in Sanskrit), one of the dreams of old, and which has now become again the dream of modern science. It is the greatest, just as it is the boldest, of the surviving speculations of ancient philosophers. For the (hidden) . . . however, both ether and the Primordial Substance are a reality. To put it plainly, ether is the Astral Light, and the Primordial Substance is Akasa, the Upadhi (imposition) of divine thought.”

*The Secret Doctrine, Volume 1, Helena Blavatsky*

(Marilynn's Teaching) Primordial substance can be known in two very diverse manners.

- 1.) Primordial substance would be that inexhaustible font or substantial energy which has existed from time immemorial, before time and as timelessness itself. In this manner and form, it would be the energy known as the One Mind, the energy many religions refer to as God.
- 2.) Primordial substance, according to its obsolete usage in the Middle Ages, would have referred to it as the Spirit from which all matter, life and form were created. In this manner, it would be more like a condensed state of matter from which subatomic particle would formulate in order to create life as we know it.

The greater primordial substance, then, can be understood to emanate from the all creative principle, also referred to as God.

However, the lesser primordial substance in its lesser formula could be the cosmic content of creation from which being, soul and spirit formulate and in this manner provides for the transmutation from the particulate form of matter to greater and greater forms of life.

But it takes both forms of primordial substance to understand the unique cause of out-of-body travel and its function in the universal mechanism of the constant movement and evolution of particulate matter, and thus, spirit and soul.

The mystic must become capable of working with the greater and lesser forms of primordial substance in order to be of assistance to the realm. In other words, the out-of-body traveler must become capable of inherently sensing and working within both types of primordial substance; the mind of God and the heart of matter, both of which contain different vibrations of the same primordial substance.

And it is in this merging of two apparently separate energetic thrusts, (I say apparently, because as to energy they remain the same, only as to physical perception do they appear to be different,) that proper metamorphosis can occur within the spectrum of all matter and life.

Primordial substance, then, becomes the absolute factor involved in the spectrum of evolution within matter as it subsists within the confines of human and physical vision; but alas also within the evolutionary requirement of soul.

*From Rabindranath Tagore*

“Brahma (or Brahman: God in Creation or Ultimate Reality) is Brahma, he is the infinite ideal of perfection. But we are not what we truly are; we are ever to become true, ever to become Brahma. There is the eternal play of love in the relation between this being and the becoming; and in the depth of this mystery is the source of all truth and beauty that sustains the endless march of creation.

In the music of the rushing stream sounds the joyful assurance, "I shall become the sea." It is not a vain assumption; it is true humility, for it is the truth. The river has no other alternative. On both sides of its banks it has numerous fields and forests, villages and towns; it can serve them in various ways, cleanse them and feed them, carry their produce from place to place. But it can have only partial relations with these, and however long it may linger among them it remains separate; it never can become a town or a forest.

But it can and does become the sea. The lesser moving water has its affinity with the great motionless water of the ocean. It moves through the thousand objects on its onward course, and its motion finds its finality when it reaches the sea.

The river can become the sea, but she can never make the sea part and parcel of herself. If, by some chance, she has encircled some broad sheet of water and pretends that she has made the sea a part of herself, we at once know that it is not so, that her current is

still seeking rest in the great ocean to which it can never set boundaries.

In the same manner, our soul can only become Brahma as the river can become the sea. Everything else she touches at one of her points, then leaves and moves on, but she never can leave Brahma and move beyond him. Once our soul realizes her ultimate object of repose in Brahma, all her movements acquire a purpose. It is this ocean of infinite rest which gives significance to endless activities. It is this perfectness of being that lends to the imperfection of becoming."

*Sadhana, The Realization of Life, the Realization of the Infinite, Rabindranath Tagore, 1916*

*From Swami Abhedananda*

"The phenomena of the universe are like the waves in the ocean of Brahman (Ultimate Reality). As waves rise in the sea, and after playing for a while, once more merge into it, so the waves of subject and object rise, live, and dissolve in the ocean of that Absolute Substance Brahman. Brahman is described in Vedânta as "That of which all animate and inanimate objects are born, by which they live, and into which they return after dissolution. It should be known and realized by all." It is the essence of Divinity."

*How to be a Yogi, Swami Abhedananda, 1902*

### *From Angels*

“Do angels have a special connection with the sea?

- 1.) Though angels are pure spirits, they are creatures and messengers of God who invented and loves the material world. (He murmured a satisfied “good, good” after each day work of creating more and more of it, according to Genesis.) So angels, being *Godlike*, may love matter, too, and may have special intimate relationships with some special parts of the material world. (Demons - evil angels - probably would not; they would be too proud to love lowly matter.)
- 2.) So angels love matter, in general; but why the sea especially? Well, as almost everyone knows, angels have a special intimacy with another aspect of the material world: light. Angels often appear as “beings of light”. Light is the first thing God created, and water is the second, according to Genesis. Now light and water are two of our primary needs, two things we naturally desire. Light and water are also the two natural symbols of spirit. Scripture constantly uses both. Jesus heals the blind to symbolize his healing of the spiritually blind, and he calls the Holy Spirit “living water” (John 4:13 - 14; 7:37 - 39). “Living water” means, literally, *moving* water: rivers and seas, as distinct from lakes and ponds and pools and puddles. Moving water has a great effect on the human spirit, powerful magic . . . angels



love anything in the material world, it is probably stars and seas. Best of all, both: starlight reflected at sea.

- 3.) Just what precisely is the connection between angels and the sea? Do angels raise and still storms? Are the waves their dance? Does the shimmer of water reflect their spirit to us? Who knows?

Perhaps Tolkien knows. In *The Silmarillion* . . . the angels (The Ainur) especially love the sea.

But . . . the Ainur (**Angels**) looked upon the habitation . . . which the Elves call Arda, the earth; and their hearts rejoiced in light, and their eyes beholding many colours were filled with gladness; but because of the roaring of the sea they felt a great unquiet. And they observed the winds and the air, in the matters of which Arda (**Earth**) was made, of iron and stone and silver and gold and many substances; but of all these water they most greatly praised. And it is said . . . that in water their lives yet the echo of the Music of the Ainur (**Angels**) more than in any substance else that is in this earth; and many . . . hearken still unsated to the voices of the Sea, and yet know not for what they listen. (19).""

*Angels (and Demons): What do we Really Know About them, Peter Kreeft, Ignatius Press, 1995*

*From Sankaracharya*

“HE who through wisdom discerns that there is no division between the Eternal and the manifested world, bears the mark of one who is free even in life.

Whose mind is even, when honored by the good, or persecuted by the wicked, bears the mark of one who is free even in life.

In whom all sensuous objects, put forth by the supreme, melt together like the rivers and streams that enter the ocean's treasure house, making no change at all, since he and they are but the one Being, this sage self-conquered is set free . . .

From the knowledge that I am the Eternal, the accumulated Works, heaped up even through hundreds of myriads of ages, melt away like the work of dream, on awaking.”

*The Crest Jewel of Wisdom, The Three Kinds of Works, Vivekachudamani, Sankaracharya, Translated by Charles Johnston, 1946*

*From St. Augustine*

“The Apostle urges us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, and as our spiritual worship, and not to follow the pattern of this world but to be transformed by the renewal of our minds and hearts, so that we may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect,

the total sacrifice that is ourselves.”

*Writings of the Early Church Fathers, City of God, St. Augustine, Lib. 10, 6: CCL 47, 278 -279*

*From the Epistle of St. Paul*

“For many walk, of whom I have told you often (and now tell you weeping) that they are enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their things. But *our* conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of his glory, according to the operation whereby also he is able to subdue all things unto himself.”

*The Holy Bible, New Testament, Epistle of St. Paul to the Philippians, Chapter 3*

*From St. Maximus the Confessor*

“The lamp set upon the lampstand is Jesus Christ, the true light from the Father, the light that enlightens every man who comes into the world. In taking our own flesh he has become, and is rightly called, a lamp, for he is the connatural wisdom and word of the Father. He is proclaimed in the Church of God in accordance with orthodox faith, and he is lifted up and resplendent among the nations through the lives

of those who live virtuously in observance of the commandments. So he gives light to all in the house (that is, in this world), just as he himself, God the Word, says: *No one lights a lamp and puts it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.* Clearly he is calling himself the lamp, he who was by nature God, and became flesh according to God's saving purpose.

I think the great David understood this when he spoke of the Lord as a lamp, saying: *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.* For God delivers us from the darkness of ignorance and sin, and hence he is greeted as a lamp in Scripture.

Lamp-like indeed, he alone dispelled the gloom of ignorance and the darkness of evil and became the way of salvation for all men. Through virtue and knowledge, he leads to the Father those who are resolved to walk by him, who is the way of righteousness, in obedience to the divine commandments. He has designated holy Church the lampstand, over which the word of God sheds light through preaching, and illumines with the rays of truth whoever is in this house which is the world, and fills the minds of all men with divine knowledge.

This word is most unwilling to be kept under a bushel; it wills to be set in a high place, upon the sublime beauty of the Church. For while the word was hidden under the bushel, that is, under the letter of the law, it deprived all men of eternal light. For then it could not give spiritual contemplation to men

striving to strip themselves of a sensuality that is illusory, capable only of deceit, and able to perceive only decadent bodies like their own. But the word wills to be set upon a lampstand, the Church, where rational worship is offered in the spirit, that it may enlighten all men. For the letter, when it is not spiritually understood, bears a carnal sense only, which restricts its expression and does not allow the real force of what is written to reach the hearer's mind.

Let us, then, not light the lamp by contemplation and action, only to put it under a bushel—that lamp, I mean, which is the enlightening word of knowledge—lest we be condemned for restricting by the letter the incomprehensible power of wisdom. Rather let us place it upon the lampstand of holy Church, on the heights of true contemplation, where it may kindle for all men the light of divine teaching.

*St. Maximus the Confessor, Letter to Thalassius*

*From St. Augustine*

“No man comes to me except he whom the Father shall draw. Do not think that you are drawn against your will. The mind is drawn also by love. Nor ought we to be afraid, lest perchance we be censured in regard to this evangelic word of the Holy Scriptures by men who weigh words, but are far removed from things, most of all from divine things; and lest it be said to us, How can I believe with

the will if I am drawn? I say it is not enough to be drawn by the will; you are drawn even by delight. What is it to be drawn by delight? Delight yourself in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. There is a pleasure of the heart to which that bread of heaven is sweet. Moreover, if it was right in the poet to say, Every man is drawn by his own pleasure, — not necessity, but pleasure; not obligation, but delight—how much more boldly ought we to say that a man is drawn to Christ when he delights in the truth, when he delights in blessedness, delights in righteousness, delights in everlasting life, all which Christ is? Or is it the case that, while the senses of the body have their pleasures, the mind is left without pleasures of its own? If the mind has no pleasures of its own, how is it said, the sons of men shall trust under the cover of Your wings: they shall be well satisfied with the fullness of Your house; and You shall give them drink from the river of Your pleasure. For with You is the fountain of life; and in Your light shall we see light? Give me a man that loves, and he feels what I say. Give me one that longs, one that hungers, one that is travelling in this wilderness, and thirsting and panting after the fountain of his eternal home; give such, and he knows what I say. But if I speak to the cold and indifferent, he knows not what I say. Such were those who murmured among themselves. He whom the Father shall draw, says He, comes unto me.

5. But what is this, Whom the Father shall draw, when Christ Himself draws? Why did He say, Whom the Father shall draw? If we must be

drawn, let us be drawn by Him to whom one who loves says, We will run after the odor of Your ointment. (Song of Songs 1:3) But let us, brethren, turn our minds to, and, as far as we can, apprehend how He would have us understand it. The Father draws to the Son those who believe in the Son, because they consider that God is His Father. For God begot the Son equal to Himself, so that he who ponders, and in his faith feels and muses that He on whom he has believed is equal to the Father, this same is drawn of the Father to the Son. Arius believed the Son to be creature: the Father drew not him; for he that believes not the Son to be equal to the Father, considers not the Father. What do you say, Arius? What, O heretic, do you speak? What is Christ? Not very God, says he, but one whom very God has made. The Father has not drawn you, for you have not understood the Father, whose Son you deny, it is not the Son Himself but something else that you are thinking of. You are neither drawn by the Father nor drawn to the Son; for the Son is very different from what you say. Photius said, Christ is only a man, he is not also God. The Father has not drawn him who thus believes. One whom the Father has drawn says: You are Christ, Son of the living God. Not as a prophet, not as John, not as some great and just man, but as the only, the equal, You are Christ, Son of the living God. See that he was drawn, and drawn by the Father. Blessed are you, Simon Barjonas: for flesh and blood has not revealed it to you, but my Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 16:16 - 17) This revealing is itself the drawing. You hold out a green twig to a sheep,

and you draw it. Nuts are shown to a child, and he is attracted; he is drawn by what he runs to, drawn by loving it, drawn without hurt to the body, drawn by a cord of the heart. If, then, these things, which among earthly delights and pleasures are shown to them that love them, draw them, since it is true that every man is drawn by his own pleasure, does not Christ, revealed by the Father, draw? For what does the soul more strongly desire than the truth? For what ought it to have a greedy appetite, with which to wish that there may be within a healthy palate for judging the things that are true, unless it be to eat and drink wisdom, righteousness, truth, eternity?

6. But where will this be? There better, there more truly, there more fully. For here we can more easily hunger than be satisfied, especially if we have good hope: for Blessed, says He, are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, that is here; for they shall be filled, that is there. Therefore when He had said, No man comes unto me except the Father that sent me draw him, what did He subjoin? And I will raise him up in the last day. I render unto him what he loves, what he hopes for: he will see what, not as yet by seeing, he has believed; he shall eat that which he hungers after; he shall be filled with that which he thirsts after. Where? In the resurrection of the dead; for I will raise him up on the last day.

7. For it is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Why have I said this, O Jews? The Father has not taught you; how can you know me? For all the men of that kingdom shall be taught



of God, not learn from men. And though they do learn from men, yet what they understand is given them within, flashes within, is revealed within. What do men that proclaim tidings from without? What am I doing even now while I speak? I am pouring a clatter of words into your ears. What is that that I say or that I speak, unless He that is within reveal it? Without is the planter of the tree, within is the tree's Creator. He that plants and He that waters work from without: this is what we do. But neither he that plants is anything, nor he that waters; but God that gives the increase. (1 Corinthians 3:7) That is, they shall be all taught of God. All who? Everyone who has heard and learned of the Father comes unto me. See how the Father draws: He delights by teaching, not by imposing a necessity. Behold how He draws: They shall be all taught of God. This is God's drawing. Every man that has heard, and has learned of the Father, comes unto me. This is God's drawing."

*Writings of the Early Church Fathers, A Treatise on  
John, St. Augustine, Bishop, Tractate 26*

*From the Secret Doctrine of the Rosicrucians*

"In the Secret Doctrine of the Rosicrucians, we find the following Fourth Aphorism:

The Fourth Aphorism

IV. The One becomes Many. The Unity becomes

Diversity. The Identical becomes Variety. Yet the Many remains One; the Diversity remains Unity; and the Variety remains Identical . . .

The One Life, moreover, is not to be thought of as dividing and splitting itself up into bits, parts, and particles, in order to accomplish the process of Creation, and the Manifestation of the World. Instead, it is to be thought of as merely **reflecting** itself in the many individual mirrors of expression, just as the sun reflects itself as One in the millions of falling raindrops, or in a million tiny jars filled with water. There are millions of reflections of the One, but only the one One in reality. Or, using another figure of speech, the One may be thought of as an *Infinite* Ocean of Being, in which there are millions of tiny bubbles, each apparently apart and separate, but all of which are in reality, but centres of activity and expression in the One Great Ocean.”

*The Secret Doctrine of the Rosicrucians, Magus  
Incognito, 1918*

*From Clothed with the Sun*

“THERE is a law inherent in the primordial substance of all matter which obliges all things to evolve after the same mode and manner . . . Their evolution is similar, their distribution similar, and their mutual relations are similar.

To every planet belongs a different spectrum, and the physical is the measure of the spiritual. And every physical world of causes has its spiritual world of effects . . .

Soul is begotten in matter by means of polarisation, And spirit, of which all matter consists, returns to its essential nature in soul. Soul is the medium by which spirit is individuated, and in which it becomes concrete. So that by means of creation, God the One becomes God the Many. And the object set before the saint is so to live as to render the soul luminous and consolidate with the spirit, that thereby the spirit may be perpetually one with the soul, and thus eternise its individuality . . . . . “

*Clothed with the Sun, Anna Kingsford, London, 1889*

*From the Writings of the Early Church Fathers*

“The God of all things therefore became truly, according to the Scriptures, without conversion, sinless man, and that in a manner known to Himself alone, as He is the natural Artificer of things which are above our comprehension. And by that same saving act of the incarnation He introduced into the flesh the activity of His proper divinity, yet without having it (that activity) either circumscribed by the flesh through the exinanition, or growing naturally out of the flesh as it grew out of His divinity, but manifested through it in the things which He

wrought in a divine manner in His incarnate state. For the flesh did not become divinity in nature by a *transmutation* of nature, as though it became essentially flesh of divinity. But what it was before, that also it continued to be in nature and activity when united with divinity, even as the Saviour said, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." And working and enduring in the flesh things which were proper to sinless flesh, He proved the evacuation of divinity (to be) for our sakes, confirmed as it was by wonders and by sufferings of the flesh naturally. For with this purpose did the God of all things become man, viz., in order that by suffering in the flesh, which is susceptible of suffering, He might redeem our whole race, which was sold to death; and that by working wondrous things by His divinity, which is unsusceptible of suffering, through the medium of the flesh He might restore it to that incorruptible and blessed life from which it fell away by yielding to the devil; and that He might establish the holy orders of intelligent existences in the heavens in immutability by the mystery of His incarnation, the doing of which is the recapitulation of all things in himself. He remained therefore, also, after His incarnation, according to nature, God infinite, and more, having the activity proper and suitable to Himself,—an activity growing out of His divinity essentially, and manifested through His perfectly holy flesh by wondrous acts economically, to the intent that He might be believed in as God, while working out of Himself by the flesh, which by nature is weak, the salvation of the universe."

*Writings of the Early Church Fathers, Hippolytus,  
Cyprian, Caius, Novation, by Philip Schaff*

*From the Eight Limbs*

“Knowing this, abide undistracted in the real,  
Do not make any effort or train the mind in antidotes.  
Do not postulate objects or rest in mindfulness.  
Whatever arises then will be the meaning itself.  
So enter into my world--be the doer of all . . .

When there is the benefit, like a clear and cloudless  
sky,  
Looking into total space with the sun at one's back,  
Simple awareness of emptiness/luminosity rises . . .  
Examine the pure space which is the meaning of this .  
. .

Outer space is pure, but only an example,  
Of the greater inner space of the nature . . .  
The secret space is the heart of luminosity.  
Know realization as being composed of these three  
spaces . . .  
From the nature without conception and perception,  
Come the varied phenomena of the mandalas  
(Universes) of light.  
These several luminosities that shine in the center of  
space,  
By expressing variety, have never risen at all . .

If you wish to establish the nature of your own mind,  
As it is self-established when you are without desire,

Do not establish the equanimity of non-thought.  
 Rest in the sphere of the nature that does not accept  
 and reject.  
 Naturally rest in the state of natural motionlessness.

As for mind, the essence of it is suchness (**The Experience of Our Own Presence**).

All of the dharmas (**Teachings**), likewise, are established as suchness.

Do not fabricate within the state of suchness.

Do not establish anything other than the essence.

If it is sought, the buddha-space (**Enlightened Space**) will not be found.

It was already made, it need not be made now.

It was already established. That need not be done again.

Meditate in non-thought. Don't realize anything . . .”

### *The Eight Limbs*

## Prayer

### *From Hymns of the Eastern Church*

“Now the perfection of Greek poetry is attained by the Canons at Lauds, of which I proceed to speak.

A Canon consists of Nine Odes,—each Ode containing any number of troparia from three to beyond twenty. The reason for the number nine is this: that there are nine Scriptural canticles, employed at Lauds, (εις τον Ορθρον), on the model of which those in every Canon are formed:

- 1.) of Moses after the passage of the Red Sea
- 2.) of Moses in Deuteronomy (chap. 33)
- 3.) of Hannah
- 4.) of Habakkuk
- 5.) of Isaiah (26:9-20)
- 6.) of Jonah
- 7.) of the Three Children (verses 3-34 of our “Song” in the Bible Version)
- 8.) Benedicite (the “Prayer of Azarias”, verses 35-66)
- 9.) Magnificat and Benedictus.

## **1.) of Moses after the Passage of the Red Sea, Exodus 15**

1

“Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord: “I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously;  
horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.

2

The Lord is my strength and my might,  
and he has become my salvation;  
this is my God, and I will praise him,  
my father’s God, and I will exalt him.

3

The Lord is a warrior;  
the Lord is his name.

4

“Pharaoh’s chariots and his army he cast into the sea;  
his picked officers were sunk in the Red Sea.

5

The floods covered them;  
they went down into the depths like a stone.

6

Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power —  
your right hand, O Lord, shattered the enemy.

7

In the greatness of your majesty you overthrew your  
adversaries;  
you sent out your fury, it consumed them like  
stubble.

8

At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up,  
the floods stood up in a heap;  
the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea.

9

The enemy said, ‘I will pursue, I will overtake,  
I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of  
them.

I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.’

10

You blew with your wind, the sea covered them;  
they sank like lead in the mighty waters.

11

“Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods?  
Who is like you, majestic in holiness,  
awesome in splendor, doing wonders?”



12

You stretched out your right hand,  
the earth swallowed them.

13

“In your steadfast love you led the people whom you  
redeemed;  
you guided them by your strength to your holy  
abode.

14

The peoples heard, they trembled;  
pang seized the inhabitants of Philistia.

15

Then the chiefs of Edom were dismayed;  
trembling seized the leaders of Moab;  
all the inhabitants of Canaan melted away.

16

Terror and dread fell upon them;  
by the might of your arm, they became still as a stone  
until your people, O Lord, passed by,  
until the people whom you acquired passed by.

17

You brought them in and planted them on the  
mountain of your own possession,  
the place, O Lord, that you made your abode,  
the sanctuary, O Lord, that your hands have  
established.

18

The Lord will reign forever and ever.”

## **2.) of Moses in Deuteronomy. “Moses’ Final Blessing on Israel, Deuteronomy 33**

1

"This is the blessing with which Moses, the man of God, blessed the Israelites before his death.

2

He said:

The Lord came from Sinai,  
and dawned from Seir upon us;  
he shone forth from Mount Paran.  
With him were myriads of holy ones;  
at his right, a host of his own.

3

Indeed, O favorite among peoples,  
all his holy ones were in your charge;  
they marched at your heels,  
accepted direction from you.

4

Moses charged us with the law,  
as a possession for the assembly of Jacob.

5

There arose a king in Jeshurun,  
when the leaders of the people assembled —  
the united tribes of Israel.

6

May Reuben live, and not die out,  
even though his numbers are few.

7 And this he said of Judah:

O Lord, give heed to Judah,  
and bring him to his people;  
strengthen his hands for him,  
and be a help against his adversaries.

8 And of Levi he said:

Give to Levi your Thummim,  
and your Urim to your loyal one,

whom you tested at Massah,  
with whom you contended at the waters of Meribah;

9

who said of his father and mother,  
“I regard them not”;  
he ignored his kin,  
and did not acknowledge his children.  
For they observed your word,  
and kept your covenant.

10

They teach Jacob your ordinances,  
and Israel your law;  
they place incense before you,  
and whole burnt offerings on your altar.

11

Bless, O Lord, his substance,  
and accept the work of his hands;  
crush the loins of his adversaries,  
of those that hate him, so that they do not rise again.

12

Of Benjamin he said:

The beloved of the Lord rests in safety —  
the High God surrounds him all day long —  
the beloved rests between his shoulders.

13 And of Joseph he said:

Blessed by the Lord be his land,  
with the choice gifts of heaven above,  
and of the deep that lies beneath;

14

with the choice fruits of the sun,  
and the rich yield of the months;

15

with the finest produce of the ancient mountains,

and the abundance of the everlasting hills;

16

with the choice gifts of the earth and its fullness,  
and the favor of the one who dwells on Sinai.

Let these come on the head of Joseph,  
on the brow of the prince among his brothers.

17

A firstborn bull – majesty is his!  
His horns are the horns of a wild ox;  
with them he gores the peoples,  
driving them to the ends of the earth;  
such are the myriads of Ephraim,  
such the thousands of Manasseh.

18

And of Zebulun he said:  
Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out;  
and Issachar, in your tents.

19

They call peoples to the mountain;  
there they offer the right sacrifices;  
for they suck the affluence of the seas  
and the hidden treasures of the sand.

20

And of Gad he said:  
Blessed be the enlargement of Gad!  
Gad lives like a lion;  
he tears at arm and scalp.

21

He chose the best for himself,  
for there a commander's allotment was reserved;  
he came at the head of the people,  
he executed the justice of the Lord,  
and his ordinances for Israel.

22

And of Dan he said:  
Dan is a lion's whelp  
that leaps forth from Bashan.

23

And of Naphtali he said:  
O Naphtali, sated with favor,  
full of the blessing of the Lord,  
possess the west and the south.

24

And of Asher he said:  
Most blessed of sons be Asher;  
may he be the favorite of his brothers,  
and may he dip his foot in oil.

25

Your bars are iron and bronze;  
and as your days, so is your strength.

26

There is none like God, O Jeshurun,  
who rides through the heavens to your help,  
majestic through the skies.

27

He subdues the ancient gods,  
shatters the forces of old;  
he drove out the enemy before you,  
and said, "Destroy!"

28

So Israel lives in safety,  
untroubled is Jacob's abode  
in a land of grain and wine,  
where the heavens drop down dew.

29

Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you,

a people saved by the Lord,  
 the shield of your help,  
 and the sword of your triumph!  
 Your enemies shall come fawning to you,  
 and you shall tread on their backs."

### **3.) of Hannah, Samuel 2**

"Hannah's Prayer

1

Hannah prayed and said,  
 "My heart exults in the Lord;  
 my strength is exalted in my God.  
 My mouth derides my enemies,  
 because I rejoice in my victory.

2

There is no Holy One like the Lord,  
 no one besides you;  
 there is no Rock like our God.

3

Talk no more so very proudly,  
 let not arrogance come from your mouth;  
 for the Lord is a God of knowledge,  
 and by him actions are weighed.

4

The bows of the mighty are broken,  
 but the feeble gird on strength.

5

Those who were full have hired themselves out for  
 bread,  
 but those who were hungry are fat with spoil.  
 The barren has borne seven,  
 but she who has many children is forlorn.

6

The Lord kills and brings to life;  
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.

7

The Lord makes poor and makes rich;  
he brings low, he also exalts.

8

He raises up the poor from the dust;  
he lifts the needy from the ash heap,  
to make them sit with princes  
and inherit a seat of honor.

For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,  
and on them he has set the world.

9

"He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,  
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness;  
for not by might does one prevail.

10

The Lord! His adversaries shall be shattered;  
the Most High will thunder in heaven.  
The Lord will judge the ends of the earth;  
he will give strength to his king,  
and exalt the power of his anointed."

Eli's Wicked Sons

11

Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, while the boy  
remained to minister to the Lord, in the presence of  
the priest Eli."

#### **4.) of Habakkuk 3**

"A prayer of the prophet Habakkuk according to  
Shigionoth.

## The Prophet's Prayer

2

O Lord, I have heard of your renown,  
and I stand in awe, O Lord, of your work.  
In our own time revive it;  
in our own time make it known;  
in wrath may you remember mercy.

3

God came from Teman,  
the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah  
His glory covered the heavens,  
and the earth was full of his praise.

4

The brightness was like the sun;  
rays came forth from his hand,  
where his power lay hidden.

5

Before him went pestilence,  
and plague followed close behind.

6

He stopped and shook the earth;  
he looked and made the nations tremble.  
The eternal mountains were shattered;  
along his ancient pathways  
the everlasting hills sank low.

7

I saw the tents of Cushan under affliction;  
the tent-curtains of the land of Midian trembled.

8

Was your wrath against the rivers, O Lord?  
Or your anger against the rivers,  
or your rage against the sea,



when you drove your horses,  
your chariots to victory?

9

You brandished your naked bow,  
sated were the arrows at your command.Selah  
You split the earth with rivers.

10

The mountains saw you, and writhed;  
a torrent of water swept by;  
the deep gave forth its voice.  
The sun raised high its hands;

11

the moon stood still in its exalted place,  
at the light of your arrows speeding by,  
at the gleam of your flashing spear.

12

In fury you trod the earth,  
in anger you trampled nations.

13

You came forth to save your people,  
to save your anointed.

You crushed the head of the wicked house,  
laying it bare from foundation to roof.Selah

14

You pierced with their own arrows the head of his  
warriors,  
who came like a whirlwind to scatter us,  
gloating as if ready to devour the poor who were in  
hiding.

15

You trampled the sea with your horses,  
churning the mighty waters.

16

I hear, and I tremble within;  
 my lips quiver at the sound.  
 Rottenness enters into my bones,  
 and my steps tremble beneath me.  
 I wait quietly for the day of calamity  
 to come upon the people who attack us.  
 Trust and Joy in the Midst of Trouble  
 17

Though the fig tree does not blossom,  
 and no fruit is on the vines;  
 though the produce of the olive fails,  
 and the fields yield no food;  
 though the flock is cut off from the fold,  
 and there is no herd in the stalls,  
 18

yet I will rejoice in the Lord;  
 I will exult in the God of my salvation.  
 19

God, the Lord, is my strength;  
 he makes my feet like the feet of a deer,  
 and makes me tread upon the heights.

To the leader: with stringed instruments.”

## 5.) of Isaiah 26:9 - 20

9  
 “My soul yearns for you in the night,  
 my spirit within me earnestly seeks you.  
 For when your judgments are in the earth,  
 the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

10  
 If favor is shown to the wicked,

they do not learn righteousness;  
 in the land of uprightness they deal perversely  
 and do not see the majesty of the Lord.

11

O Lord, your hand is lifted up,  
 but they do not see it.  
 Let them see your zeal for your people, and be  
 ashamed.  
 Let the fire for your adversaries consume them.

12

O Lord, you will ordain peace for us,  
 for indeed, all that we have done, you have done for  
 us.

13

O Lord our God,  
 other lords besides you have ruled over us,  
 but we acknowledge your name alone.

14

The dead do not live;  
 shades do not rise—  
 because you have punished and destroyed them,  
 and wiped out all memory of them.

15

But you have increased the nation, O Lord,  
 you have increased the nation; you are glorified;  
 you have enlarged all the borders of the land.

16

O Lord, in distress they sought you,  
 they poured out a prayer  
 when your chastening was on them.

17

Like a woman with child,  
 who writhes and cries out in her pangs

when she is near her time,  
so were we because of you, O Lord;

18

we were with child, we writhed,  
but we gave birth only to wind.  
We have won no victories on earth,  
and no one is born to inhabit the world.

19

Your dead shall live, their corpses shall rise.  
O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy!  
For your dew is a radiant dew,  
and the earth will give birth to those long dead.

20

Come, my people, enter your chambers,  
and shut your doors behind you;  
hide yourselves for a little while  
until the wrath is past."

## 6.) of Jonah 2

2

"saying,  
I called to the Lord out of my distress,  
and he answered me;  
out of the belly of Sheol I cried,  
and you heard my voice.

3

You cast me into the deep,  
into the heart of the seas,  
and the flood surrounded me;  
all your waves and your billows  
passed over me.

4

Then I said, 'I am driven away  
from your sight;  
how shall I look again  
upon your holy temple?'

5

The waters closed in over me;  
the deep surrounded me;  
weeds were wrapped around my head

6

at the roots of the mountains.  
I went down to the land  
whose bars closed upon me forever;  
yet you brought up my life from the Pit,  
O Lord my God.

7

As my life was ebbing away,  
I remembered the Lord;  
and my prayer came to you,  
into your holy temple.

8

Those who worship vain idols  
forsake their true loyalty.

9

But I with the voice of thanksgiving  
will sacrifice to you;  
what I have vowed I will pay.  
Deliverance belongs to the Lord!"

## **7.) Prayer of the Three Children (Verses 3-34 of our "Song" in the Bible Version)**

"For you are righteous in all the things that you have done to us: yes, true are all your works, your ways are right, and all your judgments truth. <sup>4</sup>In all the things that you have brought upon us, and upon the holy city of our fathers, even Jerusalem, you have executed true judgment: for according to truth and judgment did you bring all these things upon us because of our sins. <sup>5</sup>For we have sinned and committed iniquity, departing from you. <sup>6</sup>In all things have we trespassed, and not obeyed your commandments, nor kept them, neither done as you have commanded us, that it might go well with us. <sup>7</sup>Wherefore all that you have brought upon us, and every thing that you have done to us, you have done in true judgment. <sup>8</sup>And you did deliver us into the hands of lawless enemies, most hateful forsakers of God, and to an unjust king, and the most wicked in all the world. <sup>9</sup>And now we can't open our mouths, we are become a shame and reproach to your servants; and to them that worship you. <sup>10</sup>Yet deliver us not up wholly, for your name's sake, neither disannul you your covenant: <sup>11</sup>And cause not your mercy to depart from us, for your beloved Abraham's sake, for your servant Isaac's sake, and for your holy Israel's sake; <sup>12</sup>To whom you have spoken and promised, that you would multiply their seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that lies upon the seashore. <sup>13</sup>For we, O Lord, are become less than any nation, and be kept under this day in all the world because of our sins. <sup>14</sup>Neither is there at this time prince, or prophet, or leader, or burnt offering, or sacrifice, or oblation, or incense, or place to sacrifice before you, and to find

mercy. <sup>15</sup>Nevertheless in a contrite heart and an humble spirit let us be accepted. <sup>16</sup>Like as in the burnt offerings of rams and bullocks, and like as in ten thousands of fat lambs: so let our sacrifice be in your sight this day, and grant that we may wholly go after you: for they shall not be confounded that put their trust in you. <sup>17</sup>And now we follow you with all our heart, we fear you, and seek your face. <sup>18</sup>Put us not to shame: but deal with us after your lovingkindness, and according to the multitude of your mercies. <sup>19</sup>Deliver us also according to your marvelous works, and give glory to your name, O Lord: and let all them that do your servants hurt be ashamed; <sup>20</sup>And let them be confounded in all their power and might, and let their strength be broken; <sup>21</sup>And let them know that you are God, the only God, and glorious over the whole world. <sup>22</sup>And the king's servants, that put them in, ceased not to make the oven hot with rosin, pitch, tow, and small wood; <sup>23</sup>So that the flame streamed forth above the furnace forty and nine cubits. <sup>24</sup>And it passed through, and burned those Chaldeans it found about the furnace. <sup>25</sup>But the angel of the Lord came down into the oven together with Azarias and his fellows, and struck the flame of the fire out of the oven; <sup>26</sup>And made the midst of the furnace as it had been a moist whistling wind, so that the fire touched them not at all, neither hurt nor troubled them. <sup>27</sup>Then the three, as out of one mouth, praised, glorified, and blessed, God in the furnace, saying, <sup>28</sup>Blessed are you, O Lord God of our fathers: and to be praised and exalted above all for ever. <sup>29</sup>And blessed is your glorious and holy name: and to be praised and exalted above all for

ever.<sup>30</sup> Blessed are you in the temple of your holy glory: and to be praised and glorified above all for ever.<sup>31</sup> Blessed are you that behold the depths, and sit upon the cherubims: and to be praised and exalted above all for ever.<sup>32</sup> Blessed are you on the glorious throne of your kingdom: and to be praised and glorified above all for ever.<sup>33</sup> Blessed are you in the firmament of heaven: and above all to be praised and glorified for ever.<sup>34</sup> O all you<sup>^</sup> works of the Lord, bless you<sup>^</sup> the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.”

## **8.) Benedicite (the “Prayer of Azarias”, Verses 35 – 66**

### **“Latin**

(Benedicite Omnia Opera Domini and Official Translation as used in the Roman Catholic Office of Lauds at Sundays and Feasts)

BENEDICITE, omnia opera Domini, Domino; laudate et superexaltate eum in saecula.

BENEDICITE, caeli, Domino, benedicite, angeli Domini, Domino.

BENEDICITE, aquae omnes, quae super caelos sunt, Domino, benedicat omnis virtutis Domino.

BENEDICITE, sol et luna, Domino, benedicite, stellae caeli, Domino.



BENEDICITE, omnis imber et ros, Domino,  
benedicite, omnes venti, Domino.

BENEDICITE, ignis et aestus, Domino, benedicite,  
frigus et aestus, Domino.

BENEDICITE, rores et pruina, Domino, benedicite,  
gelu et frigus, Domino.

BENEDICITE, glacies et nives, Domino, benedicite,  
noctes et dies, Domino.

BENEDICITE, lux et tenebrae, Domino, benedicite,  
fulgura et nubes, Domino.

BENEDICAT terra Dominum: laudet et superexaltet  
eum in saecula.

BENEDICITE, montes et colles, Domino, benedicite,  
universa germinantia in terra, Domino.

BENEDICITE, maria et flumina, Domino, benedicite,  
fontes, Domino.

BENEDICITE, cete, et omnia, quae moventur in aquis,  
Domino, benedicite, omnes volucres caeli, Domino.

BENEDICITE, omnes bestiae et pecora, Domino,  
benedicite, filii hominum, Domino.

BENEDICITE, Israel, Domino, laudate et  
superexaltate eum in saecula.

BENEDICITE, sacerdotes Domini, Domino,  
benedicite, servi Domini, Domino.

BENEDICITE, spiritus et animae iustorum, Domino,  
benedicite, sancti et humiles corde, Domino.

BENEDICITE, Anania, Azaria, Misael, Domino,  
laudate et superexaltate eum in saecula.

BENEDICAMUS Patrem et Filium cum Sancto  
Spiritu; laudemus et superexaltemus eum in saecula.

BENEDICTUS es in firmamento caeli et laudabilis et  
gloriosus in saecula.  
Amen."

## **English**

"BLESS the Lord all ye heavens; bless the Lord all ye  
angels of the Lord.

BLESS the Lord all ye waters that are above the  
heavens; let all powers bless the Lord.

BLESS the Lord, ye sun and moon; stars of heaven,  
bless the Lord.

BLESS the Lord, every shower and dew. All ye winds,  
bless the Lord.

BLESS the Lord, ye fire and heat; cold and chill, bless  
ye the Lord.

BLESS the Lord, dews and hoar frosts; frost and cold,  
bless the Lord.

BLESS the Lord, ice and snow; nights and days, bless  
the Lord.

BLESS the Lord, light and darkness; lightning and  
clouds, bless the Lord.

LET the earth bless the Lord; let it praise and exalt  
Him above all forever.

BLESS the Lord, ye mountains and hills; everything  
growing from the earth, bless the Lord.

BLESS the Lord, seas and rivers; fountains, bless the  
Lord.

BLESS the Lord, ye whales and all that move in the  
waters; all you fowls of the air, bless the Lord.

BLESS the Lord, all ye beasts and cattle; sons of men,  
bless the Lord.

BLESS the Lord, Israel; praise and exalt Him above all  
for ever.

BLESS the Lord, priests of the Lord, servants of the  
Lord, bless the Lord.

BLESS the Lord, spirits and souls of the just; holy men  
of humble heart, bless the Lord.

BLESS the Lord, Ananias, Azaria, and Misael; praise and exalt Him above all for ever.

LET us bless the Father and the Son, with the Holy Spirit; let us praise and exalt Him above all for ever.

BLESSED art Thou, Lord, in the firmament of heaven; and worthy of praise, and glorious above all for ever. Amen.

## **Book of Common Prayer (1662)**

“O all ye Works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Angels of the Lord, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Heavens, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Waters that be above the Firmament, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O all ye Powers of the Lord, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Sun and Moon, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Stars of Heaven, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Showers and Dew, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Winds of God, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Fire and Heat, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Winter and Summer, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Dews and Frosts, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Frost and Cold, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Ice and Snow, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Nights and Days, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Light and Darkness, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Lightnings and Clouds, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O let the Earth bless the Lord : yea, let it praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Mountains and Hills, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O all ye Green Things upon the Earth, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Wells, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Seas and Floods, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Whales, and all that move in the Waters, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O all ye Fowls of the Air, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O all ye Beasts and Cattle, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Children of Men, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O let Israel bless the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Priests of the Lord, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Servants of the Lord, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye Spirits and Souls of the Righteous, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye holy and humble Men of heart, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O Ananias, Azarias and Misael, bless ye the Lord : praise him, and magnify him for ever.”

## **Book of Common Prayer (1979, Rite II)**

“Glorify the Lord, all you works of the Lord,  
 praise him and highly exalt him for ever.  
 In the firmament of his power, glorify the Lord,  
 praise him and highly exalt him for ever.  
 Glorify the Lord, you angels and all powers of the  
 Lord,  
 O heavens and all waters above the heavens,  
 Sun and moon and stars of the sky, glorify the Lord,  
 praise him and highly exalt him for ever.  
 Glorify the Lord, every shower of rain and fall of  
 dew,  
 all winds and fire and heat.  
 Winter and summer, glorify the Lord,  
 praise him and highly exalt him for ever.  
 Glorify the Lord, O chill and cold,  
 drops of dew and flakes of snow.  
 Frost and cold, ice and sleet, glorify the Lord,  
 praise him and highly exalt him for ever.  
 Glorify the Lord, O nights and days,  
 O shining light and enfolding dark.  
 Storm clouds and thunderbolts, glorify the Lord,  
 praise him and highly exalt him for ever.

Let the earth glorify the Lord,  
 praise him and highly exalt him for ever.  
 Glorify the Lord, O mountains and hills,  
 and all that grows upon the earth,  
 praise him and highly exalt him for ever.  
 Glorify the Lord, O springs of water, seas, and  
 streams,  
 O whales and all that move in the waters,  
 All birds of the air, glorify the Lord,  
 praise him and highly exalt him for ever.  
 Glorify the Lord, O beasts of the wild,  
 and all you flocks and herds,  
 O men and women everywhere, glorify the Lord  
 praise him and highly exalt him for ever.  
 Let the people of God glorify the Lord,  
 praise him and highly exalt him for ever.  
 Glorify the Lord, O priests and servants of the Lord,  
 praise him and highly exalt him for ever.  
 Glorify the Lord, O spirits and souls of the righteous,  
 praise him and highly exalt him for ever.  
 You that are holy and humble of heart, glorify the  
 Lord,  
 praise him and highly exalt him for ever.

Common Worship[edit]

Bless the Lord all you works of the Lord:  
 sing his praise and exalt him for ever.  
 Bless the Lord you heavens:  
 sing his praise and exalt him for ever.  
 Bless the Lord you angels of the Lord:  
 bless the Lord all you his hosts;  
 bless the Lord you waters above the heavens:  
 sing his praise and exalt him for ever.  
 Bless the Lord sun and moon:



bless the Lord you stars of heaven;  
bless the Lord all rain and dew:  
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.  
Bless the Lord all winds that blow:  
bless the Lord you fire and heat;  
bless the Lord scorching wind and bitter cold:  
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.  
Bless the Lord dews and falling snows:  
bless the Lord you nights and days;  
bless the Lord light and darkness:  
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.  
Bless the Lord frost and cold:  
bless the Lord you ice and snow;  
bless the Lord lightnings and clouds:  
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.  
O let the earth bless the Lord:  
bless the Lord you mountains and hills;  
bless the Lord all that grows in the ground:  
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.  
Bless the Lord you springs:  
bless the Lord you seas and rivers;  
bless the Lord you whales and all that swim in the  
waters:  
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.  
Bless the Lord all birds of the air:  
bless the Lord you beasts and cattle;  
bless the Lord all people on earth:  
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.  
O people of God bless the Lord:  
bless the Lord you priests of the Lord;  
bless the Lord you servants of the Lord:  
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.  
Bless the Lord all you of upright spirit:

bless the Lord you that are holy and humble in heart.”

## 9.) Magnificat, Luke 1: 46 - 55 and Benedictus, Luke 68 - 79

### Magnificat

“Mary’s Song of Praise

46 And Mary said,

My soul magnifies the Lord,

47

and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

48

for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his  
servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me  
blessed;

49

for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.

50

His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.

51

He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their  
hearts.

52

He has brought down the powerful from their  
thrones,

and lifted up the lowly;

53

he has filled the hungry with good things,

and sent the rich away empty.

54

He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,

55

according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

### **Benedictus, Luke 1:68 - 79**

“Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel;  
he has come to his people and set them free.  
He has raised up for us a mighty savior,  
born of the house of his servant David.  
Through his holy prophets he promised of old  
that he would save us from our enemies,  
from the hands of all who hate us.  
He promised to show mercy to our fathers  
and to remember his holy covenant.  
This was the oath he swore to our father  
Abraham:  
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,  
free to worship him without fear,  
holy and righteous in his sight all the days of  
our life.  
You, my child, shall be called the prophet of  
the Most High;  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his  
way,  
to give his people knowledge of salvation  
by the forgiveness of their sins.  
In the tender compassion of our God

the dawn from on high shall break upon us,  
to shine on those who dwell in darkness and  
the shadow of death,  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

*Hymns of the Eastern Church, John Mason Neale,  
1865*

*From Psalm 32*

**“I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble, and you fill  
me with the joy of salvation.**

Blessed is he whose fault is taken away,  
Whose sin is covered.  
Blessed the man to whom the Lord imputes not guilt,  
In whose spirit there is no guile.

**I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble, and you fill  
me with the joy of salvation.**

Then I acknowledged my sin to you  
My guilt I covered not.  
I said, “I confess my faults to the Lord,”  
And you took away the guilt of my sin.

**I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble, and you fill  
me with the joy of salvation.**

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you just; and rejoice,  
Exult, all you upright of heart.

**I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble, and you fill me with the joy of salvation."**

*The Holy Bible, Old Testament, Psalm 32: 5, 11*

*From the Liturgical Year*

"Absolve, we beseech thee, O Lord, the souls of thy servants from every chain of sin: that rising again in the glory of thy resurrection, they may enjoy a new life amongst thy saints and elect. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord.  
And let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in pece, Amen."

*The Liturgical Year, Fr. Dom Prosper Gueranger, O.S.  
P., Volume XV, All Souls Day, Mass Prayer*

## CHAPTER THREE

And the Lord Said, "I Will Protect You"



### Vision

(Mary Hughes's Vision) As I laid down from a long and frustrating day, I couldn't help but feel discouraged. With that frustration lying heavy on my heart, I fell into a deep sleep. As I drifted away, I could hear the wind begin to blow just outside my

bedroom window. Building into a strong breeze, the wind became more powerful and I found myself in a whole new world, no longer inside my body.

My body was paralyzed, stuck on the Earth, but my soul was free. I stood in the midst of a beautiful home that sat atop a vast landscape of colorful mountains and valleys. The sky was a mystifying color pallet of reds, blues and purples; painting the most entrancing sunset I had ever seen. The place was purely silent. I felt at peace.

*From Spiritual Guide which Disentangles the Soul*

“128. There are three kinds of silence; the first is of Words, the Second of Desires, and the third of Thoughts. The first is perfect; the second more perfect; and the third more perfect. In the first, that is, of words, Virtue is acquired; in the second, to wit, of Desires, quietness is attained to; in the third of Thoughts, Internal Recollection is gained. By not speaking, not desiring, and not thinking, one arrives at the true and perfect Mystical Silence, wherein God speaks with the Soul, communicates himself to it, and in the Abyss of its own Depth, teaches it the most perfect and exalted Wisdom.

129. He calls and guides it to this inward Solitude, and mystical Silence, when he says, That he will speak to it alone, in the most secret and hidden part of the Heart. Thou art to keep thy self in this mystical

Silence, if thou wouldest hear the sweet and divine Voice. It is not enough for gaining this Treasure, to forsake the World, nor to renounce thine own Desires, and all things created; if thou wean not thy self from all Desires and Thoughts. Rest in this mystical Silence, and open the Door, that so God may communicate himself unto thee, unite with thee, and transform thee into himself.

130. The perfection of the Soul consists not in speaking nor in thinking much on God; but in loving him sufficiently: This love is attained to by means of perfect Resignation and internal Silence, all consists in Works: The love of God has but few Words. Thus St. John the Evangelist confirms and inculcates it. (Epist. I. Chap. 3. v. 18) My little Children, let us not love in Word, neither in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth."

*From Spiritual Guide which Disentangles the Soul,  
Of Internal and Mystical Silence, Miguel de Molinos*

(Mary Hughes's Vision) Walking through the home, I discovered pieces of my childhood scattered on the walls and throughout the rooms. I found old books I had read as a child, and stuffed animals I had held close for so many years. My mom sat in a busy office room writing away as always, surrounded by stacks of files and papers. I was not able to determine what those files were, but I feel that they represented something symbolic that related to her work.

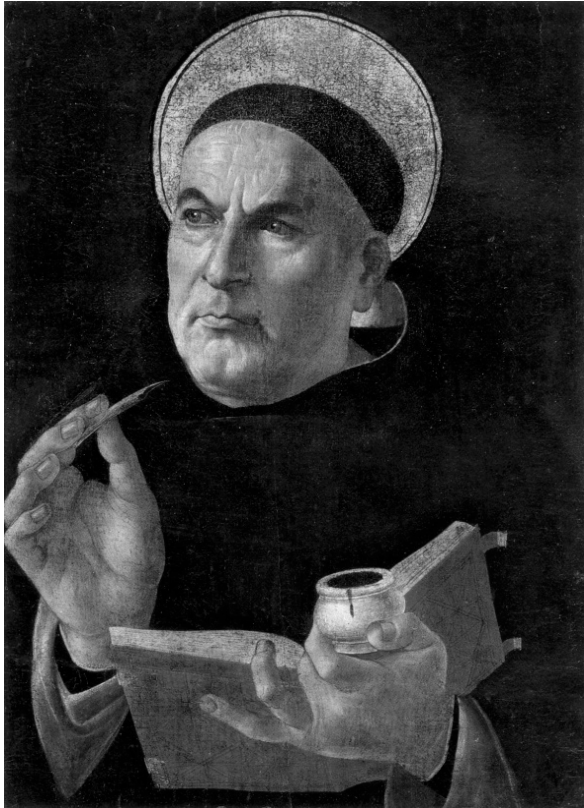


Despite my excitement for this beautiful place, I found myself wondering why I was there. The experience continued and the day went on like I was living there, and time came for me to go to sleep. The room in which I stayed in reminded me much of my bedroom in my childhood home, although the surroundings were much more beautiful and heavenly. All was peaceful and quiet. But that changed as soon as I fell asleep.

Awaking in a 'dream within a dream', I found myself in this same place, but seeing it differently. My father stood inside the home at the bottom of some sort of hill. He was praying in frustration and the words which were coming out of his mouth were incomprehensible.

Watching as this continued, I soon noticed that he was praying in the direction of an icon of a saint which was carefully hung upon the wall.

In the background were the emerald sky blue skies. The saint looked downward toward the left. He wore a black sort of cap which wrapped around his head and tied at the bottom. He looked strangely familiar, but I could not remember his name until later. It was St. Thomas Aquinas.



**St. Thomas Aquinas**

*From the History of the Christian Church*

“In an altar piece by Traini, dating from 1341, in the church of St. Caterina, Pisa, Thomas Aquinas is represented as seated in the centre with a book open before him. At the top of the cloth the artist has placed Christ, on one side of him Matthew, Luke, and Paul and on the other, Moses, John, and Mark. Below Thomas Aquinas, and on the left side, Aristotle

is represented standing and facing Thomas. Aristotle holds an open volume which is turned towards the central figure. On the right hand Plato is represented, also standing and facing Thomas with an open volume. At the foot of the cloth there are three groups. One at each corner consists of monks looking up admiringly at Thomas. Between them, Averrhoes is represented reclining and holding a closed book. This remarkable piece of art represents with accuracy the central place which has been accorded to Thomas Aquinas in the mediaeval theology. Arabic philosophy closes its mission now that the great exponent of Christian theology has come. The two chief philosophers of the unaided reason offer to him the results of their speculations and do him homage. The body of monks admire him, and Christ, as it were, commends him.

Thomas Aquinas, called the Angelic doctor, — doctor angelicus, — 1225–1274, is the prince of the Schoolmen, and next to St. Augustine, the most eminent divine of the Latin Church. He was a man of rare genius, wisdom, and purity of life. He had an unrivalled power of orderly and vigorous statement. Under his hand the Scholastic doctrines were organized into a complete and final system. He expounded them with transparent clearness, and fortified them with powerful arguments derived from Scripture, tradition, and reason. Mystical piety and a sound intellect were united in him. As compared with many of the other Schoolmen, notably with Duns Scotus, Thomas was practical rather than speculative. Popes and councils have repeatedly acknowledged

his authority as a teacher of Catholic theology. Thomas was canonized by John XXII., 1823, and raised to the dignity of "doctor of the church," 1567. In 1879, Leo XIII. commended him as the corypheus and prince of all the Schoolmen, and as the safest guide of Christian philosophy in the battle of faith and reason against the sceptical and revolutionary tendencies of the nineteenth century, between faith and reason, exalting the dignity of each and yet keeping them in friendly alliance." In 1880 this pope pronounced him the patron of Catholic schools. In the teachings of Thomas Aquinas we have, with one or two exceptions, the doctrinal tenets of the Latin Church in their perfect exposition as we have them in the Decrees of the council of Trent in their final statement."

*The History of the Christian Church, Philip Schaff*

(Mary Hughes's Vision) Suddenly, a loud crashing sound came from the sky and burst through the ceiling. A powerful glow of gold light poured through the house and shot to the floor, leaving an imprint in the form of a cross made of effervescent beads and literally what appeared to be principalities and powers of the light in the carpet right in front of my dad. All was silent. My father was left paralyzed and speechless. Then came a deep voice from the Heavens. With the light still pouring in and the imprint glowing in gold, the voice spoke"

“I AM The Lord Your God. And I will protect you.”

*From In Conversation with God*

“When we face contradictions in our environment we should be nonetheless serene and cheerful. It will be the same joy as the Apostles had, because they had been worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus. St. John Chrysostom points out: *it does not say that they did not suffer, but that the suffering caused them joy . . .*

Gladly you bore small contradictions, shortages and little worries. And you enjoyed the interior peace of thinking now I am really working for God, because here we have the Cross . . .

But now, my poor son, the hurricane has come, and you feel that you are being shaken by a force that could uproot century-old trees. You feel this from without and within. But you must remain confident, for your Faith and your Love cannot be uprooted, nor can you be blown from your way if you remain with the ‘head,’ you maintain unity.

Our Lord waits for us in the Tabernacle, to encourage us always, and to inform us that the heaviest part of the Cross has been carried by him, on the road to Calvary. Alongside him we learn how to carry him peacefully and serenely what seemed most difficult and demanding. Everything may collapse and fail. Events may turn out contrary to what was expected

and great adversity may come. But nothing is to be gained by being perturbed. Furthermore, remember the confident prayer of the prophet: *'The Lord is our judge, the Lord gives us our laws, the Lord is our king, it he who will save us.'*"

*In Conversation with God, Third Week of Easter  
Wednesday, Volume 2, Scepter 1989, Francis  
Fernandez*

(Mary Hughes's Vision) And with that, the light dissipated and all was silent once more, leaving behind both fear and tranquility. The Power of God had come through. With one simple phrase, God had reclaimed the very power of which I had begun to lose faith. Immediately, I knew that God was protecting not only me, but my entire family. God was in control. All I had to do was simply place my faith and trust in Him.

But just as quickly as all that had surpassed, it all changed and I found myself surrounded by my siblings, both arguing and worrying about the stain on the floor. The stain they spoke about was the marking left by the hand of God moments before, but no matter how desperately I tried to explain this to them, they could not understand. This inability to understand the workings of God was not out of malice or denial, but simply out of sincere ignorance of heart wherein they had chosen to block out that

knowledge which remained hidden deep inside of them.

At this moment, my siblings became small children (although they were adults in real life). Jumping on my back, they held on tightly as I jumped . . . into the vast world which waited outside the house.

Flying through the ever-changing colors of the sky, I looked down at the majesty below. The mountains surrounded us below, with glistening peaks topped with snow, and colorful serene forests as far as the eye could see. My siblings were terrified, and grasped my shirt tightly as we soared through the skies. But my observation of the landscape was disturbed by the growing sound of singing coming from the sky.

My ears tuned in to the music, and the voices became distinct. The sky was filled with the songs of the angels singing praises to God. The peace was infinite.

My soul felt free for the first time in what had seemed like forever. Listening to the song fervently, I noticed how the skies danced with the music. The melodies of the angels singing 'Ave Maria' faded and a familiar voice came through, singing softly yet with strength and power. It was a voice I had heard throughout my childhood. And my ears peeled toward the song, I recognized the voice of my mother.

Her music lit up the skies as her voice carried throughout the land. Soon her voice faded as well, and the music of rushing water poured in. It was

another familiar sound, and soon my heartbeat blended into the sound, and the sky's colors wisped and whirled with the rushing water and the colors transformed to the beat of my heart.

I recognized this music as 'The Frequency of Otara,' from my mother's music. It captured the frequencies of the angels in the Heavens. The music was unlike anything I had ever heard before.

As we soared through the ever-changing skies, the music and sounds continued to transfigure and unite with one another to solidify the orchestra of the Heavens. This masterful composition relaxed my soul and gradually returned to the room in the house in which I had fallen asleep not long before.

Awakening suddenly (in the 'dream within the dream'), I opened my eyes to find my bed surrounded by angels. Their bodies were invisible, but their souls glistened in the light of the early morning. They shined like crystalline gems in the translucence, reflecting the ever-growing light outside my window and throughout the room.

The music continued, but now the angels were singing old Latin hymns. The sun rose into the sky, producing with it a majestic sunrise. As I sat up, the angels began to fly away, but I reached out for them.

Smiling with joy, I grasped on to the spirit of the angels. 'Thank you for protecting me,' I said, 'Guide me today.' As I said this, they disappeared into the



sunrise, leaving behind the mist of their serenity. The music faded ever so slowly, until it was merely a whisper in the wind.

*From in Conversation with God*

“EXISTENCE OF THE GUARDIAN ANGELS. THE  
DEVOTION OF THE FIRST CHRISTIANS.

Let us look for a moment at this appearance of angels in Jesus’ life, for it will help us to understand their role – the role, that is, of their angelic mission – in all human life. Christian tradition describes the guardian angels as powerful friends, placed by God alongside each one of us, to accompany us on our way. And that is why He invites us to make friends with them and get them to help us.

In suggesting that we meditate on these passages of the life of Christ, the Church reminds us that during Lent, when we recognise our sins, our wretchedness and our need for purification, there is also room for our joy. Lent is a time for both bravery and joy; we have to fill ourselves with courage, for the grace of God will not fail us. God will be at our side and will send his angels to be our travelling companions, our prudent advisers along the way, our co-operators in all that we take on (J. Escrivá, *Christ is passing by*, 63).

Holy Scripture and Tradition rightly give the name of angels to those pure spirits who chose God; his

kingdom and his glory when they were given the fundamental test of freedom (John Paul II, General Audience, 6 August 1986). They are charged with protecting all men. We read in the Epistle to the Hebrews: Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation? (Heb 1:14).

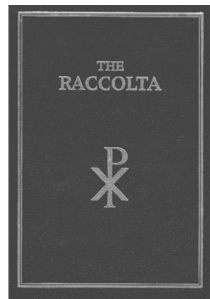
It is common doctrine that each and every man, baptised or not, has his guardian angel. The angel's mission begins with the conception of a man and continues up to the moment of his death. St John Chrysostom affirms that all the guardian angels will gather together at the universal judgement in order to bear witness themselves to the ministry that they exercised through God's command for the salvation of each man (St John Chrysostom, *Catena Aurea*, vol III, p238).

This trust and veneration of our first brothers in the Faith for the angels is particularly highlighted in the account of the freeing of St Peter from prison: An angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell, and he struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying 'Get up quickly'. And the chains fell from off his hands. And the angel said to him, 'Dress yourself and put on your sandals' And he did so. And he said to him, 'Wrap your mantle around you and follow me' (Acts 12:7-11)"

*In Conversation with God, 10/24, Seven Volumes,  
Scepter 1989, Francis Fernandez*

(Mary Hughes's Vision) My excitement of what I had just seen could barely be contained inside me, and I quickly got up and ran to find my mother. As I told her about the light pouring through the ceiling, she took me with her into the library. We searched the floor for any signs of what I had seen. We found it in front of one of the many vast bookshelves.

Tearing open the carpet in excitement, we revealed a glass-encased relic of a very ancient copy of the Holy Bible. It was worn and tattered, yet magnificent. As we dug further, we found an old and worn copy of the 'The Raccolta,' a traditional prayer book used in the Catholic Church for centuries. This book had within it all the (indulgenced) prayers and devotions from the time of the early church until present day. These were the prayers of redemption, justification and purgation for our souls and the souls of the dead in the Church. The title was outlined in majestic gold, and the cover shined with scarlet red.



**The Raccolta (which is in Scarlet Red which Gold Embossed Letters)**

Other ancient sacred texts were also present in this secret hideaway, but I was not allowed to discern their titles.

There was a knock at the door. Confused but curious, I stood up and went to open it. In stepped an elderly woman with frizzy white hair. She looked vaguely familiar, but I knew I had never met her in my earthly life. She smiled at me and walked straight to my mother, giving her a hug, and then proceeded to sit down on a couch. My mother introduced her to me as my great grandmother from her mother's side of the family. She was present to assist and pray for our endeavours, she looked after us, my mother had said.

The scene changed instantly as I found myself sitting at a desk trying to draw the marking of which God had burned into the floor of our home earlier.

As my hands moved through the power of the Holy Spirit, the image which formed resembled a monstrance *and* a cross. I could not capture what I had seen or do it real justice; but when I showed the image to my father, he was brought to tears. He knew what it meant. But I was not allowed to know.

Moments passed and my journey was reaching its end. As I awoke again to the earthly realm in which my body resided, the peace and serenity of the realm I of which I had traveled held onto me for a time, making it impossible for me to move or speak. Silence was all I could muster. The beauty of that place was incredible, and almost impossible to put into words.

But yet, it was. And in that instant, I understood what St. Paul had meant when he had said that eye hath not seen nor ear heard what God hath prepared for those who believe. Lord, I believe, I love and I trust in you. . . I pray for those who do not believe, love or trust in you.

*From St. Padre Pio*

“The Spirit of God is a Spirit of Peace. Even in the most serious faults He makes us feel a sorrow that is tranquil, humble, and confident.”

*St. Padre Pio*

*From St. Margaret of Cortona*

“In times of desolation, God conceals Himself from us so we can discover for ourselves what we are without Him.”

*St. Margaret of Cortona*

*From Thomas Merton*

“Prayer and love are learned in the hour when prayer becomes impossible and the heart has turned to stone.”

*Thomas Merton*

*From St. Augustine*

“Faith is to believe what we do not see; and the reward of this faith is to see what we believe.”

*Saint Augustine*

## Teaching

*From the Secret Doctrine*

“Divine thought cannot be defined, or its meaning explained, except by the numberless manifestations of Cosmic Substance in which the former *is sensed* spiritually by those who can do so. To say this, after having defined it as the Unknown Deity, abstract, impersonal . . . which must be placed at the root of every Cosmogony and its subsequent evolution, is equivalent to saying nothing at all. It is like attempting a transcendental equation of conditions for the true values of a set, having in hand for deducing them only a number of *unknown* quantities. Its place is found in the old primitive Symbolic charts, in which . . . it is represented by a boundless darkness, on the ground

of which appears the first central point in white -- thus symbolising coequal and co-eternal SPIRIT-MATTER making its appearance in the phenomenal world, before its first differentiation. When "the one becomes two," it may then be referred to as Spirit *and* matter. To "Spirit" is referable every manifestation of consciousness, reflective or direct, and of *unconscious purposiveness* (to adopt a modern expression used in Western *philosophy*, so-called) as evidenced in the Vital Principle, and Nature's submission to the majestic sequence of immutable law. "

*The Secret Doctrine Volume 1, Primordial Substance  
and Divine Thought, Helena Blavatsky*

*From St. Augustine*

"The person who asks for and seeks this one thing from the Lord makes his petition confidently and serenely. He has no fear that, when he receives it, it may harm him, for if this is absent, anything else he duly receives brings no benefit at all. This is the one, true and only life of happiness, that, immortal and incorruptible in body and spirit, we should contemplate the Lord's graciousness for ever. It is for the sake of this one thing that everything else is sought and without impropriety requested. The person who has this will have all that he wants; in heaven, he will be unable to want, because he will be unable to possess anything that is unfitting.

In heaven is the fountain of life, that we should now thirst for in prayer as long as we live in hope and do not yet see the object of our hope, under the protection of his wings in whose presence is all our desire, so that we may drink our fill from the plenty of his house and be given drink from the running stream of his delights, for with him is the fountain of life, and in his light we shall see light, when our desire will be satisfied with good things, and there will be nothing to ask for with sighs but only what we possess with joy.

Yet, since this is that peace that surpasses all understanding, even when we ask for it in prayer we do not know how to pray for what is right. Certainly we do not know something if we cannot think of it as it really is; whatever comes to mind we reject, repudiate, find fault with; we know that this is not what we are seeking, even if we do not yet know what kind of thing it really is.

There is then within us a kind of instructed ignorance, instructed, that is, by the Spirit of God who helps our weakness. When the Apostle said: If we hope for something we do not see, we look forward to it with patience, he added, In the same way the Spirit helps our weakness; we do not know what it is right to pray for, but the Spirit himself pleads with sighs too deep for words. He who searches hearts knows what the Spirit means, for he pleads for the saints according to God's will.



We must not understand by this that the Holy Spirit of God pleads for the saints as if he were someone different from what God is: in the Trinity the Spirit is the unchangeable God and one God with the Father and the Son. Scripture says: He pleads for the saints because he moves the saints to plead, just as it says: The Lord your God tests you, to know if you love him, in this sense, that he does it to enable you to know. So the Spirit moves the saints to plead with sighs too deep for words by inspiring in them a desire for the great and as yet unknown reality that we look forward to with patience. How can words express what we desire when it remains unknown? If we were entirely ignorant of it we would not desire it; again, we would not desire it or seek it with sighs, if we were able to see it."

*Writings of the Early Church Fathers, A Letter of St. Augustine to Proba*

*From Systematic Theology*

"5. The Mystical Theory.

"The fifth theory on this subject is the mystical. This agrees with the moral view (under which it might be included), in that it represents the design of Christ's work to be the production of a subjective effect in the sinner. It produces a change in him. It overcomes the evil of his nature and restores him to a state of holiness. The two systems differ, however, as to the

means by which this inward change is accomplished. According to the one it is by moral power operating according to the laws of mind by the exhibition of truth and the exercise of moral influence. According to the other it is by the mysterious union of God and man, of the divine with the human nature, i.e., of divinity with humanity, brought about by the incarnation . . .

According to Clemens Alexandrinus (**St. Clement of Alexandria**), He was, as the Logos ἐνδιάθετος, eternally in God as his wisdom, and therefore impersonal; but as the Logos προφορικός, or united to the world as its formative principle, He became a person. In applying these philosophical speculations to the explanation of the doctrine concerning the person and work of Christ, there is no little diversity among these writers, so far as the details are concerned. In substance they agree. The eternal Logos or Son, became truly a man, and as such gave Himself as a sacrifice and ransom for the redemption of men. He also by his incarnation secures our recovery from the power of sin and restoration to the image and fellowship of God. How this latter object is accomplished is the mystical part of the theory. The Logos is the eternal Son of God; but He is also the interior life and substance of the world. Rational creatures included in the world, are endowed with personality and freedom. Some of them, both angels and men, have turned away from the Logos which is their life. A renewed union of the divine with the human restores them to their normal relation. The original creation of man was imperfect. The divine element was not strong enough to secure a

right development, hence evil occurred. A larger infusion of the divine element corrects the evil, and secures the restoration ultimately. according to Origen, of all rational creatures to holiness and God . .

The whole universe, however, God and world, is one vast organism in which God is the only life and the only reason, and this life and reason are the Logos. And it is by giving the Logos, the rational or spiritual element, renewed power, that the world of rational creatures, who in the abuse of their freedom have turned away from God, are brought back not only to a real or substantial, but also to a cordial union with God, so that He becomes all in all."

*Systematic Theology, Volume II, The Mystical  
Theory, Charles Hodge*

*From the School of Calvary*

"VI. THE SUPPER OF THE LORD

"Ye do proclaim the Lord's death till He come" – 1 Corinthians 11:26.

The Lord's Supper is a permanent memorial of Calvary. It is purposed to keep a stupendous sacrifice in mind, and to prevent it from becoming a neglected commonplace. It is a lowly gateway into a most mysterious place. In its wonderful precincts there is unthinkable bitterness of sorrow. And yet out of the

very bitterness there comes sweet bread for the soul. There are tears in its silences, and there is also "joy unspeakable and full of glory." How, then, shall we come to the feast?

Sometimes we have come to the Lord's Supper as though it were a battleground, and we have forgotten the feast. We have come as noisy controversialists, and not as hungry guests. We have contended for spiritual privileges which we have not used. We have been heated, quarrelsome, defiant, and we have gone unblessed away.

And ministers have sometimes been so ensnared by the administrative part of the office that they have altogether forgotten that they were sinners. They have "administered," but they have not received, and when they have left the table there has been no holy glow about their souls, and no taste in their mouth of "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

How, then, shall we come to the feast? Let us come as impure suppliants. There is no room here to boast of personal merits, but abundance of room to sing the wonders of redeeming grace. This is no place to exhibit webs of our own weaving; it is rather a place of exchange, where we lay down our defective garments and humbly receive "the best robe" in the Father's house, even "the robe of righteousness and the garment of salvation." The most elaborate garment of the self-made man looks very drab and seedy when set in the light which shines around the table of the Lord.

The best thing we can do is to say nothing about our own clothes, but humbly seek that "wedding garment," which is the gift of the Lord of the feast. "Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spoke unto those that stood before him, saying, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with apparel. . . . So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments; and the angel of the Lord stood by."

How shall we come to the feast? Let us come as sickly disciples, whose obedience has been thin and faint. We have been anaemic in His service. There has been an obtrusive want of rich, red blood, and the curious, quizzing world has seen the lack, and has wondered whether we were real kinsmen of the warrior with the "red apparel," or whether our claim is a presumptuous pretense. The only authorized Alpine rope has a red worsted strand running through it from end to end. And the really sealed followers of the Lord are known by their red strand, the blood sign, the red, endless line of sacrifice. A life which shows the wan colour of a selfish worldliness, which has nothing to distinguish it from the children of mammon, cannot claim moral kinship with the Lord, who "laid down His life for His friends." We need the red strand. "My blood is drink indeed." We come to the table in order that our sickly anaemia may be changed into strong and sacrificial chivalry.

"We lay in dust life's glory dead,  
And from the ground there blossoms red

Life that shall endless be!"

And so we come as unimpressive weaklings, who in ourselves are devoid of forceful grip, and who lack the splendid virile influence of contagious health. We have too frequently moved about our work as though we had "received the spirit of bondage again to fear," and were strangers to the spirit of "love and of power and of a sound mind."

And, therefore, devils have not trembled when we drew near, and when we have commanded their expulsion they have remained powerful and enthroned. They have laughed at our approach, and had we carefully listened we might have heard the old challenge: "Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are ye?" The "voice of the great Eternal" was not in our tone, and so the evil spirit proved himself stronger than the professed disciples of the Lord, and we could not cast him out.

And now we come for the bread of strengthening. And this holy bread, this bread of tears, this bread of affliction, is the food of giants. It endows the soul with "the power of His resurrection," and it transforms the ineffective weakling into a strong son of God, and perfectly equips him as a minister of salvation. We have come from defeat and failure up many a pilgrim road, and from many a clime, and we are now in the guest chamber, where the gracious Host is accustomed to meet weary and disheartened pilgrims, and where he graciously feeds them with "the finest of the wheat."

“Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts,  
 Thou fount of life, Thou light of men,  
 From the best bliss that earth imparts  
 We turn unfilled to Thee again!”

And what will He do with us? What will He do for us? What will He do in us? Well, first of all, He will commune with us. He will whisper again to our hearts the wondrous consolations of the fourteenth of John. He will deliver us from our distraction, and He will smooth out all wrinkling and wasteful cares.

“Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid!” Have we not experienced this quieting ministry of the feast? Have we not known the gracious seasons when the real life forces have begun to move, and the soul has begun to kindle, and the envious distractions of the world have melted away, just as the imprisoning ice loosens its grasp in the genial breath of the spring? “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way?”

And thus, while He communes He will communicate, and the communication is so marvelously abounding and complete that we become incorporate with the Lord. The fifteenth of John shall follow the fourteenth; and when the separating fears and sins have been washed away and we are clean, we shall know ourselves to be engrafted into the Vine of Life. And no figure of speech, be it ever so intimate, can express the closeness of the incorporation. But friendship, be it endowed with feelers and tendrils most exquisite, leaves half the tale untold. Even wedded bliss, when

the union seems fleckless and indissoluble, only dimly reflects the fellowship of the soul and Christ. The Apostle Paul ransacked human experience for symbols of correspondence and intimacy; but even when he had used the best and most expressive, he laid down his pen in utter impotence, despairing ever to shadow forth the marvelous kinship of the soul whose life is "hid with Christ in God."

And how shall we go away from the feast? We must go as heralds. We must "proclaim the Lord's death till He come." The Lord's death! We must go out to vagrant pilgrims, who are painfully following illicit lights, and becoming more and more confused, and we must lead them to this strange, solemn birthplace of eternal life and light and hope.

We must "proclaim the Lord's death!" We must tell our struggling fellows that in that fertile gloom guilt finds its solvent, tears become translucent, and moral infirmity begins to "leap as a hart." Yes, we must leave the table as heralds, and this must be our cry: "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price."

And we must go as covenanters. We have taken "the new covenant" in His blood, and the holy sacrament will be fresh upon our lips. And there must be something about us . . . Covenanters . . . having entered into holy bond and covenant with the Lord. There must be something in our very demeanour



telling the world that we have been at a great tryst, and our lives must be gravely, grandly quiet, confident in the glorious Ally, with whom the covenant has been made.

There must be nothing dubious in our stride. Our courage must be kingly, as though we have imperial friendships, and as though in very truth we "walk with God." It must be apparent to everybody, in the home, and in the market, and in the street, that we, too, have been "brought again from the dead, . . . through the blood of the everlasting covenant."

As heralds we must go, and as covenanters, and as crusaders, too. We must leave the table as the covenanted knights left King Arthur's table, "to ride abroad, redressing human wrong," and to labour for the creation of conditions like unto those whose fair pattern we have seen in the Mount. We may test the reality of our communion by the vigour of our crusades. We must drink our politics "from the breasts of the Gospel."

There is a great word in one of Kingsley's letters which was written when the condition of the people was burdening him with its ever-deepening tragedy, and when his spirit was being tortured with the sense of accumulated degradations. And this is what he wrote:

"If I had not had the communion at church today to tell me that Jesus does reign, I should have blasphemed in my heart, I think, and said, 'The devil

is king!" But he left the feast, he assures us, braced and strengthened, and with "a wild longing to do something for his fellow men!" That is it, the power of the holy blood must be proved in our positive action upon the kingdom of the night.

"The Son of God goes forth to war,  
A kingly crown to gain;  
His blood-red banner streams afar,  
Who follows in His train?"

And so let us turn to our feast. The door is open and the King is near, and blessed are all they that love His appearing. Let all human ministries veil their faces and stand aside, and let the soul have undistracted dealings with the Lord."

*The School of Calvary, The Supper of the Lord, John  
Henry Jowett*

*From the Book of John*

*"Chapter 14*

1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me.

2 In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be.

4 Where (I) am going you know the way."

5 Thomas said to him, "Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?"

6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

7 If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

8 Philip said to him, "Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us."

9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works.

11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves.

12 Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father.

13 And whatever you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If you ask anything of me in my name, I will do it.

15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always,

17 The Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you.

18 I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

19 In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live.

20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you.

21 Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him."

22 Judas, not the Iscariot, said to him, "Master, (then) what happened that you will reveal yourself to us and not to the world?"

23 Jesus answered and said to him, "Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him.

24 Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; yet the word you hear is not mine but that of the Father who sent me.

25 "I have told you this while I am with you.

26 The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name - he will teach you everything and remind you of all that (I) told you.

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.

28 You heard me tell you, 'I am going away and I will come back to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father; for the Father is greater than I.

29 And now I have told you this before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe.

30 I will no longer speak much with you, for the ruler of the world is coming. He has no power over me,

31 But the world must know that I love the Father and that I do just as the Father has commanded me. Get up, let us go.

## *Chapter 15*

1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower.

2 He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and everyone that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit.

3 You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you.

4 Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.

5 I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.

6 Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned.

7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you.

8 By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

9 As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love.

10 If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.

11 "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.

12 This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.

13 No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.

14 You are my friends if you do what I command you.

15 I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father.

16 It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you.

17 This I command you: love one another.

18 "If the world hates you, realize that it hated me first.

19 If you belonged to the world, the world would love its own; but because you do not belong to the world, and I have chosen you out of the world, the world hates you.

20 Remember the word I spoke to you, 'No slave is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.

21 And they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know the one who sent me.

22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin; but as it is they have no excuse for their sin.

23 Whoever hates me also hates my Father.

24 If I had not done works among them that no one else ever did, they would not have sin; but as it is, they have seen and hated both me and my Father.

25 But in order that the word written in their law might be fulfilled, 'They hated me without cause.'

26 "When the Advocate comes whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth that proceeds from the Father, he will testify to me.

27 And you also testify, because you have been with me from the beginning."

*The Holy Bible, New Testament, John 14 and 15*



*From Hilary of Poitiers, John of Damascus*

“CHAPTER XII. — Chapter XII. — *Concerning the Same.*

The following, then, are the mysteries which we have learned from the holy oracles, as the divine Dionysius the Areopagite said: that God is the cause and beginning of all: the essence of all that have essence: the life of the living: the reason of all rational beings: the intellect of all intelligent beings: the recalling and restoring of those who fall away from Him: the renovation and transformation of those that corrupt that which is natural: the holy foundation of those who are tossed in unholiness: the steadfastness of those who have stood firm: the way of those whose course is directed to Him and the hand stretched forth to guide them upwards. And I shall add He is also the Father of all His creatures (for God, Who brought us into being out of nothing, is in a stricter sense our Father than are our parents who have derived both being and begetting from Him): the shepherd of those who follow and are tended by Him: the radiance of those who are enlightened: the initiation of the initiated: the deification of the deified: the peace of those at discord: the simplicity of those who love simplicity: the unity of those who worship unity: of all beginning the beginning, super-essential because above all beginning: and the good revelation of what is hidden, that is, of the knowledge of Him so far as that is lawful for and attainable by each.

*Further and more accurately concerning divine names*

The Deity being incomprehensible is also assuredly nameless. Therefore since we know not His essence, let us not seek for a name for His essence. For names are explanations of actual things. But God, Who is good and brought us out of nothing into being that we might share in His goodness, and Who gave us the faculty of knowledge, not only did not impart to us His essence, but did not even grant us the knowledge of His essence. For it is impossible for nature to understand fully the supernatural. Moreover, if knowledge is of things that are, how can there be knowledge of the super-essential? Through His unspeakable goodness, then, it pleased Him to be called by names that we could understand, that we might not be altogether cut off from the knowledge of Him but should have some notion of Him, however vague. Inasmuch, then, as He is incomprehensible, He is also unnameable. But inasmuch as He is the cause of all and contains in Himself the reasons and causes of all that is, He receives names drawn from all that is, even from opposites: for example, He is called light and darkness, water and fire: in order that we may know that these are not of His essence but that He is super-essential and unnameable: but inasmuch as He is the cause of all, He receives names from all His effects.

Wherefore, of the divine names, some have a negative signification, and indicate that He is super-essential: such are "non-essential," "timeless,"

“without beginning,” “invisible”: not that God is inferior to anything or lacking in anything (for all things are His and have become from Him and through Him and endure in Him), but that He is pre-eminently separated from all that is. For He is not one of the things that are, but over all things. Some again have an affirmative signification, as indicating that He is the cause of all things. For as the cause of all that is and of all essence, He is called both *Ens* and *Essence*. And as the cause of all reason and wisdom, of the rational and the wise, He is called both reason and rational, and wisdom and wise. Similarly He is spoken of as *Intellect* and *Intellectual*, *Life* and *Living*, *Power* and *Powerful*, and so on with all the rest. Or rather those names are most appropriate to Him which are derived from what is most precious and most akin to Himself. That which is immaterial is more precious and more akin to Himself than that which is material, and the pure than the impure, and the holy than the unholy: for they have greater part in Him. So then, sun and light will be more apt names for Him than darkness, and day than night, and life than death, and fire and spirit and water, as having life, than earth, and above all, goodness than wickedness: which is just to say, being more than not being. For goodness is existence and the cause of existence, but wickedness is the negation of goodness, that is, of existence. These, then, are the affirmations and the negations, but the sweetest names are a combination of both: for example, the super-essential essence, the Godhead that is more than

God, the beginning that is above beginning and such like. Further there are some affirmations about God which have in a pre-eminent degree the force of denial: for example, darkness: for this does not imply that God is darkness but that He is not light, but above light.

God then is called Mind and Reason and Spirit and Wisdom and Power, as the cause of these, and as immaterial, and maker of all, and omnipotent. And these names are common to the whole Godhead, whether affirmative or negative. And they are also used of each of the subsistences of the Holy Trinity in the very same and identical way and with their full significance. For when I think of one of the subsistences, I recognise it to be perfect God and perfect essence: but when I combine and reckon the three together, I know one perfect God. For the Godhead is not compound but in three perfect subsistences, one perfect indivisible and uncompound God. And when I think of the relation of the three subsistences to each other, I perceive that the Father is super-essential Sun, source of goodness, fathomless sea of essence, reason, wisdom, power, light, divinity: the generating and productive source of good hidden in it. He Himself then is mind, the depth of reason, begetter of the Word, and through the Word the Producer of the revealing Spirit. And to put it shortly, the Father has no reason, wisdom, power, will, save the Son Who is the only power of the Father, the immediate cause of the creation of the universe: as

perfect subsistence begotten of perfect subsistence in a manner known to Himself, Who is and is named the Son. And the Holy Spirit is the power of the Father revealing the hidden mysteries of His Divinity, proceeding from the Father through the Son in a manner known to Himself, but different from that of generation. Wherefore the Holy Spirit is the perfecter of the creation of the universe. All the terms, then, that are appropriate to the Father, as cause, source, begetter, are to be ascribed to the Father alone: while those that are appropriate to the caused, begotten Son, Word, immediate power, will, wisdom, are to be ascribed to the Son: and those that are appropriate to the caused, processional, manifesting, perfecting power, are to be ascribed to the Holy Spirit. The Father is the source and cause of the Son and the Holy Spirit: Father of the Son alone and producer of the Holy Spirit. The Son is Son, Word, Wisdom, Power, Image, Effulgence, Impress of the Father and derived from the Father. But the Holy Spirit is not the Son of the Father but the Spirit of the Father as proceeding from the Father. For there is no impulse without Spirit. And we speak also of the Spirit of the Son, not as through proceeding from Him, but as proceeding through Him from the Father. For the Father alone is cause."

*Writings of the Early Church Fathers, Philip Schaff,  
Hilary of Poitiers, John of Damascene*

# Prayer

## *From the Liturgy of the Hours*

“We do not know how we should pray;  
– the Spirit will plead on our behalf with sighs too deep to express.

On that day, says the Lord, I will pour out a spirit of compassion and prayer on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

– The Spirit will plead on our behalf with sighs too deep to express.”

*Liturgy of the Hours, Responsorial Psalm Romans 8:26; Zechariah 12:10. Office of Readings, 10/23*

## *From the Raccolta*

“Look down, O Lord, from Thy sanctuary, and from Heaven Thy dwelling-place on high, and behold this sacred Victim which our great High-Priest, Thy holy Child, our Lord Jesus, offers up to Thee for the sins of This brethren; and be appeased for the multitude of our transgressions. Behold the voice of the Blood of Jesus, our Brother, cries to Thee from the Cross. Give ear, O Lord! be appeased, O Lord! hearken, and do not tarry for Thine own sake, O my God, for Thy

Name is invoked upon this city and upon Thy people; and deal with us according to Thy mercy. Amen.

V. That Thou wouldst vouchsafe to bring us to true penance,

R. We beseech Thee, hear us.

V. That Thou wouldst vouchsafe to defend this house and city, and all Thy people, to keep them in peace, to guard, preserve, and look down on them with Thy most tender pity,

R. We beseech Thee, hear us.

V. Through the holy Mysteries of the redemption of man.

R. Let Thy mercies come quickly to aid us, O Lord, and spare Thy people.

V. Through the merit and intercession of Thy most blessed Mother, and all the angels and saints.

R. Let Thy mercies come quickly to aid us, O Lord, and spare Thy people.

V. Holy Mary, conceived without original sin, and all ye Angels and Saints, intercede for us to our Lord.

R. That the mercies of our Lord may come quickly to aid us, and that He may spare His people; that so we all may rejoice with Him for ever and ever. Amen.

Let us pray.

Almighty and merciful God, may Thy most holy will be done, at all times and in all things, according to Thine infinite and eternal mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## DEVOUT INTENTION AND OFFERING.

Eternal Father, in union with all the heavenly host, and with the Hearts of Jesus and of Mary, I desire that from all eternity, and for eternity, the most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, his infinite merits, and the merits of His Church be offered to Thee, in discharge of our debt of sin, of the sin of the whole world, for the deliverance of the holy souls in purgatory, and in thanksgiving, first, that Thou hast granted to us, and to all who are at present in this world, and wilt grant to all who shall hereafter be born, such gifts, graces, and mercies as redound to Thine own greater glory and the greater sanctification of all souls in these present tribulations, justly deserved as Thy chastisements; and, secondly, that Thou hast formed of the whole world one Fold and one Shepherd, that all who on earth live in the faith, hope, and charity of our Lord Jesus Christ may meet together in heaven, to sing Thy divine mercies for ever and ever. Amen . . .

Help us, O God of our salvation, and for the glory of Thy Name deliver us: be merciful to our sins for Thy Name's sake.

*Ps. 53.*

Save me, O Lord, in Thy Name; and judge me in Thy strength.

O God, hear my prayer; give ear to the words of my mouth

For strangers have risen up against me, and the mighty have sought after my soul, and they have not set God before their eyes.



For behold, God is my helper, and the Lord is the protector of my soul.

Turn away evil from me upon my enemies, and scatter them in Thy truth.

I will freely sacrifice to Thee; and will give praise, O God, to Thy Name, because it is good.

For Thou hast delivered me out of all my trouble, and mine eye hath looked down upon mine enemies.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

V. For the glory of Thy Name, deliver us.

R. And deal mercifully with our sins for Thy Name's sake.

Let us pray.

Lord, we beseech Thee, in Thy pity hear the prayers of Thy people; that we who suffer justly for our sins, may for the glory of Thy Name mercifully be delivered. Through Christ our Lord. R. Amen.

We beseech Thee, therefore, help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy Precious Blood . . .

Jesus Christ, the King of Glory, hath come in peace.

God was made man.

The Word was made flesh.

Christ was born of Mary the Virgin.

Christ went through the midst of them in peace.

Christ was crucified.

Christ died.

Christ was buried.

Christ rose from the dead.

Christ ascended into heaven.

Christ is victorious.

Christ reigns.  
 Christ is Lord of all.  
 May Christ defend us from all evil.  
 Jesus is with us.

*Pater, Ave, and Gloria.*

Eternal Father, by the Blood of Jesus have mercy; sign us with the Blood of the Immaculate Lamb Jesus Christ, as Thou didst sign the people of Israel, in order to deliver them from death: and do thou, Mary, Mother of mercy, pray to God and appease him for us, and obtain for us the grace we ask.  
*Gloria Patri, &c.*

Eternal Father, by the Blood of Jesus have mercy; save us from the shipwreck of the world, as Thou didst save Noe from the universal deluge: and do thou, Mary, Ark of salvation, pray to God and appease Him for us, and obtain for us the grace we ask.  
*Gloria Patri, &c.*

Eternal Father, by the Blood of Jesus have mercy; deliver us from the plagues which we have deserved for our sins, as Thou didst deliver Lot from the flames of Sodom: and do thou, Mary, our Advocate, pray to God and appease Him for us, and obtain for us the grace we ask.

*Gloria Patri, &c.*

Eternal Father, by the Blood of Jesus have mercy; comfort us under our present necessities and troubles, as Thou didst comfort Job, Anna, and Tobias in their

afflictions: and do thou, Mary, Comforter of the afflicted, pray to God and appease Him for us, and obtain for us the grace we ask.  
*Gloria Patri, &c.*

Eternal Father, by the Blood of Jesus have mercy; Thou who wouldest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live, grant us through Thy mercy time for penance; that, filled with contrition and penance for our sins, which are the cause of all our evils, we may live in the holy faith, hope, charity, and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ: and do thou, Mary, Refuge of sinners, pray to God and appease Him for us, and obtain for us the grace we ask.

*Gloria Patri, &c.*

Precious Blood of Jesus, our Love, cry unto the Diviue Father for mercy, pardon, grace, and peace for , sfor N., and for all the world.  
*Gloria Patri, &c.*

Mary, our Mother and our Hope, pray to God for us, for N., and for all, and obtain for us the grace we ask.  
*Gloria Patri, &c.*

Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Blood of Jesus Christ in discharge of all my debt of sin, for the wants of Holy Church, and for the conversion of sinners.  
*Gloria Patri, &c.*

Mary Immaculate, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for us, for N., and for all. Jesu, Mary, mercy! St. Michael Archangel, St. Joseph, SS. Peter and Paul,

protectors of all the faithful in the Church of God, and all ye Angels and Saints of Paradise, men and women, pray to God, and by your intercession obtain grace and mercy for us, for N., and for all. Amen.

Ant. Give peace, O Lord, in our days; for there is none other to fight for us, but only Thou, our God.

V. Let peace be in Thy strength, O Lord,  
R. And plenty in Thy strong places.

**Let us pray.**

O God, from whom proceed all holy desires, all right counsels and just works; grant unto us Thy servants that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be devoted to Thy commands, and that, being delivered from the fear of our enemies, we may pass our time in peace under Thy protection. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

*The Raccolta, or Collection of Indulgenced Prayers,  
Translated by Fr. Ambrose St. John, 1866*

## CHAPTER FOUR

All things came out from God, all things go back to  
God.



Mother Wisdom, Sophia

“I stem the net of nature  
To bespeak its quarrels with me”

- Marilyn Hughes

## Teaching

*From St. Charles Borromeo*

“Would you like me to teach you how to grow from virtue to virtue and how, if you are already recollected at prayer, you can be even more attentive next time, and so give God more pleasing worship? Listen, and I will tell you. If a tiny spark of God’s love already burns within you, do not expose it to the wind, for it may get blown out. Keep the stove tightly shut so that it will not lose its heat and grow cold. In other words, avoid distractions as well as you can. Stay quiet with God. Do not spend your time in useless chatter . . .

My brothers, you must realize that for us . . . nothing is more necessary than meditation. We must meditate before, during and after everything that we do. The prophet says: *I will pray, and then I will understand.*”

*St. Charles Borromeo*

*From the Catechism of the Catholic Church*

“Meditation is above all a quest. The mind seeks to understand the why and how of the Christian life, in order to adhere and respond to what the Lord is asking. The required attentiveness is difficult to sustain. We are usually helped by books, and Christians do not want for them: the Sacred Scriptures, particularly the Gospels, holy icons, liturgical texts of the day or season, writings of the spiritual fathers, works of spirituality, the great book of creation, and that of history—the page on which the "today" of God is written.

To meditate on what we read helps us to make it our own by confronting it with ourselves. Here, another book is opened: the book of life. We pass from thoughts to reality. To the extent that we are humble and faithful, we discover in meditation the movements that stir the heart and we are able to discern them. It is a question of acting truthfully in order to come into the light: "Lord, what do you want me to do?"

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2705-2708*

*From a Letter of the Epistle of St. Paul to the  
Corinthians*

“Brethren, behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall all indeed rise again, but we shall not all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead

shall rise again incorruptible. For this corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality. And when this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory . . . through Our Lord Jesus Christ.”

*The Holy Bible, New Testament, A Letter of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, I Chapter 20*

*From the History of the Christian Church*

“The doctrinal teaching of Scotus Erigena can be reduced, as he himself states, to three heads. (1) God, the simple and at the same time the multiform cause of all things; (2) Procession from God, the divine goodness showing itself in all that is, from general to particular; (3) Return to God, the manifold going back into the one.

First Head. God, or Nature, which creates but is not created. a. The Being of God in itself considered. God is the essence of all things, alone truly is, and is the beginning, middle and end of all things. He is incomprehensible. While the predicates of essence, truth, goodness, wisdom, &c., can be, according to the “affirmative” theology, applied to God, it can only be done metaphorically, because each such predicate has an opposite, while in God there is no opposition. Hence the “negative” theology correctly maintains they can not be. Neither can self-consciousness be predicated of God. Although not even the angels can



see the essence of God, yet his being (i.e. the Father) can be seen in the being of things; his wisdom (i.e. the Son) in their orderly arrangement, and his life (i.e. the Holy Spirit) in their constant motion. God is therefore an essence in three substances. Scotus Erigena takes up the doctrine of John of Damascus concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit and applies it to the relation of the Son to the Father: "As the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son, so is the Son born of the Father through the Holy Spirit." In the old patristic fashion he compares the Three Persons to light, heat and radiance united in the flame. But he understood under "persons" no real beings, only names of the aspects and relations under which God's being comes out. God realizes himself in creation, and in every part of it, yet he does not thereby yield the simplicity of his essence. He is still removed from all, subsists outside of and above the world, which has no independent existence apart from God, but is simply his manifestation. He is both the substance and the accidents of all that exists. "God therefore is all and all is God." But God reveals himself to the creature. He appeared first to the pious in visions, but this was only occasional. He then appeared constantly in the form of the different virtues. The intellect is itself a theophany; and so is the whole world, visible and invisible.

2. The Procession from God or Nature. a. Nature which creates and is created, or the primordial ideas of the world and their unity in the Logos. God is the nature and essence of the world. Creation is the effect of the divine nature, which as cause eternally

produces its effects, indeed is itself in the primordial ideas the first forms and grounds of things. As the pure Being of God cannot immediately manifest itself in the finite, it is necessary that God should create the prototypes in which he can appear. In creation God passes through these prototypes or primordial causes into the world of visible creatures. So the Triune God enters the finite, not only in the Incarnation, but in all created existences. Our life is God's life in us. As remarked above, we know God because in us he reveals himself. These prototypes have only subjective existence, except as they find their unity in the Logos. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit they produce the external world of time and space.

b. Nature, which is created and does not create, or the phenomenal world and its union in man. In the Logos all things existed from eternity. Creation is their appearance in time. The principle of the development of the primordial ideas is the Holy Spirit. The materiality of the world is only apparent, space and time only exist in the mind. The "nothing" from which God made the heavens and the earth was his own incomprehensible essence. The whole phenomenal world is but the shadow of the real existence. Man is the centre of the phenomenal world, uniting in himself all the contradictions and differences of creation. His intellect has the power to grasp the sensuous and intelligible, and is itself the substance of things. So all nature is created in man, and subsists in him, because the idea of all its parts is implanted in him. The divine thought is the

primary, the human the secondary substance of things.

Paradise is to be interpreted spiritually. Adam is not so much an historical personage as the human race in its preëxistent condition. Man was never sinless, for sin, as a limitation and defect, is not accidental or temporal, but original in the creation and nature of man.

c. The union of divinity and created existence, or the Godman. Scotus Erigena shows upon this point the duality of his system. On the one hand he presents Christ as an historical character, with body, mind, soul, spirit, in short the union of the entire sensible and intellectual qualities of the creature. But on the other hand he maintains that the Incarnation was an eternal and necessary fact, and that it came about through an ineffable and multiplex theophany in the consciousness of men and angels.

3. The return to God, or the completion of the world in Nature, which creates not and is not created. a. The return to God according to its pre-temporal idea, or the doctrine of predestination. There is only one true predestination, viz. to holiness. There is no foreknowledge of the bad. God has completest unity and simplicity; hence his being is not different from his knowledge and will; and since he has full liberty, the organization of his nature is free. But this organization is at the same time to the world law and government, i.e. its predestination; and because God is himself goodness, the predestination can only be to

good. The very character of wickedness,—it is opposed to God, not substantial in nature, a defect mixed up with the good, transitory, yet essential to the development of the world,—renders it unreal and therefore not an object of divine knowledge. God does not know the bad as such, but only as the negation of the good. “God’s knowledge is the revelation of his essence, one and the same thing with his willing and his creating. As evil cannot be derived from the divine causality, neither can it be considered as an object of divine knowledge.” Nor is there any divine predestination or foreknowledge respecting the punishment of the bad, for this ensues in consequence of their violation of law. They punish themselves. Hell is in the rebellious will. Predestination is, in brief, the eternal law and the immutable order of nature, whereby the elect are restored from their ruin and the rejected are shut up in their ruin.

b. The return of all things to God considered according to their temporal principles, or the doctrine of salvation. There are only a few scattered remarks upon this subject in Scotus Erigena. Christ is the Saviour by what he is in himself, not by what he does. His death is important as the means of resurrection; which began with the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, because then all things began to return to their union in their primordial causes, and this return constitutes salvation. The consequences of salvation are therefore felt by angels as well as men, and even by inanimate things. Salvation, as far as we are

concerned, consists in speculative knowledge. We unite ourselves with God by virtue of contemplation.

c. The return of all things to God considered according to their future completion. All things came out from God, all things go back to God. This is the law of creation. The foundation of this return is the return of man to the Logos."

*History of the Christian Church, Volume IV:  
Mediaeval Christianity. A.D. 590-1073*

*From the Liturgical Year*

"The Church is a magnificent temple, which is built up, to the glory of God, of the living stones, which let themselves be set into its walls. The constructing of those sacred walls on the plan laid down by Christ is a work in which all are permitted to share. What one does by word, another does by good example but both of them build, both of them edify the holy city; and, as it was in the apostolic age, so always; example is more powerful than word, unless that word be supported by the authority of holiness in him who speaks it, unless, that is, he lead a life according to the perfection taught by the Gospel."

*The Liturgical Year, Volume XI, 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, Dom  
Prosper Gueranger, O.S.B.*

*From St. Clement*

” Let us fix our gaze on the Father and Creator of the whole world, and let us hold on to his peace and blessings, his splendid and surpassing gifts. Let us contemplate him in our thoughts and with our mind’s eye reflect upon the peaceful and restrained unfolding of his plan; let us consider the care with which he provides for the whole of his creation.

By his direction the heavens are in motion, and they are subject to him in peace. Day and night fulfill the course he has established without interfering with each other. The sun, the moon and the choirs of stars revolve in harmony at his command in their appointed paths without deviation. By his will the earth blossoms in the proper seasons and produces abundant food for men and animals and all the living things on it without reluctance and without any violation of what he has arranged.

Yet unexplored regions of the abysses and inexpressible realms of the deep are subject to his laws. The mass of the boundless sea, joined together by his ordinance in a single expanse, does not overflow its prescribed limits but flows as he commanded it. For he said: Thus far shall you come, and your waves will be halted here. The ocean, impassable for men, and the worlds beyond it are governed by the same edicts of the Lord.

The seasons, spring, summer, autumn and winter, follow one another in harmony. The quarters from

which the winds blow function in due season without the least deviation. And the ever-flowing springs, created for our health as well as our enjoyment, unfailingly offer their breasts to sustain human life. The tiniest of living creatures meet together in harmony and peace. The great Creator and Lord of the universe commanded all these things to be established in peace and harmony, in his goodness to all, and in overflowing measure to us who seek refuge in his mercies through our Lord Jesus Christ; to him be glory and majesty for ever and ever. Amen."

*St. Clement*

## Prayer

*From the Raccolta*

- "1. O my God, and Sovereign Good, would that I had always loved Thee
2. My God, I detest the time when I loved Thee not.
3. How could I ever live so long without Thy holy love?
4. And Thou too, my God, how couldst Thou bear with me?
5. My God, I give Thee thanks for Thy great patience.
6. But now I desire to love Thee for ever.
7. I am content rather to die than love Thee not.
8. Take from me my life, O my God, if I am not to love

Thee.

9. The grace I beg of Thee is ever to love Thee.

10. With Thy love I shall be blessed.

Glory be to this Father, &c.

1. My God, I would see Thee loved by all.

2. Happy should I be, could I but shed my blood that all might love Thee.

3. They who love Thee not are blind indeed.

4. My God, give them Thy light.

5. Miserable indeed are they who love not Thee, the Sovereign Good.

6. My God, let me never be one of these wretched ones who love Thee not.

7. My God, be Thou my joy, and all my good.

8. I would be wholly Thine for ever.

9. Who shall separate me from Thy love?

10. Come, all ye creatures, love ye my God.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

1. My God, I would I had a thousand hearts wherewith to love Thee.

2. I would that I had all hearts of all men wherewith to love Thee.

3. I would there were more worlds, that all might love Thee.

4. How blessed would he be who could love Thee with the hearts of all possible creatures!

5. Thou meritest, my God, to be so loved.

6. My heart is too poor, too cold, to love Thee.

7. Alas for the dead coldness of men in loving their sovereign Good

8. Alas for the miserable blindness of the world,



which knows not Thee, who art true love.

0. O blessed inhabitants of heaven, who know and love Him!

10. O blessed necessity of loving God!

Glory be to the Father, &c.

1. My God, when will the time come that I shall burn with love for Thee?

2. How happy then will be my lot!

3. But since I know not how to love Thee, I will at least rejoice that there are others who love Thee with their whole hearts.

4. In particular I rejoice that Thou art loved by all angels and all saints in heaven.

5. With the hearts of all these I unite the love of my poor heart.

6. In a special manner I intend to love Thee with the love with which those Saints who loved Thee best have loved Thee.

7. Wherefore I intend to love Thee with the love wherewith St. Mary Magdalene, St. Catherine, and St. Teresa loved Thee.

8. With the love wherewith St. Augustine, St. Dominic, St. Francis Xavier, St. Philip Neri, and St. Louis Gonzaga loved Thee.

9. With that same love wherewith Thy Holy Apostles, especially St. Peter, St. Paul, and the beloved Disciple, loved Thee.

10. With that same love wherewith St. Joseph the great Patriarch loved Thee.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

1. Moreover I intend to love Thee with that love

wherewith Mary most holy loved Thee when on earth.

2. In particular with that love wherewith she loved Thee when she conceived Thy Divine Son in her virgin womb, when she brought Him forth, when she suckled Him, and when she saw him die.

3. Yet more, I intend to love Thee with that love wherewith she loves Thee, and will love Thee for ever in heaven.

4. But to love Thee worthily, O my God of infinite goodness, not even this love suffices.

5. Wherefore I would love Thee as Thy Son, the Divine Word made Man, did love Thee.

8. As He loved Thee when He was born.

7. As He loved Thee when He died upon the cross.

8. As He loves Thee ever in those sacred tabernacles where He lies hid.

9. And with that love with which He loves Thee, and will love Thee in heaven for all eternity.

10. Lastly, I intend to love Thee with that love with which Thou lovest Thyself; and since that is impossible, grant me, O my God, of Thy tender pity, that I may love Thee as far as I know how and am able, and as much as Thou art pleased that I should love Thee. Amen and amen.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

Oremus.

Deus, qui diligentibus Te bona invisibilia praeparasti, infussde cordibus nostris tui amoris affectum; ut Te in omnibus et super omnia diligentes, promissiones tuas, quae omne desiderium superant, consequamur. Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, etc.

Let us pray.

O God, who hast prepared invisible good things for them that love Thee; pour Thy love into our hearts, that we, loving Thee in all things and above all things, may attain Thy heavenly promises, which exceed all that we can desire. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c."

*The Racolta, The Chaplet of the Acts of Love*

*The Racolta*

"O Lord God Almighty, behold me prostrate before Thee in order to appease Thee, and to honour Thy Divine Majesty, in the name of all creatures. But how can I do this who am myself but a poor sinner? Nay, but I both can and will, knowing that Thou dost make it Thy boast to be called Father of mercies, and for love of us hast given Thy very only-begotten Son, who sacrificed Himself upon the Cross, and for our sake doth continually renew that sacrifice of Himself upon our altars. And therefore do I - sinner, but penitent; poor, but rich in Jesus Christ - present myself before Thee, and, with the ardent love of angels and of all Thy saints, and with the tender affection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, offer to Thee in the name of all creatures the Masses which are now being celebrated, together with all those which have been celebrated, and which will be celebrated to the end of the world. Moreover, I intend

to renew the offering of them every moment of this day and of all my life, that I may thereby render to Thy infinite Majesty an honour and a glory worthy of Thee, thus to appease Thy indignation, to satisfy Thy justice for so many sins of us thy children, to render Thee thanks proportioned to Thy benefits, and to implore Thy miseries upon myself and upon all sinners; upon all the faithful, living and dead, upon Thy whole Church, and principally upon its visible Head, the Sovereign Pontiff of Rome; and lastly upon all poor schismatics, heretics, and infidels, that they also may be all converted and save their souls."

*The Raccolta, The Offering to be Made at the  
Beginning of the Day*

*From Psalm 35*

"I  
O Lord, plead my cause against my foes;  
fight those who fight me.  
Take up your buckler and shield;  
arise to help me.  
O Lord, say to my soul:  
"I am your salvation."  
But my soul shall be joyful in the Lord  
and rejoice in his salvation.  
My whole being will say:  
"Lord, who is like you  
who rescue the weak from the strong  
and the poor from the oppressor?"

Lying witnesses arise  
and accuse me unjustly.  
They repay me evil for good:  
my soul is forlorn.

## II

When they were sick I went into mourning,  
afflicted with fasting.  
My prayer was ever on my lips,  
as for a brother, a friend.  
I went as though mourning a mother,  
bowed down with grief.  
Now that I am in trouble they gather,  
they gather and mock me.  
They take me by surprise and strike me  
and tear me to pieces.  
They provoke me with mockery on mockery  
and gnash their teeth.

## III

O Lord, how long will you look on?  
Come to my rescue!  
Save my life from these raging beasts,  
my soul from these lions.  
I will thank you in the great assembly,  
amid the throng I will praise you.  
Do not let my lying foes  
rejoice over me.  
Do not let those who hate me unjustly  
wink eyes at each other.  
O Lord, you have seen, do not be silent,  
do not stand afar off!

Awake, stir to my defense,  
to my cause, O God!  
Let there be joy for those who love my cause.  
Let them say without end:  
“Great is the Lord who delights  
in the peace of his servant.”  
Then my tongue shall speak of your justice,  
all day long of your praise.”

*The Holy Bible, Old Testament, Psalm 35*

## CHAPTER FIVE

***“I am the bread of the strong. . . Thou wilt not convert Me into thee, as the food of thy flesh; but thou shalt be converted into Me.”***



# Teaching

## *From Doctrinal Theology*

“52. *The Law and the Gospel.*

The Word of God is divided, according to the different results it produces in men, whose salvation it is to effect, into Law and Gospel. [1]

I. THE LAW, in which God, by command and prohibition, has made known His will to men, and to the fulfilment of which He has obligated them, [2] is, according to its widest extent, partly general and applicable to all times, and partly given for a certain period and under certain circumstances. The former is called the *moral Law*, inasmuch as it contains the precepts of God relating to our moral conduct, which remain unchanged at all times, and concern all rational creatures. [3] The latter is called the *ceremonial* and *forensic Law*, inasmuch as it contains the ceremonial and civil precepts which were given to the Jews during the period of the Jewish theocracy. [4] We have here to consider only the former, as the other has already been abrogated by God. [5] The contents of this were written on the heart of man at the creation (hence it is also called the *Law of Nature*), and men, as long as they remained in their original state, had in it a perfect rule for their moral conduct; [6] but after the Fall, when their knowledge was obscured and they heard



the voice of God in their hearts but imperfectly, it was necessary for God to adopt another method of making known His will to them, and that was most completely done at the delivery of the Law of Sinai. [7] The Law there given contains the most perfect rule for our moral conduct, [8] and applies to us no less than to the Israelites. [9] It binds us to the most perfect obedience, and threatens temporal and eternal punishment in case of disobedience; [10] but also promises eternal life to him who perfectly observes it.

As, however, no one since the Fall is able perfectly to keep the Law, we cannot say that the Law avails for our salvation, [11] but it rather serves, first of all, to lead to the knowledge of sin, and render man receptive for the salvation that is in Christ. [12] The former the Law effects by teaching us the difference which exists between its requirements and our deeds; the latter, by alarming us the more we come short of the requirements of the Law, and by constraining and impelling us to long earnestly for a refuge from the wrath of God with which He has threatened every violator of the Law. Thus the Law drives us to Christ, who promises us such a refuge. It is also predicated of it that it contains a call to repentance, and hence we include within the Law everything which contributes to repentance. [13] Besides this, the Law serves to maintain external propriety and morality in the unregenerate: but it is serviceable to the regenerate, because it contains the perfect rule of moral life, both internal and external. According to these different designs for which the

Law was given, the use of it is divided into *political, elenchtical, pedagogical, and didactic*. [14] (**Political, Refutation, Relating to Teachers or Education, Instructive.**)

II. THE GOSPEL. As the Law contains the declaration of the divine will, promising a reward to him who keeps it, and threatening punishment to him who violates it, so the Gospel, in distinction from the Law, contains the doctrine of the gracious pardon of sins, which we receive as a gratuity for Christ's sake through faith. [15] Thus, in the preaching of the Gospel, the means are pointed out to men by which they may escape the condemnation which the Law suspends over them. And when men are brought to a knowledge of sin through the Law, the Gospel enters, holds forth the grace of God, the merit of Christ, and all the benefits therewith associated; [16] and aims at producing faith in them, by which they appropriate to themselves the salvation in Christ.

Different, then, as are the Law and the Gospel in their signification, [17] yet there is no contradiction between them. As they were both alike given by God, so they are both always and equally binding; they both alike have a work to accomplish in all men; they have in view the same final result, namely, the salvation of men, [18] to the attainment of which end each contributes its part. As, by the preaching of the Law, knowledge of sin and repentance are produced, so, by the preaching of the Gospel, faith is effected. The efficacy of the one follows that of the other; but the efficacy of the one does not hence entirely cease where the efficacy of

the other begins, for the Law still continues to be a rule for the regenerate, to which he conforms his moral conduct, and it thus works in him a penitence which is renewed daily, inasmuch as it still continually convinces him of his sins. [19]

[1] The division of the Word of God, according to its historical publication in the world, into the Old and New Testaments, belongs to the section which treats of the Scriptures. The division specified above, *i.e.*, Law and Gospel, must be treated under this article; for the design here is to derive from the Word, and to illustrate, the different operations which must be experienced before man is fully brought to a personal knowledge of salvation in Christ. The division is justified by John 1:17 and 2 Cor. 3:6. The Law was given by Moses, *e.g.*, "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." The *Law* and the *Gospel* are not then here identical with the *Old* and the *New Testament*; for the Old, as well as the New Testament, contains "a preaching of repentance, and a preaching of the remission of sins."

FORM. CONC. (Sol. Dec., v. 23): "These two kinds of doctrine, *viz.*, repentance and faith, were held in the Church of God from the beginning of the world, yet with a proper distinction. For the posterity of the patriarchs, as well as the patriarchs themselves, not only carefully remembered that man in the beginning was created by God just and holy, and by the guile of the serpent disobeyed the command of God, and thus became a sinner; . . . but they also encouraged and consoled themselves by the most

precious announcement concerning the Seed of the woman, . . . and concerning the Son of David who was to restore the kingdom to Israel and to become the light of the Gentiles.”

[2] HOLL. (996): “The divine Law is the command of God, in which this supreme Lord and Legislator prescribes that which is to be done by men, and prohibits that which is to be avoided, binding them to render a perfect obedience, or, in the deficiency of this, visiting them with punishment.”

The term Law is also used in the sense “(1) of everything that is taught by God, Ps. 1:2; (2) of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, John 15:25; 1 Cor. 14:21; (3) of the Mosaic Pentateuch, Luke 24:44.”

HOLL. (ib.): “But here the words Law and Gospel are taken, as far as they are adequately contradistinguished.”

[3] HOLL. (997): “The divine Law is either universal and perpetual, or particular and temporary. The *universal* and *perpetual* Law is the immutable rule of all moral actions, by which God binds all men to do that which is honest and right, and to avoid that which is dishonest and unjust. It is called also the moral Law.

The *particular* and *temporary* Law is that which God gave to the Israelites alone, binding them to the obedience of it; it is either ceremonial or judicial, and ceased with the cessation of the Hebrew polity.”

[4] HOLL. (1026): I. “*The Ceremonial Law* is the command of God, by which the supreme Lord and Legislator bound the people of the Old Testament, and through Moses prescribed to them a certain form of external worship, that He might remind men of their sins, show from afar to the contrite a Redeemer, and apply and seal covenant grace by two sacraments and various sacrifices. The *external worship*, prescribed to the people of God in the Old Testament, consisted in certain rites to be observed about sacred persons, things, places, and times.”

“*The chief end of the Ceremonial Law* is the signification and adumbration of the benefits of Christ, as well as their application by sacraments and sacrifices. The *subordinate end* is the admonition of sin, the observance of proper order in ecclesiastical assemblies and rites, and the separation of the Jewish Church from all association with the Gentiles.” (Id., 1027)

II. “*The Forensic or Judicial Law* is the command of God, by which He bound the Israelites in the times of the Old Testament, and through Moses prescribed to them a form of political government so that external discipline might be preserved in civil society, and the Jewish polity, in which Christ was to be born, might be distinguished from the polity of other nations. The forensic Law uttered precepts concerning all those things which pertained to the administration of the Israelitic republic, and came under the cognizance of the forum or court of the Jews.” (Id., 1030.)

“The *design of the Forensic Law* is (1) The preservation of external discipline in civil society. (2) The separation of the Jewish polity from that of other nations. (Id., 1031.)

[5] QUEN. (IV, 1): “That the Jewish Law is abrogated is evident from the fact that, since the destruction of the Jewish polity and temple, there is no place for sacrifice or the execution of the forensic Law.”

[6] BR. (398): “It is otherwise called the Law of Nature, because it is employed about those things which are naturally and *per se* either honorable or base; whether they be such as agree or disagree with rational nature. It is also called the *Moral Law*, in so far as it relates to morals, or to the mode of life which is becoming or unbecoming to a rational creature.”

HOLL. (997): “The *Natural Law* is the command of God impressed naturally on the minds of all, by which they are informed and bound to do those things which *per se* are right and honorable, and to avoid those things which *per se* are wicked and base.”

QUEN. (IV, 3): “It is the light and dictate of right reason divinely given to man, enabling him intellectually to discriminate between the common notions of what is just and unjust, honorable and base, that he may understand what is to be done and what is to be avoided.”

[7] The Moral Law is therefore divided into the Natural or Connate Law and the Moral Law specially so called.

QUEN. (IV, 1): "In original, uncorrupted nature the natural and moral Laws were entirely the same, but in corrupted nature a great part of the Natural Law has been obscured by sin, and only a very small part of it has remained in the mind of man; and so a new promulgation of Law was instituted upon Mount Sinai, which Sinaitic law is particularly called the Moral Law, and does not in kind differ from the Natural Law."

HOLL. (1002): "*The Moral Law, specially so called*, is the command of God superadded to the Natural Law in the divinely revealed Word, which was often repeated from the beginning of the world, and at last solemnly promulgated on Mount Sinai and reduced to writing, distinctly teaching what is right and forbidding what is wrong, directing all our actions and feelings, binding all men to the most perfect obedience, or, in the deficiency of this, to the most excruciating torments." MEL., Loc. Comm.: "The Law is doctrine divinely revealed, teaching what we ought to be, to do and to omit to do."

GRH. (V, 223): "The Moral Law is summarily comprehended in the Decalogue."

The Dogmaticians generally hold that a *primordial Law* preceded the Sinaitic Law, by which they understand those preparatory revelations

which were given to primaeval men and the patriarchs.

HOLL. (1003): “The *primordial Moral Law* is that which was given to our first parents, Gen. 2:17, then revealed to their posterity by the voice of God, and afterwards expounded and taught more fully by the patriarchs, until the solemn promulgation of the Law on Mount Sinai . . . . The *primordial Moral Law* and the *Sinaitic* do not differ in substance of doctrine, but in the mode of revelation.”

HOLL. (1002) thus states the difference between the Natural and the Moral Law: “The Natural Law does not differ *as to matter* from the Moral Law specially so called, for indeed the Natural Law is summarily contained in the Decalogue; but it differs from it *as to form*. For (1) the Natural Law is inwardly written by nature on the minds of men, the Moral Law is promulgated externally, uttered by the voice of God, and reduced to writing; (2) the Natural Law is more imperfect and obscure, the Moral Law is more perfect and clear. The former directs external discipline; the latter governs and rules the internal as well as the external conduct of men.” Concerning the Natural Law, HOLL. (999) further admits, that “there nevertheless remain certain vestiges of it, namely, universal principles, from which the difference between right and wrong is naturally apparent. Rom. 2:15.”

[8] We hence find in the Dogmaticians a very exact



exposition of the Decalogue, comprehending the whole science of ethics.

CHMN. (Loc. c. Th., II, 23): "Such is the brevity of the precepts of the Decalogue that Moses called them ten words. And yet in that brevity is comprehended everything that pertains to the love of God and of our neighbor, and those short sentences are to be the rule and line by which we may ascertain what constitutes sin."

**(Commentary) From the Holy Bible "The Ten Commandments.**

**Exodus 20.**<sup>1</sup>Then God spoke all these words: <sup>2</sup>I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. <sup>3</sup>You shall not have other gods beside me. <sup>4</sup>You shall not make for yourself an idol or a likeness of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth; <sup>5</sup>you shall not bow down before them or serve them. For I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God, inflicting punishment for their ancestors' wickedness on the children of those who hate me, down to the third and fourth generation; <sup>6</sup>but showing love down to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

<sup>7</sup>You shall not invoke the name of the LORD, your God, in vain, For the LORD will not leave unpunished anyone who invokes his name in vain.

<sup>8</sup>Remember the sabbath day—keep it holy. <sup>9</sup>Six days you may labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup>but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God. You shall not do any work, either you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your work animal, or the resident alien within your gates. <sup>11</sup>For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the LORD has blessed the sabbath day and made it holy. <sup>12</sup>Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a long life in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

<sup>13</sup>You shall not kill.

<sup>14</sup>You shall not commit adultery.

<sup>15</sup>You shall not steal.

<sup>16</sup>You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

<sup>17</sup>You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, his male or female slave, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

**Moses Accepted as Mediator.** <sup>18</sup>Now as all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the blast of the shofar and the mountain smoking, they became afraid and trembled. So they took up a position farther away <sup>19</sup>and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we shall die." <sup>20</sup>Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid, for God has come only to test you and put the fear of him upon you so you do not sin." *The Holy Bible, Old Testament, Exodus 20, The Decalogue*

[9] HOLL. (1019): "The Sinaitic Moral Law is the perfect rule of things to be done and things to be avoided, neither has it been enlarged by new precepts added by Christ, but only more fully declared and purged from Pharisaic corruptions or additions."

[10] Quen. (IV, 8): "The internal form of the Moral Law consists in a directive and constraining power with respect to doing or avoiding moral acts, binding the conscience to most perfect obedience, or, if this be not rendered, bringing the most dreadful punishment, temporal and eternal, on the violator. James 2:10; Matt. 5:19; Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10." And, indeed, "the Law demands conformity not only in external actions, but also in internal;

neither is it satisfied with any interior effort of the will, but it requires love, *i.e.*, the most ardent feelings, and indeed from the whole heart, the whole soul, and all the strength."

[11] BR. (630): "The Moral Law has been given for eternal life, but upon the condition of its complete fulfilment (Luke 10:28; Gal. 3:12). But, since the Fall, no one can render this, and therefore no one can be saved by the Law." Whence HOLL. (1007): "The aim of the Moral Law is (a) the glory of the Lawgiver; (b) eternal life, promised upon the condition of perfect obedience. The accidental issue is eternal death. Rom. 8:10."

[12] BR. (636): "The Law, which teaches what is to be done and what is to be avoided, and binds to the most perfect observance of these things, charging the most grievous guilt upon all manner of transgressors, by so doing leads men to the knowledge of their sins and to grief concerning them, and so renders them desirous for a mediator." QUEN. (IV, 9): "The subsequent aim is the knowledge of our inability, which fails to fulfil the Law (Rom. 8:3), and the urging of us to seek a remedy." And the additional remark: "This powerlessness ascribed to the Law does not belong to it *per se* and by virtue of its own nature, but accidentally, by reason of our flesh, which weakens the Law of God, although it is in itself holy and good, and renders it powerless and unable to give us life, or to preserve it, since our flesh is not able to fulfil the condition of the Law, *i.e.*, to render to it a

perfect obedience, Gal. 3:24; and this is the reason why the impossibility of saving is ascribed to the Law."

[13] FORM. CONC. (Epit. V, 4): "Whatever is contained in the Holy Scriptures that convinces of sins, that truly belongs to the preaching of the Law." Therefore, just as the Old Testament contains the Gospel, also (comp. note 1) in like manner the New Testament contains the Law.

FORM. CONC. (V, 11): "Yet, meanwhile, it is true and proper that the apostles and ministers of the Gospel should confirm the preaching of the Law, and begin with it in dealing with those who as yet do not feel their sins and are not disturbed by a sense of the divine wrath." Hence to the preaching of the Law can be reckoned, from a certain view of the subject, even the preaching of the death of Christ.

FORM. CONC. (Sol. Dec., V, 12): "For what more severe and terrible indication and declaration of the wrath of God against sin is there, than the passion and death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God? But yet, so far as this displays the wrath of God and alarms men, it is not properly a preaching of the Gospel or Christ, but of Moses and the Law against the impenitent."

[14] HOLL. (1021): "(1) *The political use of the Law* consists in the preservation of external discipline, that wicked and licentious men may be turned away from heinous offences, by presenting

before them the penalties and rewards. According to this use, the Law is a bridle or barrier by which sinners are restrained. (2) The *elenchtical* use consists in the manifestation and reproof of sins, and also in the demonstration of the most severe divine judgment. Rom. 3:20. According to this use of the Law is the mirror of sin. (But the FORM. CONC. already properly observes that the Law does not fully impart the designed knowledge of sin until the coming of the Gospel. FORM. CONC. (Epit., V, 8): 'As to what relates to the revelation of sin, the matter stands thus: The veil of Moses is hung before the eyes of all men, as long as they hear only the preaching of the Law and nothing of Christ. Therefore they do not truly come to a knowledge of their sins from the Law, but either become hypocrites, inflated with an idea of their own righteousness, as were the Pharisees, or fall into despair in their sins, as Judas the traitor did. For this reason Christ undertook to explain the Law spiritually, and thus the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all sinners, that, the Law being rightly understood, they may learn how great is that wrath. Thus at length sinners, being led to the Law, properly ascertain the enormity of their guilt. But such a recognition of their offences Moses alone could never have extorted from them.')

(3) *The pedagogic use* of the Law consists in indirectly compelling the sinner to go to Christ. Although the Law formally and directly neither knows nor teaches Christ, yet by accusing, convincing, and alarming the sinner, it indirectly compels him to seek for solace and help in Christ the Redeemer.

Wherefore the Law is our schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ. Gal. 3:24. (4) *The didactic use* consists in the instruction and direction of all internal and external moral actions. Thus the Law is a perpetual rule of life. Matt. 5:17.”

QUEN. (IV, 10): “The first use pertains to unregenerate and obstinate sinners; the second and third to men about to be justified; the fourth to those who are justified and regenerate.” The FORM. CONC. and the earlier Dogmaticians favor only a threefold use of the Law, political, pedagogical, and didactic. The later Dogmaticians have divided the pedagogical use into two parts, one of which they call the elenchtical use. The question introduced in . . . whether the Law is to be inculcated to the regenerate, and its observance urged on them, is thus determined by the FORM. CONC. (Epit., 6:4): “Although they are regenerated and renewed in the spirit of their minds, yet regeneration and renovation are not perfect in all respects in this life, but only begun. Believers are constantly struggling in the spirit of their minds with the flesh, *i.e.*, with their corrupt nature, which cleaves to us even to our death. And on account of the old Adam who yet dwells in the understanding, the will, and all the powers of man, it is necessary that the Law of God should always shine before us.” . . . When, however, the Law is still held before the regenerate, its significance is thus more particularly described: “That the Law here means only one thing, namely, the immutable will of God, according to which all men ought to regulate their mode of life.”

[15] FORM. CONC. (V, 5): "We hold the Gospel to be specifically that doctrine which teaches that man should believe, who has not kept the Law, and is therefore condemned by it; namely, that Jesus Christ has expiated and made satisfaction for all sin, and thus has procured remission of sin, righteousness before God, and eternal life, without any merit intervening on the part of the sinner." FORM. CONC. (V, 21): "Everything that consoles terrified minds, everything that offers the favor and grace of God to transgressors of the Law, is properly called the Gospel, *i.e.*, the cheering message, that God does not wish to punish our sins, but for Christ's sake to forgive them."

BR. (631): "The Gospel is the doctrine of the grace of God and of the gratuitous pardon of sin for the sake of Christ the Mediator, and His merit apprehended by faith." Hence, as far as this grace is declared in the Old Testament, so far does it also contain the Gospel. (Note 1.) Hence, BR. (ib.): "This doctrine was revealed not only in the New Testament, but also in its own way in the Old Testament (in the New more clearly)." Such intimations in the Old Testament are cited as occurring, not only in the protevangelium to the patriarchs and prophets, but also in the Ceremonial Law. BR. (632): "It is certain that those things which were contained in the ceremonial laws, had the force of Law, so far as they commanded certain acts and rites; yet as far as they represented Christ the Mediator, and His merit to be apprehended by faith, by certain rites, such as types and shadows, they are properly to be considered as

Gospel." As to the relation of the Law and Gospel to the Old and New Testaments, QUEN. (IV, 61) says: "The Old Testament and the Law, and the New Testament and the Gospel, are not identical, but distinct; for they differ as the containing and the contained. For the Old Testament contains the Law as its part, but not to the exclusion of the Gospel, and the New Testament contains the Gospel as its portion, but not to the exclusion of the Law; and thus the evangelical intention of God respecting the remission of sin, grace, and salvation through the death of Christ, is declared not only in the books of the New, but also in those of the Old Testament."

The word Gospel can also be used in various senses. HOLL. (1032): "*Generally*, but with less propriety, the word is used to designate the whole doctrine of the New Testament, taught by Christ and the Apostles, Mark 1:1; 16:15. *Specially*, for the doctrine of grace and the gratuitous remission of sin to be obtained by faith in Christ, whether proposed in the Old or New Testament, Rom. 10:15; Heb. 4:2. *Most particularly*, for the doctrine concerning the Messiah already manifested, Rom. 1:1." Here the word is taken in the second sense, for we are to describe that effect of it, which is different from the effect of the Law. (HOLL. (ib.): "In this *special* sense, the Gospel is sufficiently contradistinguished from the Law.") In the proper discrimination of these senses, the question is also settled, whether the Gospel also preaches repentance. FORM. CONC. (ep. V, 6): "We believe, etc., that if by the word *Gospel* be meant the whole doctrine concerning Christ [taken, therefore,



in *the general sense*] which He taught in His ministrations, that we properly say and teach, that the Gospel is a preaching of repentance and the remission of sins. But when the Law and the Gospel, Moses himself, as a teacher of the Law, and Christ Himself, as a teacher of the Gospel, are compared together, we believe, teach, and confess, that the Gospel does not preach repentance or reprove sin, but properly is nothing else than a more cheering message and an announcement full of comfort."

[16] FORM. CONC. (Sol. Dec., V, 24): "We believe and confess that these two heads of Christian doctrine should be diligently taught and enforced in the Church of God even to the end of time, yet with a proper distinction. For, by the preaching of the Law and its severe threatenings, through the Gospel ministry, the hearts of impenitent men are to be alarmed and brought to a knowledge of their sins and to the exercise of repentance; yet not so that they may despair on account of their sins, but that they may flee to Christ . . . . Wherefore, after they have come to a knowledge of their sins by the Law, their alarmed consciences are to be so directed that they may receive solid consolation from the preaching of the Gospel of Christ." HOLL. (1038): "The Gospel preaches and offers to us the grace of Christ, the merit of Christ, and all the benefits derived from Him." QUEN. (IV, 6): "The form of it is the gratuitous promise of grace, Rom. 3:24; 4:13, 14, 16; Gal. 3:18, given to produce faith, John 3:16; Mark 16:16; Acts 10:43; Rom. 10:9, 10."

[17] The distinctions are stated by HOLL. (1039) as follows: "The Moral Law and the Gospel differ: (1) *As to the manner of their revelation and recognition.* The Law is in some measure known from the light of Nature; for it was communicated to the mind of man at his creation, and it was not entirely extinguished by the Fall, Rom. 2:15. But the Gospel is a mystery plainly concealed from human reason, brought to us from the bosom of the eternal Father by the Son of God, and revealed to us. (2) *As to the object.* The Law is the doctrine of works; it prescribes and commands what is to be done and avoided, hence it is called the law of works, Rom. 3:27. But the Gospel is the doctrine of faith; it holds forth Christ as the Mediator, His merit, the righteousness and salvation derived therefrom to be apprehended by faith: therefore it is called the law of faith, Rom. 3:27. (3) *As to the difference of the promises.* The promises of the Law are conditional and compensatory; they indeed promise life, but under the condition of individual, perfect and perpetual obedience. But the promises of the Gospel are gratuitous, because they promise life, not on account of our own obedience, but of another's, namely, of Christ, apprehended by true faith. The promises of the Gospel are, therefore, absolute and unconditional, not simply, but in respect to legal and meritorious condition, although they do not exclude the evangelical condition or faith, which is destitute of all merit, and the use of the means of faith. (4) *As to the subject, to whom they are declared.* The Law is to be uttered and sharply inculcated to wicked and contumacious sinners, that they may be brought to contrition; the Gospel is to

be applied to the contrite, that they may believe in Christ. (5) *As to the disparity of the effects.* The Law accuses delinquents of disobedience, convicts, condemns, alarms, Rom. 3:20; 4:15; 2 Cor. 3:2; but the Gospel exhibits the Saviour, consoles, absolves, vivifies, Luke 2:10; 4:18; 2 Cor. 3:6." HOLL. (996) makes another distinction, which may be here quoted. "The divine Law is not the causative or conferring means of salvation to fallen man, but it is only the pedagogic means to a sinner seeking the causative means of salvation, Gal. 3:24. The Law leads to Christ not directly, but as disease leads to the physician, indirectly and on account of the manifested inability of obtaining salvation by the Law."

[18] BR. (633): "The Law and the Gospel agree (*a*) as to the author of both, who is God; (*b*) as to the subject to whom they are given, namely, all men; (*c*) as to their design, which is eternal salvation; (*d*) as to their duration, which is to the end of the world."

[19] HOLL. (1041): "The Law and the Gospel practically are united, as if in a certain mathematical point. They concur in producing: (1) the *repentance of sinners* (repentance consists of two parts, contrition and faith, and so it is the *αποτέλεσμα*, or the common function of converting and regenerating grace. The Law, in converting man, does its part by exciting and producing contrition. The Gospel, in regenerating man, also does its part by enkindling faith in Christ. There results, therefore, repentance, as the effect, from the concurrence of the Law and

the Gospel); (2) *the renovation of a justified person* (in sanctification, the Law is at hand as a *normative principle*, or the rule of a holy life; it prescribes and teaches what is to be done and what omitted, and binds to obedience, but it does not confer new strength for a spiritual and holy life: therefore the Gospel comes in as a succor and productive principle, which furnishes strength and power to men, enabling them rightly to walk in the ways of God. Wherefore the Law and the Gospel concur in producing one holy act in the work of renovation); (3) *the preservation of the renewed man* in perseverance of faith and godliness (the Law by its threatenings moves the renewed man the more strictly to suppress his carnal desires, lest, conquered by the flesh, he should lapse into mortal sin, and fall away from the faith; the *Gospel*, by constantly affording new strength, confirms and increases his faith, so that the renewed man perseveres in faith and holiness. Add to this, that the Gospel alone shows the difference between mortal and venial sin. The Law prohibits both, that the renewed man, conscious of his imperfection, may practice a daily repentance. The Gospel consoles his mind, grieving under a sense of his imperfect obedience and sin, by teaching him that there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, (Rom. 8:1)."

*Doctrinal Theology, Heinrich Schmid*

*From St. Thomas Aquinas*

“Now justice of this latter kind may be brought about in two ways. It may be brought about by simple generation, which is from privation to form. Justification in this wise may happen even to one who is not in sin, through his receiving justice from God, as Adam is said to have received original justice. But it may also be brought about by movement from contrary to contrary. When it is brought about in this latter way, justification means the *transmutation* from a state of injustice to the state of justice which we have mentioned. It is this that we mean when we speak here of the justification of the ungodly, in agreement with the apostle’s words in Rom. 4:5: “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” And since a movement is denominated from its terminus ad quem rather than from its terminus a quo, the *transmutation*, wherein one is *transmuted* by remission of sin from a state of injustice to a state of justice, is called “the justification of the ungodly.”

*Summa Theologica, St. Thomas Aquinas*

*From the Three Ages of the Interior Life*

“The Influence of Christ the Redeemer on His Mystical Body

The Blessed Trinity which dwells in every just soul is, as we have seen, the uncreated source of our

interior life. But our sanctification depends also on the constant influence of Christ the Redeemer, who incessantly communicates to us, through the sacraments and outside of them, the graces He merited for us during His earthly life, and especially during His passion. Therefore it is fitting that we speak here of this sanctifying influence in general, and that we consider how it is exercised in particular by the greatest of all sacraments, the Eucharist.

#### HOW THE SAVIOR COMMUNICATES TO US THE GRACES WHICH HE FORMERLY MERITED FOR US

As the living instrument ever united to the divinity, source of all grace, Christ communicates to us the graces which he formerly merited for us. St. John says: "Of His fullness we all have received." Christ Himself tells this to us in a most expressive, symbolical manner: "I am the true vine; you the branches. . . . As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. . . . He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. . . . If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you." Elsewhere Jesus likewise says: "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." By this He means that, if we ask especially for a living, more intimate, and profound knowledge of Him (which is given by the Holy Ghost) and for a purer and stronger love of Him, we

shall be heard. Who would dare to say that Christ is not speaking here of the prayer by which His members ask for the infused contemplation of the mysteries of salvation? "In this," He adds, "is My Father glorified; that you bring forth very much fruit, and become My disciples."

This beautiful figure of the vine and the branches is most expressive. St. Paul reverts to it under the form of the olive tree in which we are ingrafted. He also gives another that is no less striking. Christ, he says, is like the head which communicates to the members the vital influx, which has its principle in the soul. The Church is the mystical body of Christ; Christians are the members of this body. He often repeats this statement: "Now you are the body of Christ, and members of member." "But doing the truth in charity, 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 . . . maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in charity." "And let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein also you are called in one body."

According to this doctrine, the Savior communicates to us the vital influx of grace (of which the source is God Himself considered in His divine nature), as the head communicates to the members the vital influx, the principle of which is in the soul. Clearly to understand this teaching, we must distinguish between the divinity and the humanity of Christ. Jesus, as the Word, dwells, as do the Father and the

Holy Ghost, in the center, in the depths of our soul. He is closer to it than it is to itself; He preserves its natural and its supernatural life. By operating grace, He moves it to the deepest, most secret acts which it could not produce by itself. The humanity of our Savior, says St. Thomas, is the instrument ever united to the divinity through which all graces are communicated to us. Just as in the sacraments, the water of baptism, for example, and the sacramental formula are the physical, instrumental cause of sacramental grace, in the sense that God, by making use of this water and this formula, communicates to them a transitory divine power to produce this grace, so also the humanity of the Savior and especially the acts of His holy soul are the physical, instrumental cause of all the graces we receive, either through the sacraments or outside of them.

The sacred humanity of the Savior does not dwell in our soul. His body could not be in our soul; it is only in heaven (as in its natural place) and sacramentally in the Eucharist. But, although the humanity of Christ does not dwell in us, the just soul is continually under its influence, since by its intermediary every grace is communicated to us, just as in our body the head communicates the vital influx to the members. Since at every waking moment we have some duty to accomplish, Christ's humanity communicates to us from minute to minute the actual grace of the present moment, as the air we breathe continually enters our lungs. God, the Author of grace, makes use of Christ's humanity to communicate grace to us, as a great artist uses an



instrument to transmit his musical thought to us, or as a great thinker uses his own style, his more or less rich language, to express himself. Thus the seven sacraments are like the strings of a lyre from which God alone can, by His divine touch, draw music. The Savior's humanity is a conscious, free, and superior instrument, ever united to the divinity in order to communicate to us all the graces that we receive and that Christ merited for us on the cross. Thus every illumination of the intellect, every grace of attraction, of consolation, or of strength, whether felt or not, actually come to us from the sacred humanity. For each of our salutary acts, it is a continual influence far more profound than that exercised over a child by the best of mothers when she teaches him to pray.

Outside the sacraments, this activity of the Savior transmits the lights of faith to unbelievers who do not resist it; to sinners, the grace of attrition, which invites them to approach the sacrament of penance. Especially through the Eucharist His influence is exercised, for the Eucharist is the most perfect of the sacraments, containing not only grace but the Author of grace; and it is a sacrifice of infinite value. This point must be insisted on here in speaking of the bases or the sources of the interior life.

#### THE SANCTIFYING INFLUENCE OF THE SAVIOR THROUGH THE EUCHARIST

The very terms that Christ used in the Gospel to describe this influence may be fittingly used here.

To draw greater spiritual profit from this influence

and to thank the Lord for it, we may recall how, through love for our souls, Christ first promised the Eucharist; how He gave it to us at the Last Supper by instituting the priesthood; how He renews it every day in the Sacrifice of the Mass; how He wishes to remain among us by assuring the continuity of His real presence; and finally, how He gives Himself to us in daily Communion, continuing to do so until we last receive Him as holy viaticum. All these acts of divine generosity spring from one and the same love and are all ordained to our progressive sanctification. They deserve a special thanksgiving. Such is the true meaning of the devotion to the Eucharistic heart of Jesus. His heart is called "Eucharistic" because it gave us the Eucharist and still continues to do so. As people say that the air is healthful when it maintains or restores health, the heart of our Savior is called "Eucharistic" because it has given us the greatest of the sacraments, in which it is itself really and substantially present as the radiant source of ever new graces.

The words of the promise of the Eucharist, recorded by St. John (6:26-59), show us best of all what this vivifying influence of the Savior on us should be, and how we ought to receive it. First of all, Christ promised a heavenly bread. After the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves, He said: "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of man will give you. . . . My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to

the world." Then a number of those who had eaten their fill after the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves exclaimed: "Lord, give us always this bread." Jesus answered them: "I am the bread of life. . . . You also have seen Me, and you believe not." The Jews murmured, says St. John, because He had said: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven." Jesus replied: "Murmur not among yourselves. . . . Amen, amen I say unto you: he that believeth in Me, hath everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven; that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give, is My flesh, for the life of the world. . . . He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed: and My blood is drink indeed. . . . The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." Many did not believe and withdrew. "Then Jesus said to the twelve: Will you also go away? And Simon Peter answered Him: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." This promise of the Eucharist makes us glimpse all that this sacrament ought to produce in us, whether beginners, proficient, or the perfect.

The institution of the Eucharist shows us the import of this promise. It is thus related in St. Matthew, and almost in the same terms in St. Mark, St. Luke, and the First Epistle to the Corinthians: "And whilst they

were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke: and gave to His disciples, and said: Take ye, and eat. This is My body. And taking the chalice, He gave thanks, and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this. For this is My blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins." The words of the promise are illumined. Peter was rewarded for having said with faith: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." At the Last Supper, Christ's word was more efficacious than ever; it was a transubstantiating word by which He changed the substance of bread into that of His own body that He might remain sacramentally among us. At the same moment He instituted the priesthood to perpetuate sacramentally, by means of the Eucharist, the sacrifice of the cross until the end of time. Christ says, in fact, as St. Luke relates, and as St. Paul states: "This do for the commemoration of Me." The apostles then received the power to consecrate, to offer the Eucharistic sacrifice, which perpetuates in substance the sacrifice of the cross in order to apply its fruits, its merits, and its satisfactions to us until the end of the world. In the Mass, the principal priest is Christ, who continues to offer Himself sacramentally. As St. Paul says, He is "always living to make intercession for us." He does this especially in the Holy Sacrifice. By reason of the principal priest and of the victim offered, of the precious blood sacramentally shed, this sacrifice has an infinite value. At the same time, Christ offers to His Father our adoration, our supplication, our reparation, our thanksgiving, all the salutary acts of

His mystical body.

Christ's love did not give us the Eucharist only once, but gives it to us daily. He might have willed that Mass should be celebrated only once or twice a year in some great sanctuary to which people would come from afar. On the contrary, not only one Mass, but numbers of them are celebrated continually, at every minute of the day, over the surface of the earth. Thus He grants to His Church the graces it needs at the various moments of its history. In the catacombs, later during the great barbarian invasions, in the iron centuries of the Middle Ages, the Mass was the source of ever new graces; it is still so today that it may give us the strength to resist the great dangers threatening us.

Moreover, Christ daily returns really and substantially among us, not only for an hour during the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice, but to remain continually with us in the tabernacle, to be there "the companion of our exile, patiently waiting for us, eager to hear and grant our prayers" and unceasingly to offer there to His Father adoration of infinite value.

Finally, Communion is the consummation of the gift of self. Goodness is essentially diffusive, it attracts, it gives itself to vivify us and to enrich us spiritually. This is especially true of the radiating goodness of God and of His Christ. In Communion, the Savior draws us and gives Himself, not only to humanity in general, but to each one of us if we wish it, and in an

ever more intimate manner if we are faithful. He gives Himself, not that we should assimilate Him, for this would reduce Him to our level; but that we may be made more like to Him. "The bread, which we break," says St. Paul. "is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?" It is Life itself that we receive.

Communion ought to incorporate us more and more into Christ, by increasing our humility, faith, confidence, and especially our charity, in order to make our hearts like to that of the Savior who died out of love for us. In this sense, each of our Communions should be substantially more fervent than the preceding one, that is, as far as fervor of the will is concerned; for each Communion ought not only to preserve but to increase the love of God in us, and thus dispose us to receive our Lord on the following day with not only an equal but a greater fervor of will, although it may be otherwise as regards sensible fervor, which is accidental. There should be, as it were, an accelerated progress toward God, which recalls the acceleration of bodies as they gravitate toward the center which attracts them. As a stone falls more rapidly as it approaches the earth which attracts it, souls should advance more rapidly toward God as they draw near Him and are more attracted by Him. We find this idea expressed in many forms in the liturgy, and especially in the *Adoro Te* of St. Thomas Aquinas:

*Adoro te devote, latens Deitas*

I adore Thee devoutly, O hidden Deity, who art truly hidden beneath these figures; my heart submits

entirely to Thee, and faints in contemplating Thee.

*Fac me tibi semper magis credere,  
In te spem habere, te diligere.*

Make me believe Thee ever more and more, hope in Thee, and love Thee.

*O memoriale mortis Domini,  
Panis vivus, vitam praestans homini:  
Praesta meae menti de te vivere,  
Et te illi semper dulce sapere.*

O memorial of the death of the Lord! Living bread giving life to man, grant that my soul may live by Thee and ever taste Thee with delight!

*Pie pellicane, Jesu Domine,  
Me immundum munda tuo sanguine.*

Merciful Jesus Lord, unclean I am, cleanse me in Thy blood, of which a single drop suffices to cleanse the entire world of all its sin.

*Jesu, quem velatum nunc aspicio,  
Ora fiat illud, quod tam sitio:  
Ut te revelata cernens facie,  
Visu sim beatus tuae gloriae. Amen.*

Jesus, whom I now behold beneath these veils, grant, I pray Thee, what so ardently I desire, that contemplating Thee face to face, the vision of Thy glory may make me blessed. Amen.

Should a soul thus live daily by the Savior in Mass and Communion, it would certainly arrive at great intimacy with Him, at the intimacy which is that of the mystical life. The gifts of the Holy Ghost would grow proportionately in it, and it would attain to an increasingly more penetrating and delightful contemplation of the great mystery of our altars, of the infinite value of the Mass, which is like an eminent spring of ever new graces to which all succeeding generations must come and drink, that they may have the strength to arrive at the end of their journey towards eternity. Thus the prophet Elias, overcome by fatigue, renewed his strength by eating the loaf that came down from heaven, and was able to walk even to Horeb, a figure of the summit of perfection.

Christ says to us in Communion, as He said to St. Augustine: "I am the bread of the strong. . . . Thou wilt not convert Me into thee, as the food of thy flesh; but thou shalt be converted into Me." He who truly receives Christ in Holy Communion is more and more incorporated in Him, living by His thought and by His love. He can say with St. Paul: "To me to live is Christ and to die is gain," for death is the entrance into unending life.

PROGRESSIVE INCORPORATION IN CHRIST AND SANCTITY-The doctrine of progressive incorporation in Christ will manifest its marvelous fecundity to the soul that wishes to live by it.

First of all, in order to die to sin and its



consequences, we will recall what St. Paul says: "We are buried together with Him (Christ) by baptism into death. . . that the body of sin may be destroyed." "And they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences"; this is the death to sin through baptism and penance. Then, in the light of faith and under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the Christian should put on "the new (man), him who is renewed unto knowledge, according to the image of Him that created him. . . . Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God," adds St. Paul, "holy, and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience. . . . But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection." This is the illuminative way of those who imitate Christ, who adopt His sentiments, the spirit of His mysteries, His passion, His crucifixion, His resurrection. This is the way of the contemplation of the Savior's mysteries which all the saints have lived, even those of the active life, while recalling these words of the Apostle: "Furthermore, I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ."

This road leads to continual union with the Savior, according to the sublime words of the Epistle to the Colossians (3: 1-3): "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. For you are dead (to the world); and your life is hid with

Christ in God." Then the peace of the Savior reigns in the soul that delights in saying to Him: "Lord, give Thyself to me, and give me to Thyself." In the saints, this union is like an almost uninterrupted communion. A glance, a movement of the soul toward Christ, tell Him our desires, present to Him our weakness, our good will, our disposition to be faithful to Him, and the thirst we have for Him. Such is the way of the loving contemplation of the great mysteries of Christ; it has its aridities and its joys. Those who experience it, see in it the normal prelude of the vision of heaven."

*The Three Ages of the Interior Life, Part I, The Sources of the Interior Life and its End, Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange*

## Prayer

*From the Raccolta*

"O Lord God of goodness, and Father of mercies, I draw nigh to Thee with a contrite and humble heart; to Thee I recommend the last hour of my life, and that judgment which awaits me afterwards. Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me. When my feet, benumbed with death, shall admonish me that my course in this life is drawing to an end,

Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.

When my hands, cold and trembling, shall no longer  
be able to clasp the crucifix, and shall let it fall against  
my will on my bed of suffering,

Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.

When my eyes, dim with trouble at the approach of  
death, shall fix themselves on Thee my last and only  
support,

Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.

When my lips, cold and trembling, pronounce for the  
last time Thy adorable Name,

Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.

When my face, pale and livid, shall inspire the  
beholders with pity and dismay; when my hair,  
bathed in the sweat of death, and stiffening on my  
head, shall forebode my approaching end,

Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.

When my ears, shall to be for ever shut to the  
discourse of men, shall be open to that irrevocable  
decree, which is to fix my doom for all eternity,

Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.

When my imagination, agitated by dreadful spectres,  
shall be sunk in an abyss of anguish; when my soul,  
affrighted by the sight of my iniquities and the terrors  
of Thy judgments, shall have to fight against the angel  
of darkness, who will endeavour to conceal from my  
eyes Thy mercies, and to plunge me into despair,

Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.

When my poor heart, oppressed with suffering and  
exhausted by its continual struggles with the enemies  
of its salvation, shall feel the pangs of death,

Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.

When the last tear, the forerunner of my dissolution,

shall drop from my eyes, receive it as a sacrifice of expiation for my sins; grant that I may expire the victim of penance; and then in that dreadful moment, Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.

When my friends and relations, encircling my bed, shall be moved with compassion for me, and invoke Thy clemency in my behalf,

Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.

When I shall have lost the use of my senses, when the world shall have vanished from my sight, when my agonising soul shall feel the sorrows of death,

Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.

When my last sighs shall force my soul to issue from my body, accept them as the children of a loving impatience to come to Thee.

Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.

When my soul, trembling on my lips, shall bid adieu to the world, and leave my body lifeless, pale, and cold, receive this separation as a homage which I willingly pay to Thy Divine Majesty, and in that last moment of my mortal life,

Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.

When at length my soul, admitted to Thy presence, shall first behold the splendour of Thy Majesty, reject me not, but receive me into Thy bosom, where I may for ever sing Thy praises, and in that moment when eternity shall begin to me,

Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.

Let us pray.

O God, who hast doomed all men to die, and hast concealed from all the hour of their death, grant that I may pass my days in the practice of holiness and

justice, and that I may be made worthy to quit this world in the peace of a good conscience, and in the embrace of Thy love, through Christ our Lord. Amen."

*The Raccolta, For a Good Death*

*From the Raccolta*

"THE PRAYERS.

1. Hear us, O God of our salvation, and issue not the decree for the completion of our days before Thou forgivest us our sins; and because penance avails not in hell, and there is no room for amendment in the pit, therefore we humbly pray and beseech Thee here on earth, that giving us time to pray for pardon, Thou wouldst give us all forgiveness of our sins. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

2. Take away, merciful Lord, all errors from Thy faithful people, avert from them the sudden destruction of the wasting pestilence; and those whose wanderings Thou dost justly chastise, do Thou mercifully pity when corrected. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ANTIPHON.

3. Sin no longer, O my soul; think upon the sudden change from sin to endless torments. There, in hell,

penance is not accepted, and tears profit not. Turn, then, whilst thou hast time; cry out and say, Have mercy upon me, O my God.

ANTIPHON.

4. In the midst of life we are in death; but to whom can we look to be our helper save Thee, O Lord, who art justly angry with us because of our sins? O holy God, holy and strong, holy and merciful Saviour, deliver us not over to a bitter death,

5. V. Lest, overtaken by the day of death, we seek time for penance, and be unable to find it. R. Hearken, O Lord, and have mercy on us; for we have sinned against Thee.

6. We beseech Thee, Almighty God, receive in Thy fatherly pity Thy people who flee unto Thee from Thine anger; that those who fear to be chastised by the rod of Thy majesty through unprepared death, may be made worthy to rejoice in Thy pardon. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

7. We beseech Thee, Almighty God, graciously incline Thine ear to the assembly of Thy Church, and let Thy mercy to us anticipate Thine anger; for if Thou shouldst mark iniquities, there shall no creature be able to stand before Thee: but in that same admirable charity whereby Thou didst create us, pardon us sinners, and destroy not the work of Thine own hands in an unprepared death. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

8. Hear our prayers, O Lord, and enter not into judgment with Thy servants; for, knowing that there is no justice in us on which we can dare to presume, We acknowledge no other fount of mercy whereby we can be washed from our sins, delivered from our infirmities, and especially from unprepared death, but only Thou, O Lord. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

9. O God, before whom every heart trembles and ever conscience is awed; show forth Thy mercy upon us Thy suppliants, that we who trust not in the excellence of our own merit, may never experience unprepared death, but may receive Thy pardon. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

#### PRAYER.

Most merciful Lord, Jesus, by Thy agony and bloody sweat, and by Thy death, deliver me, I beseech Thee, from sudden and unprepared death. O most gentle Lord Jesus, by Thy cruel and ignominious scourging and crowning with thorns, by Thy cross and bitter passion, and by Thine own great goodness, I humbly pray Thee, let me not die unprepared, and pass from this life without the Holy Sacraments. Jesus, my best beloved, my Lord! by all Thy travails and all Thy sorrows, by Thy Precious Blood, and by Thy most holy wounds, and by those last words spoken by Thee upon the cross, - "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and again, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," - most ardently I pray

Thee, free me from unprepared death. Thy hands, O my Redeemer, have wholly made and formed me; O suffer not death to take me unawares; grant me, I beseech Thee, time for penance; vouchsafe me a happy passage in Thy grace, that in the world to come I may love Thee with My whole heart, and praise and bless Thee for ever and for ever. Amen.

*Then say five Pater noster's and five Ave Maria's in memory of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and three Ave Maria's to the Blessed Virgin Mother of Sorrows."*

***The Raccolta, Prayers for an Unprepared Death***

***From the Roman Missal***

"May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord; and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.

O God, the life of the living, the hope of the dying, the salvation of all that trust in thee, mercifully grant that the souls of thy servants and handmaids, delivered from the darkness of our mortality, may rejoice with thy saints in perpetual light. Through our Lord.

O Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory, deliver the souls of all the faithful departed from the pains of hell and



from the deep pit: deliver them from the mouth of the lion, that hell may not swallow them up, and they may not fall into darkness, but may the holy standard-bearer Michael introduce them to the holy light; Which thou didst promise of old to Abraham and to his seed.

Accept this prayer which I offer You, merciful Father, for those who have died, those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith, and those whose faith in this life was known to You alone. Have mercy on them all and bring them into Your kingdom of peace and light without end where You and Your saints live in the happiness which this world has not known and cannot give. Amen.

Immortal God, Holy Lord, Father and protector of everything Thou hast created, we raise our hearts to Thee today for those who have passed out of this mortal life. In Thy loving mercy, Father of men, be pleased to receive them into Thy Heavenly company, and forgive them the failings and faults of human frailty. Thy only Son, Christ, our Savior, suffered cruelly that He might deliver them from the second death. By His merits may they share in the glory of His victory over sin and death. We pray for all the faithful who have died, but in particular for those dear to us - parents, relatives and friends. Nor do we forget those who did us good while on earth, who helped us by their prayers, sacrifices, and example. We pray also for any who have done us harm and stand in need of Thy special forgiveness. May the merits of Our Virgin Mother Mary, and those of all

Thy Angels and Saints, speak for us and assist them now. This we ask in Christ's name. Amen.

V. Eternal rest give unto the faithful departed, O Lord!

R. And let perpetual light shine upon them!

V. May they rest in peace.

R. Amen."

*The Roman Missal, Third Edition for use in the  
Dioceses of the United States of America, 2010*

*From the Raccolta*

"O gentle Heart of Jesus, ever present in the Blessed Sacrament, ever consumed with burning love for the poor captive souls in Purgatory, have mercy on them. Be not severe in Your judgments, but let some drops of Your Precious Blood fall upon the devouring flames. And, Merciful Savior, send Your angels to conduct them to a place of refreshment, light, and peace. Amen.

Most loving Jesus, I humbly beseech Thee, that Thou Thyself wouldst offer to Thine eternal Father in behalf of the Holy Souls in purgatory, the Most Precious Blood which poured forth from the sacred wounds of Thine adorable Body, together with Thine agony and death. And do thou likewise O sorrowful Virgin Mary, present unto Him, together with the dolorous Passion of Thy dear Son, thine own sighs and tears, and all the sorrows thou didst suffer in His suffering,

in order that, through the merits of the same, refreshment may be granted to the souls now suffering in the fiery torments of purgatory, so that, being delivered from that painful prison, they may be clothed with glory in heaven, there to sing the mercies of God for ever and ever. Amen.

O most compassionate Jesus, have mercy on the souls detained in Purgatory, for whose redemption Thou didst take upon Thyself our nature and endure a bitter death. Mercifully hear their sighs, look with pity upon the tears which they now shed before Thee, and by virtue of Thy Passion, release them from the pains due to their sins. O most merciful Jesus, let Thy Precious Blood reach down into Purgatory and refresh and revive the captive souls who suffer there. Stretch out to them Thy strong right hand, and bring them forth into the place of refreshment, light and peace. Amen. O blessed souls! We have prayed for thee! We entreat thee, who art so dear to God, and who art certain of never losing Him, to pray for us poor miserable sinners who are in danger of being damned and of losing God forever. Amen.

My God, pour forth Thy blessings and Thy mercies upon all persons and upon all souls in purgatory for whom, by reason of charity, gratitude and friendship, I am bound or desire to pray. Amen.

O Lord God omnipotent, I beseech Thee by the Precious Blood which Thy divine Son Jesus shed in His cruel scourging, deliver the souls in purgatory, and among them all, especially that soul which is

nearest to its entrance into Thy glory, that it may soon begin to praise Thee and bless Thee for ever. Amen.

O Lord God omnipotent, I beseech Thee by the Precious Blood which Jesus Thy divine Son did shed this day upon the tree of the Cross, especially from His sacred Hands and Feet, deliver the souls in purgatory, and particularly that soul for whom I am most bound to pray, in order that I may not be the cause which hinders Thee from admitting it quickly to the possession of Thy glory where it may praise Thee and bless Thee for evermore. Amen.

O Lord God, omnipotent, I beseech Thee by the Precious Blood, which Thy divine Son Jesus shed in the Garden, deliver the souls in purgatory, and especially that one which is the most forsaken of all, and bring it into Thy glory where it may praise and bless Thee for ever. Amen.

My Jesus, by the sorrows Thou didst suffer in Thine agony in the Garden, in Thy scourging and crowning with thorns, in the way to Calvary, in Thy crucifixion and death, have mercy on the souls in purgatory, and especially on those that are most forsaken; do Thou deliver them from the dire torments they endure; call them and admit them to Thy most sweet embrace in paradise.

Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Most Precious Blood of Thy Divine Son, Jesus, in union with the Masses said throughout the world today, for all the holy souls in Purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the

universal Church, those in my own home and within my family. Amen.

O Holy Guardian Angels of the poor souls, you who accompanied them so faithfully during life, who so lovingly guarded them from error, misfortune, and sin, help them now when, having escaped from the dangers of the world, they are so near to heaven. Obtain for them from the Most Holy Trinity a full remission of their indebtedness and lead them without delay to the joys of heaven.

O divine Heart of Jesus, grant, I pray Thee, eternal rest to the souls in purgatory, the final grace to those who are about to die this day, true repentance to sinners, the light of faith to pagans, and Thy blessing to me and to all who are dear to me. To Thee, therefore, O most merciful Heart of Jesus, I commend all these souls, and in their behalf I offer unto Thee all Thy merits in union with the merits of Thy most blessed Mother and of all the Angels and Saints, together with all the Masses, Communions, prayers and good works which are this day being offered throughout Christendom.

Most holy Mary, our Lady of Intercession, whose maternal tenderness gathers in one embrace all the souls redeemed by the Precious Blood of thy Son Jesus, we come before thy royal throne with sadness in our hearts as we remember those who have gone before us, but also with unlimited confidence in thine intercession. Death, which burst asunder the bonds of earth, has not destroyed the affection which binds us

to those who lived in the same faith as we do. O Mary, countless souls await with unutterable anxiety the assistance of our prayers, and the merits of our good works in that place of expiation. Urged by the charity of Jesus Christ, we raise our countenance and heart in supplication to thee, the compassionate Mother of all believers, in favor of those suffering souls. Make our prayers of good effect, O Mary; obtain for them the power to move the Heart of Jesus our Redeemer through thy motherly intercession. Let thine incomparable holiness supply the defects of our misery, thy love make good our languid affection, thy power strengthen our weakness. Grant, O Queen of heaven, that the ardent desire of the souls of the departed to be admitted to the Beatific Vision may soon be satisfied. We pray to thee, O Mother, especially for the souls of our relations, of priests, of those who were zealous in honoring these, of those who did good to the souls of others, of those who wept with them and for them and finally, for those souls of those who are forgotten. Grant that one day, when we are all reunited in heaven, we may be able to rejoice in the possession of God, in the happiness of thy dear presence, in the fellowship of all the Saints, thanking thee forever for all the blessings thou hast obtained for us, O Mother, who art our unfailing comfort. Amen. Hail Mary... Hail Mary... Hail Mary... Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord; and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen"

*The Raccolta, or Collection of Indulgenced Prayers,  
Translated by Fr. Ambrose St. John, 1866*

*The Our Father*

“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 Trespasses  
As we Forgive those who Trespass Against Us  
And Lead us not Into Temptation  
But Deliver us from Evil  
For Thine is the Kingdom  
And the Power  
And the Glory  
Forever and Ever.  
Amen.”

*The Our Father*

## CHAPTER SIX

**"The Eucharist is "the source and summit of the  
Christian life."**



Teaching



*From the Catechism of the Catholic Church*

"The Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life."

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church*

## Explanation of the Prayers and Ceremonies of Holy Mass

Taken from Notes Made at the  
Conferences of Dom Prosper Gueranger,  
Abbot of Solesmes.

(1805 - 1875)

Translated from the French by Rev. Dom Laurence  
Shephers, (1825 - 1885) Monk of the English  
Benedictine Congregation

Abridged (with Additions of Scriptures and Prayers)  
by Marilyn Hughes, 2015, for 'The Shining Ocean'

*From Fr. Dom Prosper Gueranger*

### "EXPLANATION OF THE MASS

"The Ordinary of the Mass, (or, as it is called in the Roman Missal, *Ordo Missae*,) is the summary of the rubrics and prayers, which are used in the celebration of Mass, and which are observed, without any variation, on all the Feasts celebrated by the Church.

We shall never have anything like a full idea of the ceremonies of the Mass, unless we keep referring to what is called a *High Mass*, (*Missa Solemnis*), and which is the type of all others. We shall continually have to seek in the ceremonies of a High Mass, for the meaning of those of a Low Mass.

The Sacrifice of the Mass is the Sacrifice of the Cross itself; and in it we must see our Lord nailed to the Cross; and offering up his Blood for our sins, to his Eternal Father. And yet we must not expect to find, in the several portions of the Mass, all the detailed circumstances of the Passion.

The Priest leaves the Sacristy, and goes to the Altar, there to offer up the holy Sacrifice. He is, as the rubric expresses it, *paratus*, - that is, he is clad in the sacred vestments, which are appointed for the celebration of the Sacrifice. Having reached the Altar, he makes the due reverence before it; that is to say, if the Blessed Sacrament be there, he makes a genuflexion; otherwise, he merely makes a profound inclination. This is the meaning of the rubrics saying: *debita reverentia*.

### **JUDICA, Ps. XLII.**

Having made the sign of the Cross, the Priest says the Antiphon: *Introibo ad altare Dei*, as an introduction to the 42nd Psalm.

## Psalm 42

## Longing for God's Presence in the Temple

<sup>1</sup> For the leader. A *maskil* of the Korahites.<sup>[b]</sup>

## I

<sup>2</sup> As the deer longs for streams of water,  
so my soul longs for you, O God.

<sup>3</sup> My soul thirsts for God, the living God.

When can I enter and see the face of God?<sup>l</sup>

<sup>4</sup> My tears have been my bread day and night,  
as they ask me every day, "Where is your God?"

<sup>5</sup> Those times I recall  
as I pour out my soul,

When I would cross over to the shrine of the Mighty One,  
to the house of God,

Amid loud cries of thanksgiving,  
with the multitude keeping festival.

<sup>6</sup> Why are you downcast, my soul;  
why do you groan within me?

Wait for God, for I shall again praise him,  
my savior and my God.

## II

My soul is downcast within me;  
therefore I remember you

From the land of the Jordan<sup>l</sup> and Hermon,  
from Mount Mizar,

<sup>8</sup> Deep calls to deep  
in the roar of your torrents,  
and all your waves and breakers  
sweep over me.

<sup>9</sup> By day may the LORD send his mercy,  
and by night may his righteousness be with me!  
I will pray<sup>l</sup> to the God of my life,

<sup>10</sup> I will say to God, my rock:

"Why do you forget me?

Why must I go about mourning  
with the enemy oppressing me?"

**<sup>11</sup> It shatters my bones, when my adversaries reproach me,  
when they say to me every day: "Where is your God?"**

**<sup>12</sup> Why are you downcast, my soul,  
why do you groan within me?**

**Wait for God, for I shall again praise him,  
my savior and my God.**

This Antiphon is always said, both before and after the Psalm, which he at once begins: *Judica me Deus*. He says the whole of it, alternately with the Ministers. This Psalm was selected on account of the verse *Introibo ad altare Dei*: I will go unto the altar of God. It is most appropriate as a beginning to the Holy Sacrifice. We may remark here, that the Church always selects the Psalms she uses, because of some special verse which is appropriate to what she does, or to what she wishes to express. When we hear the Priest saying this Psalm, we understand to whom it refers:- it refers to our Lord, and it is in his name, that the Priest recites it. We are told this by the very first verse: *Ab homine iniquo et doloso erue me*: deliver me from the unjust and deceitful man.

### Antiphon

**People of Zion, the Lord will come to save all nations, and  
your hearts will exult to hear his majestic voice.**

The verse here used as an Antiphon, shows us, that David was still young when he composed this Psalm; for, after saying, that he is going to the Altar of God, he says: *Ad Deum, qui laetificat juventutem meam*: To God, who giveth joy to my youth. He expresses astonishment at his soul being sad; and, at once, cheers himself, by rousing his hope in God; hence, his

song is full of gladness. It is on account of the joy which is the characteristic of this Psalm, that holy Church would have it be omitted in Masses for the Dead, in which we are about to pray for the repose of a soul, whose departure from this life leaves us in uncertainty and grief. It is omitted, also, during Passiontide, in which season, the Church is all absorbed in the sufferings of her divine Spouse; and these preclude all joy.

This 42nd Psalm is an appropriate introduction to the Mass. Who is He that is to be *sent* to the Gentiles, but He that is Light and Truth? David foresaw all this; and, therefore, he uttered the prayer: *Emitte lucem tuam et veritatem tuam*. We take his prayer and make it ours; and we say to our heavenly Father: send forth Him, who is thy Light and thy Truth!

The Psalm having been terminated by the *Gloria Patri*, and the Antiphon repeated, the Priest asks for God's assistance, saying *Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini*: Our help is in the name of the Lord: To which the Ministers reply: *Qui fecit coelum et terram*: Who hath made heaven and earth. In the Psalm just recited, the Priest expressed his ardent desire to possess our Lord, who is Light and Truth: but the very thought, that he, - a sinful creature, - is about to meet this Lord of his, makes him feel the need he has of help. True, - God has willed this meeting; he has even vouchsafed to prescribe it as one of our duties: and yet, notwithstanding, man is continually made to feel his unworthiness and nothingness. Before going further in the holy Sacrifice, he is determined to

humble himself, and confess that he is a sinner. He encourages himself to this, by making the sign of the Cross, and imploring God's aid. He then begins the avowal of his sins.

### **CONFITEOR.**

Holy Church here makes use of the formula of confession, which she has drawn up; it probably dates from the 8th century. We are not allowed to make the slightest change in the words. It has this prerogative, in common with all the other *Sacramentals*, - that its recitation produces the forgiveness of venial sins, provided we be contrite for them. Thus it is, that God, in His Infinite Goodness, has provided us with other means, over and above the Sacrament of Penance, whereby we may be cleansed from our venial sins: He, for this end, inspired His Church to give us her *Sacramentals*.

The Priest, as we were saying, begins the confession; and, first of all, he accuses himself to God.

#### The Confiteor

I confess to almighty God  
and to you, my brothers and sisters,  
that I have greatly sinned,  
in my thoughts and in my words,  
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,  
through my fault, through my fault,  
through my most grievous fault;  
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,  
all the Angels and Saints,  
and you, my brothers and sisters,

to pray for me to the Lord our God.

But, he is not satisfied with that; - he as good as says: "I not only desire to confess my sins to God, but to all the Saints; in order that they may join their prayers with mine, and obtain pardon for me." Therefore, he immediately adds: "I confess to the Blessed Mary ever Virgin." Not that he has ever committed any offence against this holy Mother; but he has sinned in her sight; and the very thought of it urges him to make his sins known to Her also. He does the same to the glorious St. Michael, the great Archangel, who is appointed to watch over our souls, especially at the hour of death. In like manner, he confesses to St. John the Baptist, who was so dear to our Lord, and was His precursor. Lastly, he desires to own his sins to Saints Peter and Paul, the two Princes of the Apostles. After mentioning these and all the Saints, he would have even the Faithful, who are present, know that he is a sinner; and he therefore says to them: *And to you, Brethren!* because, as he is now humbling himself on account of his sins, he not only accuses himself before those who are glorified in God, but moreover, before those his fellow-mortals who are there visibly present, near the sanctuary. And not satisfied with declaring himself to be a sinner, he adds in what way he has sinned; and confesses, that it is by all the three ways, wherein men commit sin, namely, by thought, word, and deed: *cogitatione, verbo, et opere*. Then wishing to express, that he has thus sinned and through his own freewill, he utters these words: *Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*: through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. And, that he may, like the publican of the Gospel, outwardly testify his

inward repentance, he thrice strikes his breast, whilst saying those words. Conscious of the need he has of pardon, he once more turns towards Mary and all the Saints, as likewise to the Faithful who are present, begging that they will all pray for him. In reference to this formula of Confession, which has been established by our holy Mother the Church, it may be well to remind our readers, that it would, of itself, suffice for one who was in danger of death, and unable to make a more explicit Confession.

The Ministers answer the Priest by wishing him the grace of God's mercy; they express their wish under the form of prayer, during which he, the Priest, remains bowed down, and answers: *Amen*.

But, the Ministers themselves stand in need of God's pardon; and, therefore, they repeat the same formula as the Priest, for the confession of their sins; only, instead of saying: *Et vobis, fratres*, and to you, Brethren, they address the Priest, and call him Father: *Et tibi, Pater*.

*Amen*. A sort of blessing then follows: *Indulgentiam, &c.*, whereby the Priest asks, both for himself and his brethren, pardon and forgiveness of their sins; he makes the sign of the Cross, and uses the word *nobis* and not *vobis*, for he puts himself on an equality with his Ministers, and takes his share in the prayer that is said for all.

The Confession having been made, the Priest again bows down, but not so profoundly as he did during the *Confiteor*. He says: *Deus, tu conversus vivificabis*



*nos*: Thou, O God, with one look, wilt give us life; to which the Ministers answer: *Et plebs tua laetabitur in te*: And thy people will rejoice in thee. Then, - *Ostende nobis, Domine, misericordiam tuam*: Show unto us thy mercy, O Lord; *Et salutare tuum da nobis*: And grant us the Saviour whom thou hast prepared for us.

The practice of reciting these Versicles is very ancient. The last gives us the words of David, who, in his 84th Psalm, is praying for the coming of the Messias.

## Psalm 84

Prayer of a Pilgrim to Jerusalem

I

<sup>2</sup>How lovely your dwelling,  
O LORD of hosts!

<sup>3</sup>My soul yearns and pines  
for the courts of the LORD.

My heart and flesh cry out  
for the living God.

<sup>4</sup>As the sparrow finds a home  
and the swallow a nest to settle her young,  
My home is by your altars,  
LORD of hosts, my king and my God!

<sup>5</sup>Blessed are those who dwell in your house!  
They never cease to praise you.

*Selah*

II

<sup>6</sup>Blessed the man who finds refuge in you,  
in their hearts are pilgrim roads.

<sup>7</sup>As they pass through the Baca valley  
they find spring water to drink.

The early rain covers it with blessings.  
<sup>8</sup> They will go from strength to strength  
 and see the God of gods on Zion.

## III

<sup>9</sup> LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer;  
 listen, God of Jacob.

*Selah*

<sup>10</sup> O God, watch over our shield;  
 look upon the face of your anointed.

## IV

<sup>11</sup> Better one day in your courts  
 than a thousand elsewhere.  
 Better the threshold of the house of my God  
 than a home in the tents of the wicked.

<sup>12</sup> For a sun and shield is the LORD God,  
 bestowing all grace and glory.  
 The LORD withholds no good thing  
 from those who walk without reproach.

<sup>13</sup> O LORD of hosts,  
 blessed the man who trusts in you!

In the Mass, before the Consecration, we await the coming of our Lord, as they, who lived before the Incarnation, awaited the promised Messiah. By that word Mercy, which is here used by the Prophet, we are not to understand the Goodness of God; but, we ask of God, that He will vouchsafe to send us Him, who in His Mercy and His Salvation, that is to say, the Saviour, by whom Salvation is to come upon us. These few words of the Psalm take us back in spirit, to the Season of Advent, when we are unceasingly asking for him who is to come.

After this, the Priest asks of God, that He would vouchsafe to grant his prayer: *Domine, exaudi orationem meam*: Lord, hear my prayer. The Ministers continue, as though in his name: *Et clamor meus ad te veniat*: And let my cry come unto thee. The Priest salutes the people, saying: *Dominus vobiscum*: The Lord be with you. It is as though he were taking leave of them, now that the solemn moment is come for him to ascend the Altar, and, like Moses, enter into the cloud. The Ministers answer him in the name of the people: *Et cum spiritu tuo*: And with thy spirit.

Whilst going up to the Altar, the Priest says *Oremus*: he stretches out his hands, and joins them again. As often as he uses this word, he observes the same ceremony. The reason is, that it immediately precedes some prayer which he is going to make; and, when we pray, we raise our hands up to God, who is in heaven, and to whom we are about to speak. It was thus that our Blessed Lord prayed on the Cross. The thought which is uppermost in the Priest's mind, at this solemn moment is, to be all pure; for, as he says, he is entering into the Holy of Holies: *Ad Sancta Sanctorum*, meaning to express, by this Hebrew superlative, the importance of the act which he is going to fulfil. The nearer we approach to God, the more we feel the slightest sin to be an intolerable blot upon our soul; so that the Priest redoubles his prayer, that God would cleanse him from his sins. Having reached the Altar, he puts his hands upon it, first joined, and then separated, so that he may kiss it. This kissing the Altar is prompted by a sentiment of respect for the Saints' Relics, which are

there. Again, another prayer for pardon of his sins: he says: *peccata mea*: my sins; although he began it by: *Oramus Te, Domine*: We beseech thee, O Lord.

### **INCENSING THE ALTAR.**

The Altar represents our Lord Jesus Christ. The Saints' Relics which are there, remind us that the Saints are His members. For, having assumed our human nature, He not only suffered His Passion, triumphed in His Resurrection, and entered into His glory by the Ascension, - but He, also, founded the Church upon earth, and this Church is His mystical Body; He is its Head, and the Saints are its members. From this point of view, then, our Lord has not the fullness of His mystical Body without His Saints; and it is for this reason, that the Saints, who are reigning with Him in glory, are united with Him, in the Altar, which represents Him.

The Priest prepares for its Incensing. Twice will this take place during the Holy Sacrifice, and both times with much solemnity, out of respect for our Lord, who is signified by the Altar, as we have already said. Nevertheless, the Priest does not recite any prayer during the first Incensing; he merely thurifies every portion of the Altar, in such wise as that the whole of it is thus honoured. We learn from the Book of Leviticus, that Incense was used, at a very early period, in the divine worship. The blessing, which the Priest gives it in the Mass, raises this production of nature to the supernatural order. Holy Church has borrowed this ceremony from heaven itself; where St. John witnessed it. In his Apocalypse, he saw an

Angel, standing, with a golden censer, near the Altar, on which was the Lamb, with four-and-twenty elders around him. (Apoc. viii. 3.) He describes this Angel to us, as offering to God the prayers of the Saints, which are symbolised by the incense. Thus, our holy Mother the Church, the faithful Bride of Christ, wishes to do as heaven does; and taking advantage of the veil of its mysterious secrets being even thus partially raised up by the Beloved Disciple, she borrows, for our earth's imitation, the tribute of honour thus paid, yonder above, to the glory of her Spouse. At this part of the Mass, the Altar alone, and the Priest, are thurified.

### **INTROIT.**

The ceremony of the Incensing completed, the Priest says the Introit.

#### **The Introit**

To thee have I lifted up my soul; In thee, O my God, I put my trust, let me not be ashamed; neither let my enemies laugh at me; for none of them that wait on thee shall be confounded.

Ps: Show, O Lord, thy ways to me, and teach me thy paths.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever, world without end. Amen.

Both the Priest and the Choir make the sign of the Cross at the beginning of the Introit, because it is considered as the opening of the Readings. In Masses

for the Dead, the Priest makes the Cross over the Missal only.

### **KYRIE.**

Next follows the *Kyrie*, which, at a High Mass, is said at the same side of the Altar. This prayer is a cry of entreaty, whereby the Church sues for mercy from the Blessed Trinity. The first three invocations are addressed to the Father, who is *Lord: Kyrie, Eleison;* (Lord, have mercy). The following three are addressed to Christ, the Son incarnate: *Christe, eleison.* The last three are addressed to the Holy Ghost, who is Lord, together with the Father and the Son; and therefore, we say to Him also: *Kyrie, eleison.* The Son, too, is equally Lord, with the Father and the Holy Ghost: but, holy Church here gives Him the title of *Christ*, because of the relation this word bears to the Incarnation. The Choir, too, takes up the same nine invocations; and sings them. The three invocations, each repeated thrice over, (as now practised,) are like a telling us of our union, here below, with the *nine* choirs of Angels, who sing, in heaven, the *glory* of the Most High. This union prepares us to join them in the Hymn which is now to follow, and which these blessed Spirits brought down to this our earth.

### **GLORIA IN EXCELSIS.**

Then the Priest has to intone the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*, he goes to the middle of the Altar; extends his arms at first, and then joins his hands together; but, neither here, nor at the intonation of the *Credo*, does

he raise up his eyes. At the close of the hymn, he makes the sign of the Cross, because there is pronounced the name of Jesus, who, together with the Holy Ghost, is in the glory of God the Father; and thus mention is made of the Blessed Trinity. This Hymn is one of the most ancient in the Church's collection. One thing is certain, - that this Hymn dates from the earliest days of the Church, and that it is to be found in all the Missals of the Eastern Churches. Nothing can exceed the beauty of its expressions. It is not a long composition, like, for example, the Preface, in which holy Church always begins by some doctrinal teaching, and then turns to prayer: here, on the contrary, all is enthusiasm and fervent language of the soul. The Angels themselves intoned the Hymn; and the Church, inspired as she is, by the Holy Ghost, continues the words of the Angels. Let us dwell upon the words of this magnificent Canticle.

*Gloria in excelsis Deo! et in terra, pax hominibus bonae voluntatis:* Glory be to God in the highest heavens; and peace on earth to men of good will; to men that are beloved of God. These are the words of the Angels: to God, be glory; to men, who, heretofore, were all children of wrath, the peace and blessing of God. In this the opening of the Hymn, it speaks to God, without distinction of Persons; and holy Mother Church, after the example of the Angels, takes up, at first, the same tone; and thus continues: *Laudamus te:* We praise Thee; for praise is due to Thee, and we offer it unto Thee. *Benedicimus te:* We bless Thee; that is to say, we offer Thee thanksgiving, in return for thy

benefits. *Adoramus te*: We adore Thee, O Infinite Majesty! *Glorificamus te*: We give glory to Thee, for that Thou hast created and redeemed us. The bare addressing these several expressions to God, with the intention of praising Him, thanking Him, adoring Him, and glorifying Him, is a perfect prayer and praise; such is the intention of the Church; let it be ours, and we shall not need to go in search of any higher meaning to our words. *Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam*: We give thee thanks for thy great glory. The better to take in the deep meaning of these few words, let us remember that God vouchsafes to make it a glory to Himself to bestow His favours upon us. The greatest of these is the Incarnation; and the Incarnation is his greatest glory. Hence, the Church might well say to Him: We give thee thanks, because of Thy great glory; The homage paid by the Word Incarnate, even in what might be thought the least of his adorations, procures more glory to the Divine Majesty, than all created beings, unitedly, could do. Truly, therefore, the Incarnation is the *great glory of God*. And we His creatures give Him thanks for it; because if the Son of God became Incarnate, it was for us, it was because of us, that He did so. Yea, it is for us, that Thou, O God, achievedst the mystery which gives Thee the greatest glory: it is most just, then, that we thank Thee for it: *Gratias agimus tibi, propter magnam gloriam tuam!* - *Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens*: O Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. Here, the Church addresses herself directly to the Father. Previously, she was intent on the Unity which is in the Godhead; she now thinks of the Trinity; and



seeing, first of all, the divine Person who is the Principle and source of the other Two, she exclaims *Deus Pater omnipotens!* God, Father Almighty! Then she turns to her Divine Spouse. She can never tire speaking of Him; and almost all the rest of the Canticle is addressed to Him. She sings the Incarnate Son of God, and she calls Him Lord: *Domine, Fili unigenite:* Lord, the Only Begotten Son! She also calls Him by the human name which he received as creature: *Jesu Christe!* But, she does not forget that He is God; she loudly proclaims it, saying: *Domine DEUS, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris!* Yes, her Spouse is God; he is, too, the Lamb of God, as St. John declared Him to the people; and, finally, He is Son of the Father. In her delighted love, Holy Church gives her Spouse every title she can think of; she enumerates his glories; it is a joy to her to announce them all in turn. Among these titles, she gives him that of *Lamb of God;* but she seems to falter a moment, before adding what is the sad consequence of that title, - namely, that He had to take the world's sins upon Himself. She must, first, speak again of His magnificence; she calls Him *Filius Patris;* and this said, she takes heart, and sings out to her Spouse, that, being the Lamb, He has humbled Himself so low, as to take upon Himself the sins of the world: *Qui tollis peccata mundi.* Who takest, and takest away, the sins of the world. Thou hast deigned to redeem us by Thy Blood; now, therefore, that Thou art in glory, at the right hand of thy Father, abandon us not, but have mercy upon us: *Miserere nobis!* She no longer hesitates to say those words; she repeats them, for they tell us where our strength lies: *Qui tollis peccata*

*mundi*. The Lamb of God, the Son of the Father, taking away our defilements and our sins, what have we to fear? Is it not this that makes us strong? The Church is thus minded. She tells and re-tells the glorious truth first, she asks for mercy and then, she beseeches Him to attend to the prayer of His Bride: *Suscipe deprecationem nostram*. Behold us here assembled for the Sacrifice; receive, then, our humble prayer.

After having thus spoken, holy Church contemplates her divine Spouse throned in the highest heavens: *Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris*: Who sittest at the right hand of the Father. Just before, she was complacently looking at Him as the Lamb of God, who had taken on Himself the sins of the whole world; she now advances higher, and goes even to the Father's right hand, where she beholds Him who is the object of her adoration and praise. There, she reaches the very Being of God; there, she pays her homage to all Holiness, all Justice, all Plenitude, all Greatness, as she is now going to proclaim. But, first, she repeats her cry for mercy: *Miserere nobis!* Have mercy on us, for Thou hast redeemed us! *Tu solus Sanctus; Tu solus Dominus; Tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe*: Thou alone art Holy; Thou alone art Lord; Thou alone art most High, O Christ Jesus! Thus, in this Canticle, holy Church perseveres in her endeavours to reach her divine Spouse; each one of her exclamations is like an attempt to be with Him. She thinks of her own necessities; she thinks of Him; she is all enthusiasm. She no sooner mentions His name, than she must tell all His Perfections; not one must be forgotten. She

dwells on His name, because He is her Spouse; she praises Him, and glorifies Him, and calls Him the alone God, the alone Lord, the alone Most High. She adds, however: *Cum Sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris*; together with the Holy Ghost, in the glory of God the Father. Thus, she mentions each of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity and the praise she gives to Christ, by calling Him *alone Holy, alone Lord, alone Most High*, applies also to the other two Persons, since the Father and the Holy Ghost cannot be separated from the Son, and, like Him, They are *alone Holy, alone Lord, alone Most High*: and no one is *Holy*, no one is *Lord*, no one is *Most High*, except the great God himself.

In this magnificent Canticle, everything is, at once, grand and simple. Holy Church is in admiration at the thought of her divine Spouse. She began with the *Kyrie*; then, the Hymn of the Angels followed; she took up *their* song, and continued it; and the same Spirit that spoke, through the Angels, to the Shepherds, taught the Church how to worthily close the Canticle.

#### COLLECT.

The Gloria being finished, the Priest kisses the Altar; and, turning towards the people, says *Dominus vobiscum; The Lord be with you*. It was a sort of farewell; for, when he was just about entering into the cloud, he seemed loath to leave the Faithful people, until he had spoken one word, at least, of affection to them that had been praying together with him. But, now, the Church has a different motive for using

these two words; and it is, that she may gain the people's attention to the Collect which the Priest is going to address to God, - in other words, to the Prayer in which he sums up the desires of the Faithful, and presents them under the form of a petition. The importance of the Collect is great. Hence, holy mother Church urges us to listen to it with all respect and devotion.

### The Collect

Exert, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy power and come; that by thy protection we may be freed from imminent dangers of our sins, and be saved by thy mercy; who livest and reignest God, world without end. Amen.

When the Collect is finished, the Choir answers *Amen*; that is to say, Yes, that is what we pray for, and we assent to everything that has been said. Be all attention, for what is now going to be said, is of the greatest importance. Moreover, the Priest, when here saying the *Dominus vobiscum*, turns towards the people, which he did not do when he was at the foot of the Altar. But having now ascended to it, and having received the peace of the Lord by kissing the Altar, he announces the same to the assembly, to whom, opening his arms, he says: *Dominus vobiscum*. The people reply: *Et cum spiritu tuo*. (**And with your spirit**) Then the Priest, feeling that the people are one with him, says: *Oremus*; Let us pray.

The *Pax vobis*; *peace be with you* said here by Prelates, is a very ancient usage. It was the customary salutation of the Jews. The words of the *Gloria*: PAX

*hominibus bonae voluntatis* prompted its being used at this part of the Mass.

The Priest should stretch out his arms, whilst saying the Collect. Herein, he imitates the ancient manner of praying, used by the first Christians. As our Lord had His arms extended on the Cross, and so prayed for us, - the early Christians had the practice of praying in that same attitude.

This ancient usage has been transmitted to us, in an especially emphatic way, by the paintings of the Catacombs, which always represent prayer as being made in that attitude: hence, the name of *Orantes* (**The position of the priest's hands**), given to those figures. It is by this means, as also by the writings of the Holy Fathers, that many details regarding the usages of the primitive times have been handed down to memory, which, otherwise, would have been lost.

## OLD TESTAMENT READING

### A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Baruch

*"The prayer and confession of sin of a penitent people*

Read out publicly this scroll which we send you, in the house of the Lord, on the feast day and during the days of assembly:

**"Justice is with the Lord, our God; and we today are flushed with shame, we men of Judah and citizens of Jerusalem, that we, with our kings and rulers and priests and prophets, and with our fathers, have sinned in the Lord's sight and disobeyed him. We have neither heeded the voice of the Lord, our God, nor followed the precepts which the Lord set before us.**

**"From the time the Lord led our fathers out of the land of Egypt until the present day, we have been disobedient to the Lord, our God, and only too ready to disregard his voice. And the evils and the curse which the Lord enjoined upon Moses, his servant, at the time he led our fathers forth from the land of Egypt to give us the land flowing with milk and honey, cling to us even today. For we did not heed the voice of the Lord, our God, in all the words of the prophets whom he sent us, but each one of us went off after the devices of our own wicked hearts, served other gods, and did evil in the sight of the Lord, our God.**

**"And the Lord fulfilled the warning he had uttered against us: against our judges, who governed Israel, against our kings and princes, and against the men of Israel and Judah. He brought down upon us evils so great that there has not been done anywhere under heaven what has been done in Jerusalem, as was written in the law of Moses: that one after another of us should eat the flesh of his son or of his daughter. He has made us subject to all the kingdoms round about us, a reproach and a horror among all the nations round about to which the Lord has scattered us. We are brought low, not raised up, because we sinned against the Lord, our God, not heeding his voice.**

**"Lord Almighty, God of Israel, afflicted souls and dismayed spirits call to you. Hear, O Lord, for you are a God of mercy; and have mercy on us, who have sinned against you: for you are enthroned forever, while we are perishing forever. Lord Almighty, God of Israel, hear the prayer of Israel's few, the sons of those who sinned against you; they did not heed the voice of the Lord, their God, and the evils cling to us.**

**"Remember at this time not the misdeeds of our fathers, but your own hand and name: for you are the Lord our God; and you, O Lord, we will praise! For this, you put into our hearts the fear of you: that we may call upon your name, and praise you in our captivity, when we have removed from our hearts all the wickedness of our fathers who sinned against you. Behold us today in our captivity, where you scattered us, a**

**reproach, a curse, and a requital for all the misdeeds of our fathers, who withdrew from the Lord, our God."**

*The Holy Bible, Old Testament, Baruch 1:14-2:5, 3:1-8*

## **EPISTLE.**

After the Collect, and the other Prayers, which are frequently added under the name of Commemorations, there follows the Epistle, which is, almost always, taken from the Epistles of one or other of the Apostles, although, occasionally, from some other Book of the holy Scriptures.

### **Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans Chapter XIII**

Brethren, know that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep. For now our salvation is nearer then when we believed. The night is passed, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ

Thus everything in the holy Sacrifice proceeds with order: the Priest has, first of all, expressed the desires and petitions of the assembled Faithful, - holy Church has spoken through him. We shall soon be hearing the words of our divine Master, in the Gospel; but we are to be prepared for that, by the word of his servant; this was done in the Epistle. So that, we first have the Prophet, then the Apostle, and, at length, our Lord Himself.

**GRADUAL.**

Between the Epistle and the Gospel, we have the Gradual. It consists of a Responsory and its Versicle.

None of them that wait on thee shall be confounded, O Lord.

V. Show, O Lord, thy ways to me; and teach me thy paths.  
Alleluia, alleluia.

V. Show us, O Lord, thy mercy, and grant us thy salvation.  
Alleluia.

The Gradual is really the most musical piece in the whole Liturgy; and, as the rendering of it requires great skill, there were never more than two chanters permitted to sing it. When about to sing it, they went to the Ambo, which was a sort of marble pulpit, placed in the church; and it was on account of the *steps*, which led to the Ambo, that this portion of the chant got the name of *Gradual*; just as the Gradual Psalms were those which the Jews used to sing whilst ascending the *steps* of the Temple.

**ALLELUIA. TRACT.**

The Gradual is followed by the *Alleluia*. The *Alleluia* is repeated after the manner of a Responsory; it is then followed by a Verse; which having been said, the *Alleluia* is sung a third time. This, by excellence, the chant of the praise of God, deserved to have a Place in the Mass. There is something so joyous, and, at the same time, so mysterious about it, that during penitential seasons, - that is, from Septuagesima to Easter, - it is not to be said.



## Alleluia Tract

**Alleluia. Alleluia. Show us, Lord, your love, and grant us your salvation. Alleluia. Alleluia.**

During those Seasons, it is replaced by the *Tract* (A Series of Verses from a Psalm).

## SEQUENCE.

On certain Solemnities, there is added to the *Alleluia* or *Tract*, what is called the *Sequence*, (*Sequentia*). It was added to the chant of the Mass long after the time of St. Gregory; the addition was made some time about the 9th century. It received the name of *Sequence*, that is to say, sequel, because it originally consisted of certain words adapted to the notes which form a sequel to the word *Alleluia*, and which were called *Sequentia*, even before the introduction of the *Sequence*.

It is called, also, the *Prose* (*Prosa*,) because originally, it bore no resemblance either to the metrical hymns composed by ancient writers, nor to cadenced rhythms, which appeared later on. It was a real piece of prose, which was sung in the manner we have described, as a way of putting words to the pneuma of the *Alleluia*. By degrees, however, it partook of the character of a Hymn. - The Sequence thus added to the solemnity of the Liturgy.

## Sequence or Prose

**Thou our eternal salvation,  
the never-failing light of the world.**

Light everlasting and our true redemption.  
 Moved with compassion to see the human race perish by its  
 idolatry offered to its very tempter.  
 Thou didst descent to these depths of our misery,  
 yet not having thine own high throne above.  
 Thou, by thy own gratuitous love, assuming our human  
 nature.  
 Thou didst save all on earth that was lost,  
 Giving joy to this world.  
 Come, O Christ, purify our souls and bodies.  
 And make them thy own pure abode.  
 Justify us by thy first coming.  
 And in thy second, deliver us;  
 That so, when thou judgest all things, on the day of the light  
 light,  
 We may be adorned with a spotless robe, and may follow thy  
 footsteps wheresoever they are seen. Amen.

## GOSPEL.

Whilst the Choir is singing these several pieces, the  
 Deacon takes the Book of the Gospels, and puts it  
 upon the Altar, because the Altar represents our Lord;  
 and he thus signifies the identity existing between the  
 Word of God, which is heard in the Gospel, and  
 Christ Jesus. The Priest does not incense the Book,  
 but he blesses the incense, - an act, which is not  
 permitted to the Deacon. The incense having been  
 blessed, the Deacon kneels upon the top step of the  
 Altar, and says the prayer *Munda cor meum*. In that  
 prayer, he asks of God, that his heart and his lips may  
 be purified, to the end that he may worthily proclaim  
 the holy Gospel. He there alludes to the coal of fire,  
 with which a Seraph touched the lips of the Prophet  
 Isaias, in order to purify him, and fit him to make  
 known the inspirations received from the Holy Ghost.  
 (Is. vi. 5-7.) After the prayer, the Deacon takes the

Book from the Altar; and, kneeling before the Priest, asks for a blessing, because he is going to read: *Jube, Domne, benedicere*; Please, Father, give me a blessing: *Jube, Domine, benedicere!* Having received the blessing, the Deacon kisses the hand of the Priest, who, for this purpose, should place his hand on the Book of the Gospels, which he thus virtually gives to the Deacon, commissioning him to read it in his name.

A procession is then formed towards the Gospel-Ambo; and there the Deacon begins with this solemn expression: *Dominus vobiscum*. It is the only occasion on which the Deacon is allowed to use these words: and his present use of them is equivalent to his preparing the Faithful; as though he said to them: You are about to hear the Word of God, the eternal Word: it is a great grace for you all: may, then, the Lord be with you! May he enlighten you, and nourish you with His Word! The people answer him, saying: *Et cum spiritu tuo*. Then, the Deacon announces the title of the passage he is going to give them: he tells it them in these words: *Initium, or Sequentia sancti Evangelii*; and whilst saying this, he makes the sign of the Cross upon the Book, and at the place where begins the text of the Gospel. He, at the same time, signs himself on the forehead, the lips, and the breast, asking, in virtue of the Cross, which is the source of all grace, that he may always have the Gospel in his heart, and on his lips, and that he may never be ashamed of it. He then takes the thurible, and incenses the Book three times; whilst the Faithful, in answer to the announcement of the Good Tidings,

give thanks and glory to our Lord Jesus Christ, whose Word is now going to be heard: *Gloria tibi, Domine.*

### The Gospel of Our Lord According to St. Luke

Jesus said to his disciples:

“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars,  
and on earth nations will be in dismay,  
perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves.  
People will die of fright  
in anticipation of what is coming upon the world,  
for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.  
And then they will see the Son of Man  
coming in a cloud with power and great glory.  
But when these signs begin to happen,  
stand erect and raise your heads  
because your redemption is at hand.

“Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy  
from carousing and drunkenness  
and the anxieties of daily life,  
and that day catch you by surprise like a trap.  
For that day will assault everyone  
who lives on the face of the earth.  
Be vigilant at all times  
and pray that you have the strength  
to escape the tribulations that are imminent  
and to stand before the Son of Man.”

It is now time to sing the holy Gospel. The Deacon joins his hands; but does not lean them on the Book, as that would be too great a familiarity with an object so sacred as is the Book, which contains the expression of the Eternal Word. The Deacon having completed what he had to sing, the Subdeacon takes the open Book to the Celebrant, who kisses the first words of the sacred text, saying: *Per evangelica dicta*

*deleantur nostra delicta*; May our sins be wiped away by these words of the Gospel.

We should notice the difference, wherewith the Church would have the Epistle and the Gospel announced in the Mass. As to the Epistle, it is merely preceded by the Subdeacon's saying whence is taken the Passage, which he is going to sing; whereas, the Gospel is always preceded by the words: *Dominus vobiscum*. The reason is, that in the Epistle, it is but the servant that speaks to us; but, in the Gospel, it is the word of the Master himself, which we are about to hear; and, therefore, a means is taken for exciting the attention of the Faithful. It is only at the end of the Priest's reading of the Gospel, that there is answered: *Laus tibi, Christe: (We adore you, Christ)* because, formerly, the Celebrant read nothing of what was sung by others; the Gospel was of this number, and he merely listened to it.

## **CREDO.**

The Gospel is followed by the *Credo*. The object proposed by the recitation of the *Credo* is, to lead the Faithful to confess the Faith; and since their Faith is based upon the holy Gospel, the *Credo* comes immediately after the sacred text has been read. It is but right, that the Faithful should utter this profession of faith against the heresies that have been broached.

### The Creed

**I believe in one God, The Father Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth,**

and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord, Jesus Christ the  
Only-begotten Son of God.  
Born of the Father before all ages.

God of God, Light of Light,  
true God of True God.  
Begotten, not made,  
of one substance with the Father.  
By whom all things were made.

Who for us men  
and for our salvation came  
down from heaven.  
And became incarnate by the  
Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary:  
AND WAS MADE MAN.

He was also crucified for us,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
and was buried.  
And on the third day He rose again  
according to the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven and  
sits at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead and  
His kingdom wil have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord and Giver of life,  
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son.  
Who together with the Father  
and the Son is adored and glorified,  
and who spoke through the prophets.

And one holy, Catholic and  
Apostolic Church.  
I confess one baptism  
for the forgiveness of sins

**and I await the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

The Symbol used in the Mass begins thus: *Credo in unum Deum*. I believe in one God. The Apostles had not made use of the word *unum*; there was nothing, at that period, to make such an insertion necessary. It was at the Council of Nicea, that the Church deemed it needful to add that word, in order to maintain the affirmation of the Divine Unity, at the same time that the Trinity of Persons was expressed. But why do we say: I believe *in* one God? Why use the preposition *in*? It is of the greatest importance, as a moment's reflection will show. What is Faith, but a movement of the soul towards God? that Faith which is united with charity, that living faith placed by holy Church in the hearts of her children, tends of its very nature towards God, ascends and raises itself up to Him, *Credo in Deum*.

There are two ways of knowing God. A man who sees all things of which the universe is composed; - the earth with its numberless productions; the firmament studded with stars, in the midst of which the sun reigns supreme in dazzling splendour, and completes its revolutions in so marvellous a manner; - a man, I say, beholding such wonders arranged with so great order and perfection, cannot help recognising that *Some-One* has achieved all that; this is what is called a rational truth. If he failed to come to such a conclusion, he would show a total want of intellect, and would be but on a par with brute-beasts to whom understanding has not been given, since they are

irrational creatures. This is what is meant by knowing God by reason; we see creation, and we thence conclude that it is the very work of God Himself. But when we talk of knowing God as the Father, as the Son, and as the Holy Ghost, - there is absolutely needed for that conclusion, that God Himself must have told it to us, and that we do believe His Word by faith; that is to say, by that disposition which is supernaturally given unto us, to believe what God has said, to yield to his word. God does reveal such unto me, and he does so by His Church; at once I leap forth from myself, I dart upwards unto Him, and I accept as Truth, that which He deigns to reveal thus unto me. And we confess our God thus: *Credo in unum Deum Patrem Omnipotentem.*

*Factorem coeli et terrae visibilium omnium et invisibilium.* God made heaven and earth, all things visible and invisible. The Gnostics were loath to attribute to God the creation of matter and of visible beings; this decision of the Council of Nicaea condemns them, formulating with precision, that all things visible and in visible, *visibilium et invisibilium*, were the work of God. Homage is hereby paid to the God Eternal, as being the Almighty, and as having, by this His Omnipotence, created all things visible and invisible. Hereby also is made a profession of faith in the creation of the Angels.

*Et in unum Dominum, Jesum Christum, Filium Dei Unigenitum.* Here again Holy Church would have us say: I believe in *one* Lord. This word *unum* is



essential; it is not in two Sons that we believe, but One Alone; it is not in a man and in a God, both separate, and forming two different persons; no, it is the one same Person, that of the Only Son of God. But why is He here called Lord in so marked a manner? We did not do so, when we were just now speaking of the Father. This title is specially given to Jesus Christ, because we belong to Him, twice over. We are, first of all, His, because we were created by Him, together with the Father, Who hath made all things by his Word; again, we are His, because He redeemed us by His Blood and snatched us from the jaws of Satan; we are His own purchase, His property, His possession; so that He holds us as His by a second right and title, over and beyond that of Creator; and, what is more, his love for souls goes to such a length, as to possess them in title of spouse. That there should be a Son, in the God-head, verily our knowing this is a sample of a knowledge of God differing far from that mere rational knowledge, of which we were just now speaking. Left to herself, Reason could never have taught us that in God there is a Father and a Son; to come to this knowledge, we should need either to have been in heaven, or to have had this Truth revealed to us in Scripture or by Tradition. In the same way, as we believe in one only God the Father, and not in two, so do we believe in one only Son; *et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum.*

*Et ex Patre natum, ante omnia saecula, born of the Father before all ages. Ages began only when God sent forth Creation from His hands; that ages might be, time*

must needs exist, and that time might be, created beings were necessary. Now, before all ages, before aught had yet stepped forth from nothingness, the Son of God had issued from the Father, as we here confess in these words: *Ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula. Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero.* The created world proceeds from God, because it is His handiwork; but for all that, it is not God. The Son of God, on the contrary, coming from the Father, is God as He is, because Begotten by Him: in so much, that all that is said of the Father befits the Son, save only that He is not the Father; but He is ever the same Substance, the same Divine Essence. But still, how can the Son be the same Substance as the Father, without this Substance becoming thereby exhausted? St. Athanasius, speaking on this subject, gives us the following comparison, which, although material, enables us, in some measure, to seize this Truth. In the same manner, says he, as a torch lighted from another of the same substance, in no way lessens that from which it is lighted, so also the Son of God, taking the Substance of the Father, in no way diminishes this Divine Substance which He shares with Him; for He is in very deed, *God of God, Light of Light, True God of True God.*

*Genitum non factum*, Begotten not made. We human creatures have all of us been made, we are the work of God, every one of us, not even excepting Our Blessed Lady and the Angels. But as to the Word, the Son of God, it is not so: He is Begotten, not made; He came forth from the Father, but He is not His work. He has the same Substance, the same Essence, the

same Nature as the Father. In God, it behoves us ever to make distinction of Persons, but we must also ever behold the same Divine Substance, as well for the Father and the Son, as for the Holy Ghost: *idem quoad substantiam*. Our Lord also tells us so Himself: *Ego et Pater unum sumus*; they are One, but the Persons are distinct; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, these are the three terms which serve to designate them. Very important indeed, then, is this great word of the Council of Nicaea: *Consubstantialem Patri*, consubstantial with the Father. Yea, the Son is Begotten by the Father, He has the same Substance; there is the same Divine Essence.

*Per quem omnia facta sunt*, by Whom all things were made. It was said at the beginning of the Symbol, that God made Heaven and earth and all creatures visible and invisible; and now here we are told, speaking of the Word, the Son of God, that all things were made by Him. How are we to reconcile all this? It can easily be understood by means of a comparison with our own soul. Three distinct faculties are given her, for the exercising of these her three distinct acts: power, understanding, and will. These three faculties are necessary to the perfecting of an act. By power, the soul is enabled to act, but this presupposes understanding and will. In like manner God the Almighty Father has made all things by His Power; he has made all things in Wisdom by His Son; and thereon has stamped His Will by the Holy Ghost: and thus is His Act perfected. It is therefore quite correct to say, speaking of the Son: *per quem omnia facta sunt*.

*Qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis.* Having shown us the Word operating such great things, Holy Church adds that He has come upon this earth for us sinners. Not only has He come for man's sake, but to repair the sin of man and to snatch him from eternal misery; in a word, to operate our salvation: *et propter nostram salutem.* Yea, on this account is it, that He descended from Heaven: *descendit de coelis.* Nevertheless, He has not quitted the Father and the Holy Ghost, He is not thereby deprived of the Beatitude of the Divinity, but He has truly united Himself to man, and in this Man, He has suffered all that man can suffer, excepting sin; He descended from Heaven, to be in a creature, living in the midst of us, walking with us, conforming Himself in all things to the exigences of human nature.

*Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto.* The Word hath become Incarnate, He hath been made Flesh, by the operation of the Holy Ghost. All things were made by God, and we have seen how they were made by all the Three Divine Persons. In the Mystery of the Incarnation, likewise, there is the Action of these Three Persons. The Father sends His Son, the Son comes down upon the earth, and the Holy Ghost overshadows this sublime Mystery.

*Ex Maria Virgine.* Note well these words: *ex Maria.* Mary it was who furnished the substance of His Humanity, that substance which was proper and personal thereunto; so that she truly took from Herself to give unto the Son of God, who thereby

became indeed Her very Son, how pure must Mary needs have been to have been found worthy to furnish unto the Son of God the substance of His human Being! The Word did not choose to unite Himself to a human creature drawn immediately from nothingness, as was the first man, but He would be of the very race of Adam. In order to effect this, He became Incarnate in the Womb of Mary, which necessitated His being consequently a son of Adam; not only did He descend into Mary, but He took from Mary, *ex Maria*: He is of Her very substance.

*Et homo factus est.* And He was made Man. The Word of God has not only taken the semblance of man, but He has truly become Man. In these sublime words, we behold the Divinity Itself, espousing the Humanity. A genuflection is here made, as a mark of honour paid to the Mystery of the Incarnation.

*Crucifixus etiam pro nobis, sub Pontio Pilato passus et sepultus est.*

*Crucifixus.* The Apostles' Creed has the same expression; the Apostles were bent on saying that our Lord was crucified, not content with simply stating that He died; and this, because it was of high importance to signalise, to all, the Victory of the Cross, over Satan. As we were ruined by the wood, so God willed that our salvation also should be wrought by the wood, as we elsewhere sing: *ipse lignum tunc notavit, damna ligni ut solveret.* Yes; it was fitting that the artifice of our enemy should be foiled by his own trick itself: *et medelam ferret inde, hostis unde laeserat,* and that the remedy should be drawn

thence, whence the enemy had taken the poison. It is for this very reason, that the Apostles were careful to lay so much stress on the manner of Christ's being put to death; and when first announcing the faith, to pagans, they at once spoke of the Cross. St. Paul writing to the Corinthians, tells them that, when he first came amongst them, he had not judged it meet to preach unto them anything else but Jesus, and Jesus crucified: *Et enim judicavi me scire aliquid inter vos, nisi Jesum Christum et hunc crucifixum.* (1 Cor. ii. 2). And previously, too, he had said to them: And we preach Christ Crucified: a scandal, indeed, to the Jews, and to the Gentiles foolishness: *Judaeis quidem scandalum, Gentibus autem stultitiam.* (1 Cor. i. 23).

Jesus Christ was crucified, and the Creed adds: *pro nobis.* In the same way as we say *propter nos homines descendit de coelis*, it was fitting that Holy Church should impress upon us, that, if our Lord was crucified, it was for us. *Crucifixus etiam pro nobis: sub Pontio Pilato passus.* The name of the Roman Governor is here mentioned also by the Apostles, because it marks a date.

*Et sepultus est.* Christ suffered; that is very true; but what is just as true also is, that He was buried, and it must needs so have been; for had He not been buried, how could that prophecy have been accomplished, wherein it was said that He should rise again on the third day? By this also was proved the reality of His Death, complete and not fictitious Death, - since burial took place, just as is practised in the case of other men.

*Et resurrexit tertia die secundum Scripturas.* On the third day, He rose again, as the prophecies had foretold, specially that of the Prophet Jonas. Our Lord Himself had said: this wicked and perverse Generation seeketh a sign, but one shall not be given to it, unless it be that of Jonas the Prophet, *nisi signum Jonae prophetae* (S. Matth. xii. 39, S. Luc. xi. 29). For just as Jonas was in the whale's belly, three days and three nights, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

*Et ascendit in coelum.* He ascended into Heaven. The Word of God, coming down on earth to be made man, quitted not His Father's Bosom. In this place, it is said that He ascended into Heaven, meaning that His humanity actually went up thither, and that there It was enthroned for eternity.

*Sedet ad dexteram Patris.* He is seated at the Right Hand of the Father, as Master and Lord. Indeed, He was always there according to His Divine Nature, but it behoved Him to be there also according to His Human Nature, and this is what is expressed by these words. In fact, this was a necessity, because the Human Nature being united to the Divine Nature in one and the same Person, which is the Person of God the Son, it can in all truth be said: the Lord is seated at the Right Hand of the Father. David foretold this, saying: *Dixit Dominus Domino meo: Sede a dextris meis.* (Ps. cix. 1). This is a proof of the intimate union which exists of the Divine Nature with the Human, in the Person of Our Lord. For this reason, the Psalm cix. is essentially the Psalm of the Ascension, because

that was truly the moment when the Lord, the Father, said to the Lord, the Son: Sit Thou at My Right Hand: *Sede a dextris meis.*

*Et iterum venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos.* So, as regards our Lord, there is question of two comings: in the first He is born without Glory, and, as St. Paul expresses it, He annihilates Himself, taking the form of a servant: *Semetipsum exinanivit formam servi accipiens* (Philip. ii. 7); whereas in the second, He is to come in glory, *venturus est cum gloria.* And wherefore will He come? Not as, heretofore, to save, but to judge: *judicare vivos et mortuos.* Not only will He come to judge those who will be still living on earth, at the time of his second coming, but moreover all those dead from the very beginning of the world, because absolutely all must be judged.

*Cujus regni non erit finis.* And of His kingdom there shall be no end. This refers only to the reign of Jesus Christ in His Sacred humanity, because, in His Divinity He has never ceased to reign. This kingdom of His will not only be glorious, but it will never have an end.

The second part of the Credo here ends, and is the largest portion. It was fitting that in this public confession of our faith, Jesus Christ should be treated of, at greater length, because personally He has done most for us, though He has done nothing without the joint action and concurrence of the other two Divine Persons. Therefore it is, we call Him Our Lord: doubtless, this Title of Lord befits the Father who created us; but still it is doubly applicable to the Son,



who, besides having created us (inasmuch as God hath made all things by His Word), has likewise redeemed us: so that we belong to Him by a double title.

*Et in Spiritum Sanctum Dominum et vivificantem.* I equally believe in the Holy Ghost, that is to say, by faith I go towards the Holy Ghost, I adhere to the Holy Ghost. And who is the Holy Ghost: *Dominum*. He is the Lord, He is the Master, just as the other two Divine Persons are. But what is He furthermore? *Vivificantem*, He gives life. In the same way as our soul gives life to our body, so does the Holy Ghost give life to our soul. It is this Holy Spirit who animates her by the sanctifying grace, which He pours into her, and thus does He sustain her, make her act, vivify her, and make her grow in love. In like manner also, in the Church, it is the Holy Ghost who maintains all; it is He who makes all these her members, so divers in nation, language, and customs, to live all of the same life, belonging, as they do, to the one same Body, of which Jesus Christ is the Head. In fact, all have the same faith, all draw the same graces from the same Sacraments, and all are animated by the same hopes, and are in expectation of the realisation of these same; in a word, the Holy Ghost sustains all.

*Qui ex Patre Filioque procedit:* this same Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son. How could one suppose that the Father and the Son are not united? There needs must be a link uniting One to the Other. The Father and the Son are not merely in

juxtaposition, but a Link unites Them, embraces Them, and this Link proceeds from Both of Them, forming but One with Them; and this Mutual Love is no other than the Holy Ghost.

At the Council of Nicaea, in drawing up the Symbol, the main attention of the Fathers was directed to what treated of Jesus Christ; at the Council of Constantinople, they resolved upon completing the Nicene Creed, by adding what regards the Holy Ghost, save the words *Filioque*; as they expressed it, the words simply stood *Qui ex Patre procedit*. The Fathers of this Council saw no necessity of saying more on the subject of the Procession, because the words of Our Lord, in the Gospel, leave no doubt on the matter. "I will send you the Spirit of Truth who proceedeth from the Father:" *Ego mittam vobis a Patre Spiritum veritatis qui a Patre procedit*. (S. John, xv. 26): He is therefore, likewise the Principle of the Holy Ghost, as He sends Him. The Father sends the Son, and it is evident that the Son emanates from the Father, that He is begotten by Him; Our Lord here saying: "I will send you the Spirit," proves that He is Himself the Source of the Holy Ghost, as is the Father. And if our Lord adds these words: *Qui a Patre procedit*, He in no way means to say that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father only; it is merely in order to give further expression to His own words, and to emphasise that not He alone sends this Divine Spirit, but that the Father, conjointly with the Son, sends Him.

The Greeks refused to admit this Truth, and so raised disputations on this passage, in order to overturn the Dogma of the Trinity. But we believe that the Trinity is linked in Its Three Persons, in this ineffable manner, namely, that the First Person begets the Second; the First and the Second are united to one another by the Third. If belief be refused in this Bond produced by the Father and the Son, and linking Them together, the Holy Ghost would be utterly isolated from the Son, the Trinity would be destroyed.

It was in Spain that the addition of the *Filioque* was first of all introduced into the Creed, in order to express with greater precision what the Fathers of Constantinople had declared; this change was begun in the eighth century; but the Roman Church did not adopt it till the eleventh. She knew that such a measure would provoke difficulties; but seeing the necessity, she decided upon it, and since then, this addition to the Symbol has become obligatory on the whole Church.

*Qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur.* The Holy Ghost must needs be adored, therefore He is truly God. So to be in the True Faith, it suffices not to pay honour only, to the Holy Ghost, He must be adored as God, just as we adore the Father and the Son, *simul adoratur*: He is adored like the other two Divine Persons, and at the same time as They, *simul*. At these words, Holy Church wishes an inclination of the head to be made, as a homage paid to the Holy Ghost, whose Divinity we are here confessing. *Et conglorificatur*, He is

conglorified, that is to say, He receives glory together with the Father and the Son; He is included in the same doxology, or glorification, for doxology means to give glory.

*Qui locutus est per prophetas*; here we have another Dogma. The Holy Ghost spoke by the Prophets, and the Church proclaims that He did so. In formulating this article she had chiefly in view the confounding of the Marcionites, who taught that there was a Good God and an Evil God; and, according to them, the God of the Jews was not good. The Church here declaring that the Holy Ghost spoke by the Prophets, from the Books of Moses, right up to those which near the time of Our Lord, - proclaims that the Action of the Divine Spirit was spread over our earth, from the very commencement.

On Pentecost-Day, He came down upon the Apostles, and descended upon earth, in order to abide there: His mission being wholly different from that of Our Lord. The Word made flesh came down to our earth, but after a certain time, He ascended again to heaven. The Holy Ghost, on the contrary, came, that He might abide with us for ever: so that, our Lord, when announcing the coming Paraclete to His Apostles, said to them: The Father will give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever (St. John, xiv. 16). He added, that this Paraclete would teach them all things, by giving them the remembrance of all the things which He Himself had taught them: He will bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said unto you (Id. *ibid.* 26).

The Church requires to be taught, guided, led, and supported. To whom does it belong to effect all this? Who is it that does it? It is the Holy Ghost, Who is to assist her even to the end of the world, according to the promise of our Lord. Thus, the Son has been sent by the Father; and then He ascended into heaven again: both the Father and the Son sent the Holy Ghost, that He might remain with the Church to the end of the world. Our Lord said: My Father will send you the Spirit: and he also said: I will send you the Spirit: and this, in order to show the relations which exist between the Divine Persons, who can never be isolated one from the other, as the heretics asserted.

Holy Church, then, has put clearly before us the dogma of the Trinity. First of all, we have the Father Almighty, Creator of all things; then, the Son, who came down from heaven, was made man, and died for us; after which He rose again from death, and ascended triumphantly into heaven, by His Ascension; finally, we have the Holy Ghost, Lord equally with the Father and the Son, the Giver of Life, who spake by the Prophets, and is God together with the Father and the Son.

After this, follows another subject: *Et unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam*. Observe, we do not say: I believe in the Church; we simply say, I believe the Church. Why is this? Because the faith which has God for its immediate object, is a movement of our soul towards God; she goes forth towards him, and rests in him; and thus, we believe IN GOD. But, as regards created and intermediate things which

concern God, which help us to go to God, but are not God himself, - we simply believe them. Thus, for example, we believe the holy Church, which was founded by our Lord Jesus Christ, and in whose bosom alone is there to be found salvation: I believe the Church: *Credo Ecclesiam*. In this Symbol, which is said in the Mass, this article of our faith is more fully expressed than in the Apostles' Creed, where we are taught to say simply: I believe the holy Catholic Church.

We declare then, first of all, that the Church is one: *Credo unam Ecclesiam*. In the Canticle of Canticles, we have our Lord himself calling her *My ONE*; - *ONE is my Dove, my perfect one is but ONE* (Cantic. vi. 8). - she is, moreover, Holy: *Credo SANCTAM Ecclesiam*. We hear the divine Spouse again saying in the same Canticle: *My Love, my Dove, my Beautiful one ... there is not a spot in thee* (Ibid. ii. 10; iv. 7). Writing to the Ephesians, St. Paul likewise says, that the Church which our Lord presented unto himself, is a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle (Eph. v. ); therefore, the Church of Christ is Holy, there are no Holy ones, no Saints, but within her, and there are always Holy ones, Saints, within her. Moreover, being Holy, she cannot teach aught but the truth. - The Church is Catholic: *Credo Ecclesiam Catholicam*; that means, she is universal, because she is spread throughout the whole earth, and because she will continue to exist to the end of time; now both of these are included in the quality of catholicity. - Finally, she is Apostolic: *Credo Ecclesiam Apostolicam*. Yes, her existence dates from the

commencement that is to say, she comes from our Lord Himself; she did not spring up all on a sudden when five, ten, or fifteen centuries had gone by, as was the case with Protestantism, for example; had she come thus tardily into being, she could not have come from our Lord. In order to her being the true Church, she must be Apostolic, that is, she must have a hierarchy which dates back even to the Apostles, and, by the Apostles, to our Lord Himself.

Thus, we believe the Church; and God wishes us to believe her to be One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic: *Et Unam, Sanctam, Catholicam, et Apostolicam Ecclesiam*. We believe her, because she is founded upon these four essential Marks, which are the very meaning of her being called a Church of divine Institution, and she is proved to be that, by the very fact of her having those four Marks.

*Confiteor unam baptismam in remissionem peccatorum*: I confess one Baptism for the remission of sins. The word *Confiteor* signifies here I acknowledge. But why does Holy Church oblige us to confess so expressly one only Baptism: *Confiteor unum baptismam*? Because she is bent on proclaiming that there is but one mode of spiritual birth, and, according to the words of the Apostle to the Ephesians, that there is but one only Baptism, as there is but one only God, and one only Faith: *Unus Dominus, una fides, unum baptismam* (Ephes. iv. 5).

Baptism makes us become children of God, at the same time giving us sanctifying grace, by which the

Holy Ghost comes to dwell within us. And when, by mortal sin, man has the misfortune to lose this grace, Absolution, reconciling him to God, gives back to him this grace of Baptism, this primordial sanctification, and not another; so strong is this first grace. Baptism derives all its power from the Water which flowed from Our Lord's side, and which hence became for us the very Principle of Life; therefore Our Lord did truly bring us forth; and this is the one only Baptism which we must confess and acknowledge.

*Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum:* I expect the resurrection of the dead. The Church does not tell us to say merely: *I believe* the resurrection of the dead, but *I expect*. We ought, indeed, to be impatient to see the coming of that moment of the resurrection, for the union of the body with the soul is necessary to the perfection of beatitude. The pagans had great difficulty in accepting this Truth, because death seems to be a condition of our very nature; our nature being composed indeed of body and soul, seeing that these elements can be separated, death maintains a certain empire over us. But for us, Christians, the Resurrection of the Dead is a fundamental Dogma. Our Lord Himself, rising again, on the Third Day after His death, confirms this Dogma in a most striking manner; for, says St. Paul, He is the first to come forth from amongst the Dead: *primogenitus ex mortuis*; as we are all to imitate Him, we too must all rise again.

*Et vitam venturi saeculi.* I expect, likewise, the Life of the World to come, which knoweth not death. On



earth, we live by the Life of Grace, we are supported by Faith, Hope, and Charity; but we do not see God. In glory, on the contrary, we shall fully enjoy the sight of Him, we shall see Him Face to Face, as Saint Paul tells us: *Videmus nunc per speculum in enigmate, tunc autem facie ad faciem* (1 Cor. xiii. 12). Moreover, during the days of our earthly pilgrimage, we are exposed to the danger of losing grace; whereas, in Heaven, no further fear of this kind can exist any longer, and we are put in possession there, of that which alone can fully satiate the boundless cravings of the heart of man; we are put in possession of God Himself, who alone is the End of man. With good reason, then, does Holy Church bid us say: *Et exspecto vitam venturi saeculi*.

Such is the magnificent confession of Faith, put by Holy Church into the mouth of her children. There is yet another formula of our Creed, which was composed by Pius IV., after the Council of Trent. This, which we have just been explaining, is included in it, but with several other articles directed against Protestants, who, when they wish to make their abjuration, are required to read it aloud; without this condition being fulfilled, they could not receive absolution. In like manner, all holders of benefices, before taking possession thereof most pronounce this formula of Faith; for this reason, a Bishop does so, on arriving in his Diocese.

### **THE OFFERTORY.**

When the Symbol of Faith has been chanted by the faithful, the Priest kisses the Altar, and turning

towards the people, he says: *Dominus vobiscum*, to which the usual response is given: *Et cum Spiritu tuo*. Wherefore does the Priest kiss the altar? Because being on the point of turning to the Faithful, he wishes to salute them with the kiss of Christ, and Christ Himself is represented by the Altar.

Next comes the reading of the Offertory: this is a modern custom, because formerly whatever was sung by the Choir was never said at the Altar. The distinctive functions of the different clerical orders are very clearly marked at this portion of the Mass: to the Deacon it belongs to present the Paten with the Host upon it, to the Priest. The Deacon cannot consecrate, but he may carry the Holy Eucharist, he may even touch and administer It; so we are not astonished to see what he is now doing; whereas we see the Sub-Deacon remaining much further off from the Celebrant.

The Priest, on receiving the Paten and whilst offering the Host, says the Prayer: *Suscipe, sancte Pater*. This Prayer dates from the Eighth or Ninth century.

Suscipe, Sancte Pater

**Accept, O holy Father, Almighty and eternal God, this unspotted Host, which I Thy unworthy servant offer unto Thee, my living and true God, for my innumerable sins, offences and negligences and for all here present; as also for all faithful Christians, both living and dead, that**

it may avail both me and them  
for salvation unto life everlasting.  
Amen.

## Offertory Hymn

### Psalm 23

#### I

The LORD is my shepherd;  
there is nothing I lack.

<sup>2</sup> In green pastures he makes me lie down;  
to still waters he leads me;

<sup>3</sup> he restores my soul.

He guides me along right paths  
for the sake of his name.

<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of  
death,

I will fear no evil, for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff comfort me.

#### II

<sup>5</sup> You set a table before me  
in front of my enemies;

You anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

<sup>6</sup> Indeed, goodness and mercy will pursue me  
all the days of my life;

I will dwell in the house of the LORD  
for endless days.

In order the better to understand all these Prayers which now follow, we must keep steadily before us the Sacrifice itself, although it is not as yet offered in all its august reality. As a first instance, we have in this Prayer, the Host spoken of as being presented to the Eternal Father, although our host at this moment

is not yet the Divine Host Itself. And it is said that this host is without spot: *immaculatam hostiam*; in these words allusion is made to the victims of the Old Testament, which were obliged to be without blemish, because they were a type of Our Lord, Who was one day to appear before us as the *Immaculatus*.

In this Prayer the thought of the Priest runs far on, from the present moment; he is thinking of the host which will be on the Altar after Consecration, the Host which alone is the True Victim. And for whom does he offer it? Here we see the advantage of our being actually present and assisting at the Mass; for not only does the Priest offer it for himself but also for those who are surrounding him: *pro omnibus circumstantibus*. He continually keeps mentioning all those who are here present. But more than this; the action of the holy Sacrifice of the Mass extends so far, that the Priest speaks also of all the faithful, and takes care not to omit the dead; of these last, he presently makes mention saying: *pro omnibus fidelibus Christianis vivis atque defunctis*; for not only is the Sacrifice intended to give glory unto God, but it is meant likewise to procure good things for man.

The Priest having finished the Oblation Prayer, makes the sign of the cross with the Paten and places the host on the Corporal. This form of the cross expresses the identity existing between the Sacrifice of the Mass and that of Calvary. Next, the Deacon puts Wine into the Chalice, and the Sub-Deacon approaches to fulfil his office, which consists in putting the water into this

same Chalice; this act is the highest of all his functions.

The prayer which accompanies this ceremony is very ancient; it dates back as far as the first ages of the Church, and indeed it is easy to see that the Latin was a spoken language at the time it was composed. In it is strongly brought before us what is the importance, what the dignity of the Water here used in the Holy Sacrifice. Why is Water put in the Chalice? Because, according to Tradition, Our Lord Himself when instituting the Holy Eucharist, mixed Water with the Wine, as the abstemious are wont to do, and the Church continues to observe this custom. She avails herself of this opportunity to speak to us in wonderful language, unfolding to us sublimest mysteries.

Thus says Mother Church: *Deus, qui humanae substantiae dignitatem mirabiliter condidisti*. Why speak here of the dignity of man? Why recall here, the Divinity and Humanity of Jesus Christ? Because the Wine and Water here used are figures: the Wine represents Jesus Christ as God, the Water represents Him as Man. The weakness of the Water, compared with the strength of the Wine, expresses the difference which exists between the Humanity and the Divinity of Jesus Christ. We must see ourselves too in this water, since we it was, who by Mary, furnished Our Lord with the Humanity; thus does Holy Church express herself on this subject, in sentiments of admiration; thus does she love to put forward the true dignity of man.

Already had the royal Prophet sung this our dignity, in his Psalm: *Constituisti eum super opera manuum tuarum, omnia subjecisti sub pedibus ejus*: Lord, Thou hast placed man over all the Works of Thy Hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet (Ps. viii.). And if we recollect the manner of his creation by God, we are not surprised to hear Holy Church here saying that he was created *in an admirable manner*. When there is question of man, God speaks this word: "Let Us make man to Our Own Image and Likeness." And as He said, so hath He done.

But if man has been thus created, he has been moreover, *raised up in a still more admirable manner*, after his fall, and Holy Church fails not to say so: *mirabilis reformasti*. Yes indeed, God has up-raised him in a manner far exceeding, in wonder, that of His creation, in espousing human nature by His Son, and so reforming fallen man.

*Da nobis per hujus aquae et vini mysterium, ejus divinitatis esse consortes, qui humanitatis nostrae fieri dignatus est particeps, Jesus Christus Filius tuus Dominus noster*. Make us, by the mystery of this Water and of this Wine, participators of the Divinity of Him, Who hath deigned to make himself Participator of our humanity, Jesus Christ Thy Son, our Lord. Holy Church here puts before us, first of all, in bold relief, the Mystery of the Incarnation, by means of this thought of the Water and the Wine being mingled together in one potion; thus does she recall the union of the Humanity and the Divinity of Our Lord, and site asks of God that we too may participate in the Divinity of the Lord Himself, just as St. Peter

expresses it, in his second Epistle: *ut per haec efficiamini divinae consortes naturae*, that is to say, that by the promises which were fulfilled in Jesus Christ, *we may be made participators of the Divine Nature*. This deification, begun on earth by sanctifying grace, will be completed in heaven in glory. In the terrestrial Paradise, the devil told Eve that if she and Adam would only follow his counsel, both of them should be as gods. Herein he lied; for then, as now, by the faithful fulfilment of the divine precepts alone, can man ever attain unto God. In Heaven, we shall be as gods, not that we shall become so, by nature, but that in the Beatific Vision, we shall see God even as He sees Himself, and our state will be that of creatures placed immediately below the Divinity. Holy Church is bent on holding this Truth before our mental gaze, and she does so in this Prayer, while speaking to us of the Incarnation of the Word, the very Principle of man's true greatness.

The Water and Wine being mingled in the Chalice, the Priest offers this Chalice to God saying these words: *Offerimus tibi, Domine, Calicem salutaris, tuam deprecantes clementiam, ut in conspectu Divinae majestatis tuae, pro nostra et totius mundi salute, cum odore suavitatis ascendat. Amen.* We offer to Thee, O Lord, the Chalice of Salvation, invoking Thy clemency, that it may ascend as an odour of sweet fragrance, before Thy Divine Majesty, for our salvation and that of the whole world. Amen.

In this prayer, Holy Church is thinking, in advance, of that which this Chalice is to be come. As yet it holds

only Wine; but, later on, there will remain of this Wine only the accidents, the species or appearances; the Substance will give place to the very Blood of Our Lord Himself. Holy Church, therefore, prays God to vouchsafe to look beyond that which she is actually offering to Him at this moment - and she begs that this Chalice may be in His sight as an odour of sweetness, that is to say, that it may be agreeable to His Divine Majesty, so as to operate the salvation of us all.

The Prayer of the Offertory being ended, the Priest places the Chalice on the Corporal, making the sign of the Cross with the Paten, first of all, on the spot whereon it is to stand, in order, thereby, to show, yet once again, that this Sacrifice is truly that of the Cross. In the Latin Church, the Bread is placed on the Altar in front of the Priest, the Chalice between the Bread and the Altar-cross: thus, the two offerings are in a line, one in front of the other. The Chalice once placed on the Corporal is again covered with the Pall. The Pall is a linen cloth, stiffened so as to give it a certain degree of consistence, and which is placed on the Chalice to prevent anything falling into it, specially after consecration.

Another prayer follows the Offering of the Chalice, which is recited by the Priest at the middle of the Altar, having his hands joined and his head somewhat inclined: *In spiritu humilitatis et in animo contrito suscipiamur a te, Domine, et sic fiat hoc sacrificium in conspectu tuo hodie ut placeat tibi, Domine Deus.* In a spirit of humility and in contrite heart, we



beg of Thee, O Lord, that we may be received by Thee, and that our Sacrifice may be such, this day in Thy sight, that it may be acceptable to Thee, O Lord, our God. This is a general Prayer placed here by Holy Church to complete the Sacred Rites. The words are those of the Three Children in the Fiery Furnace, as related in the Book of Daniel (iii. 39,40.)

Next follows a very important Benediction; the Holy Ghost must needs be invoked that He may deign to come down and operate in the holy Sacrifice; the Priest does so in these words: *Veni, Sanctificator, Omnipotens aeterne Deus, et benedic*(saying this word, he makes the sign of the cross on all the things offered) *hoc sacrificium in tuo nomini praeparatum.*

As it is the Holy Ghost Himself who operates the change of the Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Our Lord, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, it is right that this Divine Spirit should be mentioned in the course of the Sacrifice. Holy Church here invokes Him by this Prayer, in order that as He produced Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Womb of Mary, so He would deign to produce Him again here upon our Altar. She expresses this her request in the form of craving a Blessing: Bless, says she, this Sacrifice, that is to say, make it fruitful, so that it may be pleasing to the Divine Majesty.

### **INCENSING OF THE ALTAR, &c.**

We have already seen how the Altar represents our Lord; this explains why it is treated with so much honour; the rest of the Church represents the

members of the Mystical Body of which Christ is the Head, that is to say, the Faithful of whose aggregate Holy Church, the Bride of Christ, is composed. On first going up to the Altar, the Priest has already incensed it in every direction, thus paying homage to Christ Himself. Now again, this ceremony is performed with sacred pageantry; just as the Eastern Kings laid their rich gifts at the Feet of the Divine Infant, as the Gospel tells us, so too is the Priest about to burn incense, in his turn, as a homage to his Master and his King.

But, another ceremony must precede that of the incensing of the Altar itself. This Bread and Wine just offered by the Priest have been raised above the order of common things by this very offering made of them, so much so indeed, that were the Priest to die at this moment of the Function, this Bread and Wine must be disposed of . . . in the Piscina (**Holy Sink**). To show her reverence for them, Holy Church sheds on them the perfume of her incense, as if she were doing so to Christ himself. This custom of using perfumes in Church ceremonies began in the East, where they can be procured in rich abundance. But in our cold countries though it is much more difficult to get them, Holy Church will not allow our ceremonies to be utterly deprived of them, and so she prescribes the use at least of Incense, just as for the Chrism, she will at least have Balsam mixed with the Oil. After the incensing of the Bread and Wine, *incensatio super oblata*, the Altar itself is honoured in like manner. Before making use of the incense, it must be blessed; the Priest does so by the following Prayer: *Per*

*intercessionem beati Michaelis Archangeli stantis a dextris altaris incensi ...* The angel who holds the golden Thurible in the Apocalypse is not named. Holy Church here names Saint Michael, Prince of the Heavenly hosts. Some have thought that there is an error in this passage, because in Saint Luke, the Angel Gabriel is named standing at the Right of the Altar; but Holy Church pays no heed to these their objections; St. Luke does not say that Gabriel held a golden Thurible. The first blessing of the Incense was less solemn; the Priest then only said: *Ab illo benedicaris in cuius honore cremaberis*. Mayst thou be blessed by Him in honour of whom thou art to be burned. But in this place, the Angels are called upon because the Mystery of Incense is no other than the Prayer of the Saints presented to God, by the Angels, as St. John tells us, in His Apocalypse (viii. 4): The smoke of the Incense ascends as does the Prayer of the Saints before the Throne of God: *Et ascendit fumus incensorum de orationibus sanctorum de manu Angeli coram Deo*.

The Priest incenses the Bread and Wine in such a way, that its odour may perfume, and wholly cloud in fragrance the Things offered; while so doing, he says these words: *Incensum istud a te benedictum, ascendat ad Te Domine, et descendat super nos misericordia tua*. May this incense, O blessed by Thee, ascend to Thee, O Lord, and may Thy Mercy descend upon us. This Prayer, whilst being a homage paid to God, is a wish expressed for ourselves also. The Priest divides these words, at intervals, whilst incensing at several parts to be thus honoured, in performing which ceremony,

he follows what the rubrics prescribe. When he first incensed the Altar, the Priest said no Prayer; but now, when thus honouring it a second time, Holy Church bids him repeat a portion of Psalm cxl., which she selects, chiefly on account of these words which occur therein, and which are the first she puts on the lips of the Priest: *Dirigatur, Domine, oratio mea sicut incensum in conspectu tuo.* May my prayer, O Lord, ascend as incense in Thy sight. It is thus she always does, ever selecting with wonderful appropriateness whatsoever suits the circumstance, whether in Psalms, or in Gospels and Epistles. The Priest begins by incensing the Cross, or the Most Holy Sacrament if exposed; he then bows before the Cross, or genuflects, if the Most Holy Sacrament is reserved in the Tabernacle of that Altar; then, if there be relics there exposed, he incenses them with two throws of the Thurible, first on the Gospel side, then on the Epistle side; after which he incenses every part of the Altar. In all other respects, this incensing differs in no way from the first, nor from that which is performed at Lands and Vespers.

On returning the Thurible to the Deacon, the Priest gives expression to a good wish in his regard as well as in his own, saying: *Accendat in nobis Dominus ignem sui amoris et flammam aeternae charitatis.* May the Lord enkindle in us the fire of His Love and the flame of everlasting charity. On taking the Thurible, the Deacon kisses the Priest's hand, and then the top of the chains; he does the contrary, on presenting it. These customs have come to us from the East, and, inasmuch as they are marks of reverence and respect,

it is to the Liturgy we owe the preservation of them. The Deacon then honours the Priest with incense, who receives it standing sideways to the Altar; but if the Most Holy Sacrament be exposed, as, for instance, at the Mass of Reposition, the Priest comes down from the Altar, and with his face turned to the people, he receives the said honours from the Deacon, who likewise suits his position to the occasion. Then follows the incensing of the Choir, beginning with the Bishop, if present; next the Prelates, if there then the Priests and Clerics; and, finally, all the Faithful, to show that all form but one Body, of whom Jesus Christ is the Head. All, whether Bishops, Prelates, or simple Faithful, should rise on receiving the incense; the Pope alone remains seated for its reception.

#### **LAVABO, Ps. XXXV.**

Whilst the Choir and people are being honoured with incense, the Priest washes his hands. This ceremony is marked, at this particular moment, because the Priest has just been using the Thurible, which always soils the hands, because of the smoke. But at the same time, this washing of the hands embodies a mystery: it expresses the necessity there is for the Priest to purify himself yet more and more, as he advances in the Holy Sacrifice. Just as Our Lord washed the feet of His Apostles before instituting the Holy Eucharist and giving them Holy Communion, so too, should the Priest purify himself. In the Ambrosian Liturgy, this rite of washing the hands takes place during the Canon, before the Consecration; the signification is ever the same, namely, the duty of self-purification

incumbent on the Priest; nevertheless, the moment chosen for this rite by the Roman Church, ever discreet in all her decisions, is preferable to that adopted by the Ambrosian Liturgy.

To accompany this action, which signifies what the purity of the Priest should be, holy Church has selected the Psalm xxv., which is marked in the Monastic Office in the First Nocturn of Sunday's Matins: *Judica me, Domine, quoniam ego in innocentia mea ingressus sum*. In this Psalm, it is Our Lord Himself who speaks; it is easy to perceive that the Priest could never apply such words to himself. Holy Church appoints but the half of this Psalm to be said, commencing with the words: *Lavabo inter innocentes manus meas et circumdabo altare tuum, Domine, ...* I will wash my hands, O Lord, and make myself like to those who are in the state of innocence, so as to be worthy to approach Thine Altar, to hear Thy sacred Canticles and to recount Thy marvellous Works. Every word is wonderfully adapted to the present occasion. Further on, we come across this other remarkable expression of the Prophet: *Domine, dilexi decorem domus tuae et locum habitationis gloriae tuae*: Lord, I have loved the beauty of Thy House, the Place where Thy Glory dwelleth. David here speaks of that Tabernacle under the shade of which he dwelt so happy, although the Temple was not yet in existence, for it was not built till Solomon's time. The Psalm is continued to the end, so as to allow the Priest ample time for washing and wiping his hands. This other verse of the same Psalm: *Ego autem in innocentia mea ingressus sum*: I have walked in mine innocence,

proves to us, once again, that this Psalm is altogether Messianic; the Priest, therefore, says it in the Name of Christ, with whom he is but one and the same, during the action of the Great Sacrifice. In Masses of the Dead, and at Passiontide (when the Mass is ferial), the *Gloria Patri* is omitted at the end of this Psalm. This omission of the Gloria in this place is always coupled with the omission of Psalm *Judica* at the beginning of the Mass.

### **SUSCIPE, SANCTA TRINITAS.**

The Priest having ended the Psalm, returns to the middle of the Altar, and there, with his hands joined and his head slightly inclined, he says: *Suscipe Sancta Trinitas, hanc oblationem quam tibi offerimus ob memoriam Passionis, Resurrectionis et Ascensionis Jesu Christi Domini nostri ...* Things of high import here stand before us. An Oblation is spoken of: *Suscipe hanc oblationem*: Receive this Oblation. The Priest says these words of the Bread and Wine just offered by him; nevertheless, he has really in view neither this Bread nor this Wine. These things are, indeed, sanctified and blessed, and hence they deserve to be treated with respect; but the Oblation here presented to the Divine Majesty, could never be confined to an order of Sacrifice purely material, as was that of the Jews; it is evident, therefore, that the Priest is here stretching forward in thought to a something far higher: he is presenting the Offering of the Great Sacrifice which is soon to be accomplished. - And, O holy Trinity, we offer this Oblation to Thee, in memory of the Passion, of the Resurrection, and of the Ascension of Jesus Christ, our Lord. So, we must here

note these three things in Our Lord, without which He would not be complete. First of all, He suffered, but He could not be satisfied with suffering alone, so He died also, and these two coupled, constitute what we call His Passion; but this is not all, the Lord rose again. Death, the punishment of sin, is, as it were, the devil's triumph over man, and therefore it would have been a true defeat suffered by Christ, had He died without afterwards Rising again. But further still, He hath gone up into Heaven, by His glorious and triumphant Ascension. Our Lord could not possibly have remained on earth; until He open Heaven, and Himself enter therein, in His Human Nature, Heaven must needs remain closed to man; on this very account, therefore, our salvation is not wholly effected, unless Our Lord ascend to Heaven, after having suffered for us, notwithstanding His being truly the Risen-One, being, as St. Paul expresses it, "the First-Born from amongst the dead!" So, then, let us well drink in this great Truth, namely, that Our Lord Suffered, that He Arose, but that man's salvation is not wholly accomplished, if he still abide as an exile on our earth; to the Passion and Resurrection, must needs be added the Ascension. Such, then, should be our Faith, because such is the Economy of our Salvation, in which are contained these Three Things: the Passion, the Resurrection, the Ascension. So well does Holy Church understand that these Three are needed to complete Christ, and that therein is our whole Faith comprised, that she makes a point of insisting on our expressing the same in a marked manner, here at this moment of the Offering of the Sacrifice.



*Et in honorem beatæ Mariæ semper Virginis.* Not a single Mass is offered, but it brings glory to our Blessed Lady, who is, in Herself, a whole World apart. Therefore is it that we first of all recall the Memory of Our Lord, then of the Blessed Virgin, and finally of the Angels and Saints. The Angels are greater than we, that is to say, they are superior to us, by reason of their spiritual nature; but Our Blessed Lady, although a mere human creature, is raised far above them all, because, as before said, she forms a world apart, she is the very Master Piece of God Himself; hence Holy Church fails not to honour her as such in the Holy Sacrifice, wherein she never forgets this sublime Queen and the place apart due to her alone.

*Et beati Joannis Baptistæ.* Holy Church holds St. John the Baptist in great veneration in the *Confiteor*, we have seen, she always mentions him, and here again she is delighted to give fresh honour to the Precursor of Our Lord. *Et sanctorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli;* it is right to pay our tribute of glory also to these two great Apostles who laboured together in founding the Holy Roman Church.

*Et omnium sanctorum ...* Finally, Holy Church mentions all the saints, in general, because all have part in the Holy Mass. *Ut illis proficiat ad honorem, nobis autem ad Salutem ...* Observe here two things coupled in the Holy Sacrifice: on the one hand, it gives glory to God, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and to the Saints; on the other, it is profitable to us; the Church, therefore, makes us here beg of God to deign

to accept it so, that it may attain this double end proposed. As to the words which terminate this Prayer, they give us a form of invoking the saints whom holy Church specially commemorates on that particular day: *Et illi pro nobis intercedere digneris in coelis quibus memoriam agimus in terris. Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum*; note how the name of Christ is always added.

This Prayer, like the first, has only been fixed for universal use, since the the of Saint Pius V. Its Latin is less fine than that of the Canon, which originates from the earliest Christian ages, as does also the Prayer for the Benediction of the Water, which we have given above.

### **ORATE FRATRES.**

Then the Priest, having kissed the Altar, turns towards the people with this salutation: *Orate, fratres, ut meum ac vestrum sacrificium acceptabile fiat apud Deum Patrem Omnipotentem*. These words form the Priest's farewell to them, for he will not again turn to them, until the Sacrifice is consummated. But, observe that this is not his ordinary parting word; as, for instance, when he went up to the Altar, his merely said *Dominus vobiscum*. In this place, he recommends himself to the prayers of the Faithful, in order that this Sacrifice, which belongs, at once, both to Priest and people, may be pleasing unto God. The Sacrifice is the Priest's, for he is the direct agent therein; the Sacrifice belongs to the Faithful, because Jesus Christ instituted it for their particular profit; see now why it is that the Priest lays such stress upon these

words: *meum ac vestrum sacrificium*. For the very same reason, likewise, he re-awakens the attention of the Faithful, urging them more and more to earnestness; for it behoves them not to forget, that they too have a share in the Priesthood, as says St. Peter, calling the Faithful a kingly Priesthood, *regale sacerdotium* (1 S. Peter ii. 9), by the mere fact that they are Christians. They come from Christ, they belong to Christ, they have been anointed, and by their very baptism have become *other Christs*; needs must be, therefore, that they too hold the power of offering Sacrifice in union with the Priest. - Thus, aroused by the Priest's voice, they hasten to respond to his desire, by giving expression to their own hearty wish: *Suscipiat Dominus sacrificium de manibus tuis, ad laudem et gloriam nominis sui, ad utilitatem quoque nostram, totiusque Ecclesiae suae sanctae*. May the Lord receive this Sacrifice from thy hands, for the praise and glory of His name, for our own weal, and for that of His Holy Church. The Missal still retains in a parenthesis, in this place, the word *meis* to suit an occasion in which the Priest himself might be obliged to supply for the absence or ignorance of the server of his Mass.

This response having been made by the Faithful, they should reflect how they will indeed see the Priest's face no more, until the Lord Himself has come down on our Altar. His voice even will not be heard again, save once; and that will be for the intoning of the great and magnificent Prayer of Thanksgiving, namely, the Preface.

But, before this, he collects the desires of the Faithful, into one Prayer, which, as he says it in an undertone, has received the name of the *secret*; for the same reason that he prays here in silence, he does not precede it with the usual word *Oremus*, Let us pray, inasmuch as he is not now convening the Faithful to make it with him. In the Sacramentaries, that of St. Gregory, for example, this Prayer is entitled: *Oratio super oblata*.

### PREFACE.

Although the Priest has been making his petitions in a low voice, yet he terminates this his Prayer aloud, exclaiming: *Per omnia saecula saeculorum*; to which the Faithful respond *Amen*, that is to say, we ask also, for what thou hast been asking. In fact, the Priest never says anything in the Holy Sacrifice without the assent of the Faithful, who, as we have already noticed, participate in the Priesthood. They have not heard what the Priest has been saying, nevertheless they join therein and approve heartily of all, by answering their *Amen*, yea, our Prayer is one with thine! The dialogue here begun between Priest and people is maintained for a while, at length leaving the final word to the Priest alone, who gives thanks solemnly, in the name of all there assembled.

The Priest then salutes the people, but this time without turning to them, saying: *Dominus vobiscum*, the Lord be with you: lo! now is the most solemn moment of Prayer! And the Faithful respond: *Et cum Spiritu tuo*, may He be with thy Spirit, may He aid thee, lo! we are one with thee! - Then the Priest

says: *Sursum Corda!* lift up your hearts! The Priest requires that their hearts be detached from earthly thoughts, so that they may be directed on God alone; for the Prayer he is about to make is that of Thanksgiving. Admire how well placed is this Prayer here, for the Priest is on the point of accomplishing the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Our Lord, and this Sacrifice is verily for us the Instrument of Thanksgiving; it is the means whereby we are enabled to render back to God that which we owe him. So Holy Mother Church, delighting with intensest relish in this magnificent Prayer, would fain arouse her faithful children with this cry: *Sursum Corda!* in order that they too may appreciate, as she does, this great Act of Thanksgiving, whereby she offers unto God a Something that is Great and worthy of Him. And now the Faithful hasten to express their reassurances to the Priest: *Habemus ad Dominum!* we have our hearts raised up unto the Lord! Then, replies the Priest, if indeed it is so, let us all unitedly give thanks unto the Lord: *Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro.* And the Faithful at once add: *Dignum et justum es!* Thus do they unite themselves wholly with the Thanksgiving of the Preface which the Priest is about to speak. - This dialogue is as old as the Church herself; and there is every reason to believe that the Apostles themselves arranged it, because it is to be found in the most ancient Churches and in all Liturgies. As far as possible, the Faithful should make an effort never to be seated on any account during these acclamations. Now does the Priest take up the speech himself and continues thus alone: *Vere dignum et justum est, aequum et salutare, nos tibi semper*

*et ubique, gratias agere: Domine Sancte, Pater omnipotens, aeternae Deus, per Christum Dominum nostrum.* So it is truly just to give Thee thanks, O Almighty God, *tibi* to Thee, Thyself, *semper et ubique*, always and everywhere, and to render Thee this our Thanks, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Yes, indeed, it is through Jesus Christ that our Thanksgiving must be made, for were we to do so in our own name, there would be the Infinite between God and ourselves, and so our Thanksgiving could never reach unto Him; whereas, made through Jesus Christ, it goes straight up, and penetrates even right to the very centre of the Divinity. But, not only must we, human creatures, go to the Father through Our Lord, but the very Angels even, have no access except through Him. Hearken once more to the Priest: *Per quem Majestatem tuam laudant angeli*, by Whom, (i.e., Jesus Christ), the Angels praise Thy Majesty for, since the Incarnation, they adore the Godhead, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord, the Sovereign High-Priest. *Adorant Dominationes*, the Dominations adore through Jesus Christ; *tremunt Potestates*, the Powers too, those beauteous Angels, make their celestial thrillings heard, and in awe, tremble before the Face of Jesus Christ: *Coeli*, the Heavens, that is to say, Angels of still higher order; *coelorumque Virtutes*, and the Heavenly Virtues also, Angels yet more exalted; *ac beata seraphim*, and the Blessed Seraphim, who by their pure love come highest unto God, - *socia exultatione concelebrant*, all these stupendous Choirs blended together in one harmonious transport celebrate, through Jesus Christ, the Majesty Divine. The Prefaces thus terminate by mentioning the Angels, in

order to lead the Church Militant to sing the Hymn of the Church triumphant. *Cum quibus et nostras voces ut dimitti jubeas deprecamur, supplici confessione dicentes*; yea, fain are we to join anon our feeble voice to that mighty angelic strain, and we crave leave to begin even now whilst here below, and sinners still, the great: *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth.*

Thus all Prefaces are formed on the one great idea of Giving Thanks to God, *gratias agere*; and of making this Thanksgiving *through Jesus Christ*, because it is by Him Alone that we can come nigh unto God, yea, approach in union with the Angels too, with whom we join in the celestial chorus of their Trisagion.

Besides this the Common Preface, holy Church offers us others wherein we invite the Heavenly Spirits to celebrate with us, in one joint Act of Thanksgiving, the principal Mysteries of the Man-God, whether at Christmas or in Lent, or at Passion-tide, or at Easter, or, again, at Ascension or Pentecost. Nor does she fail to remember her by whom Salvation came to this our earth, the Glorious Virgin Mary; as also the holy Apostles by whom redemption was preached to the entire world.

The Preface is intoned on the very same melody used by the ancient Greeks when celebrating some hero in their feasts, and there declaiming his mighty deeds in song.

## SANCTUS.

The Trisagion is the hymn heard by Isaias when favoured with a vision of Heaven, and later by St. John also, as he relates in his Apocalypse (iv. 8). The Church could not well have placed this Song of Heaven at the beginning of the Mass, whilst we were just confessing ourselves sinners before God and the whole celestial court. What, then, is it the Angels say? *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth.* They celebrate the Sanctity of God. And how do they celebrate It? In a manner the most complete; they use the superlative, saying thrice over that God is truly holy. We meet with the Song Trisagion in the *Te Deum* also: *Tibi Cherubim et Seraphim incessabili voce proclamant: Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth.*

Wherefore is it that God is thus expressed by the triple affirmation of Holiness? Because Holiness is the chief Perfection of God: God is Holy by Essence.

In the Old Testament even, this Angelic Cry was already made known: the Prophet Isaias heard it; in the New Testament, John, the Beloved Disciple, names it in his Apocalypse. So then, God is indeed Holy, He delights in revealing this to us. But, to Holiness is added yet more still: *Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth*, Holy is the Lord, the God of Armies; this is like saying: *Deus Sanctus et fortis*, God, the Holy and the Strong. So here we have Two Things in God, Sanctity and Strength. This expression *Deus Sabaoth* or *Deus exercituum*, the God of Armies, is used, because nothing gives such an idea of Strength,



as an army surmounting all obstacles, laughing at difficulties, and over-riding all that comes in its way: thus is the Strength of God vividly expressed. So then, God is Holy and Strong. This Angelic Song has received the name of the Trisagion, which is derived from *Agios*, Holy, and from *tris*, Three: God, the thrice holy.

In the Old Testament a notion of the Holy Trinity was hereby conveyed, as though it stood thus: Holy is God the Father, Holy is God the Son, Holy is God the Holy Ghost. But in order to catch a glimpse of this truth, it was needful to be learned in the understanding of the Scriptures; hence, hardly any but the Doctors of the Law could come at this knowledge; or, again, in Prayer, God would sometimes vouchsafe to reveal this Truth to privileged souls, in whom He deigned to enkindle his Light. Among the Jews, such favoured souls were always to be found.

After confessing the holiness and Strength of God, the Church adds: *Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua*. There is no way, more magnificent than this, of expressing the Glory of God; verily there is no nook or corner of Creation where shines not forth the Glory of God; everything is produced by His Power, and everything gives Him Glory. Holy Church transported on beholding this, cries out aloud: *Hosanna in excelsis*. We read in the Sacred Scriptures that this cry was uttered by the Jews, when Jesus was entering into Jerusalem, on Palm Sunday, and the people shouted *Hosanna filio David*; yes, *Hosanna*, which

means Salvation, a salutation of deep respect. Holy Church blends both of these together, making one of the *Sanctus* and of this solemn salutation: *Hosanna in excelsis*, Hosanna in the highest. She could never have let slip such exquisite lore. Just as at the commencement of Mass, she would have us unite with the Angels in chanting the *Kyrie* a very cry of distress, so now she bids us mingle our voices once again with their Angelic Choirs, but in a manner totally different to the former occasion; lo! now she has entered into the mysteries, - she is on the point of coming into complete possession thereof; - therefore is she seized with enthusiasm, and her one thought now is to sing to her God: *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Hosanna in excelsis*. Verily, the Jews did well to shout their *Hosanna*, as they went, wending in glad procession down the Mount of Olives, towards Jerusalem, entering by the Golden Gate; all was in harmony, and breathed triumph; but how far more fitting is it for us to sing it, at this portentous moment, when the Son of God is about to come down in the midst of us who truly know Him! Well did the Jews shout: *Hosanna*. Hold, still they knew Him not; yet a few days and they would cry against Him: *Tolle, tolle, crucifige eum*.

This Trisagion is to be found in every Church, of whatever Liturgy, and whatever Rite it may be. Formerly, the *Sanctus* was sung on the Preface tone; and then there was ample time to sing the whole before the Consecration, adding even the words: *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini*. Later on, however, it was sung to more elaborate chants; hence

arose the somewhat modern custom, of cutting this piece in two, because it was quite possible for the Consecration to take place before its singing was finished. So, the Choir now pauses at the *Benedictus*, taking up from there, after the Consecration. Hence this phrase, first intended as a salutation to Him who was about to come, must now be taken in the sense of hailing Him who is come. The Priest, however, still recites these words: *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini*, immediately after the Trisagion; and in so saying, he makes on himself the sacred sign of our Redemption, to show that these words apply to Our Lord Himself. Nevertheless this recitation of the *Sanctus* and the *Benedictus* by the Priest must not be considered as comparatively recent, as we said respecting the Introit. For, indeed, we find the *Sanctus* is recited by Priests of Oriental Rites; now, it is well known that Eastern Liturgies have retained their adopted rites from the highest antiquity, without suffering the slightest change therein.

## THE CANON OF THE MASS

The Preface being finished, the *Sanctus* is sounded, and the Priest then enters within the cloud. His voice will not be heard again, until the Great Prayer is concluded. This Prayer has received the name of *Canon Missae*, that is to say, Rule of the Mass, because it is this portion which essentially constitutes the Mass: it may be well termed the Mass by excellence. It finishes at the *Pater*, and then, as

previously at the conclusion of the Offertory prayers, the termination will be signalled by the Priest himself, who will utter the concluding words in a loud voice: *Per omnia saecula saeculorum*; to which the Faithful will add their *Amen*, we approve of all that has been said and done by thee, because our intention was one and the same with thine, to bring down the Lord into our midst; and therefore are we participators in all thine acts. So then, it is to be observed that the Priest says the whole of this Great Prayer, the Canon, in an under-tone, not excepting even the various *Amen* which conclude the separate Prayers of which the Canon is composed. Once only, does he raise his voice a little, and then only whilst uttering two or three words, whereby he declares himself to be a sinner, as well as those who are around him: *Nobis quoque peccatoribus*.

In the Seventeenth Century the Jansenist heretics tried to introduce the abuse of reciting the Canon of the Mass aloud. Deceived by their tricks, Cardinal de Bissy, one of the successors of Bossuet, countenanced the admission of R. in red type, into the Missal which he had composed for his Church, as the French Bishops of that day imagined they had a right to do. These R. in red would naturally convey the idea that the people were supposed to respond the *Amen* thus marked. Now they can only respond to Prayers that can be heard. Hence would necessarily follow, at last, the recitation of the Canon aloud, by the Priest, which was the very thing aimed at by these Jansenists. But happily public attention was quickly drawn to this dangerous innovation, loud complaints were raised

against it, and Cardinal de Bissy himself withdrew the unfortunate step he had taken.

The various Prayers of which the Canon is composed are of the highest antiquity; nevertheless, they cannot be traced to the very first days of Holy Church; this is proved by the fact that the Divine Service was at first performed in the Greek tongue, a language in much more general use, at that epoch, than the Latin. It is probable, therefore, to suppose that the Prayers, such as we have them, were drawn up verging on the Second Century, or possibly as late as the first years of the Third. Every Church has its Canon; but if these differ a little as to form, the substance is always the very same, and the doctrine expressed in their various rites, agrees often identically with that expressed in our Latin Rite. We have in this fact, an admirable proof of the unity of belief, be the Rite what it may.

The initial letter of the first Prayer of the Canon is T, which is equivalent to the Hebrew *Tau*, and which, by its very shape, represents a Cross. No other sign could better be placed as a heading to this Great Prayer, in the course of which the Sacrifice of Calvary is renewed. Thus it was, that when those magnificent Sacramentaries were first of all written, ornamented with vignettes and rich designs of every kind, this *Tau* was lavishly treated in decoration, and at length came the happy idea of painting a figure of Christ on this Cross, supplied by the Text itself. By degrees the design got enlarged, until it ended in becoming a representation of the entire scene of the Crucifixion; still, large as it was, it continued to be

merely an adjunct to the initial letter only of the Prayer *Te igitur*. But at length, a subject of so great importance, was deemed worthy of being treated quite independently of this, and the result was a separate picture. So that now, there is no complete Missal without an engraving of Christ on the Cross, placed on the leaf facing that on which the Canon begins. And this can be traced to the simple fact of this little vignette which ornamented the Ancient Sacramentaries.

As to the importance of the *Tau* itself, we hear mention of it even in the Old Testament; for Ezechiel says, speaking of the elect, that the blood of the Victim being taken, all those whom God had reserved to Himself should be marked therewith on the forehead with the sign of the *Tau*, and that the Lord had promised to spare all those thus marked (Ezechiel, ix. 46.). This is explained by the great fact that we are all saved by the Cross of Jesus Christ, which was made in the form of the *Tau*. In confirmation also the Bishop marks the *Tau* with Holy Oil, on the forehead of those whom he confirms. Our Lord's Cross was in the shape of a *Tau*, thus: T. Above it a piece of wood was placed as a support to the Title affixed, and thus is completed the shape of the cross such as we now have it; for we learn, in St. John, that the cause of Our Lord's death was placed above the cross: *Scriptis autem et titulum Pilatus, et posuit super crucem* (S. John, xix. 19).

Notice of what high importance is this one letter which commences the Great Prayer of the Canon.

**TE IGITUR.**

*Te igitur, Clementissime Pater, per Jesum Christum Filium tuum Dominum nostrum supplices rogamus ac petimus.*

After the Sanctus, the Priest extends his arms upraised, then joining his hands, he raises his eyes to Heaven, but casts them down again immediately. Then, bowing profoundly, with his hands joined and leaning them upon the altar, he says: *Te igitur, Clementissime Pater.* These words *Te igitur* serve as a link to the one great idea; they express that the Priest has but one thought, that of the Sacrifice. It is as though he were saying to God (for all these prayers, as we see from the outset, are addressed to the Father), seeing that I am Thine, seeing that the Faithful have now placed all their desires in my hands, behold, we come before Thee, in the name of this very Sacrifice; then he kisses the Altar, in order to give more expression to the earnestness of his petition, and continues: *uti accepta habeas et benedicas*, here, he joins his hands and then prepares to begin the sign of the cross which he is to make thrice, over the oblation, whilst adding these words, *haec dona, haec munera, haec Sancta sacrificia illibata*; yea, this Bread and Wine which we have offered to Thee are truly pure; deign then to bless them and receive them; and bless them, not inasmuch as they are mere material Bread and Wine, but, in consideration of the Body and Blood of Thy Son, into which they are about to be changed. The sign of the cross here made by the Priest over the Bread and Wine is especially to show that he has Christ Himself mainly in view.

Again stretching out his hands, he thus continues: *in primis quae tibi offerimus pro Ecclesia tua sancta catholica*. The first interest at stake, when Mass is said, is Holy Church, than which nothing is dearer to God; He cannot fail to be touched, when His Church is spoken of. *Quam pacificare, adunare et regere digneris toto Orbe terrarum*. The word *adunare* gives us here God's own intention regarding her; He wishes her to be One, as He himself says in Holy Writ: *una est Columba mea* (Cant. vi. 8).

Entering into His Divine views, we too implore of Him to keep her always One, and that nothing may ever succeed in tearing the Seamless Garment of Christ. As in the *Pater* the very first petition that Our Lord bids us make, is that This Name may be hallowed: *Sanctificetur nomen tuum*, thereby teaching us that God's Glory and Interests must take precedence of all others; so here, just in the same way, This Glory is put forward, in what regards His Church, *in primis*. And our prayer for her is that she may have peace; we ask that she may be protected, that she may be indeed One, and well governed throughout the entire world.

The Priest next adds: *una cum famulo tuo Papa nostro N. et Antistite nostro N. et omnibus orthodoxis, atque Catholicae et apostolicae fidei cultoribus*. So, there is not a Mass offered, but it benefits the whole Church; all her members participate therein, and care is taken, in the wording of this Prayer, to name them in particular. First of all comes the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth; and when His name is pronounced, an



inclination of the head is made, to honour Jesus Christ, in the person of his Vicar . . . the Missal makes mention of the Bishop, in whose Diocese the Mass is being celebrated, so that in all places, Holy Church may be represented in her entirety. In order that all her members without exception may be named, Holy Church here speaks of all the Faithful, calling them *fideliium*, that is to say, those who are faithful in observing the Faith of Holy Church, for to be included in those mentioned here, it is necessary to be in this Faith; it is necessary to be Orthodox, as she takes care to specify, *omnibus orthodoxis*, which means, those who think aright, who profess the Catholic Faith, - the Faith handed down by the Apostles (**and those to whom their faith is known by God alone, Vatican II**).

Thus does Holy Church give all her members a participation in the Great Sacrifice.

Nor must we be astonished at this, for Holy Mass is an event in God's Sight, as well as for us; it is an event which directly touches His Glory. He could not despise the voice of this Blood more eloquent a thousand times, than that of Abel; He is obliged to regard it with special attention, because His own Glory is there at stake, and because it is His own Son Himself, the Eternal Word, Jesus Christ, who is there offering Himself as victim, and who there prays for us to His Father.

In the Holy Eucharist there are three things for us ever to hold in view: Firstly, the Sacrifice whereby Glory is given to God; secondly, the Sacrament which is the Food of our souls; thirdly, the Possession of Our

Lord personally in His Real Presence, so that we are able there to offer Him that adoration which is the consolation of our exile.

This mere Possession of Our Lord, whereby a means is given us of adoring Him there really present, is the least of these Three Great Things, - it is less than the receiving of the Sacrament in Holy Communion; again, if Holy Communion is less than the Sacrifice, because, there, we alone are in question; but when all these Three are unitedly realised, then the whole Mystery is complete, and that which our Lord willed in instituting the Eucharist is brought to pass. Verily, had it been given us but to be permitted to adore the Lord present in our midst, it would indeed have been a wondrously mighty Gift, but Holy Communion far surpasses this; and the Sacrifice transcends, beyond all thought, both of these great Favours: Lo! by the Sacrifice, we act directly on God Himself, and to that act He cannot be indifferent, else He would thereby derogate from His own Glory. Now, as God has done all things for His glory's sake, He must needs be attentive to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and must grant, under some form or other, whatsoever is thereby asked of his Divine Majesty. Thus never is one Mass offered without these four great ends of Sacrifice being fulfilled: adoration, thanksgiving, propitiation, and impetration; because God has so pledged himself.

When Our Lord was teaching us how to pray, He told us to say: *Sanctificetur nomen tuum*, - this is a bold petition, one that very closely touches the interests of

God's great Glory, - but in Holy Mass, we go further still, we poor creatures may there tell the Mighty God Himself; that He may not turn away from this Sacrifice, for it is even Jesus Christ Who is offering It; that He may not refuse to hearken, for it is Jesus Christ Himself who is here praying.

### **MEMENTO OF THE LIVING.**

*Memento, Domine, famulorum famularumque tuarum N. et N. ...* and the Priest, joining his hands, recalls in secret, those whom he wishes to recommend to God. Thus has the Priest first of all prayed for the whole Church in general, for the Pope, the Bishop, and all Orthodox Catholics, that is to say, all who are of the Faith of Holy Church. But this great Sacrifice, the fruits of which are infinite, operates in a more particular manner on all those, for whom special prayer is made; therefore the Priest is allowed here to mention those whom he wishes to recommend to God more especially. We learn from Tradition that in all ages, the Priest has been free thus to pray more expressly for those in whom he was interested, because the fruits of the Holy Sacrifice can be applied to them in particular, without prejudice to the principal intention.

Again stretching out his hands, the Priest continues his prayer, saying: *Et omnium circumstantium, quorum tibi fides cognita est et nota devotio. ...* The Priest prays for all those who are present around him, because their faith has urged them to leave alone everything else, and to come gathering about the Altar, and for this reason, they deserve a special share in the Holy

Sacrifice. See here, how good it is to assist at Mass as often as possible. But if we do so, it must be with faith and devotion, for the Priest particularly says: *quorum tibi fides cognita est et nota devotio*. It is quite clear that the Priest could never speak thus to God in behalf of such Christians as conduct themselves no differently in Church than they would anywhere else, who are in no way preoccupied with what is going on at the Altar, and who seem to have nothing else to do, but to distract themselves as far as they can, more or less respectably. So then of those who are present it is only such as assist with faith and devotion that can participate in the fruits of Holy Mass. As to those who are absent, they too can participate of the Sacrifice, by uniting themselves spiritually thereunto, and by desiring to assist thereat, with faith and devotion, were it in their power to come. If such be their dispositions, they do really share in the fruits of the great Sacrifice, how far soever distant they may be. Observe from all that has been said, how the Priest can have no mere personal idea, when approaching the Altar to offer Sacrifice. He then holds the whole Church in his hands, and he prays with outstretched arms, like Christ Himself, offering Sacrifice for all men.

The Priest here adds further instance to his prayer, singling out before God, those divers persons for whom he is offering the Holy Sacrifice: *pro quibus tibi offerimus, vel qui tibi offerunt hoc Sacrificium laudis*. The Church here uses this term Sacrifice of praise (though more properly applied to the Psalmody), because Holy Mass is likewise for the praise and honour of

God; besides, this is a Scripture phrase, often to be met with, elsewhere.

For whom is the Sacrifice being offered The Priest, still speaking of those whom he has mentioned, continues his thought, adding: *pro se, suisque omnibus, pro redemptione animarum suarum, pro spe salutis et incolumitatis suae*. Thus does the Holy Sacrifice embrace all, extend to all. The soul holds the first place in this enumeration; and we have here come across that petition, so frequently found in Foundation-Charta of the Middle Ages, namely, *pro redemptione animarum suarum, &c.* The Church next occupies herself with the bodily needs of her children; she begs of God to keep the body safe and sound amidst all the perils by which it is surrounded. Finally, the Priest concludes by offering to the living God, the desires and wants of all the Faithful, in these words: *tibi que reddunt vota sua aeterno Deo vivo et vero*.

The Priest cannot here pray either for Jews or for infidels, no more than he can for heretics, who by the very fact of heresy alone, are excommunicates, and consequently out of the pale of the holy Catholic Church. Neither can he pray for such as, without being heretics, are excommunicated for other causes; it would be a profanation to utter the names of any such in the midst of the Holy Sacrifice. They may be prayed for in private, but not in official prayers. They are excluded from the Sacrifice, as they are out of the Church; consequently, it is impossible to mention them during the Sacred Celebration.

## COMMUNICANTES.

The Church Militant does not wish to approach the Holy Altar all alone. She has spoken to God, about the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, about the Bishop under whose Jurisdiction the Diocese is placed, then about all Catholics. Now, she wants to name another class of persons, belonging not to the Church Militant, but to the Church Triumphant. She is fully aware that those who are already enjoying the Glory of the Church Triumphant are not separated from her, but, on the contrary, that they are intimately united to her, forming but one and the same Church with her. It is true, the Church is divided into the Church Triumphant, the Church Suffering, and the Church Militant; nevertheless there is but one Church. We are to present ourselves, then, before God, in company not only of the Saints on earth, but of the Saints in Heaven.

For this reason, the Priest adds: *Communicantes et memoriam venerantes*. ... Yes, we do indeed venerate those whom we are about to name, and our motive for thus honouring their memory is that they have already attained eternal glory and God for evermore; we are united with them, and have direct communication with them, forming but one with them, in the Holy Sacrifice. And who are they?

First of all: *in primis gloriosae semper Virginis Mariae, Genetricis Dei et Domini nostri Jesu Christi*. ... Our Blessed Lady has every right to an honour peculiar to her alone, and Holy Church never fails to pay it to her; on the present occasion she expresses this her

thought by the word *in primis*: it behoves us in the first place, to speak of Mary. Yes, of Mary who always was and ever is a Virgin: Virgin before Birth-giving, Virgin in Birth-giving, Virgin after Birth-giving; She is, moreover, the true Mother of God, of Him who is at the same time, Our Lord Jesus Christ. All these her titles give her special right to particular mention apart from all others. *Sed et beatorum Apostolorum et Martyrum Tuorum ...* Holy Church adds next, the Apostles and Martyrs of Christ. She will give us the names of the martyrs presently, but not till she has given us those of the Apostles. St. Mathias is the only one omitted, but his name occurs later on, in another list, after the Consecration. The name of diptychs is applied to these lists, because they used formerly to be written on folded tablets, frequently of richly carved ivory. Several of these would be used at the Altar: on one were inscribed the Saints' names to be more particularly commemorated; on another, the name of the reigning Pontiff or the Patriarch under whose jurisdiction the place was, and of the Bishop of that Diocese, &c. Sometimes a third was specially added, for the names of the Catholic Prince of the country and his children. Finally, those who had founded the Church, in which they were assembled, or who had endowed it, or had rendered it some signal service, had their names also written on a Diptych, and as they were particularised, the list was often very long. If any one had the misfortune to fall into heresy, his name would be erased, if inscribed on the diptych, and it could not be replaced there, until he had made due submission and was reconciled to the Church. These customs have now fallen into

disuse, because at last the number of persons claiming a right to be inscribed on the diptychs was so great that it became burthensome. The list of Saints was then limited and the names fixed as we now have them in the Missal; these lists are, however, a remnant of the ancient custom of the diptychs.

St. Joseph is not mentioned here, no more than he is in the *Confiteor*, because devotion to this great Saint was reserved for the latter Days, and because just at first, in the earlier ages, the attention of the Church was more specially drawn to the Apostles and Martyrs, for all the honours of her worship. Later on, when the time for fixing the Canon came, holy Church recoiled from rehandling and making modifications, even of smaller details, in a Liturgical Prayer fixed and consecrated by Christian Antiquity. With her ever wise discretion, Holy Church has limited the Saints' names mentioned here. Let us go through the list.

*Petri et Pauli.* The Priest has this one thought uppermost in his mind, that he is in close union with all these Saints, and that he is engaged in honouring their memory. He names St. Peter and St. Paul together, because these two Saints are really one, belonging as they both do to the Holy Roman Church which was founded by their joint labours. Then come the other Apostles: *Andreae, Jacobi*, James the Great, *Johannis*, John, the beloved disciple, *Thomae, Jacobi*, James the Less, *Philippi, Bartholomaei, Matthaei, Simonis, et Thaddai*, Thaddeus, called also Jude.



These holy ones just named by the Church, all belong to the Gospel; but in order to show that she belongs to all ages, she deems it well to couple with these venerable names of the very Foundations of the Church, others no less dear to her. So these three Popes are mentioned in the same list: *Lini, Cleti, Clementis*. Linus, Cletus, Clement, were all three ordained by St. Peter; so that at the Apostle's death, there were these three Bishops in Rome. St. Peter had appointed Clement to be his successor, but he contrived at first to escape the burthen; nevertheless he was at last forced to accept it, but whether he succeeded St. Linus, before or after St. Cletus, on the Chair of Peter, is uncertain. *Xysti*, here we have another Pope; it is Sixtus II., he who had St. Laurence for his deacon. He is a very celebrated Pontiff: he was beheaded in the Cemetery Pretextatus; and the Cemetery of St. Calixtus where is the Crypt of St. Camilia, is also called by his name, i.e., of St. Sixtus. Then follows Cornelius, *Cornelii*, whose epitaph, lately discovered in the Catacombs by the Commendatore De Rossi, has been a subject of such lively interest; this epitaph was found in two separate pieces, on one was only *Cor*, on the other, *nelius*.

After these Popes, we are given a Bishop's name: it is St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, *Cypriani*. He is coupled, on the diptychs, with his friend, St. Cornelius. *Laurentii*, the great Deacon St. Laurence ever so markedly honoured by Holy Church. These Martyrs all suffered in the persecution under Valerian; but the next, St. Chrysogonus, *Chrysogoni*, comes under Diocletian.

As regards SS. John and Paul, *Johannis et Pauli*, they are much later, being put to death in the reign of Julian the Apostate. Finally, *Cosmae et Damiani*, both physicians; they were not Romans, but their bodies were brought to Rome later; they suffered under Diocletian. These two names close the list adopted by Holy Church, and no others may now be added. She terminates her Prayer by naming all the Saints, by whose merits she reminds herself to God: *et omnium Sanctorum tuorum, quorum meritis precibusque concedas, ut in omnibus protectionis tuae muniamur auxilio.*

Thus ends this third Prayer, which is, like the other two, a Prayer of recommendation. First of all, the Priest prayed for Holy Church, the Pope, the Bishop, all Catholics, then for those for whose intention the Holy Sacrifice is being offered; to these he joined other persons in whom he is interested, finally, he reminded God of the union which exists between the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant, and then the names of the Saints in Heaven were heard at our Altar here below. These three Prayers form but one, for which reason, only at the conclusion of this third, the Priest, joining his hands, terminates with the usual words: *Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.* He says the *Amen* himself and in a whisper; his voice is not to be heard, until the *Pater*.

### **HANC IGITUR.**

This Prayer being ended, the Priest, extending his hands over the Oblation, prays anew. This gesture is of high importance and must be here remarked; it comes to us from the Old Law. When a Victim was

presented in the Temple to be offered in Sacrifice, the right of the imposition of hands had a twofold meaning and was of double efficacy. The victim was, by means of this rite, set apart for ever from all profane use, and was devoted to the service and honour of God alone. The Lord, thereby, took possession of the victim, whatever it happened to be. So now, Holy Church after having already, at the Offertory, alienated the Bread and Wine from all profane use, and having offered them unto God, does so now once again, and yet more earnestly, seeing that the moment of Consecration is close at hand. In the holy impatience of an expectation well nigh realised, the Priest stretches out his hands over the Bread and Wine, so that his oblation may have favourable acceptance, before the Throne of God; and he says these words: *Hanc igitur oblationem servitutis nostrae, sed et cunctae familiae tuae, quaesumus Domine, ut placatus accipias: diesque nostros in tua pace disponas, atque ab aeterna damnatione nos eripi, et in electorum tuorum jubeas grege numerari.* Thus, whilst offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and at this very moment when he is so specially pointing to his Oblation itself, the Priest prays for himself, for all those who are present, and for all those who are united with them; and he begs that peace may be granted unto us in this world, that we may escape hell, and that we may, together with the elect, enjoy the Glory of Heaven. This Prayer ends with: *Per Christum Dominum nostrum* (**Through Christ Our Lord**), which words are said by the Priest, with hands joined, and to which he adds for himself in a whisper: *Amen.*

## QUAM OBLATIONEM.

Here begins the Great Prayer which continues up to the *Memento* of the dead, and in the midst of which the sublime Mystery of Trans-substantiation is accomplished. Thus speaks the Priest: *Quam oblationem tu, Deus, in omnibus, quaesumus, adscriptam, ratam, rationabilem, acceptabilemque facere digneris.* Holy Church continues wholly absorbed in the Oblation, imploring of God to bless it, and, in order to this, the Priest makes thereon the Sign of the Cross, so that thus sanctified it may be lovingly accepted by the Lord; *adscriptam* (here the Cross is again signed): this Oblation is of such real importance, that it must be registered, He is begged to note it down; *ratam* (again, the sign of the Cross), it must needs be ratified, approved, confirmed in Heaven, as a Thing most truly Good and Fitting; lastly, the Priest begs that this Oblation may be *rationabilem*. To understand this expression, we must call to mind what those victims of the Old Law were, they were, after all, but gloss and figurative, having no worth, save in as far as they had reference to the Sacrifice of the Cross. Whereas, the Bread and Wine, or rather, - anticipating in thought, together with Mother Church herself, the stupendous effect of the Sacred Consecration, let us say, - the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ are here, on our altar, the true and real Victim, the Spiritual Oblation whereby all other sacrifices are rendered superfluous and sterile, it is in this sense that St. Paul, writing to the Romans, tells them to offer unto God in their own persons, an interior and wholly spiritual host: *Obsecro vos, fratres*

*per misericordiam Dei, ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam viventem, sanctam, Deo placentem, rationabile obsequium vestrum* (Rom. xii. 1). You, who are Christians, says the Apostle, ought to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, agreeable unto God, and reasonable, that is to say, spiritual, in contradistinction to the Sacrifices of the Old Law. So then, the Christian must offer to God, even his very body, making it to take its share in prayer; and this he does by imposing fasts and penances upon it, in order to prevent its continually dragging downwards, according to its own material tendency; in a word, he must so act that the inferior part be continually upheld, so that it may without hindrance unite itself to the superior part of his being.

But let us return to the Offering that is on the Altar. Were this Bread and Wine to remain such as they are they would be no better than the Sacrifices of the Old Law; but inasmuch as they are soon to be changed into the Body, Blood, and Soul of Our Lord Jesus Christ, verily this will be a *reasonable Host*, essentially *reasonable*. This is not all: our Oblation must needs be *acceptabilem*, so that the Lord may truly say: I am wholly satisfied with the Offering made to Me. *Ut nobis Corpus et Sanguis fiat dilectissimi Filii tui Domini nostri Jesu Christi*. At the words *Corpus et Sanguis*, the Priest makes the Sign of the Cross over the Host and over the Chalice. Oh! may this Oblation become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ! Truly the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ are for ever in Heaven, but we are asking that They may be produced here below in this Oblation which we are

offering. So then, it is for our own sakes that we make such a petition to God, as that this Oblation may be changed into the Body and Blood of the Lord, for the Church particularly puts these words on our lips: *Fiat nobis*, in order that this Body and Blood may be at our own disposal and may even become our very Food.

### CONSECRATION OF THE HOST.

*Quam pridie quam pateretur.* These words were added by Pope Alexander I., the sixth Successor of St. Peter. This he did, in order to recall the Passion, because the Sacrifice of the Mass is one and the same with the Sacrifice of the Cross; for the same Lord, when He first immolated Himself in the Cenacle, on the Eve of His Sacrifice, was to be immolated the next day on Calvary. *Accepit panem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas.* At these words the Priest does the very same, he takes the Bread into his hands, *et elevatis oculis in coelum*, he too raises his eyes to heaven, imitating what he is saying that Our Lord did. It is not mentioned in the Gospel that Jesus raised His eyes to heaven, on this occasion, but tradition tells us so, - a tradition so certain that Holy Church makes a point of giving it here her full acceptance. *Ad Te Deum Patrem suum omnipotentem, tibi gratias agens.* This is the Eucharist, or thanksgiving; and Holy Church is careful to call attention to it; for, behindhand as we ever necessarily are in paying our ceaseless debt of gratitude to God, for His countless Benefits, we should constantly have Thanksgiving in our hearts and on our lips. *Benedixit* (at this word the Priest

signs the Cross upon the host) *fregit deditque discipulis suis. Accipite et manducate ex hoc omnes. HOC EST ENIM CORPUS MEUM.*

The Priest then holds the Host in both his hands, between the thumb and index finger, and pronounces the words of Consecration, in a whisper, yet distinctly, and keeping his eyes fixed on the Host which he intends to consecrate. The moment that these words of Consecration are uttered, the Priest, on bended knees, adores the Sacred Host. The rubric says *statim*, at once; he must leave no interval, for the Bread has gone, there remain now but the species, the appearances; it has yielded its place to the Lord, it is the Lord Himself whom the Priest adores. Rising from his own act of Adoration, the Priest uplifts the Host, raising It above his head, to show It to the Faithful so that they too may adore.

Formerly the Host was not elevated at this part of the Mass, but only just before the commencing of the *Pater*. In the Eleventh Century, Berengarius, Archdeacon of Angers, having dared to deny the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist, this Showing of the Sacred Host to the people, in the Mass, immediately after Consecration was introduced, in order to excite them to adoration.

After this august ceremony, the Priest lays the Sacred Host on the Corporal and again kneels in adoration before It. From this moment, each time that the Priest touches the Host, he will genuflect both before and after doing so; before, because he is going to touch the Lord, and after, in order to pay Him homage. Besides

this, he will not disjoin the thumb and index finger of each hand, until the Ablution, because these fingers are sacred, and have alone the honour of touching the Lord. For this reason, at his Ordination, the Bishop consecrated these fingers in a more special manner, putting the holy oil upon them first, and thence spreading it over the rest of the hand; if a Priest were to lose one of his index fingers, he would need permission from the Pope himself to touch the Body of the Lord with another finger.

Thus is accomplished the Great Mystery of Transubstantiation (that is to say, the changing of one substance into another), according to that word of Our Lord to His Apostles: Do this in commemoration of Me: *Hoc facite in meam commemorationem* (St. Luke xxii. 19); on condition, however, that the Minister be a Priest validly ordained, and that he pronounce these sacramental words over true bread and natural wine, with the intention of consecrating as the Church does. These conditions fulfilled, God is not free, He is bound by His own Word, and the Mystery must consequently be achieved.

The word *enim* is put in, to link this phrase with the preceding; it is not to be found in any of the three Gospels which mention the institution of the Eucharist, neither does St. Paul give it in his Epistle (1 Cor. xi. 24). Nevertheless Our Lord must have said this word, as this Tradition has come down to us from St. Peter and the Apostles. A Priest who were to omit the *enim* would sin, but his consecration would be valid. If he were to omit the *meam* there would be no



consecration, because it is necessary to determine whose Body it is that the Priest is holding in his hands.

As soon as these above named sacred Words are pronounced, the Body of Our Lord is truly on the Altar; but because, since His Resurrection, the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of our Redeemer cannot be separated, he is on our Altar in a Living State, just as He is in heaven, that is to say, glorious as He has ever been since His Ascension.

The showing of the Body of Our Lord which now takes place, is, as we have explained above, of comparatively modern institution. The Eastern Churches do not observe a similar ceremony, at this part of the Mass; but on the other hand, they give far more pomp and importance, than we do, to the Elevation that immediately precedes the *Pater*, and thereby attract the attention of the people to profound adoration: for this purpose, the Priest then takes the Body and Blood of the Lord in his hands, and turning towards the Faithful, as at the *Orate Fratres*, holds Them up for adoration.

### CONSECRATION OF THE WINE.

The Chalice being uncovered, the Priest pronounces these words: *Simili modo post coenatum est* and then taking the Chalice into his hands, he continues: *accipiens hunc praeclarum calicem in sanctas et venerabiles manus suas*. Notice this expression, *praeclarum calicem*. How Holy Church extols this Chalice which held the Blood of the Lord,

and which she is now placing in the hands of her Priest! In the Psalm, we have the Prophet telling us: *Et calix meus inebrians quam praeclarus est!* (Ps. xxii. 5). Yea, truly, my chalice is inebriating! how august is it! how glorious, how magnificent! Mother Church finds this phrase so well suited to the Sacred Cup which is used to hold the Blood of Jesus Christ, that she now pours out her own sentiments in these very words. The Priest continues: *item tibi gratias agens*. The Priest spoke previously of this giving of thanks, when, at the consecration of the Host, he said that Our Lord, raising His eyes, gave thanks. Then, taking the Chalice in his left hand, and blessing it with his right, he says: *benedixit, deditque discipulis suis, dicens: Accipite et bibite ex eo omnes*. The Priest then pronounces the words of Consecration over the wine, whilst he holds the chalice somewhat raised. These are the Sacred Words: **HIC EST ENIM CALIX SANGUINIS MEI, NOVI ET AETERNI TESTAMENTI MYSTERIUM FIDEI QUI PRO VOBIS ET PRO MULTIS EFFUNDETUR IN REMISSIONEM PECCATORUM.**

Notice that the word *enim* comes in here just as it was at the Consecration of the Bread, to connect what precedes with what is to follow.

The Words used for the Consecration of the wine resemble those of the Gospel with some slight differences. We have received them by the tradition of the Church of Rome, founded by St. Peter, who had himself heard Our Lord speak. *Novi et aeterni testamenti*. So then this very Chalice of ours holds the Blood of the Lord, the Blood of the New Testament,

called also here, eternal, to distinguish it from the Old Covenant which was to last only till the coming of Our Lord. *Mysterium fidei*. Mystery, that means the Mystery which specially and above all others, proves our faith; for, according to the word of St. Peter, our faith must needs be proved. And so truly is It the mystery of faith, that St. Paul, writing to Timothy, tells him, on the subject of the Eucharist, that Deacons should be pure and holy, guarding the Mystery of faith in a clean conscience: *Habentes mysterium fidei in conscientia pura*. It is well known that the Holy Eucharist was given to the special custody of the Deacons, who could even administer It to the Faithful, in the absence of a Priest. Finally, let us notice there other words: *pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum*. This Blood shall be shed for many, unto the remission of sins. Our Faith is that it was shed for all, and not merely for a large number, but all would not profit of It for the remission of their sins.

Such are the words of Consecration of the Wine, the effect of which is so tremendous. They constitute together with the Words of Consecration of the Bread, the Sacrificial Act itself. Our Lord is the Victim, the Victim immolated on our Altar; not merely in the sense that the Holy Mass, by the mystic separation of the Body and Blood, represents and recalls to us the bloody sacrifice of Calvary; but furthermore, because of the very state and proper destination of the Body and Blood of Our Lord, under the Eucharistic Species. Never was victim in any sacrifice, more truly slain and immolated, than is this Divine Victim of ours, as soon as the Consecration is achieved, when

He who is the Splendour of God the Father, has now no other end and destination for this His Divine Glory, Beauty, and very Life, than to enter into us, there to be wholly lost and consumed.

So then, the Sacrifice is verily and indeed accomplished. God has looked upon It, and we can truly say to Him: Behold what was done on Calvary, and were it not for the immortality of Thy Son, the resemblance would be complete. For the accomplishing of this Sacrifice, the Priest lends his ministry to Our Lord who has bound Himself to come down to be thus immolated each time any mortal man invested with the Sacerdotal dignity, holding in his hands bread and wine shall pronounce over them certain words. But who is it that here offers the Sacrifice? Is it the Priest, or is it Jesus Christ? It is Our Lord Himself, in the person of the Priest, who is but one with Him; there is but this single restriction, i.e., that he would not come down on the Altar, if the Priest did not give his concurrence. The Sacrifice, then, is but one, whether it be offered on Calvary or on the Altar.

At the words of Consecration, the Priest, while placing the Chalice on the Corporal, adds the following: *Haec quotiescumque feceritis, in mei memoriam facietis*. When Our Lord said this to his Apostles, He, thereby, gave to them, and in their persons, to all Priests, power to do what He had just done, that is to say, to immolate Him. So that, consequently, it is not man who speaks at this solemn moment of the

Consecration, it is rather Christ Himself who makes use of man for the purpose.

Such is the dread Christian Sacrifice, which takes us back to Calvary, and shows us how tremendous is the Justice of God which required such a Victim. By itself alone, this Sacrifice could have saved millions of worlds. But Our Lord willed that it should be perpetuated. Having been immolated once on Calvary, He can do no more; yet, nevertheless, knowing what human weakness is, he feared lest the Sacrifice of the Cross, only once offered, might at last make little impression on the Faithful. Before long, man would have treated the Sacrifice of Calvary as a mere historic fact, consigned to the pages of the Church's Annals, where few even would think of seeking it. So Our Lord said to himself: What was done once on Calvary must needs be renewed until the end of time. See here why, in His Love, he devised this Divine Mystery, whereby He comes into the host and immolates Himself anew. And God too sees the importance of this work, and by its very means He is moved to Compassion, and Mercy, and Pardon towards man.

Now let us next examine and find out who it is that produces this change of the Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Our Lord is it that operates in this mystery? It behoves us to remember that whenever any One of the Three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity acts, the other Two Persons concur in this same Act, in perfect accord. In the Incarnation, the Son becomes Incarnate but it is the Father Who sends

Him, and it is the Holy Ghost Who operates the Mystery. In like manner, in Holy Mass, the Father sends the Son, - the Son comes down, the Holy Ghost operates Trans-substantiation, or the changing of the one substance into another. Thus, in order to express the Action of the Holy Ghost in this Mystery, the Church in her prayer at the Oblation, called upon this Divine Spirit, as we observed, in these words: *Veni Sanctificator Omnipotens, aeterne Deus, et benedic hoc sacrificium tuo sancto nomini praeparatum.*

The Eastern Church has not this Prayer, in her Liturgy; but wishing, as she does, to make known to the people, the action of the Holy Ghost in this Great Mystery, after pronouncing the Words of Consecration over the Bread, the Celebrant says: O Lord, God, deign to send Thy Spirit that He may change this Bread into the Body of Thy Son; and all the people answer: Amen. After consecrating the Wine, the Celebrant again says: O Lord, God, deign to send Thy Spirit that He may change this Wine into the Blood of Thy Son; and all the people answer Amen. But this looks like an anomaly; for when the Priest utters each of these invocations, Trans-substantiation has already been effected. Why then call on the Holy Spirit? This is a remark that has more than once been made; their custom has been maintained, and this is the reason alleged. In order not to mix the acclamation of the people with the words of the Sacred Mysteries, the Eastern Church placed after these the invocations relative to the operation of the Holy Ghost, that is to say, they occur at the very moment chosen in the Latin Church for

the Elevation, when she presents the Body and Blood of our Lord, to the adoration of the Faithful. Then it is that the Eastern Church pays homage to the Power and Work of the Holy Ghost. This, we Latins do, beforehand, both in the Prayer: *Veni Sanctificator Omnipotens*, and in the Prayer: *Quam oblationem*, in which we say: *Ut Corpus et Sanguis fiat*. Nevertheless, the Latin Church does not ask the people to approve of her Prayer by an acclamation; and in this place, would imply the recitation of this Prayer, in a loud voice. Now, we have already explained that the Prayer of the Canon is entirely secret, and must be wholly recited in a low voice.

#### UNDE ET MEMORES.

The Priest having adored the Precious Blood, has shown It to the Faithful, and then again adored. He now, once more, extends his hands, and continues his Prayer: *Unde et memores, Domine, quaesumus, nos servi tui, sed et plebs tua sancta, ejusdem Christi Filii tui tam beatæ Passionis, necnon et ab inferis Resurrectionis sed et in coelis Gloriosæ Ascensionis. Offerimus praeclaræ majestati tuæ ...* So do we call to mind. The Priest says *we*, for there is question not of himself alone, but of all the people. He reminds God the Father of this; and we all, united with him, call to mind the Blessed Passion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension of Our Divine Redeemer. During the Oblation, these three great Mysteries were brought prominently forward; but Holy Church is not satisfied with that; she wants to insist on the same thought again, and with still more delight in this place. She well knows that God

has done all for man, and she wishes that not one of His Benefits should escape her.

Yea, verily, we are indeed offering a something very great, for we have here before us the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. We call to mind His Passion which has been so blessed a Boon for us; here too the Victim is immolated but more than that, the Victim which we here possess as ours, is also He who rose again. Nor is this even all: we call to mind, likewise, His Glorious Ascension into Heaven. Yes indeed, He who is here present, is the Risen One; He it is, who scaling the Heavens, was seated at the Right Hand of the Father, whilst the angels re-echoed the glad shout: *Attolite portas, principes, vestras et elevamini portae aeternales, et introibit Rex gloriae* (Ps. xxiii. 7). So then we have really here, upon our Altar, Him Who suffered, Who rose again, and Who is now reigning in Triumphant Glory in heaven. Oh! yes, indeed, we do indeed recall these things, and this it is that gives us such full confidence, that we dare to say with holy boldness: *Offerimus praeclarae majestati tuae de tuis donis ac datis*. We talk of offering! We who have nothing! absolutely nothing! Yea, it is true, we have naught of our own, but we offer to Thee Thine Own Gifts, that is all we can say. This Bread and Wine were given to us by Thee; then they became the Body and Blood of Thy Son, Whom, likewise, Thou didst give unto us, whole and entire; we are then drawing out from Thine own exhaustless riches, and we are offering unto Thee what Thou Thyself hast given us.



And what qualities does this our offering possess? It is pure, holy, and spotless. But, upon earth, all is impure, nothing is holy, everything is tainted and defiled; how then can the Priest dare to speak thus? We must recollect what our Offering is. It is the very Son of God Himself in Whom have been accomplished the Great Mysteries of the Passion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension. Behold here what gives Holy Church such boldness of speech. Bride, as she is, she steps forth in face of the Glorious Trinity, and says I am endowed with Thine Own riches, I possess him as mine own, Who hath performed all this that I am now calling to mind, He is mine, for Thou hast given him to me. Behold now, I offer Him unto Thee, and this my Offering is worthy of Thee for It is indeed pure, and holy, and spotless.

This Sacrifice is so powerful, that God is enforced to look upon our Offering; He cannot refuse It; and the whole Strength of the Sacrifice rests on this, namely, that the Son hath been given unto us, as our own. By Him alone, we realise the four ends of the Christian Sacrifice; we thus lay hold on the part of God Himself, Who is obliged to accept this Offering, and to own Himself fully satisfied therewith. In the Old Law, it was not so; for how could sacrifices of bullocks and lambs have any such effect upon the Great God; what did He want with them? But here, on our Altar, under the frail appearances of Bread and Wine, there is a Something which forces the attention of God Himself, and obliges Him to prove unto us that What is offered is indeed acceptable to Him. Well may the devil be enraged at such a sight, well may he make

every effort to do away with faith in the Real Presence, striving to overturn our Altars, and to diminish the number of Priests, so that, at least, fewer Masses be offered unto God.

Oh! what a thought is it, that it is a mere sinful man that operates such stupendous Things, that stands thus powerful before the very God Almighty! If only this ministry had been reserved unto Angels, those pure spirits, untouched by the breath of sin, one could better comprehend it. But no; it is man, sinful man, whom God chooses and whom alone He honours with such a privilege. This man must needs tremble, it is true; but he feels himself all-powerful, holding, as he does, in his very hands, the Son of God Himself.

This host, pure, holy, spotless, which the Priest is offering unto God, is moreover: *Panem sanctae vitae aeternae, ac Calicem salutis perpetuae*. Here we have the Eucharist brought before us as the Sacrament. If it is a Sacrifice offered unto God, it is just as truly a Sacrament destined to feed our souls, to give them Eternal Life and Salvation.

In this magnificent Prayer, the Priest, whilst pronouncing these words: *Hostiam puram, hostiam sanctam, hostiam immaculatam*, makes the Sign of the Cross, thrice, over the host and the Chalice at the same time; then, whilst saying: *panem sanctae vitae aeternae*, he makes it again over the Host; and, when saying: *Calicem salutis perpetuae*, he makes it over the Chalice. Can this possibly imply that he here ventures to give his blessing to Our Lord? No,

assuredly not. Up to the moment of Consecration, he has really blessed the Bread, because he has the right to do so, having received sacerdotal powers of giving blessings. But now he holds no longer Bread in his hands: it is the Divine Author himself of all Benediction Who is now upon our Altar. If, then, the Priest thus makes the Sign of the Cross, it is merely in order to show that this Sacrifice, is the Sacrifice of the Cross Itself, a Sacrifice truly pure, holy, and spotless. He signs the Host separately, in order to express that this is indeed the Lord's very Body, which was crucified; and then the Chalice, to signify that it contains the very Blood which was Poured out upon the Cross. So we must observe that from the moment of the Consecration, all Signs of the Cross made by the Priest are prescribed by Holy Church to indicate and recall the Sacrifice of the Cross; and are in no way meant as signs of Benediction made over Our Lord.

### **SUPRA QUAE PROPITIO.**

The Priest again stretching out his hands continues the Great Prayer, saying: *Supra quae propitio ac sereno vultu respicere digneris.* Yea, Lord, although Thou art Infinite Sanctity, Infinite Power, Sovereign Being Itself, deign in Thy Goodness and Mercy to cast Thine eyes upon this earthly dwelling of ours, and vouchsafe to incline Thy Face unto that which we are now offering unto Thee: *supra quae respicere digneris.*

*Et accepta habere.* Formerly, up to the time of St. Leo, this Prayer did not end in the way it now does; the word *illa*, those things, was understood here, as the complement of the phrase. St. Leo thought it would

be better to give it a more determined close, and so he added these words to the said Prayer: *Sanctum sacrificium, immaculatam hostiam*. Such then is the real sense: *et accepta habere sanctum Sacrificium, immaculatam hostiam*. The remainder of the phrase forms a kind of parenthesis to the preceding, as it now stands: *sicuti accepta habere dignatus es munera pueri tui justi Abel*. ... Receive, then, O Lord, this Sacrifice (says the Priest), as Thou didst accept the offerings of Thy servant, the Just Abel. The Gifts of Abel, O Lord, were agreeable unto Thee; and yet what he offered was infinitely inferior to That which we are now able to present unto Thee: there is no comparison possible, between these two Sacrifices; nevertheless, lowly as was Abel's Sacrifice, Thou didst graciously accept it.

Nor is this all; there was yet another ancient sacrifice that God held dear: *et sacrificium patriarchae nostri Abrahae*, it was the Sacrifice of Abraham. The first-named, that of Abel, was in a bloody manner, but Abraham's was unbloody: it was a Father's Sacrifice, consenting as he did, to the immolation of his son, demanded by God. The Lord said unto him: Take thy son and go and offer him to Me in holocaust, on the mountain that I will show thee. And Abraham obeyed God, and set out with his son. The whole consisted in this acquiescence of the great Patriarch; his Sacrifice was all spiritual, for God, contented with his Obedience, bade him spare his son; the blood shed on this occasion was but that of a ram, immolated instead of Isaac. Abel and Abraham are coupled in this Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who has given up His

honour and His Life, offering unto His Father devotedness the most complete, immolating himself truly, since His Body and Blood are here separated before Him. It is then most fitting to recall here the Sacrifice of Abel and that of Abraham; observe also how the Sacrifice of blood is primordial, but still that of Abraham is so agreeable unto God, that, in return, it makes this holy Patriarch become the direct ancestor of Christ, who truly had flowing in his veins the blood of this Father of the faithful.

Further still, the Priest here adds other words whereby is proved the existence of a third Sacrifice: *et quod tibi obtulit summus sacerdos tuus Melchisedech*. This third Sacrifice is wrapped in mystery: it was offered by the High-Priest Melchisedech, himself a mysterious personage, and God found his offering truly acceptable. We can here remind Him of what He Himself says to His Divine Son, in Psalm cix: *Tu es Sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech*. Yes, O Lord, when Thou wishest to honour Thy Son, Thou dost tell Him He is Priest according to the Order of Melchisedech; how agreeable, then, unto Thee must not the Sacrifice of this mysterious person have been. In the Holy Mass we have at once united, the Sacrifice of Abel, that of Abraham, and that of Melchisedech: the Sacrifice of Abel, which represents the Sacrifice of the Cross, with which the Mass forms but one and the same Sacrifice; the Sacrifice of Abraham, in which the immolation takes place in an unbloody manner, as is the case in the Sacrifice of the Mass; finally, the Offering of Melchisedech which represents the Sacrifice of the Mass, in which Bread

and Wine are used upon the Altar; but, after Consecration, there remains neither Bread nor Wine, but only the species or appearances, serving but to veil the Divine Victim.

### **SUPPLICES TE ROGAMUS.**

During the following Prayer, the Priest no longer has his hands out-stretched, because he is bowing down, in lowly supplication; placing his joined hands on the Altar, he says: *Supplices Te rogamus, Omnipotens Deus: jube haec perferri per manus sancti Angeli tui in sublime Altare tuum, in conspectu divinae Majestatis tuae.* Dread words are these, says Innocent III., in his treatise on the Mass! The Priest designates his offering by the simple word *haec, these Things*; he knows that God sees them, and knows their priceless worth, so he contents himself with merely saying: *jube haec perferri*, command that these Things be carried.

And whither does he want them to be carried? *in sublime altare tuum.* This altar of ours here on earth suffices us not; we aspire even so far, as that this our Offering may be placed on that Altar which St. John saw in heaven, and on which he pictures to us a Lamb, as it were, slain: *et vidi Agnum stantem tamquam occisum.* This Lamb is standing, says St. John; nevertheless, he adds: *tamquam occisum*, as it were, slain. Truly, Our Lord will ever bear the marks of His Five Wounds, but, now all resplendent as suns; and this Lamb is standing, because He is living, and dieth now no more; thus does St. John show Him unto us. Such is the Altar, on which the Lord standeth, in His Immortal Life, bearing the marks of what He has

suffered for us: *Agnum tamquam occisum*, there is He for ever, before the Throne of Divine Majesty. So now, the Priest begs of God to send His Angel to take up the Victim from this our Altar on earth, and to place It on the Altar of Heaven.

To what Angel does the Priest here refer? There is neither Cherub, nor Seraph, nor Angel, nor Archangel that can possibly execute what the Priest here asks God to command to be done. It is an Act wholly beyond the power of any created being. Now, observe the meaning of the word Angel; it signifies *sent*, and the Son of God was the *One Sent*, by the Father; He came down upon earth among men, He is the true *Missus*, Sent, as He says of Himself: *Et qui misit me Pater* (S. John, v. 37). Our Lord is not simply in the rank of those spirits whom we term Angels and Archangels, placed near to us by God. No, He is the Angel by excellence, He is, as the Scripture expresses it, the Angel of the Great Counsel, *Angelus magni consilii*, of that great Counsel of God whereby willing to redeem the world, He gave His own Son. So then, the Priest begs of God that the Angel may bear away *haec* (*What is upon the Altar*), and may place It upon the Altar of heaven; he makes this petition in order to show the identity of the Sacrifice of Heaven, with the Sacrifice of earth.

Here we have something similar in idea, to what is found in the Greek Liturgy. After the Consecration, the Orientals beg of the Holy Spirit to come down and operate the Mystery, as we before noticed, in order to show that it is the Holy Ghost who works here, just as

he operated in the Blessed Virgin. The Act is accomplished, it is true, and the Greek Priest should refrain from such a Prayer, seeing that, without it, the Holy Ghost has already operated the Mystery. But no; this is but their way of affirming what we have just seen expressed in the Latin Prayer we are now studying, namely, the identity of the Sacrifice of the Lamb, whether on the Altar of Heaven or that of earth. In Heaven, the Lamb is standing, although, as it were, slain; here below, He is in like manner slain. Now Who is it that can make these two Sacrifices, to be both one? It is Jesus Christ, the Sent, the Angel of the Great Counsel.

The Priest then adds: *ut quotquot ex hac altaris participatione*. The Priest kisses the Altar, whilst pronouncing these words. Holy Church has the profoundest veneration for this Altar which represents Jesus Christ, Who is himself the Living Altar; therefore, in its sanctification and consecration, does she lavish her most beautiful rites. The Priest continues: *Sacrosanctum Filii tui Corpus et Sanguinem sumpserimus* (here he signs with the cross the Host and Chalice, as also himself), *omni benedictione celesti et gratia repleamur. Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum*. So we here beg to be filled with all graces and blessings, just as if we were already admitted in Heaven, to the participation of that Living Altar there, Jesus Christ, Who sheds around Him grace and benediction. We crave these graces and blessings, in virtue of our participating at this Altar of earth, which Holy Church treats with such veneration. It is in the name of this Altar that the Priest asks all sorts of



blessings for all mankind. Observe how the Priest never speaks for himself alone, so here he says *repleamur*, that we may be filled, he signs himself with the cross, whilst saying these last words, in order to show that this benediction comes to us by the Cross, and also to signify that we accept it with our whole heart.

Here ends the second part of the Canon, that which is consecrated to the Offering. These three Prayers wrap the Act of Consecration, just as the preceding ones prepared for it. Now, Holy Church would bring us back to Intercession.

#### **MEMENTO OF THE DEAD.**

Besides the Church Triumphant and the Church Militant, there exists a third part of this Great Body. Yes, God has given us the power to intercede for the Church Suffering, to come to her aid and to do her good; therefore the Holy Sacrifice can be offered in behalf of her suffering members, and Holy Church in her maternal love, wishes that in every Mass that is said, mention should be made of them, because thereby fresh succour is procured for those of her children who are still detained in this place of expiation. It is a point of Faith that the Holy Sacrifice brings relief to the souls in Purgatory. This Doctrine has been handed down to us by Tradition. As early as the Second Century, we find Tertullian speaking of Prayer for the Dead. There used, formerly, to be a separate Diptych set aside exclusively for the names of the Departed, whose memory was particularly to be preserved - Benefactors, for example.

The Priest now addresses himself to God, in behalf of these suffering members: *Memento etiam, Domine, famulorum famularumque tuarum N. et N. qui nos praecesserunt cum signo fidei et dormiunt in somno pacis.* We say that we are interceding for those who have gone before us, with the sign of faith. What does the Church understand by this sign of faith? It is the sign of Baptism, and that of Confirmation, which latter makes the perfect Christian. Baptism alone already gives us the sign of faith, because in it we are marked with the Cross, so truly so that when the body of a deceased person is brought to the Church, the Priest pronounces this Prayer over it: *Non intres in iudicium cum servo tuo, Domine ... qui, dum viveret, insignitus est signaculo sanctae Trinitatis.* Yes, it was signed with the sign of faith, *signum fidei*, the sign of the Trinity; it is therefore entitled, O Lord, to be taken into consideration by Thee, and not to be judged too severely. This expression of Holy Church, *signum fidei*, gives a proof, once more, that we may not here pray for infidels, as we have already noticed above, speaking of the *Memento* of the living, since they are not in communion with Holy Church.

*Et dormiunt in somno pacis.* Holy Church puts here strongly before us, in what light she regards death in the case of a Christian. It is a sleep, she tells us, for those of whom we speak, *dormiunt*; for the same reason she gives the name of Cemetery to places reserved for burial, because this word means a dormitory, or sleeping place. Yes, they sleep and it is the sleep of peace, *in somno pacis*. Holy Church uses this expression, because those for whom she is

praying, died in peace with her, and in true filial submission to her; they died in Jesus Christ, in the kiss of the Lord; even were they still in Purgatory, it can yet be said of them, that they sleep in peace, because they are saved in Jesus Christ, Who bringeth Peace along with Him. In the Catacombs these words *in pace* are frequently found graven on tombstones; this was the Early Christians' way of speaking of death; so too, in the Office of Martyrs we sing: *Corpora sanctorum in pace sepulta sunt*. This very ancient Office recalls the language of the Catacombs: *in pace*. Holy Church preserves a vestige of the same, when praying for her dead, she bids the Priest say: *dormiunt in somno pacis*.

The Rubric here directs the Priest to join his hands when ending this first part of the Prayer. Then it is that he prays for such of the deceased as he more particularly wishes to recommend. Having done so, again stretching out his hands, he continues thus *Ipsis, Domine, et omnibus in Christo quiescentibus*; here we see that every Mass is of profit to all the souls in Purgatory. *Locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis, ut indulgeas, deprecamur*. Notice here these three things asked for by Holy Church refreshment, light, and peace. Now, what is Purgatory? It is a place in which souls stand in need of refreshment, for those piercing flames are keenly felt. Moreover, it is a place where there is no light, since Holy Church craves for these poor souls, *locum lucis*; so there is nothing ever in this place of expiation, to distract them from their fearful sufferings. Furthermore, it is a place where sweet peace reigns not; there, is ceaseless agitation, the soul

striving towards God whom it may not reach; there, in direst trouble and anguish, the misery of the poor soul in having thus put herself into such straits of wailing sorrow and frightful pain. Yes, Purgatory is indeed a place the very opposite of that abode where reign endless *refrigerium, lux, et pax*. These three expressions are of the highest importance, because they reveal to us, that whenever we pray for the Dead, the succour that reaches them by our means, is always in the form of refreshment, light, and peace.

The Priest terminates the Prayer, in the usual manner: *Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen*. Besides this, there is a special rubric which bids him bow his head whilst saying these concluding words, which is not prescribed in the case of closing other prayers. It is meant as one more earnest pleading; for at this moment, light shines in Purgatory, as prayer offered for these poor souls can never be ineffectual. As it were, the dismal prison is uncovered now, to allow the sweet dew of refreshment, light and peace to distil gently on those burning sufferers; and this triple aid is given to the different souls, in the proportion assigned to each by the Justice of God; for Holy Church can only pray for the dead, by way of suffrage; she has no longer those rights she had over them when they were her members on earth. But, on the other hand, we also know that her prayer has always a salutary effect on the souls suffer in Purgatory, and that God never allows any prayer said in their behalf to be of no avail.

## NOBIS QUOQUE PECCATORIBUS.

Now having shown how the precious Blood of Christ has flowed plentifully in Purgatory, let us turn our thoughts upon our selves. The Priest is going to speak in his own and our interest. He declares himself a sinner, as we ourselves are. *Nobis quoque peccatoribus famulis tuis, de multitudine miserationum tuarum sperantibus partem aliquam et societatem donare digneris cum tuis sanctis.* ... We also, although sinners, claim our share of happiness; we would not be excluded from it. This is the only occasion on which the Priest speaks aloud during the Canon; and whilst thus speaking, he strikes his breast, and the Faithful should do in like manner. Our fraternal charity has urged us to pray for such of our Brethren as are dead, and have not, as yet, been admitted into a participation of the bliss of heaven. But, we beseech our Lord, that He would give us to partake of the like happiness; it is in his Goodness and Mercy, that we put our trust.

And with whom is it that we desire to have a share and fellowship? *Cum tuis sanctis Apostolis et Martyribus:* with thy holy Apostles and Martyrs. It seems to Holy Church, that she has not as yet named a sufficient number of Saints; but still not deeming it fitting to add other names to her first list, she found this moment a favourable one, for speaking of those that had rendered themselves especially dear to her. As it is a most marked glory for the Saints that their Names should thus be registered in what is the Great Act of the Church, - therefore has God chosen his Elect that are thus to be commemorated in the very

presence of Jesus Christ Himself. Here, again, we meet afresh with Apostles and Martyrs: *Cum tuis sanctis Apostolis et Martyribus*. Neither must we forget, that, in the early ages, the *Cultus* of mere Confessors was not, as yet, established; holy honours were only given to Apostles and Martyrs: it is for this reason that these are the only two classes mentioned. Therefore we desire to be with them; and then also *cum Johanne*: with John. Who is the John that is mentioned here? It is John the Baptist, our Lord's Precursor. - *Stephano*, with Stephen, the Proto martyr. Why has not this model, this first of Martyrs, been named until now? Because, in the first diptych, after having mentioned Saint Peter and the Apostles, Holy Church passed on at once to the first Popes: Linus, Cletus, and Clement. By thus naming St. Peter and his three successors, the Church is straightway established, as is the power of Peter, by this glorious trinity of holy Popes. St. Stephen's name would have deranged this order of ideas, had he taken his place in the first list. The same must be said of St. John the Baptist, who is looked upon neither as an Apostle nor a Martyr, although he preached penance and the Coming of Christ, and although he was put to death because of the earnestness wherewith he took up the cause of Chastity: the Church, however, desirous of mentioning these two great Saints, assigned them this place. *Matthia*, with Mathias: here we have an Apostle. The reason of his name being put here, is, because, as Holy Church enumerated Twelve Apostles on her first diptych, adding St. Paul to the Twelve, - Mathias, who was chosen to complete the Apostolic College, after Judas's apostasy, was not to

forfeit the right to his position, and it was but fair to put his name at the head of the second diptych. *Barnaba*, with Barnabas, the companion of St. Paul in many of his evangelical travels. *Ignatio*, with Ignatius, the great Martyr, who after Evodius, had succeeded Peter in the See of Antioch. He it is, who wrote that magnificent Letter to the Romans, wherein he speaks of the happiness that awaits a Christian, when he may have the happiness of dying for Christ. He came to Rome under Trajan, as it were, to mingle his ashes with those of Peter and Paul; for it was in that City that he suffered Martyrdom. - *Alexandro*, with Alexander: here comes the name of a great Pope. He was the fifth or sixth successor of St. Peter. It was a happy thought to insert his name here; for, it was he that prescribed that these few words should be put in the Canon: *Qui pridie quam pateretur*, (who the day before he suffered,) and this in order to recall to our minds, at this solemn moment, the memory of the Passion. - *Marcellino, Petro*, with Marcellinus and with Peter. These are two of those who suffered in the persecution of Diocletian. Marcellinus was Priest, and Peter Exorcist. Their names are never separated. So far there has been no mention made of any holy woman, in the Canon. Holy Church could never omit them. Who, then, is the first she speaks of? *Felicitate*, - With that great Felicitas, the Mother of the Seven Martyred Children, who thus renewed under the persecution of Marcus Aurelius, the generous sacrifice of the Mother of the Macha bees. So illustrious was she, together with her children, that the Catacombs being already opened at the period of their martyrdom, the Christians divided

amongst them the bodies of her children, in order to place them in the various cemeteries. Felicitas was martyred on the 29th of November; whereas her children had been thus honoured in the preceding July. She was buried in the Cemetery of Priscilla, together with two of her sons. - *Perpetua*, this is that noble lady of Carthage. As her name is put after that of St. Felicitas, this affords us an additional proof that this Felicitas is certainly the one of Rome, and not she who suffered at Carthage together with Perpetua. In this place Perpetua represents her companion as well as the rest who suffered with her; she is emphasised as being the foremost among them all, and as having written certain portions descriptive of her martyrdom. *Agatha, Lucia*, with Agatha, Lucy: Until the time of St. Gregory the Great, they used to say: *Perpetua, Agnes, Cecilia* but this holy Pontiff, loving Sicily, where he had himself founded six monasteries, inserted in the Canon the names of the two Sicilian Virgins, Agatha of Catania, and Lucy of Syracuse. Out of courtesy, due to strangers, he gave them the precedence of the two Roman Virgins, Agnes and Caecilia. Why then does Agnes come in here before Caecilia? She did not suffer until under Diocletian, whereas Caecilia is to be found under Marcus Aurelius. Perhaps, harmony of phrase is the sole real reason for this. - *Anastasia*, she is the noble Roman widow who suffered martyrdom under Diocletian, and who is so illustrious at Rome, that formerly the Sovereign Pontiff used to celebrate the Second Mass of Christmas Day in her Church. Although this practice is now discontinued, a commemoration of this great Saint is still made in that



same Mass. - *Intra quorum nos consortium, non aestimator meriti, sed veniae quaesumus, largitor admitte.* After having mentioned the Saints anew, the Priest begs that God would deign to admit us amongst them; not assuredly because of any merit of ours giving us any right thereunto, but because God's Goodness, Mercy, and Pardon are able to do so: (*but of thine own gratuitous pardon.*) The Priest terminates by the ordinary conclusion: *Per Christum Dominum nostrum.*

### PER QUEM HAEC OMNIA.

What, then, would holy Church do with these words of benediction? The Priest turns them, now from their primitive sense, and applies them to the Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ, present on the Altar, by *Whom* all things are given unto us. Thus, even the Priest signs with the cross the Chalice and Host at these words *Sanctificas, vivificas, benedicis.* Perhaps this appears somewhat strained; but at any rate it shows us how great is the respect of Holy Church for the sublime Prayer of the Canon. In order not to lose these few words, she prefers now to apply them to the Body of Jesus Christ, which was created, which by the Mysteries of His Passion, of His Resurrection, and of his Ascension, accomplishes what is expressed by these words: *vivificas, benedicis; in fine, praestas nobis,* for It is given to us as Food.

The Canon is nearing its close; it will terminate with the Priest raising his voice to say its concluding words, and to recite the Lord's Prayer. The Greeks call the Canon *the Liturgy.* In the course of ages the

signification of this word was extended so as to express the whole aggregate of that which composes the entire Divine Office; but originally it was strictly understood of the Canon of the Mass only, which is *the work* by excellence, as the Greek word expresses it. In the same way, we find marked, in the Latin Missal: *infra actionem*, to signify that which is done in the action of the Sacrifice; that is to say *the Action* by excellence. Furthermore, the very word *Canon* is also a Greek word, as we have before remarked; and there is nothing surprising in this, since it is well known how widely spread was the use of the Greek tongue, at the period of the birth of Holy Church. Out of the four Gospels, three were certainly written in Greek.

Before the conclusion of the Great Prayer, a very solemn rite is performed; it is Holy Church's last confession of the identity existing between the Sacrifice of the Cross and that of the Mass. The Priest uncovers the Chalice containing the Blood of Our Lord, and after making a genuflection, he takes in his right hand the Sacred Host, and in his left hand the Chalice, then he three times makes the sign of the cross with the host, over the Chalice, going from one lip of the Chalice to the other, saying: *per ipsum, et cum ipso, et in ipso*, - then, making the sign of the cross between the Chalice and his own breast, with the sacred host, as before, he adds: *est tibi Deo Patri omnipotenti, in unitate Spiritus Sancti*: he replaces the Host above the Chalice and slightly elevates both saying: *omnis honor et gloria*, he then puts down the Host again, and re-covers the Chalice; and having

done so, says: *Per omnia saecula saeculorum*, and the people answer: *Amen*.

What does this action of the Priest signify? Holy Church possesses her Spouse in the state of immolation and of sacrifice; nevertheless, He is living. Thence she would here bring out, in a marked manner, this His character of the living God, and she expresses it by thus reuniting the Body and Blood of the Lord, placing the Host immediately over the Precious Blood, in order to give Glory to God. She then bids the Priest say: *per ipsum*, by Him is the Father Glorified; *et cum ipso*, with Him is He glorified, because God the Father has not a glory superior to that of the Son, nor isolated from that of the Son (see what majesty in this *cum ipso*); and, *in ipso*, in Him is the Father glorified: the glory, which is brought by the Son to the Father, is in the Son, and not outside of Him, *in ipso*. Thus, by Him, with him (that is to say, conjointly with Him), and in Him, are all honour and glory to God the Father. The Priest, twice again, makes the sign of the cross, but this time he makes it between the Chalice and his own breast. And why this difference? He is pronouncing these words: *est tibi Deo Patri omnipotenti, in unitate Spiritus Sancti*; as neither the Father, nor the Holy Ghost have been immolated, it would be unbecoming, whilst naming them, to place the Host over the Blood which belongs to the Son alone, Who alone was clad in our human nature, and alone was immolated for us. But whilst pronouncing these last words: *omnis honor et gloria*, the Priest again holds the Sacred Host over the chalice, expressing thereby, that in the veins of the

Divine Victim that he is offering, the Precious Blood flows together with immortality for evermore. So the Priest can now say to God: *omnis honor et gloria*; this offering is the most glorious Act that can possibly be made to thine honour, for we possess the risen Christ, and it is His very Self that is immolated to thine honour, on this Altar. No, He who is offered is not a mere creature; but by Him, and with Him, *per ipsum et cum ipso*, are all honour and glory to God. Thus, this glory goes straight to God; He cannot refuse the homage which is paid to Him, which is rendered by Him who is immolated, but yet is living still. The Sacrifice thus truly offered indeed, is the greatest Act which can be done for God. On Calvary, the immolation of our Lord was a hideous and abominable crime; but here, this immolation is all that is most glorious for God, and it is so, because He who is offered is living. It is the Living God we offer; it is the Living Son offered to the Living God. What more grand, what more just, than to express this thought by placing the Body of our Lord directly over His Blood? See here how it is that the Sacrifice of the Mass is the most glorious Act that can be done for God, since all honour and all glory are rendered to Him at this sublime moment; *per ipsum, et cum ipso, et in ipso*.

This solemn rite, of which we are treating, shows us how much God has loved the world. When we consider that He whom the Priest is thus holding in his hands, is not only He by whom all glory is given to God, but even He who shares this same glory together with Him: *per ipsum, et in ipso!* It is the Word

of the Father who allows himself to be lifted in one's hands, to be touched, because He wishes that all glory should be given to God, *omnis honor et gloria*, He wishes that there should ascend to God a homage from which He cannot turn away. What now are all the homages of men compared with the worship paid by our Lord Himself to His Father!

Yes, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is verily the most glorious Act we can possibly do for God; one can offer a prayer, or perform an act of virtue, but that does not force the attention of God; whereas at the Mass He is forced, by all His own Infinite Perfections, to be attentive to the worship there paid Him.

Now let us see if this important rite can be traced up to the first centuries. It is certainly very ancient; it must have existed in all ages, as it is to be found everywhere. It can at once be understood that Holy Church, offering up her Spouse unto God, could never say that He is dead; she has immolated Him, it is true, but He whom she has thus immolated is living and this she must needs confess. Lo! now are accomplished the three great Mysteries, the Passion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension. That our Christ is indeed our very own, is what these three Mysteries truly express, and Holy Church right well remembers it. Before these were accomplished, there was not so much richness, if we may be allowed the expression. He was born at Bethlehem, but the Incarnation alone was not to save us, according to the designs of God; although it would have sufficed thereunto and

superabundantly, if such had been the Divine Decree. Then, Christ suffered His bitter Passion, but that was not enough; there must be his Victory over Death, His Resurrection. There must yet be something more. Christ must open Heaven, He must have His Ascension; it needs must be, I say, that our human nature, which He deigned to take to Himself, in which He suffered, by means of which He subjected Himself to death, - that this very human nature should be throned in heaven, - His Ascension, therefore, is a very necessity. So truly and indeed, He whom we hold in our hands, is the Lord himself, He who suffered, He who died, He who hath risen again, He who hath ascended into Heaven.

Behold here the reason why we owe great thanks to our Lord, for having allowed us to be born since the accomplishment of all these stupendous Mysteries. For in the case of those who died between the taking place of the Resurrection and the Ascension, although happier far than those who preceded them in point of time, still are we much more fortunate than they, for in their day, Christ was not as yet completed in his Mysteries. Those who died between the Death of Our Lord and His Resurrection, were less happy than the first named; and as to those who died before our Saviour, they had but the hope, and they were obliged to quit this life, before seeing this hope realised. Oh! how far more highly favoured are we, than those who have gone before us! and so we say: *unde et memores Domine, nos, servi tui, sed et plebs tua sancta ejusdem Christi Filii tui Domini nostri tam beatæ Passionis, nec non et ab inferis Resurrectionis, sed et*

*in coelos gloriosae Ascensionis.* What energy in these words! but moreover what profound reverence, and what love ought we not to have for one single Mass, since it is the one grandest thing which Our Lord Himself has done! It is even all that He can do; it is that which He will ever do, for the ministry of Our Lord is never to cease; Priest He is and ever will be: *tu es sacerdos in aeternum.*

It is His Father Himself who declares the perpetuity of His Priesthood: *Juravit Dominus et non paenitebit eum: tu es Sacerdos in aeternum secundum Ordinem Melchisedech.* The Lord hath sworn it, *juravit:* thou art Priest for ever, saith He, according to the order of Melchisedech. The Lord adds this, because Jesus Christ is to exercise His ministry by means of bread and wine which were likewise the matter of the Sacrifice of Melchisedech. Priest, then, is He for ever, offering Himself ever for us, living for ever; and all this, as Saint Paul says in order to make intercession for us: *Semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis;* yet retaining ever the wounds of His Passion, so as to bespeak the sacrifice and to offer these His wounds to His Father for us. Confidently then, does Holy Church say to God: *Jube haec perferri per manus Sancti Angeli tui in sublime altare tuum, in conspectu divinae Majestatis tuae,* that is to say, these things which we are here offering, in order that they may be wholly one with that Altar yonder in Heaven, since of this they are truly worthy. For on the Altar of earth, just as on the Altar of Heaven, it is always and ever Jesus Christ who is the Offerer, being Priest for ever, and who is likewise, at the same time, the Victim also.

Yea even when the world ceases to exist, Our Lord will continue to render unto God, the very same worship, in his quality of Priest: *Sacerdos in aeternum*, because it is meet that God should be honoured for ever. Nevertheless, the two ends of Sacrifice which regard propitiation and impetration shall exist no more; Jesus Christ, *Sacerdos in aeternum*, will continue only to adore and give thanks.

It is well to remark here, that the Sacrifice of praise surrounds the Sacrifice of the Mass, whereby true life is given to the former. Holy Church has fixed the hour of Tierce for the offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. This was the hour at which the Holy Ghost came down upon the Church; hence at the beginning of this hour we are bid, in the Office, to say: *Nunc Sancte nobis Spiritus...* The Church invokes this Divine Spirit who by His very presence gives warmth to her love and prepares her to offer the Great Sacrifice. Ever since Matins, the entire Office has been lighted up by the beaming rays of this Sublime Sacrifice; and this its influence will last on, even unto the Compline hour, which concludes the Sacrifice of Praise.

Formerly, as we have already said, the Elevation used to take place at the end of the Canon. The Greeks have retained this Custom which is observed as follows. The Priest having placed the host above the Chalice and said the words: *Omnis honor et gloria*, turns towards the assembled faithful, holding the Body and Blood of our Lord, which he shows to



the people, whilst the Deacon utters aloud these words: *Sancta Sanctis*, holy things for the holy!

The Great Prayer of the Canon being terminated, the Priest interrupts the silence which reigns in the holy assembly, by exclaiming: *Per omnia saecula saeculorum*. And the people answer: *Amen*, as a sign of approbation of what has just been done, and of union with the offering just presented to God.

### THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Our Lord has told us: "When you would pray say: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, etc., etc." What better occasion could there be than the present, of making this prayer to God? So the Priest now, is going to let us hear the *Pater noster*. ... As in our own day, so in all past ages, the Lord's Prayer has had a place in the course of the Holy Sacrifice, for we meet with it in every Liturgy and in every Canon of the Mass. Moreover, it is used by the Church, on all solemn occasions; it is our support; it is the pledge which Our Lord has given us, saying: when you would pray, say: *Pater noster*. Holy Church preludes this Prayer, with these magnificent words: *Praeceptis salutaribus moniti, et divina institutione formati, audemus dicere*. Yes, if we dare to speak, if we formulate the petitions which follow, it is because we rely on the very precept which we have received so to pray, a precept given us by our great Master for our salvation. Thus have we been instructed by His own Divine Mouth, so we dare to say, *audemus dicere: Pater noster*.

The Priest is about to present to God successively, the seven Petitions of the Lord's Prayer. The first three regard God Himself and treat, therefore, of the Love of Benevolence, thus does Our Lord set us on the road of the purest love. *Pater noster qui es in coelis, sanctificetur nomen tuum*, hallowed be thy name, that is to say, let all honour and respect be paid to it as it deserves, because that is thy very right. - *Adveniat regnum tuum*. Thy kingdom come that is, we beg that thy reign be established in all and over all, because thou art truly king. *Fiat voluntas tua sicut in coelo et in terra*. Thy Will be done on earth; that is to say, by men, as it is in heaven, by the Angels and the blessed.

Having thus prayed, following the teaching of Our Lord Himself, that God's kingdom may come, that His Glory may be realised in all creation, the Priest adds the other four Petitions of the Lord's Prayer, which treat of that which is necessary for ourselves. *Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie*. Here we ask for our daily bread; God so understands it, and Our Lord thus points out to us, by bidding us say only daily bread, that it is useless to be preoccupied without cause, seeing that we do not even know if we shall be alive to-morrow. But we are asking bread, not for the body only, but also for the soul, which likewise needs food. For this reason, one of the Evangelists has it: *panem nostrum supersubstantialem da nobis hodie* (Matth. vi. 11). Lo! this Bread is on the Altar; there it is to feed our souls; and now is the moment to ask It of God. - Then, as we are sinners, it behoves us to beg for pardon *Et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus*

*nostris*; yea, forgive what ever we have done against thee. And we ourselves mark the measure of this our pardon, by begging Him to forgive us, as we forgive them that trespass against us. - *Et ne nos inducas in tentationem*, and lead us not into temptation, that is to say, ward and defend us when temptation strikes us. Although it be in the designs of God that we should thus be tried, in order that we may gain merit, still may we beseech Him to spare us therein, for we are weak and may so easily fall.

*Sed libera nos a malo*, but deliver us from evil. Here two things must be understood: we ask to be delivered from evil, from the evil one, that is the devil, who is ever seeking to make us fall into evil. Moreover, if we have committed it, we beg of God mercifully to withdraw us from its grasp.

\* "This does not mean that man's forgiveness is the measure of God's, but that the more mercy we show "to others, the more will be extended to ourselves."

### **LIBERA NOS QUAESUMUS.**

Here begins another part of the Mass, which continues up to the second Prayer before the Communion. Communion is the means taken by Our Lord to unite all men one with the other, so as to make of them all, one whole. Thus when Holy Church would drive forth from her bosom one of her members who has rendered himself unworthy of her, she excommunicates him; he has no longer any share in this communion of the faithful. In order to express this union, holy Church wishes that peace, the result

of that charity which reigns amongst the faithful, should be the object of very special attention. So now, she is about to ask it, in the following prayer; and then presently, the kiss of peace will be mutually given amongst the faithful and will give expression to their charity one with the other.

Our Lord hath said: if whilst offering thy gift at the altar, thou rememberest that thy brother hath something against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go first and be reconciled with thy brother; and then coming, thou mayest offer thy gift. Holy Church entering fully into this thought of her Lord, is here occupied at this solemn moment, with the maintenance of peace and charity amongst all her members. In Masses of the Dead, this kiss of peace is not given, thus keeping ever in view, that the Dead being no longer under power of the keys of Holy Church, she cannot give them peace; our relations with them are utterly changed.

The Priest, therefore, says, as if developing the last petition of the Lord's Prayer: *Libera nos, quaesumus, Domine, ab omnibus malis praeteritis, praesentibus et futuris.* Yea, Lord, strengthen us, because our past evils have caused us to contract spiritual weakness, and we are as yet but convalescents. Deliver us from the temptations of which we are now being made the butt, and from the other afflictions which are weighing us down, as well as from the sins of which we may be guilty. In fine, preserve us from those evils which may be lurking for us in the future. *Et intercedente beata et gloriosa semper Virgine Dei Genitrice Maria, cum beatis Apostolis tuis Petro et Paulo, atque*

*Andreae et omnibus sanctis.* Holy Church, standing in need of intercessors, fails not to have recourse to the Blessed Virgin, as well as to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul. But why is St. Andrew alone, here added on to these? Simply because the holy Roman Church has ever had a very special devotion to this Apostle. *Da propitius pacem in diebus nostris, ut ope misericordiae tuae adjuti, et a peccato simus semper liberi, et ab omni perturbatione securi.* Give us, Lord, peace in these our days, so that aided by the help of Thy mercy, we may be delivered, in the first place, from all sin, and then be secured against all evil attacks that might surprise us unawares.

Such is this magnificent Prayer of Peace, which is used by Holy Church for this special Mystery of Holy Mass. Towards the middle of this Prayer, just when the Priest is saying *et omnibus Sanctis*, he makes the sign of the cross with the Paten, which he has been holding in his right hand, from the commencement; he then kisses it, as a mark of honour to the sacred vessel on which the Body of the Lord is about to repose: for it is never permitted to kiss the Host Itself. The Prayer being ended, the Priest places the Paten under the Host, he uncovers the Chalice, takes up the host and holding it over the Chalice, breaks it through the middle, whilst saying this portion of the concluding words: *Per eundem Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum.* He then replaces, on the Paten, the part of the host which is in his right hand, and breaks off a Particle of the other half which he is holding in his left hand, saying: *qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus;* then placing also

on the Paten the portion of the host which he has in his left, and holding over the Chalice the small Particle which he has just broken off, he says in a loud voice: *Per omnia saecula saeculorum*. The people, in approval of his petition and making it also with him, answer: *Amen*. Then making three times the sign of the cross over the chalice, with the Particle, he says aloud: *Pax + Domini sit + semper vobis + cum*. R. *Et cum spiritu tuo*. Holy Church never loses sight of the peace for which she has just been asking, and she here profits of this moment to refer to it again.

The Priest then allows the Particle which he had in his hand, to fall into the chalice, thus mingling the Body and the Blood of the Lord, and saying at the same time: *Haec commixtio et consecratio corporis et Sanguinis Domini nostri Jesu Christi, fiat accipientibus nobis in vitam aeternam. Amen*. What is the meaning of this rite? What is signified by this mingling of the Particle with the Blood which is in the Chalice? This rite is not one of the most ancient, although it is quite a thousand years old. Its object is to show, that, at the moment of Our Lord's Resurrection, His Blood was reunited to His Body, by flowing again in His veins as before. It would not have sufficed if This soul alone had been reunited to His Body; His Blood must necessarily be so likewise, in order that the Lord might be whole and complete. Our Saviour, therefore, when rising, took back his Blood which was erstwhile spilled on Calvary, in the Praetorium, and in the Garden of Olives.

In the Prayer which the Priest recites whilst mingling the Particle of the host with the Precious Blood, the word consecratio must not be taken in the sense of sacramental consecration, but simply as signifying the reuniting of Sacred Things.

## AGNUS DEI

After this mingling, the Priest bowing before the Most Holy Sacrament, and joining his hands, recalls the words of Saint John Baptist and says: *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis* (**Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us**). These words could hardly be better introduced than now. Thus it is that Holy Church is wont to seek everywhere, the most lovely things in order to blend them together in one beautiful whole, in the great action of the Holy Sacrifice. Therefore does she take up the song which the angels sing in Heaven, and she too cries with them: *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth* (**Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Power and Might**). Then she adds the gladsome shout of the Hebrew children: *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini* (**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord**). But now she sings with the Precursor Agnus Dei. Yea, at this moment, the Lord is verily and indeed Himself the immolated Lamb, and twice does she implore of him, who hath taken our sins upon him, to have mercy on us, *miserere nobis*. The third time she adds: *Dona nobis pacem*, because the Eucharist is, as we have said, the Sacrament of peace, by means of which all the faithful become united together.

In Masses of the Dead, instead of *miserere nobis*, there is said *dona eis requiem*, and the third time, *sempiternam* is added, which very clearly expresses the character of the petition we are making for the souls of the faithful departed; we are asking for them, not now, as formerly, union in peace, but rest in the Eternal Peace.

### **PRAYERS BEFORE THE COMMUNION.**

Now comes the Prayer of Peace: *Domine Jesu Christe, qui dixisti Apostolis tuis, pacem relinquo vobis, pacem meam do vobis, ne respicias peccata mea, sed fidem Ecclesiae tuae, eamque secundum voluntatem tuam sanctificare et coadunare digneris. Qui vivis et regnas Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.*

Such is the Formula whereby the Priest petitions for peace and union amongst the faithful, at the very moment when they are about to partake of the Holy Mysteries. This Prayer is not said in Masses of the Dead. - When it is ended, the Priest who is celebrating the Mass, gives the Peace to the Deacon, who gives it to the Sub-Deacon, by whom it is passed, in like manner to the Choir. If the celebrant is a Bishop, he gives the Peace to the Assistant Priest, who, in his turn, passes it to the Choir, whilst the Deacon and Sub-Deacon approach to receive it directly from the Prelate himself.

As to the Celebrant, he takes the Peace, by kissing the Altar, in front of the Sacred Host. Thus, it is our Lord Himself who gives it to him. A plate of precious metal (called for that reason *instrumentum pacis*), may be



used for the giving of the Peace; in which case, the Celebrant kisses this plate, after having kissed the Altar. Should there be present any Princes, Princesses, or other personages of high rank whom it is fitting thus to honour, the instrumentum pacis is taken to them, to kiss in their turn.

The Priest has yet two other Prayers to recite before the Communion. Those now found in the Missal are not very ancient; nevertheless, they are at least a thousand years old. Formerly, what was said at this moment was traditionary, just as were the prayers of the Offertory; so that these Prayers are not to be found in the Sacramentary of St. Gregory, which contains only the Prefaces, the Canon, and the Collects, Secrets, and Postcommunions. All the rest was transmitted by Tradition, and varied in the several Churches. The two now fixed in this Missal were chosen from out of the variety of Prayers thus handed down. These two Prayers are always said, even when the Prayer of Peace is omitted.

The first of these begins thus: *Domine Jesu Christe, Fili Dei vivi, qui ex voluntate Patris, cooperante Spiritu Sancto, per mortem tuam mundum vivificasti. ...* Lo! in the death of Our Lord, the whole Blessed Trinity acts; the Father wills it, the Holy Ghost co-operates and assists the Sacred humanity of Our Lord in the voluntary Offering that He makes of Himself. But let us continue the Prayer: *libera me per hoc Sacrosanctum Corpus et sanguinem tuum, ab omnibus iniquitatibus meis, et universis malis.* The first thing we ought to desire, when approaching Holy Communion, is that our sins

may disappear; and as we have not the present moment alone in view, we moreover beg to be freed from all evils, adding this petition regarding the future: *et fac me tuis semper inhaerere mandatis et a Te numquam separari permittas. Qui cum eodem Deo Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivis et regnas Deus in saecula saeculorum. Amen.* Here three things are begged by us, of the God who is coming unto us in the holy Communion: first, that we may be delivered from our sins; then, that we may ever adhere closely to his commandments; and finally, that He would never allow us to be separated from Him.

Let us now pass on to the third Prayer: *Perceptio Corporis tui, Domine Jesu Christe, quod ego indignus sumere praesumo, non mihi proveniat in iudicium et condemnationem.* This is in allusion to the words of St. Paul about the Holy Communion, when he says, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians: *qui enim manducat et bibit indigne, iudicium sibi manducat et bibit* (1 Corinth. xi. 29) (For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself.) The Prayer terminates with these words: *sed pro tuae pietate prosit mihi ad tutamentum mentis et corporis, et ad medelam percipiendam. Qui vivis et regnas* (For the mind and body of your loving kindness, may it become a safeguard and an effective remedy to be received. Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever, Amen.) This Prayer can very appropriately be used by the faithful when about to communicate.

These Prayers being ended, the Priest says the following words, which are a free rendering of Psalm cxv: *Panem coelestem accipiam, et nomen Domini,*

*invocabo* (I will call upon heaven, and I will take the bread of heaven in the name of the Lord). Holy Church never loses an opportunity of drawing from the Psalms; because she there finds the true source, model, and type of Prayer.

Having pronounced these words, the Priest takes up in his left hand, the two portions of the host, beneath which he holds the Paten; and, striking his breast three times, he says: *Domine, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum; sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea* (Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof ; but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.) These were the words addressed by the Centurion to our Lord, who was coming to heal his servant. Once again let us repeat, Holy Church is ever showing how she possesses the happy secret of choosing the loveliest passages of Sacred Scripture, to place in the Holy Mass; as it were enchasing them there, like priceless diamonds! We likewise say *Domine non sum dignus* (Lord, I am not worthy.) . . . In our case, it is not for our servant that we beg a cure; it is our own poor soul craving help for herself, and making use of these words as a last appeal to God. We sorely need to be cured; and the nearer we approach the Lord who alone can cure us, the greater should be our confidence in asking. Assuredly nothing can be so certain and manifest, as our unworthiness; but, on the other hand, who is so powerful as the Lord. There is nothing for us, but to appeal to Him, and crave with true humility: *sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea*. Yea, say but one word, and my soul shall be healed!

## COMMUNION.

After this act of Humility the Priest disposes himself to make his Communion; signing himself, therefore, in the form of a cross with the Host, which he holds in his right hand, he says: *Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam meam in vitam aeternam. Amen.* Let us observe the words, *in vitam aeternam*, unto Life Eternal. The Priest speaks as if he were to communicate but once only in his life. One communion would of itself be sufficient to preserve our soul unto Life Eternal, for such is the intrinsic efficacy of this Divine Sacrament, provided for our wants by God. Of this truth Our Lord has vouchsafed to give occasional examples.

Having communicated, the Priest pauses a moment in recollection, and then uncovering the Chalice, he puts therein the small particles of the Host, which may have adhered to the Corporal and Paten; whilst doing so he says these words: *Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quae retribuit mihi? Calicem salutaris accipiam, et nomen Domini invocabo.* What return shall I make to the Lord, for all He hath rendered to me? I will take the Chalice of Salvation and will call on the name of the Lord. These words are culled from Psalm cxv; in speaking here of the Chalice, *Calicem Salutaris*, David had no common kind of drink in view; the prophetic phrase here stands out clearly; one already catches a glimpse of man to be saved by a potion with which none other may compare, a potion which is no other than the very Blood of his Saviour. - Then the Priest adds: *Laudans invocabo Dominum, et ab inimicis meis salvus ero.* Now, will I praise the Lord, for my tongue

is now fitted for his praise, by reason of the gifts He has given me; and being delivered from mine enemies, I shall have nothing more to fear, He then takes the Chalice in his right hand and making the sign of the cross with the Chalice itself, says: *Sanguis Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam meam in vitam aeternam. Amen.* Then he receives the Precious Blood as well as the Particle which he mingled therewith at the moment. when he was addressing his wish of peace to the people.

This is now the proper time for communicating the faithful, if any approach to receive; if not, the Priest at once purifies the Chalice. The Server pours a little wine into the Chalice which is presented to him by the Priest, who says: *Quod ore sumpsimus, Domine, pura mente capiamus. Et de munere temporali fiat nobis remedium sempiternum* (What we have received, O Lord, with a pure mind, may it become to us an eternal remedy). These words are very ancient, as may be seen by noticing the Latin itself, which is very fine, quite classic, in fact. Remark the expression, *munere temporali*, this is said because Communion belongs to time. God is Eternal, it is true, and he gives himself in Communion; but nevertheless, this Communion itself takes place on a certain day, and at a determined hour and moment: hence it is truly a temporal Gift. But by means of this very Gift, our Lord achieves the union of the soul with himself; and as he is Strength Itself, he turns this Singular Act of His into a Remedy, the energising faculty of which, should last for ever, and thus is the soul cured.

Then, a second time, the Priest has wine put into the

Chalice, by the Server; but on this occasion, water is mingled with it; he purifies his fingers at this moment, and thenceforth he can disjoin them. Whilst these things are being done, the Priest says: *Corpus tuum Domine, quod sumpsi, et sanguis quem potavi adhereat visceribus meis, et praesta: ut in me non remaneat scelerum macula, quem pura et sancta refecerunt sacramenta, Qui vivis et regnas in saecula saeculorum. Amen* (May Thy Body, Lord, which I have received, and the blood which I have drunk, cleave to my body, and grant that no trace of sin be found in me, through whom these pure and holy mysteries have renewed the sacraments. Who livest and reignest, God, world without end. Amen.) This Prayer, like the preceding, is also very fine and is certainly very ancient: both of them, in fact, as well as the Prayer of Peace, must be dated from the first ages. At the first Ablution the Priest puts wine only, into the Chalice, out of respect for the Precious Blood, with which the Chalice is still moistened, and of which something may yet remain. For this reason, it is prescribed that, in case an accident should occur and this wine be spilled, it must be treated with the same respect as the Precious Blood itself, and whatever it has touched must be purified. Rubricians recommend the Priest to turn this wine all round the inside of the Chalice, so as to gather up with it, every smallest drop of the Precious Blood that might possibly be still remaining therein.

At the second Ablution, water is mingled with the wine, because the Blood of our Lord is no longer there. The Priest must always drink from the same side of the Chalice; and for this reason, a small cross is always engraven on its foot. Without this precaution,

the Priest would be liable, if he were not very attentive, to wipe off, with the purificatory, the Precious Blood still wet on the lip of the Chalice.

## **POSTCOMMUNION.**

All these things being completed, the Priest, after saying *Dominus vobiscum*, recites the final Prayer, which is now called the Postcommunion.

### Post Communion Prayer

**Almighty God,  
give us grace to cast away the works of darkness  
and to put on the armour of light  
now in the time of this mortal life  
in which your Son Jesus Christ  
came to us in great humility;  
that on the last day  
when he shall come again in his glorious majesty  
to judge the living and the dead,  
we may rise to the life immortal;  
through him who is alive and reigns  
with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. 1#**

### Post Communion

**O Lord our God,  
make us watchful and keep us faithful  
as we await the coming of your Son our Lord;  
that, when he shall appear,  
he may not find us sleeping in sin  
but active in his service  
and joyful in his praise;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord .**

This Prayer called the Postcommunion is an important one: in it, mention is always made of the

Communion just received. It is immediately followed by the ordinary good wish of the Priest to the people: *Dominus Vobiscum*. Then the Deacon, turning towards the assembly of the faithful, intones the following words:

### **ITE MISSA EST.**

These words are usually translated thus: "Go, the Mass is said."

The *Ite Missa est* having been said, the Priest turns again to the Altar, and bowing somewhat, with his hands joined, he says: *Placeat tibi Sancta Trinitas obsequium serotutis meae, et praesta ut Sacrificium, quod oculis tuae majestatis indignus obtuli, tibi sit acceptabile, mihi et omnibus, pro quibus illud obtuli, sit, te miserante, propitiabile. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.* (May our prayers in the service of the Holy Trinity be pleasing to Thee my soul, and grant that the Sacrifice which I, unworthy servant, have offered up in the sight of Thy Majesty be acceptable for me and for all those for whom I have offered it, through Thy mercy obtain forgiveness Through Christ our Lord . Amen!) This prayer is a kind of epitome made by the Priest, reminding the Holy Trinity of all he has just been doing, begging acceptance of this Sacrifice, and that it may be profitable to all those for whom he has been praying.

### **THE BLESSING.**

After this prayer, the Priest kisses the Altar, raises his eyes to heaven, stretches out his hands, and then bows before the Cross, saying: *Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus* (May Almighty God Bless You), then



turning round to the people, he adds, blessing them: *Pater, et Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus* (**In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit**); to which they answer: *Amen*.

(And the priest concludes: **Go in Peace to Love and Serve the Lord. Faithful: Thanks be to God.**)

## THE LAST GOSPEL.

The Blessing having been given, the Priest goes to the Gospel side of the Altar, and there reads the beginning of the Gospel according to St. John.

When the Priest comes to these words of the Gospel of St. John: *Et verbum caro factum est* (**And the Word was made flesh**), he genuflects in honour of the annihilation of the Word made flesh, who emptied Himself, taking the form of a Servant (Philipp. ii. 7).

The Gospel being ended, the Priest comes down from the Altar, after bowing to the Cross; and as he retires, he recites the Canticle *Benedicite*, together with the other Prayers of Thanksgiving marked in the Missal.

## Benedicite

(**Benedicite Omnia Opera Domini and Official Translation as used in the Roman Catholic Office of Lauds at Sundays and Feasts**)

**BENEDICITE, omnia opera Domini, Domino; laudate et superexaltate eum in saecula.**

**BENEDICITE, caeli, Domino, benedicite, angeli Domini, Domino.**

**BENEDICITE**, aquae omnes, quae super caelos sunt, Domino, benedicat omnis virtutis Domino.

**BENEDICITE**, sol et luna, Domino, benedicite, stellae caeli, Domino.

**BENEDICITE**, omnis imber et ros, Domino, benedicite, omnes venti, Domino.

**BENEDICITE**, ignis et aestus, Domino, benedicite, frigus et aestus, Domino.

**BENEDICITE**, rores et pruina, Domino, benedicite, gelu et frigus, Domino.

**BENEDICITE**, glacies et nives, Domino, benedicite, noctes et dies, Domino.

**BENEDICITE**, lux et tenebrae, Domino, benedicite, fulgura et nubes, Domino.

**BENEDICAT** terra Dominum: laudet et superexaltet eum in saecula.

**BENEDICITE**, montes et colles, Domino, benedicite, universa germinantia in terra, Domino.

**BENEDICITE**, maria et flumina, Domino, benedicite, fontes, Domino.

**BENEDICITE**, cete, et omnia, quae moventur in aquis, Domino, benedicite, omnes volucres caeli, Domino.

**BENEDICITE**, omnes bestiae et pecora, Domino, benedicite, filii hominum, Domino.

**BENEDICITE**, Israel, Domino, laudate et superexaltate eum in saecula.

**BENEDICITE, sacerdotes Domini, Domino, benedicite, servi Domini, Domino.**

**BENEDICITE, spiritus et animae iustorum, Domino, benedicite, sancti et humiles corde, Domino.**

**BENEDICITE, Anania, Azaria, Misael, Domino, laudate et superexaltate eum in saecula.**

**BENEDICAMUS Patrem et Filium cum Sancto Spiritu; laudemus et superexaltemus eum in saecula.**

**BENEDICTUS es in firmamento caeli et laudabilis et gloriosus in saecula.  
Amen."**

**English**

**"BLESS the Lord all ye heavens; bless the Lord all ye angels of the Lord.**

**BLESS the Lord all ye waters that are above the heavens; let all powers bless the Lord.**

**BLESS the Lord, ye sun and moon; stars of heaven, bless the Lord.**

**BLESS the Lord, every shower and dew. All ye winds, bless the Lord.**

**BLESS the Lord, ye fire and heat; cold and chill, bless ye the Lord.**

**BLESS the Lord, dews and hoar frosts; frost and cold, bless the Lord.**

**BLESS the Lord, ice and snow; nights and days, bless the Lord.**

**BLESS the Lord, light and darkness; lightning and clouds, bless the Lord.**

**LET the earth bless the Lord; let it praise and exalt Him above all forever.**

**BLESS the Lord, ye mountains and hills; everything growing from the earth, bless the Lord.**

**BLESS the Lord, seas and rivers; fountains, bless the Lord.**

**BLESS the Lord, ye whales and all that move in the waters; all you fowls of the air, bless the Lord.**

**BLESS the Lord, all ye beasts and cattle; sons of men, bless the Lord.**

**BLESS the Lord, Israel; praise and exalt Him above all for ever.**

**BLESS the Lord, priests of the Lord, servants of the Lord, bless the Lord.**

**BLESS the Lord, spirits and souls of the just; holy men of humble heart, bless the Lord.**

**BLESS the Lord, Ananias, Azaria, and Misael; praise and exalt Him above all for ever.**

**LET us bless the Father and the Son, with the Holy Spirit; let us praise and exalt Him above all for ever.**

**BLESSED art Thou, Lord, in the firmament of heaven; and worthy of praise, and glorious above all for ever.  
Amen.**

**THANKSGIVING AFTER MASS**

**PRAYER OF SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS**

**I give you thanks,  
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,  
who have been pleased to nourish me,  
a sinner and your unworthy servant,  
with the precious Body and Blood**

of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ:  
 this through no merits of mine,  
 but due solely to the graciousness of your mercy.

And I pray that this Holy Communion  
 may not be for me an offense to be punished,  
 but a saving plea for forgiveness.  
 May it be for me the armor of faith,  
 and the shield of good will.  
 May it cancel my faults,  
 destroy concupiscence and carnal passion,  
 increase charity and patience, humility and obedience  
 and all the virtues,  
 may it be a firm defense against the snares of all my  
 enemies,  
 both visible and invisible,  
 the complete calming of my impulses,  
 both of the flesh and of the spirit,  
 a firm adherence to you, the one true God,  
 and the joyful completion of my life's course.

And I beseech you to lead me, a sinner,  
 to that banquet beyond all telling,  
 where with your Son and the Holy Spirit  
 you are the true light of your Saints,  
 fullness of satisfied desire, eternal gladness,  
 consummate delight and perfect happiness.  
 Through Christ our Lord.  
 Amen.

#### PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.  
 Body of Christ, save me.  
 Blood of Christ, embolden me.  
 Water from the side of Christ, wash me.  
 Passion of Christ, strengthen me.  
 O good Jesus, hear me.  
 Within your wounds hide me.  
 Never permit me to be parted from you.  
 From the evil Enemy defend me.

At the hour of my death call me  
 and bid me come to you,  
 that with your Saints I may praise you  
 for age upon age.  
 Amen.

#### PRAYER OF SELF-OFFERING

Receive, Lord, my entire freedom.  
 Accept the whole of my memory,  
 my intellect and my will.  
 Whatever I have or possess,  
 it was you who gave it to me;  
 I restore it to you in full,  
 and I surrender it completely  
 to the guidance of your will.  
 Give me only love of you  
 together with your grace,  
 and I am rich enough  
 and ask for nothing more.  
 Amen.

#### PRAYER TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST CRUCIFIED

Behold, O good and loving Jesus,  
 that I cast myself on my knees before you  
 and, with the greatest fervor of spirit,  
 I pray and beseech you to instill into my heart  
 ardent sentiments of faith, hope and charity,  
 with true repentance for my sins  
 and a most firm purpose of amendment.  
 With deep affection and sorrow  
 I ponder intimately  
 and contemplate in my mind your five wounds,  
 having before my eyes what the prophet David  
 had already put in your mouth about yourself,  
 O good Jesus:  
 They have pierced my hands and my feet;  
 they have numbered all my bones (Ps 21: 17-18).

#### THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

Attributed to Pope Clement XI

I believe, O Lord, but may I believe more firmly;  
 I hope, but may I hope more securely;  
 I love, but may I love more ardently;  
 I sorrow, but may I sorrow more deeply.  
 I adore you as my first beginning;  
 I long for you as my last end;  
 I praise you as my constant benefactor;  
 I invoke you as my gracious protector.

By your wisdom direct me,  
 by your righteousness restrain me,  
 by your indulgence console me,  
 by your power protect me.

I offer you, Lord, my thoughts to be directed to you,  
 my words, to be about you,  
 my deeds, to respect your will,  
 my trials, to be endured for you.

I will whatever you will,  
 I will it because you will it,  
 I will it in the way you will it,  
 I will it for as long as you will it.

Lord, enlighten my understanding, I pray:  
 arouse my will,  
 cleanse my heart,  
 sanctify my soul.

May I weep for past sins,  
 repel future temptations,  
 correct evil inclinations,  
 nurture appropriate virtues.

Give me, good God,  
 love for you, hatred for myself,  
 zeal for my neighbor,  
 contempt for the world.

May I strive to obey superiors,  
to help those dependent on me,  
to have care for my friends,  
forgiveness for my enemies.

May I conquer sensuality by austerity,  
avarice by generosity,  
anger by gentleness,  
lukewarmness by fervor.

Render me prudent in planning,  
steadfast in dangers,  
patient in adversity,  
humble in prosperity.

Make me, O Lord, attentive at prayer,  
moderate at meals,  
diligent in work,  
steadfast in intent.

May I be careful to maintain interior innocence,  
outward modesty,  
exemplary behavior,  
a regular life.

May I be always watchful in subduing nature,  
in nourishing grace,  
in observing your law,  
in winning salvation.

May I learn from you  
how precarious are earthly things,  
how great divine things,  
how fleeting is time,  
how lasting things eternal.

Grant that I may prepare for death,  
fear judgment,  
flee hell,  
gain paradise.  
Through Christ our Lord.



Amen.

PRAYERS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

O Mary, Virgin and Mother most holy,  
 behold, I have received your most dear Son,  
 whom you conceived in your immaculate womb,  
 brought forth, nursed and embraced most tenderly.

Behold him at whose sight  
 you used to rejoice and be filled with all delight;  
 him whom, humbly and lovingly,  
 once again I present  
 and offer him to you  
 to be clasped in your arms,  
 to be loved by your heart,  
 and to be offered up to the Most Holy Trinity  
 as the supreme worship of adoration,  
 for your own honor and glory  
 and for my needs and for those of the whole world.

I ask you therefore, most loving Mother:  
 entreat for me the forgiveness of all my sins  
 and, in abundant measure, the grace  
 of serving him in the future more faithfully,  
 and at the last, final grace,  
 so that with you I may praise him  
 for all the ages of ages.

Amen.

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you;  
 blessed are you among women,  
 and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.  
 Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
 pray for us sinners  
 now and at the hour of our death.

Amen."

*Explanation of the Prayers and Ceremonies of Holy  
 Mass, Taken from Notes Made at the Conferences of*

*Dom Prosper Gueranger, Abbot of Solesmes.  
(1805 - 1875), Translated from the French by Rev.  
Dom Laurence Shephers, (1825 - 1885) Monk of the  
English Benedictine Congregation, Abridged (with  
Additions of Scriptures and Prayers) by Marilyn  
Hughes, 2015, for 'The Shining Ocean'*

### Part III - Prayer

*From St. Thomas Aquinas*

“O Godhead hid, devoutly I adore Thee, Who truly  
art within the forms before me; To Thee my heart I  
bow with bended knee, As failing quite in  
contemplating Thee.  
Jesu, eternal Shepherd! hear our cry; Increase  
the faith of all whose souls on Thee rely.  
Sight, touch, and taste in Thee are each deceived; The  
ear alone most safely is believed: I believe all the Son  
of God has spoken, Than truth's own word there is no  
truer token.  
Ave Jesu, Pastor Fidélium; Adáuge fidem ómnium in  
te credéntium. (Hail Jesus, the faithful shepherd; Do also  
increase the faith of believers of all hope in thee.)  
God only on the cross lay hid from view; But here lies  
hid at once the manhood too; And I, in both  
professing my belief, Make the same prayer as the  
repentant thief.  
Ave Jesu, Pastor Fidélium; Adáuge fidem ómnium in

te credéntium.

Thy wounds, as Thomas saw, I do not see; Yet Thee confess my Lord and God to be; Make me believe Thee evermore and more; In Thee my hope, in Thee my love to store.

Ave Jesu, Pastor Fidélium; Adáuge fidem ómnium in te credéntium.

O Thou memorial of our Lord's own dying! O living bread, to mortals life supplying! Make Thou my soulhenceforth on Thee to live, Ever a taste of heavenly sweetness give.

Ave Jesu, Pastor Fidélium; Adáuge fidem ómnium in te credéntium.

O loving Pelican! O Jesus Lord! Unclean I am, but cleanse me in Thy Blood! Of which a single drop, for sinners split, Can purge the entire world from all its guilt.

Ave Jesu, Pastor Fidélium; Adáuge fidem ómnium in te credéntium.

Jesus, whom, for the present, veil'd I see, What I so thirst for, oh! vouchsafe to me; That I may see Thy countenance unfolding, And may be blest Thy glory in beholding.

Ave Jesu, Pastor Fidélium; Adáuge fidem ómnium in te credéntium.

*St. Thomas Aquinas*

*From St. Alphonsus Liguori*

“My crucified Love, my dear Jesus! I believe in Thee, and confess Thee to be the true Son of God and my Saviour. I adore Thee from the abyss of my own nothingness, and I thank Thee for the death Thou didst suffer for me, that I might obtain the life of divine grace. My beloved Redeemer, to Thee I owe all my salvation. Through Thee I have hitherto escaped hell; through Thee have I received the pardon of my sins. But I am so ungrateful, that, instead of loving Thee, I have repeated my offenses against Thee. I deserve to be condemned, so as not to be able to love Thee any more: but no, my Jesus, punish me in any other way, but not in this. If I have not loved Thee in times past, I love Thee now; and I desire nothing but to love Thee with all my heart. But without Thy help I can do nothing. Since Thou dost command me to love Thee, give me also the strength to fulfil this Thy sweet and loving precept. Thou hast promised to grant all that we ask of Thee: You shall ask whatever you will and it shall be done unto you. Confiding, then, in this promise, my dear Jesus, I ask, first of all, pardon of all my sins; and I repent, above all things, because I have offended Thee, O Infinite Goodness! I ask for holy perseverance in Thy grace till my death. But, above all, I ask for the gift of Thy holy love. Ah, my Jesus, my Hope, my Love, my All, inflame me with that love which Thou didst come on earth to enkindle! "Tui amoris me ignem accende." For this end, make me always live in conformity with Thy holy will. Enlighten me, that I may understand more and more how worthy Thou art of our love, and that I may know the immense love Thou hast borne me, especially in giving Thy life for me. Grant, then, that I

may love Thee with all my heart, and may love Thee always, and never cease to beg of Thee the grace to love Thee in this life; that, living always and dying in Thy love, I may come one day to love Thee with all my strength in heaven, never to leave off loving Thee for all eternity.

O Mother of beautiful love, my advocate and refuge, Mary, who art of all creatures the most beautiful, the most loving, and the most beloved of God, and whose only desire it is to see him loved! Ah, by the love thou bearest to Jesus Christ, pray for me, and obtain for me the grace to love him always, and with all my heart! This I ask and hope for from thee. Amen."

*St. Alphonsus Liguori, Prayer to Obtain the Holy  
Love of Jesus Christ*

*From St. Francis of Assisi*

"Most high, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me, Lord, a correct faith, a certain hope, a perfect charity, sense and knowledge, so that I may carry out Your holy and true command . . .

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.

All-powerful, most holy, most high, and supreme God Holy and just Father; Lord, King of heaven and earth, we thank You for Yourself for through Your holy will and through Your only Son with the Holy Spirit You have created all things spiritual and corporal and, having made us in Your own image and likeness, You placed us in paradise. And through our own fault we have fallen. And we thank You for as through Your Son You created us so also, through Your holy love, with which You loved us You brought about His birth as true God and true man by the glorious, ever-virgin, most blessed, holy Mary and You willed to redeem us captives through His cross and blood and death. And we thank You for Your Son Himself will come again in the glory of His majesty to send the wicked ones who have not done penance and who have not known You into the eternal fire, and to say to all those who have known You and have adored You and have served You in penance: 'Come, you blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom, which has been prepared for you from the beginning of the world.' And because all of us wretches and sinners are not worthy to pronounce Your name, we humbly ask that our Lord Jesus Christ Your beloved Son in whom You were well pleased together with the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, give You thanks as it pleases You and Him for everything, Who always satisfies You in everything through Whom You have done such great things for us. Alleluia! And through Your love, we humbly beg the glorious Mother, the most blessed Mary ever-Virgin, Blessed Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, and all the blessed choirs of seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominations, principalities,

powers, virtues, angels, archangels, blessed John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, Peter, Paul, and the blessed patriarchs, prophets, the Innocents, apostles, evangelists, disciples, martyrs, confessors, virgins, the blessed Elijah and Henoah, and all the saints who were, who will be, and who are to give You thanks for these things as it pleases You, the supreme and true God eternal and living with Your most beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, world without end. Amen. Alleluia . . .

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; Where there is injury, pardon; Where there is doubt, faith; Where there is despair, hope; Where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life . . .

Hail, Queen Wisdom, may the Lord protect you with your sister, holy pure Simplicity. Lady, holy Poverty, may the Lord protect you with your sister, holy Humility. Lady, holy Charity, may the Lord protect you with your sister, holy Obedience. O most holy Virtues, may the Lord protect all of you, from Whom you come and proceed. There is surely no one in the entire world who can possess any one of you unless he dies [to himself] first. Whoever possesses one and does not offend the others, possesses all. And whoever offends one does not possess any and

offends all. And each one destroys vices and sins. Holy Wisdom destroys Satan and all his subtlety. Pure holy Simplicity destroys all the wisdom of this world and the wisdom of the body. Holy Poverty destroys the desire of riches and avarice and the cares of this world. Holy Humility destroys pride and all the people who are in the world and all things that belong to the world. Holy Charity destroys every temptation of the devil and of the flesh and every carnal fear. Holy Obedience destroys every wish of the body and of the flesh and binds its mortified body to obedience of the Spirit and to obedience of one's brother and [the one who possesses her] is subject and submissive to all persons in the world and not to many only but even to all beasts and wild animals so that they may do whatever they want with him inasmuch as it has been given to them from above by the Lord . . .

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 the almighty King.  
 You, holy Father, are King of the heaven and earth.  
 You are Three and One,  
 God above all gods.  
 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 beauty,  
You are gentleness,  
You are security,  
You are rest,  
You are joy.  
You are our hope and happiness,  
You are justice and moderation,  
You are all our riches,  
You are beauty,  
You are gentleness,  
You are our protector,  
You are our guardian and defender.  
You are strength,  
You are consolation,  
You are our hope,  
You are our faith,  
You are our charity,  
You are all our sweetness,  
You are our eternal life,  
great and admirable Lord,  
God almighty,  
merciful Savior.”

*St. Francis of Assisi*

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### The Heights and Depths of Mystical Experiences



## Teaching

# The Graces of Interior Prayer

Fr. Augustin Poulain, S.J.

(1836 - 1919)

Translated by Lenore L. Yorke Smith,

(? - 1921)

Abridged (with Additions of Scriptures and Prayers)  
by Marilyn Hughes, 2015, for 'The Shining Ocean'

## Contents

### I Principal Definitions

II Of the Four Degrees of Ordinary Prayer and of the  
Last Two in Particular

III The Various Kinds of Mystical Graces

IV Historical Explanation of the Word on contemplation

V First Fundamental Character of the Mystic Union:

VI Second Second Fundamental Character of the

Mystic Union: The Interior Possession of God:

The Manner in Which it is Felt

VII The Mystic Union: Its Ten Subsidiary Characters.

VIII The Fourth and Fifth Characters of the Mystic

Union

- IX The Sixth Character of the Mystic Union
- X The Seventh and Eighth Characters of the Mystic Union
- XI The Ninth Character of the Mystic Union
- XII The Tenth Character of the Mystic Union
- XIII The Eleventh Character of the Mystic Union
- XIV Twelfth Characteristic of the Mystic Union: The Ligature

A Study of Each of the Degrees of the Mystic Union Separately

- XV The Two Nights of the Soul, the Borderland of the Mystic State
- XVI Further Details Regarding the Prayer of Quiet (the First Stage of the Mystic Union)
- XVII Details Regarding the Full Union (The Second Stage of the Mystic Union)
- XVIII Ecstasy (The Third Stage of the Mystic Union)
- XIX The Spiritual Marriage (Fourth and Last Stage of the Mystic Union)

### Revelations and Visions

- XXI Revelations And Visions

*Illusions to be avoided*

*Five Causes of Error and Absolutely False*

*Revelations**The Security of the Mystic Union, as compared  
with Revelations*Chapter XXII - XXIII Revelations and Visions  
(continued) Rules of Conduct**I Principal Definitions**

Before reviewing the various degrees of mental prayer, they must be divided into two main categories—the prayer termed ordinary, and mystic or extraordinary prayer. We apply the word mystic to those supernatural acts or states which our own industry is powerless to produce, even in a low degree, even momentarily. 2.—Explanation. There are other supernatural acts which can be the result of our own efforts. For instance, the man who wishes to make an act of contrition, hope or love of God, is sure to succeed if he corresponds to grace; and he can always do so. And it is the same with a host of meritorious actions: relieving the wants of the poor, self-mortification, prayer, etc. Preachers exhort all Christians to these acts; which would be an absurdity if they did not depend upon our own will. This does not prevent these acts from depending upon divine grace also; but this grace is never refused, because God desires to give us means of acquiring merit. So it is with an engine-driver on his locomotive—two actions are about to be combined. It rests with the man to start or to stop his engine by the turning of a

lever. But all that he does by this slight movement is to bring an enormous power into play – that of steam under high pressure. The motive-power lies, not in his feeble arm, but in the steam; but this latter is always at his disposal. 3.—On the other hand, there are many supernatural phenomena which always evade our endeavours. Strive as I may to make energetic acts of the will in order to prophesy, or to see God or my guardian angel or Satan; and nothing, absolutely nothing, will result unless God intervenes in a special manner. I shall not even, as the above definition says, succeed in a low degree or momentarily. This is what we call a mystic state. Ordinary prayer may be compared to the atmosphere that surrounds our globe. The birds move about in it at will. Thanks to its aid, they can rise above the earth, and they mount higher in proportion to the strength of their wing-beats. But this atmosphere has its limits. Above, lie those vast expanses that stretch away to the stars and beyond. Try as they may, they cannot penetrate thither, even by redoubling their efforts. The eagle is as powerless as the rest. God alone can transport them to this region; were He to do so, they would lie passive in His hand, there would be no further need to use their wings. They would have to discard their former methods of operation and adopt new ones. This upper region, where the wing no longer has any power, is a figure of the mystic state. It resembles it also by its peace, its silence. Far from the turmoil of earth we enter into a space empty of all created things. God dwells there alone. 4.—And so mystic theology becomes defined: it is the science of the study of the mystic states. 5.—Consequence. From

the above definition it follows that a supernatural state should not be described as mystic if it differs only in intensity or in duration from that which anyone can produce at will. 6.—By way of an application, let us put this question. Are we in the mystic state by the mere fact that we feel a sudden and very ardent fervour in our prayer? By no means. It is true that this fervour does not usually depend upon our own will. We cannot, alas! procure it at pleasure, or we should never suffer from aridity. But there is a part of the definition not yet verified. In order that such a state should be mystic, as has been said, it must not be procurable at will, even in a low degree, even momentarily. But we can all, when we choose, procure in a low degree, or momentarily, a sentiment of love for God; of devotion, that is to say. So that fervour and divine love do not necessarily belong to the mystic state. It is possible that it should be ordinary prayer, as to kind, even when the love becomes ardent. 7.—From this application we see the utility of the words “even in a low degree, even momentarily,” which I have inserted in the definition. They help us to a clear solution of certain difficulties. In introducing them into the definition, I have merely given expression, however, to an idea which was implied by all writers when they said that it is absolutely impossible to procure the mystic states for ourselves. 8.—The preceding definition is that which St. Teresa gives in a little treatise addressed, under the form of her Second Letter, to Father Rodrigo Alvarez. She begins to define the mystic states by employing the synonymous term of supernatural states of prayer: “Supernatural, — so I call that which no skill or

effort of ours, however much we labour, can attain to, though we should prepare ourselves for it, and that preparation must be of great service" (Relation, viii, 3, Life, p. 455). She shows elsewhere that she has this definition in mind when she says: "This is a thing supernatural, and which we cannot acquire with all the diligences we use" (Way of Perfection, ch. xxxi, p. 93). In her other works the saint describes the mystic states without first giving any general definition concerning them. 9.—We can make the above definition still more exact, and say: we give the name of mystic to supernatural states containing a knowledge of a kind that our own efforts and our own exertions could never succeed in producing.

We saw just now that love cannot effect a specific difference between ordinary prayer and the mystic state (see Suarez, *De Orat.*, Book II, ch. ix, No. 13). Even in Heaven it will not be of a new species, but only of a greater intensity. The difference, then, must be drawn from the kind of knowledge that we receive. If we read St. Teresa and other great mystic writers, we shall see that this is also their belief. 10.—Divers designations of the mystic states. We must be acquainted with these designations if we wish to read the old writers. These terms require explanation, for they include some abbreviations which have often led to misunderstandings. The names are as follows: 11.—1°. Supernatural states of prayer. This is the expression that St. Teresa makes use of. She is employing an abridged form of words here, in order to say: manifestly supernatural states. On the other hand, many of the old writers called the nonmystic



prayers: natural prayers. This is, again, an abbreviation, signifying: states that appear natural.

12.—Explanation. In ordinary prayer the acts are already supernatural and meritorious. But if faith did not teach me this, I should not be aware of it. Nothing suggests this fact to me. And so when I devoutly pronounce the name of Jesus, my faculties apparently produce a natural act only, one similar to that of the child who repeats its mother's name. In the mystic state, on the other hand, something shows us more or less clearly that God is intervening. To take a clear and simple case: at Lourdes, Bernadette has an apparition of the Blessed Virgin; and not only is the fact supernatural, but it is manifestly so. It is, therefore, a mystic fact. So, too, the term infused prayer signifies manifestly infused: that is to say, evidently supernatural.

13.—2°. Extraordinary states. This expression may be understood in two ways. It is often intended to signify that our faculties are operating in a new manner, which is unknown to them in the natural course of life. It is, then, the manner of operation that is styled extraordinary. And it is in the same sense that we speak of the ordinary and the extraordinary supernatural. The first is when the acts are apparently natural: to say an Ave Maria, for example. At other times the words "extraordinary state" are taken as synonymous with rare or infrequent, and it is often understood as being a question of rarity, not amongst the really pious, but amongst the generality of Christians. But whatever the standpoint from which we set out, this expression is regarded as synonymous with the mystic state.

14.—3°. Passive states. By this we merely wish to say

that we receive something from another source, and render count of it to ourselves. It is an abbreviation; in order properly to express the fact that our activity takes a part in this reception, we should have said *passivo-actif*. In a strictly passive state we should receive without doing anything at all. St. Thomas likewise says that our material senses, sight and hearing, are passive faculties (I, q. 78, a. 3); and yet they react. The word *passive* has another drawback: by itself it is vague, for it does not say what things are received, and these might be very various. But it becomes exact from the moment that we begin to regard it as a synonym for *mystic*, having previously defined this last word. The *passiveness* is so much the greater as the *mystic state* is higher, because God's part in it is then more accentuated. But the activity is augmented at the same time. So, on the other hand, ordinary prayer is described as acting. 15.—We must not confound *mystic* with *ascetic theology*. The last-named has an aim quite different to that of *mysticism*. It is concerned with the virtues. It points out their nature, their kind, the means for their acquirement, the obstacles, the exaggerations, or the counterfeits to which they are liable, etc. Their point of contact with *mysticism* is this: that both alike treat of prayer. But *ascetic theology* confines itself by agreement to the study of the ordinary ways of prayer; that is to say, the prayer that depends, like the virtues, upon man's own exertions. A great confusion of ideas is consequently involved when *The Imitation* is referred to as a *mystical work*. No; it is, first and foremost, an *ascetic work*. It is true that good Catholic writers have sometimes used the word *mystic* as signifying *ascetic*.

But we should be prevented from doing this for the future by the following reasons: 1° that we should be perpetuating an ambiguity. The word ascetic is clear and exact. Why, then, substitute for it another which is equivocal? 2° The word mystic cannot be justified if it is employed in the sense of ascetic. For it supposes a science which contains an element of mystery. Now, there is none in the teaching of abnegation and humility. Is it desired to indicate that it is a question of the mysterious action of grace? But in that case, dogmatic theology should also take the name of mystic. So, too, there are writers who confound the words mystic and seraphic. If a poem speaks of divine love, they describe it as mystic. But why mix up such different ideas? 16.—The word mystic is much used by modern literary men in many senses; and these all differ from the true sense given above. It is not always easy to know what they mean to imply by their use of the term, for they omit to give any definition; but the following appears to be deducible from their vague descriptions. They call a man a mystic 1° when he is strongly enamoured of any ideal, human or divine; 2° when he can give no clear explanation of the exalted grounds of his love. If he is called a mystic, it is because of this mystery, of this obscurity, of this intuitive and uncommunicable knowledge. To sum up, the name of mystic is most commonly given to anyone who is at the same time enthusiastic and obscure, not living like all the rest of the world, taking dreams for realities. On this principle it would be applicable to an enigmatic writer, a Utopian, preaching a social or aesthetic creed, etc. The rationalistic school of Cousin regarded

Christians as mystics because of their acceptance of the supernatural. This change of names enabled him to attack Christianity without doing so too apparently. Nearer to our own days, many philosophers class indiscriminately as mystics all ascetic Christians, Buddhists, and Moslems when they display an ardent religious spirit and a desire for union with the Supreme Being. What significations for one single word! In this book I shall take the word mystic in the restricted sense in which St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross employ it. It is the one in most common use in the Church.

## **Chapter II Of the Four Degrees of Ordinary Prayer and of the Last Two in Particular**

1. — In ordinary prayer there are four degrees: 1° vocal prayer, which is a recitation; 2° meditation, also called methodical or discursive prayer. This last term indicates a chain of quite distinct reflections or arguments. We can include in this degree meditated readings and the slow recitation of a vocal prayer, accompanied by some reflections which help us to penetrate its meaning; 3° affective prayer; 4° the prayer of simple regard or of simplicity. I shall say nothing of the first two degrees. They are outside my subject, and are explained at great length in a number of excellent treatises with which the reader is familiar, so that he will not wish me to traverse the same ground again. § 1. The Third and Fourth Degrees of Ordinary Prayer: Affective Prayer and the Prayer of Simplicity. Definition of these Two States. 2. — We call affective prayer that mental prayer in which the

affections are numerous or occupy much more space than the considerations and the arguments. Not that the considerations are absent (we must necessarily go on thinking), but they are less varied, less prolonged. In this degree we generally find as a foundation some dominant idea which does not, however, exclude a host of other secondary and less perceptible ideas. It is accompanied by very ardent affections. This degree differs from meditation, therefore, merely as from the greater to the less. It is a discourse, only less varied and less apparent and leaving more room for sentiments of love, praise, gratitude, respect, submission, contrition, etc., and also for practical resolutions. The deduction of truths is partly replaced by intuition. From the intellectual point of view the soul becomes simplified. This simplification may be greater or less. In a word, the degree is more or less marked and elevated according to the individual case.

3. — But the simplification can be carried farther still, and may extend, in a certain measure, to the will, which then becomes satisfied with very little variety in the affections. There is nothing to prevent them from being very ardent at times, but they are usually produced without many words. This is what we call the prayer of simplicity or of simple regard. It can be defined thus: a mental prayer where 1° intuition in a great measure replaces reasoning; 2° the affections and resolutions show little variety and are expressed in few words. When this state has reached its full development, not only do certain acts, of which I have just spoken, become rare, but the attempt to produce them results in a feeling of impotence and distaste. And it is then the same also with those

representations of the imagination which would aid other persons in their prayer. 4.—The preceding definition is primarily negative, because it consists in saying what it is that has in part disappeared: the discursive act and the variety of words. It will be well to complete it by describing its positive side thus: in the prayer of simplicity there is a thought or a sentiment that returns incessantly and easily (although with little or no development) amongst many other, thoughts, whether useful or no. This dominant thought does not go as far as to be continuous. It merely returns frequently and of its own accord. We may compare it to the strands which thread the pearls of a necklace, or the beads of a Rosary, and which are only visible here and there. Or, again, it is like the fragment of cork, that, earned away by the torrent, plunges ceaselessly, appears and disappears. The prayer of simple regard is really only a slow sequence of single glances cast upon one and the same object. This degree only differs from the preceding degrees as the greater differs from the less. The persistence of one principal idea, however, and the vivid impression that it produces, point as a rule to an increased action on God's part. 5.—An exaggerated picture of the prayer of simplicity has been drawn at times. It has been so described as to lead us to suppose that the intellect and the will continue inactive before a single idea; one showing, that is to say, neither interruptions nor the least modifications. In this case the multiplicity of acts would have disappeared entirely and during the whole time that the prayer lasted; whereas it has only diminished notably and for a certain time—long

enough to draw attention to it. The simplicity is approximate only and liable to interruption. We shall see that this is so, even in the mystic states. In the prayer of quiet, the principal act is often accompanied by other acts, though on different levels of consciousness; a crowd of little thoughts pass and repass though but half perceived. Those who appear to believe that the simplicity and the immobility are absolute, and last for a considerable time, forget to state whether they have ever met with such cases in practice, or if they have imagined them, a priori, in the study. For it would be a more extraordinary state than the mystic states themselves. Suarez considers it unlikely that there should not be a certain renewal of ideas, and especially of sentiments (*De Orat.*, Book II, ch. x, Nos. 12, 13). He concludes thus: "I think that it is in this sense only that contemplation can habitually be prolonged; but that it is very rare for the simple act to continue for long." Scaramelli, on the other hand, seems to consider that the absence of considerations has reached an extreme degree when he says: "To know truths by a simple glance of the soul, is a mode of knowledge above our human intelligence, whose property it is to seek after truth by reasoning ... it is a superhuman mode" (*Tr.* 2, Nos. 156, 69, 143). We can begin by replying that it is less a question here of seeking truth than of enjoying it. And then we shall see by examples that this state, stripped of all exaggerations, and as it actually exists in real life, is very human. Let us not invent chimerical states, and then substitute them for the real ones. Otherwise, in practice, our treatises will be useless. No one will be able to recognise his own state

in our descriptions. This exaggerated way of imagining the prayer of simple regard also leads to its being classed wrongly amongst the mystic states. For we are so struck by the exceptional character with which it is endowed, that we feel obliged to find it a place far above the modest prayer of meditation. 6.— Many writers include the prayer of simplicity in affective prayer, which they thus regard as exhibiting two degrees of elevation. And in this case, between them and us, it is a mere question of words. 7.— Before these two states could really constitute separate degrees of prayer, they must be capable of being prolonged for more than a few minutes at a time; they should continue, for instance, for an hour or more. For a very brief space, nothing is easier than for the mind to formulate ardent affections or to operate in a simple manner. Everybody can do it. It is on this account that these states, although requiring the co-operation of grace, are not called mystic (see the definition, ch. i, No. 1). We can express this reason differently, by saying that the name “mystic” has never been given to an exercise having the appearance of a purely natural operation. Now, this is the case with these degrees of prayer. 8.— Various names. The two states which we have just defined have sometimes been called the prayer of the heart, in order to indicate that the considerations do not predominate in them. I believe that the term affective prayer was created by Alvarez de Paz (*Opera*, Vol. III, *De Inquisitione pacis*, 1616). He devotes to this degree three hundred folio pages, full of pious aspirations. Some later writers have adopted this language. Others have employed different terms; others, again,



include in their classifications neither the name nor the thing. We see from this circumstance how slowly the science of prayer has come to distinguish the facts that it observes and to coin its own language. The term, prayer of simplicity, which is very clear, seems to have been invented by Bossuet. This state, again, has been called active recollection or active repose (as opposed to mystic or passive repose), active quietude (as opposed to true quietude, that which is understood in St. Teresa's sense, and which is quite different), active silence (as opposed to the passive prayer of silence), and, most frequently, ordinary or acquired contemplation. St. Francis of Sales called it the prayer of simple committal to God. This expression requires to be properly understood. It does not mean that we are to come to our prayer without preparation, doing nothing on our own side and committing to God the care of doing everything. But it supposes that God acts, and that we yield ourselves to this action, in spite of our natural tendency to prefer our own more restless action as being more pleasing to the natural faculties. 9.—All these different names given to the prayer of simplicity have led to an error on the part of certain writers; for they have supposed them to correspond to different degrees. But if we look closely at their descriptions, making abstraction from the names, we perceive that the differences which they point out bear upon insignificant shades only. At most, these might serve to distinguish variations in one and the same degree. The multitude of classifications merely embarrasses the mind instead of assisting it. Besides, a priori, it is easy to prove that ordinary prayer cannot comprise any general degrees

other than those enumerated. There are two cases only. Either we reason, and then it is meditation, or we do not reason, and then it is affective prayer or the prayer of simplicity. All must necessarily enter one or other of these categories. 10.—Transitions. The preceding states may be linked one with another and, again, with meditation by a series of insensible transitions; whereas in the simplification of acts there may be either more or less. It is a prejudice, then, to believe that there is a wall, as it were, erected between these simpler ways and the set methods of prayer. These last are not a prison from which we are forbidden to emerge. They are rather an open garden. We can remain in it if we like the regular walks, the ribbon-borders, where every plant has its own place. But these paths merge into woods, where those who are so inclined may wander in greater freedom, penetrating farther into the forest. St. Ignatius, at the conclusion of his stay at Manresa, wrote out a collection of methods; but he certainly meditated upon their subjects in a much simpler and higher manner than did those to whom he explained them later on. He kept to the spirit rather than to the letter. 11.—In respect of the diminution of the reasonings, the prayer of simplicity leads on by a gentle ascent to the mystic states. And these latter are really prayers of simple regard, although we give them another name in order to avoid confusion. And so we get evidence here of the law of continuity, a law that we must not take in too narrow a sense, and that we express in this way: *Natura non facit saltus* (Nature does not proceed by sudden bounds). It is true that in the mystic state we have a new gift, but we still find an

approximate continuity in this gift also. For it is usually granted only in a low degree to beginners. So that the transitions are gradual. 12. — Analogies. In the natural order we find conditions of soul that are analogous to the prayer of simplicity. The mother watching over her child's cradle thinks of him lovingly for hours together, but with interruptions, and she does this without any arguments. Two friends have not always new ideas to interchange. And yet they can remain in each other's society for long periods of time, enjoying the happiness of being together in tranquillity and silence. In the case of a child who is unhappy because he is separated from his family, the impression is intense and persistent, but without any reasonings; his grief is no less strong, however, so far from being so is it that he sometimes loses sleep and the health is affected. So, too, when a man falls in love, he thinks day and night of the object of his passion; but this thought, this sentiment, often shows no variety. It is always the same confused image, the same thought, happy or sad, that reappears, and each time that it presents itself he finds satisfaction in it without experiencing any need of change. Finally, the artist remains motionless before some beautiful spectacle in nature or wonderful Old Master. 13. — To sum up: in all great preoccupations or in strong enactments of sorrow, joy, or admiration, we get personal proof of this double fact to which we have just called attention in the prayer of simplicity — namely, that the idea or the memory by which we are impressed is not absolutely continuous, but only very frequent, and that when it reappears it is without any appreciable development.

14.—The examples just given, not only serve to convey a clear idea of the nature of the prayer of simplicity, but they show, *a priori*, that it must exist. This existence is clearly established by experience. But it will be as well to offer a further proof to those who decline to recognise anything between ordinary meditation and the mystic state. This is the argument. We have just proved the existence, in the natural order, of states of soul presenting exactly the same characteristics as those which we have taken as the definition of the prayer of simplicity. Only that the mind is occupied with earthly things instead of divine. Now, as grace works in accordance with the plan of nature, being content at first to elevate it secretly without changing its outward appearance, it follows that there should be quite similar states in the supernatural order.

15.—General aspect of the spiritual life. When these simplifications of the soul make their appearance during prayer, the same thing occurs with the other exercises of the interior life. The examination of conscience, for instance, takes place more intuitively, more rapidly, and by a single glance.

16.—Object of these prayers. They can be applied to all those subjects that used to offer themselves for meditation: God, Jesus Christ, His mysteries or interior states, the Blessed Virgin, the saints, or such truths as man's last end, our own nothingness, the vanity of all things, etc. (Bossuet, *loc. cit.*, 8, note).

17.—The prayer of simplicity, however, has often a tendency to simplify itself even with regard to its object, which thus at time becomes to a certain extent unique. The soul is then drawn to content herself with thinking of God or of His presence in a confused and

general manner. It is an affectionate remembrance of God. If this be consoling, the soul feels a sacred flame which burns on gently within her and takes the place of reasonings. This very special state, the one approaching most nearly to mystic states, is called the prayer of loving attention to God. It is important to note that, in this case, other subjects are not excluded; they are merely of a secondary importance. They are intertwined with another and a more persistent subject—the thought of God. This mingling will become still more evident in the prayer of quiet. This prayer of loving attention to God is nothing else than the exercise of the presence of God, so much recommended by all ascetical writers, only it has this peculiarity, that it is confused and with few or no reasonings. It is not a meditation upon the presence of God. The quietists exaggerated the simplicity of this state. They went too far also in supposing that all prayer of simple regard must have the confused thought of God for its object. This is one of its kinds only. Some good writers, such as Courbon, have perpetuated the same error in their classifications. Without actually saying so, or being aware of it, they reduced all prayer of simplicity to this one special variety. Any Christian truth can, however, be considered in this simple way. 18.—Use of the imagination. If we feel the need of employing it, nothing hinders our calling in its aid. But it will not then multiply imageries. The picture will usually be blurred and without details. In the course of the day it may even do us a service in the following manner. If in my morning prayer I have thought of one of Our Lord's virtues, contemplating such or such a scene in

His life, it will be sufficient to conjure up this picture amidst my various occupations, and I shall then not only remember Him, but also the virtue in question. This is a sweet and simple manner of prayer. 19.—Distractions. Distractions may occur in these states as in discursive prayer. It is a labour to repulse them. Yet, notwithstanding, these states have been called the prayer of repose; but this is merely an allusion to the diminution of reasoning. 20.—Efforts. The prayer of simplicity, then, requires efforts at times, especially in order to curtail distractions, just as this is so with the prayer of quiet itself. Everything depends upon the force with which the wind of grace blows. It is the same with meditation. When the vessel's sails are not unfurled, the oars must take their place. We see, therefore, that, compared with meditation, the prayer of simple regard is not what inertia and absence of effort are to labour, except occasionally and in appearance only; it is merely what uniformity is to variety. In both cases there is action, and energetic action at times. This is often present in intuition when it is well directed and rendered fruitful, just as it is in acts of reasoning. 21.—Sufferings. These states are produced, sometimes with consolations, sometimes with aridity (for this last case, see ch. xv). If there is aridity and the soul is unable to meditate, this inaction may be extremely painful. But the soul often suffers, even when the prayer of simplicity is partly consoling. For our own curiosity prefers a variety of ideas, our faculties feel the need of movement like children whom we cannot keep still. The imagination becomes irritated at not being called upon, and goes to seek its diversion elsewhere. And, finally, there is

the trial of having to fight against distractions. In the prayer of quiet, similar sufferings often occur, I will explain them with greater detail when dealing with this state later on. It is very important to realise that upon quitting the degree of meditation, we enter upon a path which is far from being strewn with roses only, as many people suppose. Crosses abound. If we are ignorant of this main truth, we shall quickly fall into anxieties and discouragement during our periods of aridity. And then we shall be tempted to abandon our prayer in virtue of such false principles as the following: "If God approved of my praying, or of my praying in any particular manner, He would give me proof of His approval by consolations." Or, "It is simply losing time to continue in such a purgatory, when I might develop my activities so well in another direction". We often constrain ourselves to continue in a friend's company, even when our subjects of conversation are exhausted. We ought not to depart from God because He seems to hide Himself. 22.— Question. How can we say that a state of aridity belongs rather to the prayer of simplicity than to the way of meditation? In both cases there are distractions and incapacity for reasoning; is it not the same thing, therefore? No. There is this difference, that in the prayer of simplicity there is one dominant thought which returns persistently (see No. 4). 23.— Fatigue. This varies from one person to another. It is less in proportion as the action of grace is greater. 24.— Various degrees of facility. All alike have not the same facility for affective prayer, and especially for the prayer of simple regard. For a few moments together, this latter is quite easy to any soul of good

will. For after painfully amassing considerations, the soul is inclined to enjoy them tranquilly, for a few minutes at any rate, and to content herself with a general and confused view of things. But it is especially important to inquire which are the persons who possess this facility for a longer time. The complexion of mind, the kind of occupations or of intellectual culture may dispose towards it, and then a merely ordinary supply of grace is sufficient. But at other times a stronger grace is required, on account of the obstacles presented by a certain type of mind, or of the great perfection to which it is approaching. Let us now come to the details. 25. — Sooner or later many persons arrive at this manner of prayer, and by a natural process, so to speak. When anyone has made twenty meditations upon death, for instance, the considerations to which he might apply himself upon this subject and all that arises from it, do not interest him any more; he is almost weary of them; or, rather, these considerations would be useless to him. They are present in his memory, and he embraces them at a glance. He comes at last to form general impressions. And if we take pleasure in these truths, they return easily to the mind; and this is one of the characteristics of the prayer of simplicity. It is the same also if we revert daily to two or three virtues, the need of which is more particularly felt. Or, again, we have formed a habit of connecting all our thoughts with some one saying, or central idea, such as the Passion or the Blessed Sacrament, and we rest in this thought without any great developments. So that, unless we possess a nature overflowing with activity, we come easily enough to the prayer of simple



regard, provided that we lend ourselves to it. St. J.-B. de la Salle, who gives a very good description of this state in his *Explication de la méthode d'Oraison* (Part II, ch. i, § 1), alludes to this progressive simplification of the soul when, at the conclusion of his explanations upon the "three different ways of applying ourselves to prayer by dwelling upon a mystery, such as the holy presence of God," he says: "They can be brought approximately to the three states of the spiritual life. Conversations by discourse and multiplied reasonings, to that of the beginners; some few reflections, persisted in for a long time, to that of the proficient (or the more advanced); and simple attention to that of the perfect." It is my conviction that many of those who practise mental prayer daily, come, at the end of several years, to the prayer of simplicity, although often without being aware of it.

26.—Let us now see who they are that arrive there fairly rapidly: 1°. Those who, like St. Teresa,‡ are endowed with but little memory or imagination. They must perforce be satisfied with small things, and they have no inclination to make any great efforts to acquire that with which nature has dowered them so sparingly. The prayer of simple regard, on the other hand, is very difficult for those in whom these two faculties are highly developed or who have a restless temperament. A flood of memories, images, and sensible emotions come to them. They find more pleasure in this variety than in a state which is peaceful and monotonous as the desert.

27.—2°. It is the same with unlettered, simple souls when they wish to pray mentally, instead of being satisfied with vocal prayers. They have no taste for high

considerations. Possessed of but few ideas, only to be nearer to God is happiness to them. It is sufficient for them to love Him. This is the prayer of Magdalen at Our Lord's feet. On the other hand, St. Teresa reproaches certain of her confessors, who were great preachers or learned theologians, with their tendency to employ their hours of prayer in composing real sermons, full of texts from Holy Scripture (Life, ch. xv). This tendency in certain preachers can be explained. Having the art of developing a subject and the habit of expounding the truths of religion with many considerations and much imagery, they find it easy and pleasant to act in the same manner during prayer. They continue preaching, but to themselves. Father Balthasar Alvarez knew this temptation to substitute study for prayer, and he dissuaded persons from it, saying: "If we do not emerge from this prayer with fresh thoughts, at least we possess more virtues and are on better terms with God" (Life, From the French of Louis du Pont, ch. xli). 28.-3°. Loving natures feel attracted towards all practices in which acts of love preponderate over acts of the understanding. And, moreover, the memory of the object love returns frequently of itself. 29.-4°. Women are generally inclined to a very simple form of mental prayer. St. J. F. de Chantal writes: "Our blessed Father used to say that women had not much capacity for lofty considerations; but we must, however, make all who enter religion begin with these considerations when they are not accustomed to this holy exercise, for that it is very important to impress the truths of religion firmly on their minds at the beginning" (Réponses sur le Coutumier, art. 24, Migne ed., col.

233). And, in fact, if we question women as to the subject of their prayer, we discover that everything is usually summed up in a few words. Instead of making long arguments, they have a happy facility for continuing for a long time under the impression of some one idea, and this is very profitable. It is true that in convents, the subject for the morning's meditation is read overnight. But when the hour of prayer comes, it often happens that the nuns do not succeed in developing it; at times, even, there is no inclination to make use of it at all. 30.—5°. In the Contemplative Orders, where much time is given to prayer, it very soon comes to be simplified. If a continued exercise of the understanding were necessary, the head would quickly become weary. 31.—St. Francis of Sales and St. J. F. de Chantal wished all their spiritual daughters to understand the prayer of simplicity and to practise it as far as possible. The results corresponded to this direction. St. J. F. de Chantal wrote: "The more I see, the more I am convinced that Our Lord leads nearly all the sisters of the Visitation to the prayer of simple union, a simple abiding in the presence of God" (*Réponses sur le Coutumier*, art. 24, translated in the *Life of St. J. F. de Chantal*, Bougaud, Vol. I, p. 446). And elsewhere: "The almost universal attraction of the sisters of the Visitation is a very simple attention to the presence of God, and I might well omit the almost, for I have remarked that all who apply themselves to prayer as they should, are drawn to it from the very first, and that all who perform their duty with regard to self-mortification and the exercise of the virtues, arrive there at last. Many are drawn to

it from the outset, and it seems as if God made use of this sole means in order to make us reach the goal and our soul's perfect union with Him. Finally, I hold that this manner of prayer is essential to our little Congregation; and that it is a great gift from God for which we should be infinitely grateful" (Letter to a Superior, ed. Plon, Vol. III, p. 337. Life by Mgr. Bougaud, ch. xviii). The saint says again: "Mgr. de Langres said that he considered that this attraction is so markedly the attraction of the daughters of the Visitation, that he did not think that anyone could really have the Visitation spirit if she was without this attraction to a happy and holy interior simplicity" (Œuvres, ed. Plon., 1875, Vol. II. Entretien 36, sur la fidélité à suivre l'attrait de la grâce pendant l'oraison). 32.—If, on the other hand, which God forbid, the Directors of a Community were prejudiced and had an aversion for this kind of prayer, the result would probably be that they would make it less common. This would not be so, I admit, if the persons concerned merely resisted the attraction in good faith and through obedience. They would then escape with the loss only of their peace of soul during the prolonged struggle. But we go beyond this as a rule. Not knowing that we are receiving a gift at God's hands, we take no interest in it, and become careless over the removal of the obstacles that it encounters in our lives. It is this negligence that God punishes by diminishing His graces. The director has been the occasion only; the real fault lies with us. 32 bis.—6°. The brevity of the prayer or other circumstances may have the effect of facilitating simple prayers—at certain moments, at any rate. Here are some

examples: (a) Those who make a short visit to the Blessed Sacrament do not, as a rule, think of going through any set meditation or of reciting a vocal prayer. They continue tranquilly and lovingly in the thought that God or Our Blessed Lord is there present. This is already the prayer of simple regard, although of short duration. We have not here the more complicated case of a daily half-hour or hour of prayer. (b) It is often the same during the thanksgiving after Communion, when the Mass has been preceded by mental prayer. For a certain fatigue has resulted, which tends to repose and justifies it. (c) Nuns who recite a Latin Office without understanding it can neither occupy their minds with what they are reading nor follow any other connected train of thought, but they often think of God in a confused way, and with love. This will be the prayer of simplicity. 33.—We have now said enough to show that our natural dispositions and mode of life have an influence upon the nature of our prayer. We shall not be surprised, therefore, to find that one person should have passed on at once to affective prayer, having had hardly any acquaintance with the prayer of meditation, and that another should have arrived at certain other degrees without having first gone through all those that were intermediary. 34.—In order to facilitate the practice of affective prayer, it is as well to do as St. Ignatius did, and to take as subjects for prayer, not the abstract virtues, but the historic facts that teach these virtues. When we meditate on any Mystery of Our Lord's life, it is easy to make the affections predominate by testifying our respect, love, gratitude or compassion to Our Saviour

or His Blessed Mother, and holding “colloquies” with them. We can also establish a certain order in the sentiments that we try to excite. To produce affections is really to make interior acts of certain virtues; we shall therefore draw up a list of virtues appropriate to our needs. We begin, for instance, by acts of faith, hope, or charity towards God and our neighbour. We then go on to contempt of self, resignation, zeal, love of regularity, etc.; or the four ends of the holy sacrifice of the Mass: adoration, thanksgiving, petitions for pardon and for graces. § 3. Advantages of these Prayers. Real or Apparent Drawbacks. 35.—The advantages of affective prayer. If we compare it with prayer in which the considerations predominate, we see that it is usually superior; for, all other things being equal, its effect upon the conduct is greater, and it leads more quickly to perfection. 1°. The difficulty arising in the practice of the virtues proceeds, as a rule, less from a want of knowledge than from a lack of faith, hope, or love. The will is weak; we must begin, therefore, by arousing its activity. 2°. And then the virtues are acquired by a repetition of their acts rather than by reflections; and, finally, these acts are more meritorious than those of the understanding. 35 bis.—3°. In this kind of prayer we not only throw off the inertia of the will, but we dwell on certain sentiments and develop them. Now, present-day psychologists have shown the great importance of feelings from the point of view of action. A mere idea is not usually sufficient to urge us to action. “Motor-ideas” (*idées-forces*) are ideas accompanied by one or more feelings. Example: The simple thought of death does not drive men to be converted, unless at the

same time they experience the terror of knowing it to be imminent. If we are overtaken by a feeling of slothfulness when we ought to rise in the morning or perform some tiresome duty, it is not sufficient to see that we are wrong; we remain inert. But if we are afraid of being reproved, we act at once without arguing the matter; and thus one feeling triumphs over another. This is understood in the Religious Orders; you find small rules with regard to supervision which may be rather irksome, but which prevent slackness. The fear of an admonition intensifies the feeling of duty. 4°. Union with God, wherein holiness lies, is, above all, a union of the will. A method in which the acts of the will are more numerous or more interior, leads most rapidly to the goal the soul's activity being less absorbed by the reason. We must not exaggerate this doctrine, however, by despising the considerations. For they are indispensable in order to excite the will, more especially in the case of a soul that is not yet penetrated with a horror of sin and has not understood that certain virtues, such as prompt obedience, mortification, meekness, and devotion, are essential. The motives for their practice must be insisted upon. If the acts of the will are the end, those of the understanding are the means. Prayer is a banquet, whence the soul derives her strength; but it is the understanding that serves up the viands. In order to reconcile these conflicting requirements, all we have to do is to avoid giving the considerations the principal part. 36.—The advantages of the prayer of simplicity. In order to judge whether it is superior to the preceding degrees, let us examine it from the

point of view of the three elements that it contains: knowledge, affections, and resolutions. The conclusion will be that it may be advantageous or the reverse, according to the individual case, and that it must not therefore be adopted blindly when we have the power of choice. 37.—From the point of view of knowledge, the prayer of simplicity is not always better than discursive prayer. If it is to have its full utility, the person must be instructed with regard to the duties of the spiritual life, habituated to their practice, and in actual dispositions to make use of what he has learned and to sanctify himself. If these conditions are fulfilled, a host of useful memories will come back to the mind during the prayer. The ideas are not really fewer, nor less deep than in meditation; but they present themselves in a simpler, more condensed, more intuitive form, and the need to translate them into words is less felt. It is just as a man, who is well versed in any science, takes in a crowd of facts at one glance. You would not call that an inferiority. This advantage does not accrue if the person is not instructed in the virtues, as happens with beginners. The mind finds nothing to gather up. And, on the other hand, as they make no effort to enter deeply into the subject of the meditation, they learn almost nothing during the time of prayer. We must not expect that God will make up for our deficiencies. For in this degree He does not usually intervene, like a professor, to teach us new truths. He is content to aid us, by means of ordinary grace, to remember acquired truths. And so, with those whose knowledge of spiritual things is not of a high order, these prayers will be a means of progress with regard



to the will, not with regard to instruction. 38.—But because these kinds of prayer afford less instruction than meditation, it does not follow that they are to be forbidden if God seems to be calling the soul to practise them. For it is very easy to give instruction outside the hours of prayer, by readings, sermons, and conversations. There will thus be certain hours for study, and others, again, in which the soul can give herself up to the Divine love. And the readings will also furnish useful material for the time of prayer. 89.—2°. Affections. Under this aspect the prayer of simplicity has the same advantages as affective prayer, and for the same reasons. 40.—3°. Resolutions and the practice of the virtues. From this point of view, the prayer of simplicity is as powerful as meditation, provided that the person is instructed and established in virtue. For it produces acts of the love of God. Now this love will incite the soul to abnegation. It would be gross ignorance to believe that we could stop short at fine sentiments. The true love of God shows itself by detachment from all that is not God: by detachment from our comforts and by devotion to others, detachment from the world's esteem, etc. These practical conclusions will be drawn spontaneously, so to speak, even during our prayers. For the sake of depreciating the prayer of simplicity, do not let us regard it as some fantastic thing in which we love God without perceiving or desiring the requirements of this love. Let us stick to the concrete. The word simplicity must not, as I have already said, be taken in its absolute sense. If the person is not well grounded in the necessity for abnegation, let him be instructed apart from his prayer, as in the case of

other things. 41. — First objection. Many writers do not make the above restriction when they speak of the prayer of simple regard, which they describe under the name of contemplation. They proclaim its absolute superiority over discursive prayer, and they are not, therefore, in full accord with you. 42. — Reply. The divergence is probably apparent only, and this may proceed from three causes:— 1°. Without drawing attention to it, these writers are studying this state from the philosophic standpoint; and then their thesis is correct. For they merely intend to say that intuition is superior to reason, and that a mode of knowledge resembling that of the angels is more perfect than that which is habitual to man. But what I, on the other hand, have looked at, is the practical side, which is the most useful: progress in the spiritual life, that is to say, 2°. Or, again, these writers rightly regard the prayer of simplicity as being, in certain respects, a preparation for mystic prayers. This is an advantage, but it does not follow that this state is always more fruitful than its predecessor. It will be so only if we are thoroughly acquainted with our road and if our goodwill is maintained and fortified. 3°. Finally these writers often imply that the simple regard is produced by a great abundance of light, and that the contrary occurs in discursive prayer. But it is not always so, and we can perfectly imagine that the reverse should be the case. In order to compare two different degrees, we must not take one in its state of light and warmth, and the other in its dark and cold state. 43.— There is a second objection to affective prayer, and to the prayer of simplicity in particular, and this one is quite a classic:

namely, that we waste our time, that we remain in a state of idleness. 44.—Reply. This is so in appearance only, and is due to superficial observation. We do exactly the same things as in meditation. The soul works, therefore, only more simply, more gently, less visibly at first sight, but the work done is no less real. Let us not confuse these prayers, which aim at the definite goal of our sanctification, with reverie. This latter is a state of relaxation of our energies, in which we abandon ourselves, like a ship without a rudder, to every current, whether of images or feelings. It results in nothing; it is simply repose. But let us study a case where the objection appears to have more force: that of the prayer of loving attention to God, which, as we have seen, is one special kind of the prayer of simplicity. Let us suppose that for some appreciable time—a quarter of an hour, for instance—this prayer is made without any difficulty or admixture of anything else, with the exception of a few distractions. We should then be content to love God without adding any other special acts, such as acts of humility, petitions, etc., and also without making any practical applications or receiving any light upon our conduct. This extreme case is probably not realisable, but we will imagine it. I say that, even then, it is not time lost, if, as I have supposed, we are sufficiently well-grounded in spiritual matters. In fact, in order to regulate our conduct satisfactorily outside the time of prayer, two things are necessary: to know what we ought to do in some particular case, and to have the will and the strength to carry it out. In the prayer of meditation we pursue both these ends simultaneously; but nothing hinders our separating

the two operations; and this is just what occurs in the state that we are now examining. We have, in part, relegated the instructions to some other time, and we are satisfied to give free play to the will by penetrating ourselves with the love of God, which must necessarily include general dispositions to self-devotion and sacrifice. Let us add that the vitality given to the will by the prayer of simplicity will not, perhaps, be perceived at once. So under the sun's action, a vast work of growth goes on in the meadows and forests; and yet all these hidden sources of life do their part slowly and in silence. All those million molecules of sap circulate like a crowd of workmen engaged in the construction of a house. So with the prayer of simplicity, the soul is a field exposed to the Divine Sun. The growth carried on is a silent one, but it is a real work. We shall see that something analogous, but more striking, occurs in the mystic state. 44 bis. — Since the above objection is unfounded, how can we explain its being so widespread, and why does it arise so readily to the mind? Here are some reasons. 1°. It is the result of a prejudice. We often imagine that work is identical with noise. But is the artist whose brush travels silently over the canvas less busy than the blacksmith who deafens us with his activity? We fancy that we are thinking and accomplishing a great deal when we are conscious of a wealth of words and of material images. But if this activity of the inferior order diminishes, as often happens when our prayer becomes higher, it is then more difficult to take note of our thoughts, and so we wrongly conclude that we have almost ceased to think and have sunk into a state of sloth. A certain

void is indeed produced, for particular things have diminished; but these are merely the gross auxiliaries of thought, the form that it has borrowed from the senses, and not thought itself. This latter has become more spiritual, but less easy of apprehension. A bottle seems empty when only filled with air; and so does the sky when it is clear and cloudless. And yet air is not nothingness. 2°. Here is a second prejudice: It is supposed that, in order to act in a holy manner, it is absolutely necessary to formulate very distinct resolutions in prayer. But many persons do not feel the need of this. All that is necessary is that they should develop general dispositions to generosity. They continue for a long time under their influence, and then, at the proper moment, the general impulse of all their faculties carries them promptly and, as it were, instinctively to action. Even when a man wishes to forecast everything in detail, how many unforeseen actions are still performed each day, resulting from a totality of circumstances that it would be difficult to analyse! We must clearly understand that our numerous and quite distinct reflexions do not constitute our only sources of action. We have a striking example of this fact in the imitative instinct. We are carried away, almost forcibly at times, to imitate those to whom we are attracted or whose company we frequent; and this without any reasoning. This obscure but efficacious tendency is utilised in the spiritual life when we read the lives of the saints or take the Life and Passion of Our Lord as a subject of prayer. If we love our Divine Master ardently, we then feel ourselves impelled to become better, to imitate His virtues, to unite ourselves to His

sufferings. It is well, I admit, to strengthen this instinctive action by reasoning, if we can do so without difficulty. But it is not necessary for everyone; and this is a point to be remembered. It is this, so it seems to me, of which the opponents of the prayer of simplicity have not taken sufficient notice. It is the same with our habits, our passions, and our various needs. They cause us to act more or less automatically; and therefore all prayer, in which the desire to please God grows stronger, will become almost unconsciously the source of a host of virtuous actions. It will create the necessary disposition of mind without resorting much to distinct resolutions. When we think of the sea, we always picture to ourselves a succession of waves, which rise, follow one another, and then subside; but this is the surface only. They cover immense depths. But our imagination does not weave its dreams about them, because those things only take hold of it that have well-differentiated parts. It is the same when I observe my soul. The distinct acts are the things that seem of importance in her. But these are, on the contrary, mere surface groupings, visible but transient. Underneath lies the intimate, the permanent, and the great source of action. From what has just been said we must not conclude that definite resolutions are useless, but simply that we ought not to be disturbed when we experience difficulty in producing them. 3°. The fact that the prayer of simplicity is sometimes called the prayer of repose has helped to promote the above objection; for the name seems to indicate a state of idleness. But this would be to exaggerate the meaning that the word

repose was intended to convey. Father de Caussade explains it: "We must know that the mind and the heart do not rest as the body rests, by ceasing to act, but rather by continuing to act in a simpler, 21 gentler manner which delights the soul" (Dialogues, Book II, preliminary Dialogue). He adds the comparison of the miser or ambitious man, who, "when they allow their hearts and minds to rest," do not cease to act and are not idle, but go on thinking of the object of their affection and growing more and more attached to it. 4°. Finally, this objection is naturally provoked when the expression, prayer of simplicity, is taken too literally. As I have explained, I do not pretend that the simplicity is rigorous and that it lasts for an hour at a time. There are many moments when the faculties are employed as in ordinary meditation, and where they work, therefore, in the usual way. Why, then, do we still call this exercise by the name of prayer of simplicity? It is because there are no words to describe these blendings of the various states and all their thousand shades. We are forced to name it by its general tendency, by some characteristic that strikes the attention at certain moments. The opponents of the prayer of simplicity forget all these restrictions, however evident they may be. They conjure up an ideal state, one that is superhuman and deprived of all that makes it useful. And then it is fair game for their condemnations. But let us take things as they exist in real life. 45.—Continuation of the objection. Agreed, then, it will be said, that the soul is usefully occupied in this prayer. But is it the best way of spending our time? Is not meditation more profitable? 46.—Reply. I have shown above that this is not so,

provided that certain conditions are fulfilled. Do not let us judge of the efficacy of a method by the complication of the means that it employs. David had nothing but his sling in his contest with Goliath; but he knew how to use it. If he had been obliged to wear Saul's cuirasse, casque, and buckler, he would have been greatly hampered. But let us even admit that at certain times the prayer of simplicity may be so mingled with distractions that it appears to be of little utility. Would it then be better to return to meditation, properly so called? I Yes, if you can do so. But, as a rule, not only would the soul feel distaste, but she would experience a great difficulty. This, as we shall see shortly, is an unequivocal sign that the prayer of simple regard is the result of a divine action. And if this is so, it is clear that this occupation is the better, even when we fail to explain how. Otherwise God would be inviting us, or even constraining us, to a state that is less favourable to the production of virtues. 47.—Unfavourably disposed directors. When directors offer the objection that I have just discussed, it is sometimes the fault of the penitent, who does not express himself clearly. For instance, he will say: "I hardly do anything in my prayer," or, "I am satisfied with just loving God in it." The director, unless he has studied these questions, does not know how to supplement this information, and can only reply: "Since your prayer is without any real profit to you, return to meditation." Hence we see the necessity of instructing penitents, so that they may learn how to explain their state of soul clearly. 48.—We come to the same conclusion when we see that persons who are given to prayer are apt to put the same objections to



themselves. As long as it has not been explained to them why the way that they are in is good, they are racked with apprehensions. They constantly resist their attractions. Thence follow interior sufferings. It is a duty to give them back their peace of mind by dispelling their prejudices. If, for instance, their only facility is for a vague and loving attention to God, we must teach them to be content with it. 49.—Another difficulty. Novices, and even some formed Religious, are obliged to give an account of their prayer, either privately to their Superior or director, or sometimes in public. And this, if their prayer is very simple, becomes an anxiety to them. Seeing others indulging in magnificent developments, they are ashamed of their apparent poverty; and instead of passing the hours devoted to prayer in loving God, without very many distinct ideas, they struggle to produce beautiful thoughts. St. Jane Frances de Chantal condemns this conduct; also Boudon (*Le Règne del Dieu en l'Oraison mentale*, Book I, ch. iii). If a description of your prayer takes two sentences only, do not try to say more about it; the Superior should not be surprised. 50.—Can it be said that the acts of love which are made during the prayer of the simple presence of God contain implicitly and in an eminent degree the acts of the other virtues? Not always; not even in the prayer of quiet, which is, however, higher than it. This expression, which we find in some ancient writers, should not be taken too literally. They mean to say that divine love is the source of the other virtues, that it gives a disposition to practise them; but it is not itself their actual equivalent, for each virtue has its special object which differs from that of

charity. Or, again, these writers suppose, without actually stating it, that the simplicity of this prayer is approximate only, and that reflexions upon the various virtues and their motives may be found here, although in an obscure manner. The quietists, on the contrary, took literally this maxim, that their contemplation, reduced almost to nothing, was a unique act, comprising "eminently" all the others, and consequently dispensing with all the others. They sought in this way to justify their simplifications which were carried to excess. There is a simple and natural way of avoiding illusions on this point. It is: not to analyse our prayers incessantly, but to watch our external conduct. If interior acts of certain virtues have been produced, at least implicitly, during our prayer, they will make themselves apparent afterwards—spontaneously, as it were—when the occasion offers. If there is a seed, it will develop. 51.— We have compared methodical prayer with that of simplicity. Some persons resort to exaggerated arguments for the sake of dispensing themselves from the first. "What a complication!" they say. "When confronted with a subject, I could never force myself to apply the three powers of the soul (the memory, the understanding, and the will) to it successively. I want to go straight to God. How could I ever resign myself to that string of preludes, compositions of place, colloquies, etc. The paraphernalia is too cumbrous; it weighs the soul down, I have no sympathy with those preachers who give retreats and think themselves obliged to teach us so many learned operations which were never heard of in ancient times." I reply that all these things are more

complicated in theory than in practice; as is the case with all treatises on rhetoric or logic. We find many learned words that really express perfectly simple operations which we are performing every day of our lives without giving any attention to them. But we do them better when we have an explicit knowledge of their meaning and have isolated them by analysis. Preachers and authors are right, therefore, in teaching them, in distinguishing these different acts and giving them names which help to make the distinction permanent. This done, I like to believe that they remember to inform you that in practice you can proceed in the way that suits you best. Nothing, for instance, obliges you, as you suppose, to employ the three faculties successively. If this seems complicated to you, then use them all simultaneously. It will be a very simple method of prayer, and I defy you to simplify it further. For in all mental prayer we are obliged to remember, to think, and to will. I could show that the other words which have alarmed you, express acts that have been known from time immemorial, and that you yourselves perform them instinctively. Only you separate them very slightly or not at all, and are scarcely conscious of them. However, since this simplification succeeds in your case, no one thinks of condemning it. But others will prefer to unravel these acts, and they must be allowed to do so. To sum up, it is useful to have learnt the theory; and it is necessary to have liberty in applying it. § 4. Rules of Conduct for Daily Mental Prayer. 52.—Marks of a vocation. The first problem that a Director is often obliged to solve is the following: Given a person who habitually practises affective

prayer or the prayer of simple regard, what are the signs by which he can decide that this prayer is in all probability due to God's action, and that the soul must consequently be allowed to continue in this way? We are supposing that it is a question of a daily half-hour or hour. 53.—There are two signs which are necessary and sufficient: success and the profit derived afterwards from the prayer. First, success in prayer. There should be a facility for this exercise, and the soul should succeed with it at least, as well as with meditation. Next, as to the profit derived from it outside our prayer. This prayer should excite, in no less a degree, at any rate, than in meditation, a sincere desire for perfection and the practice of virtue. This characteristic does not make itself patent in a day. The more these signs are accentuated, the more manifest will be the divine action. Note well that I have not said that the success and the profit should be considerable, but only that these should be as much as in the case of the former methods. We must compare the soul with herself, not with others who are led by a different way. 54.—Two supplementary signs. The fact of its being God's call will be placed beyond doubt, if the facility is accompanied by one of the two following sentiments: a persistent attraction for these prayers; and difficulty and distaste for meditation. These signs would not appear to be indispensable. Many writers, I own, seem to admit the contrary. But perhaps they have not thought of distinguishing between the strictly necessary conditions and those which are supererogatory. Or, again, they suppose, implicitly, that in practice these sentiments are almost always united, that they form

one inseparable whole, as it were. Perhaps they are right. However this may be, the two first signs alone should suffice to prevent us from disturbing those who practise these prayers. If anyone is succeeding in a holy occupation and profiting by it, what reason can we give for turning him aside from it? In the natural order, when a person consults us with regard to entering some honourable profession, we say he is acting wisely if he adopts one for which he has an aptitude and which is profitable to him. By analogy we ought to act in the same way in the choice of things appertaining to the supernatural order. Courbon calls our attention to the fact that in these passings from one degree to the other, three dangers are to be avoided: the first, that of being unwilling to quit the degree in which we have hitherto been; the second, of quitting it too late; the third, of quitting it too soon (Part II, ch. i). 55.—When anyone believes himself to be in the prayer of simplicity, an embarrassing situation may arise: that in which the simple prayer is very arid and beset with many distractions. The two first signs mentioned above are scarcely apparent any more. What do the other two, then, prove? Does the powerlessness that is experienced proceed from God's action? Should we not rather attribute it to negligence, sloth, or general fatigue? 56.—Reply. We shall always know what to do when it is a question of fatigue, and should remedy it as best we can by the usual means. But as for the charge of idleness, we must not be in too much of a hurry to make it. As has been said, from the moment that efforts to meditate cease to give better results, either during the time of prayer or in the

external conduct, there is no cause for anxiety. And this is so more obviously still if the person, whom we suppose to be sincere and of good-will, declares that in order to apply himself to a variety of reasonings, efforts exhausting from their continuity would be required. To refuse to make a slight effort would be sloth, but this is no longer so when we recoil before some crushing burden. We do not say, "I will not," but "I cannot." 57.—Objection. Yes; but is not this last statement usually based upon an illusion? Such an impossibility may be apparent only? It is simply torpor. They would overcome it if they would rouse themselves and take their spiritual progress strongly to heart. Perhaps it is just this that God desires? 58.—Reply. To urge people on to exertion is all very well as a general argument. The call to effort is excellent, always provided, however, that the result obtained is better, and the fatigue temporary only. But in the case of many persons, these double conditions would not be fulfilled. They would have been disquieted without any serious advantage, and by striving to avoid sloth will have become so jaded as to be unable to do anything more. This is what we arrive at by a system of: exert yourself, no matter what results. The same difficulty occurs with regard to study and mortification. When anyone believes that he is really doing as much as he can, he is often led to ask himself if he could not do more. And yet we must pause somewhere. Unhappily, there is no chalk line showing the boundary where wisdom advises us to stop short. This is a question of moral appreciation, of good-will and sincerity before God. Love God, and you will find the wise medium. 59.—Another case.

Sometimes the person does not know how to explain in what his mental prayer consists. What should the Director do? He should not seek for a clearness that is impossible of attainment. It is enough if he knows that the person is honestly doing what he can, in his prayer, and whether he derives any good from it. Such a method is simple and sufficient. 60.—Three rules of conduct with regard to difficulty in meditation. They apply to the prayer of simplicity. All writers agree in admitting them. We inquired just now how we were to know if God has called the soul to this state. We will suppose that the reply is in the affirmative, and we have therefore to decide upon a line of conduct. First rule, concerning those acts for which no inclination or facility is experienced during prayer (reflections, vocal prayer, petitions, etc.): never to force ourselves to produce them, but to rest content with the prayer of simplicity (which by supposition is successful). The motive of this rule is, that to act differently would be to thwart the action of grace. Second rule, concerning those acts for which, on the contrary, we have a facility during prayer: to yield to this inclination instead of insisting upon continuing inactive. The reason is that all our faculties are not too many when we want to attain to God. When we can do so, let us make use of the intellect, the memory, and imagination. We only discard these powers when we find a difficulty in exercising them. To sum up, there are two contrary excesses to be avoided: forcing ourselves to perform a variety of acts, seeing in these acts the ideal prayer; and compelling ourselves systematically to repose, as the quietists do. With regard to these questions, see St. Francis of Sales'

replies to St. J. F. de Chantal (Life of the saint, by Mgr. Bougaud, Vol. I, ch. xviii; Life of Father Balthasar Alvarez, from the French of Louis du Pont, especially ch. xli.) Third rule to be followed outside the time of prayer, properly so called: to profit by all opportunities either of getting instruction or of arousing the will; and thus to supplement anything that might be lacking in the prayer itself. 61.—The second rule can be laid down in another form: namely, that we must not make any efforts to introduce ourselves into the prayer of simplicity. This is what the orthodox writers of the seventeenth century expressed by saying that we should “not meddle with it” (*ne pas s’y ingérer*). The quietists held the contrary opinion. We ought not, therefore, to say to ourselves: “I will try systematically to suppress all distinct acts, even those that I could make easily, such as various acts of praise, thanksgiving, repentance, petition, love, etc.; and I will compel myself to be content with the simple attention to God with a gaze of love.” Besides the fact that it would be very difficult to carry out if we were not impelled to it by grace, these efforts, produced solely by our own exertions, would lead to a prayer which would be of no advantage to us. It is profitable only if it is the result of divine influence. We should then fall into a deplorable state of lukewarmness; we should no longer think of practising the different virtues outside of our hours of prayer. And this error would be still more grave if a whole community of religious were pressed to make efforts in order to introduce themselves into this degree of prayer. In fact, we have seen that in order to practise it as a frequent state we



must be called thereto by God. It follows, therefore, that we must not force anyone to it, and, above all, a whole community. The members have not all, usually, the same vocation with regard to prayer; do not let us divert them from their own way. It is enough that these souls should have sufficient instruction to keep them from impeding the divine grace if it should please God to act. We should therefore confine ourselves to giving them this instruction. 62.—In order to apply the rules given above, it might be well to imbue ourselves with those still more detailed which will be given in chapter xiv, on the ligature. They are drawn up, it is true, with reference to the prayer of quiet, but that is analogous, only more clearly accentuated than this prayer. We will merely say that when anyone has become aware that he is often in the prayer of simplicity, he should have no scruples about curtailing certain vocal prayers which are not of obligation if he finds a difficulty in continuing them, or if he sees that by replacing them with a less varied prayer he unites himself better to God. "In prayer," says St. Thomas, "we should make use of vocal prayers and other outward signs of the same sort only in so far as they excite interior devotion. But if, by these exercises, the mind is distracted, or if we experience a certain restraint (*si mens qualitercumque impediatur*), we must give them up. This is especially the case with those who find themselves sufficiently disposed to devotion without having any need of such preliminaries" (2. 2. q. 83, a. 12, c). There are persons who think they are acting rightly by forcing themselves to a variety of acts in mental prayer. St.

Ignatius gives the opposite advice. "If any particular point causes me to experience the grace which I am seeking, I must remain there calmly until my devotion is satisfied, without caring for anything more" (Exercises, First week, add. 4). The souls who are called thereto by God are thus directed gently onwards to affective prayer or the prayer of simplicity. For this continued dwelling upon one thought has not merely the effect of making us enter into it more profoundly; it leads us to perform it with greater affection or intuition. And so he also recommends a return to anything (such as considerations or affections) which in the preceding meditation should have brought most consolation or compunction (First week, Exercise 3. See also Annot. 2; Fourth week, notant. 2; 2nd manner of prayer, and then rule 2). It is a remarkable thing, and one that leads necessarily to the same end, that the saint wishes a considerable part of the five daily meditations to be made up of repetitions. He includes two a day at the beginning of the first week, and three during the two following weeks. The last is always an "application of the senses. 63.—Efforts. Certain writers recommend occasional pauses in mental prayer, which advice resolves itself into making efforts to arrive at the prayer of simplicity. But this counsel should be taken with a restriction: the pauses should come so easily that they are rather accepted than induced. For this kind of prayer must be left to come spontaneously without any actual effort on our part. And this will be so if God calls us to it, and if our prejudices oppose no obstacle in the way of the divine action. Obviously, also, the pauses consist, not in

doing nothing, but in acting with a greater simplicity.

14.—When we are in these degrees, should we prepare the subject of our prayer? In the case of affective prayer, there can be no doubt of it. For it deals with special subjects which may vary from day to day. In the case of the prayer of simple regard, we should clearly say the same if the subject is often changed. There is difficulty only when it always consists in the prayer of loving attention to God. I say that in nearly every case it is better to advise that the subject should be prepared beforehand; because, as I have already said, this loving remembrance of God is not so exclusive but that a crowd of other, secondary, ideas may mingle with it. It is necessary to supply food for this activity. There is an exception in one case only: where long experience has shown that such prepared subjects are absolutely useless, while our own thoughts furnish us with sufficient occupation, and the practical conclusion with regard to conduct follows spontaneously. But this condition must be of rare occurrence, save in certain mystic states. The prayer of simplicity has no such pretensions. Even in this extreme case it would be better to come to prayer with something equivalent to a preparation. It is not necessary to make a different one every day. It is sufficient to have some thoughts in readiness, and to be able to make use of them, if necessary, during the first few moments, at any rate. St. Francis of Sales had to consider this question. Mother Mary of the Trinity, prioress of the Carmelites of Dijon, had advised St. J. F. de Chantal not to go on preparing her meditation. She probably believed her to have arrived at the prayer of simplicity. The Bishop of Geneva

disapproved of this direction, however. In a letter of June 11th, 1610, that is I to say, shortly before St. J. F. de Chantal gave up living in the world, he wrote to her thus: "To make a practice of making no preparation seems to me to be going too far ... this may be done usefully at times, but that it should be the rule does not, I confess, appeal to me." 65.— Courbon mentions a temptation that may assail those who have attained to the prayer of simplicity. This is "to devote little or no time to prayer, on the pretext that they are always at prayer, no matter what their occupations may be." They even fancy "that they pray better as they come and go about their work." But these persons must understand "that the loving attention in which their prayer consists needs fortifying, because it is continually diminishing in process of time, just as a spring becomes gradually weakened by use. For this attention is assailed by a multitude of others which it is impossible to avoid while we are in action. It therefore requires to be brought back again and re-established; and this all takes place during the hours which are specially consecrated to prayer" (Part III, ch. ix). § 5. General Survey of the History of Mental Prayer. 66.— Before the fifteenth century, or even the sixteenth, the usage of methodical mental prayer—prayer, that is to say, where the subject, method, and duration are determined—is not traceable in the Church. In order to avoid all misunderstandings I insist upon this point: that it is solely a question here of methodical mental prayer, and not of that without fixed rules; made when you choose, for as long as you feel the attraction, or on a subject chosen according to the

inspiration of the moment. It is clear that from all times persons have reflected with this freedom on the truths of salvation, and have sought to recollect themselves in God without the recitation of formulas. This, I admit, was mental prayer, but of a different kind. This matter settled, here are some proofs of my proposition. It seems that the prayer of the old Orders consisted in penetrating the mind with ideas inspired by the Divine Office and Holy Scripture; then in free moments it reverted peacefully to these thoughts without any preconceived plan. The rules of Orders before the sixteenth century contain no definite instructions regarding prayer, apart from the Divine Office. By the word *oratio*, they intend to signify vocal prayers. We must guard against interpreting this word in accordance with our modern ideas (see the collection of rules published by Holstenius, Librarian of the Vatican: *Codex regularum*, Rome, 1666). Take the primitive rule of the Carmelites, for instance. Composed by St. Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem, it was confirmed and modified by Pope Innocent IV in 1248. It was re-established by St. Teresa for the reformed Carmelites; but she had to make the addition of two hours' mental prayer. The old rule was satisfied with saying: "The religious shall be always in their cells, or near them, meditating and occupying their thoughts day and night in the law of God, and watching in prayer, unless otherwise employed in just and reasonable duties, and the recitation of the Divine Office" (Book of the Foundations, p. 316). And the real meaning of the passage is simply to secure recollection and reflexion upon divine things without determining the means to

be adopted: whether reading, vocal prayer, etc. For if it was a question of meditation in the modern signification of the word, nobody could have been required to practise it uninterruptedly "day and night," and some method would have had to be laid down. This wide interpretation is that given by the Theology of Salamanca, composed by the Carmelite Fathers. They hold that this rule is kept even by the study of scholastic and moral theology and all sciences bearing upon them (*Cursus theol. mor.*, Tract XXXI, ch. ix, punct. 9, Num. 63). 66 bis. — With regard to the Order of St. Dominic, a Father Provincial has been good enough to give me the following information. In the early traditions of the Order, there is never any question of individual prayers, at specified hours and of fixed durations (see two thirteenth-century writers, Blessed Humbert de Romans and Gerard de Frascet, *Vitae fratrum*). It is in 1505, nearly three hundred years after the foundation of the Order, that a change appears at the Chapter of Milan. Henceforward there is to be mental prayer in the Choir, in community, for half an hour in the morning and as much in the evening. From 1569 onwards twelve successive Chapters considered it necessary to repeat this direction, making it ever more and more urgent. That of 1868 deprives the offender of any participation in the merits of the Order for the day of omission, unless he has been prevented by illness or being on a journey. That of Rome (1670) requires the subject of the meditation to be read aloud at the beginning of the exercise. As for the Franciscans, we find instructions on the subject in a seventeenth-century treatise: *Commentaria in statuta*

et constitutiones fratrum minorum, by Fr. Sanctorus de Melfi, who wrote it by the order of his General (Rome, 1643). He thus sums up the legislation laid down by the general Chapter of 1594, renewed by that of 1642: "We command that after Compline all Religious, whether lay-brothers, scholastics, or priests, shall apply themselves to mental prayer for the space of half an hour, and that they devote the same time to it after Matins. This exercise will be preceded by a short reading in some spiritual book which shall serve as material for the meditation" (ch. v, stat. II, p. 394 and following). This order at the end of the sixteenth century cannot, evidently, have created a sudden change. It implies, then, that for some time past (we do not know how long) the practice of mental prayer had spread to certain Houses or families of the Order. But it supposes also that this usage was not yet universal or obligatory. An evolution was in process. It would be interesting if these historical questions could be elucidated by specialists. 67.—These customs of the old Orders are due to many causes. The first is that the vocal prayer was long in many monasteries, and in this case it would have been extremely fatiguing to have had to go on to meditate afterwards by learned methods. Another cause is that the effects of meditation were provided for by rules which ensured a persistent state of recollection, and by frequent prayers forming a series of stepping-stones throughout the whole course of the day. The commentator on the Rule of St. Benedict (Migne edition, Vol. LXVI, col. 414, B), says: "In the old monastic rules we find no definite hour assigned to mental prayer, because in all places and at

all times they were thinking upon Heavenly things." In a word, there was an atmosphere, a continuous life of prayer, which was less the result of one particular exercise than of everything taken as a whole. But for those, on the contrary, who mix much with the world, it is generally necessary to give a more definite form to certain religious exercises or to certain of their elements, such as the preparation and the resolution, in order to bring the mind back to the recollection of divine things. In fact, we find these forms playing an important part in the more modern Congregations of men or women who have suppressed or curtailed the recitation of the Office in common. Finally, the mode of prayer of the ancients is explained by the intellectual life of their time. Possessing very few books, they did not vary their readings as we do. They accustomed themselves to live with very few ideas, just as is the case now in the changeless East and the Convents of the Greek Rite. In old days the soul was less complicated, slower than our own, and their prayer felt the effects of this condition. Great changes took place in the West after the Renaissance, when human thought became, I will not say deeper, but more restless, a movement that has always gone on becoming more accentuated. 68.—St. Ignatius himself had no idea of changing the universal usage. As soon as a man entered the Order, he made him follow his Exercises in silence for a month. Afterwards the obligatory morning prayer consisted solely in half an hour of vocal prayer and the recitation of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin. The professed religious were only invited in a general way to consecrate the largest possible part of their



free time to prayer. This custom lasted for thirty years; and then mental prayer was gradually introduced. 69.—In the seventeenth century the method of St.-Sulpice became celebrated. It has passed through two considerably different phases, as M. Letourneau, Curé of St. Sulpice, has pointed out in his book, which is well furnished with facts, references, and authorities: *Methode d'Oraison mentale du séminaire de St. Sulpice* (Lecoffre, 1903).

31 The first version, which we owe to M. Olier (1656), resembles M. de Condren's manner of prayer, who himself took it from Cardinal Bérulle (*ibid.*, Appendix, p. 322). It was almost wholly an affective prayer, supposing men who were already instructed and who only needed to have their wills aroused. Without seeking to develop a subject, you "adore Jesus Christ in one of His Mysteries," and then strive to enter into a "participation" of His sentiments (*ibid.*, ch. i, pp. 6, 7). The second version is due to M. Tronson. He made a change which, while perhaps appearing insignificant at first sight, was really of profound importance. He wished to make the exercise more practical and to adapt it to the needs of the seminarists who are beginners with regard to prayer. And he therefore transformed M. Olier's affective prayer into true meditation, adding considerations and strengthening the petitions (*ibid.*, ch. ii).

70.—Because there was a long period when methodical mental prayer was not in use in the Church, we must not conclude that it is useless, or wish to suppress it under pretext of restoring the former spirituality. The methods have been an advance, and this advance has been brought about, naturally and necessarily, by

changes in the temper of the human mind, as I have showed above. In our days we have to avoid two opposite exaggerations—one of being the slave of methods, the other of despising them; one of wishing to impose them upon everybody alike, the other of dissuading everyone from them. The truth lies between the two courses: recommend the methods to those who can make use of and derive profit from them. We have an example of this breadth of mind in a piece of advice given by Fr. Achille Gagliardi, S.J., who was the first commentator of St. Ignatius' Exercises, and who is an authority in the matter. Speaking of the particular Examen, he says: "This examen is very important for all, but it is otherwise in the case of that strict method which consists in marking a series of dots in columns. This is useless and even harmful to the scrupulous and those who are lacking in memory or imagination; let them perform this examen in another way" (*Commentarii; præmium*, § 2). 71.—The prayer of simplicity has evidently been practised from all times. But the art of explaining it has progressed but slowly. It has often been described in an obscure or too brief manner, or without distinguishing it clearly from the mystic union. It would be interesting to disentangle the course of the development of these explanations. We find, at any rate, that gradually, during the first half of the seventeenth century, the idea of this degree passes from learned books into pious treatises of a popular character. This is probably owing to St. Jane Frances de Chantal's teachings, which were spread in all directions by her spiritual daughters. But the tares of quietism grow alongside of the good seed. In 1687

the Church is obliged to intervene, that the prayer of simplicity may not be perverted by exaggeration, and she condemns quietism. It is greatly to be desired that in our days some slight idea, at least, of this degree should be given in books or instructions for novices, instead of letting it be supposed that there is nothing between making acts of reasoning in prayer and being lifted up in an ecstasy. How many directors or mistresses of novices have never heard of this intermediary! And how can they, then direct, either for the present or the future, those numberless souls who come to this state? They will be inclined to say to them: "Since you have not reached the mystic state, you must continue in that of meditation." St. John of the Cross denounces these incomplete directions (*Ascent of Mt. Carmel*, Prologue; *Living Flame*, stanza 3, § 4 and 12. See also my ch. xxvi); and he does so in very strong terms. But I do not insist upon this point, for I shall be told that reproaches bearing upon persons who are regarded as being highly enlightened, can only be tolerated on the part of a saint! They may even add under their breath that the saint himself is too exacting here. We will not argue the matter. It is with the object of remedying this state of affairs to some extent that I have dealt with the prayer of simplicity at such length. I regard this chapter alone as being no less useful than the mystic portion, properly so called, of which I am soon to speak.

### **Chapter III The Various Kinds of Mystical Graces**

1.—Two groups. In Chapter I we discriminated between the mystical graces and those of the ordinary way. We must now divide the first into their respective kinds. From the outset we have to recognise two quite distinct groups amongst them. In order to understand this clearly, let us remember that in Heaven we shall receive two kinds of gifts which will not have the same importance. On the one hand, we shall have the beatific vision, which will put us into possession of God; on the other, we shall behold the saints, the angels, and other creatures. These, in the language of the theologians, constitute relatively the first object and second object of beatitude. 2.—And in the same way, on earth we can distinguish two sorts of mystical graces, according to the nature of the object that is supernaturally offered to our understanding. The characteristic of the states of the first group consists in this, that it is God Himself, and God alone, who manifests Himself. We call them the mystic union, or, again, mystical (or infused) contemplation of the Divinity. In the second group the manifestation has to do with some created object. We shall see Our Lord's Sacred Humanity, for instance, or the Blessed Virgin or an angel, or some past or future fact, etc. We find here visions (of created things) and revelations; in other words, apparitions and supernatural utterances. To these are added miraculous corporeal phenomena, such as those that are observed in the case of ecstasies. 3.—It is necessary to make a clear distinction between these two categories of graces; first, because we shall have to describe them separately; and secondly, because we must hold them in very different estimation. The

graces of union with God are by far the most useful and the most sure. 4.—Names given to these two groups. It has been proposed to give the name *deïques* (*indéïques*) to those graces by means of which we penetrate into the Divinity. The others, which have for their end something that is outside of God, would be termed *ex-deïfic* (*exdéïques*). Nothing so contributes to clearness of thought as the practice of bestowing very short and sharply contrasting names upon things which we are inclined to confuse. Following Scaramelli, many writers have designated these two groups by the words *confused contemplation* and *distinct contemplation*. They thus refer, not to the object of the knowledge, but to the manner of knowing it. This second point of view seems of less importance than the first. And this language also implies that the revelations always consist in very definite knowledge, which is incorrect.

5.—The four stages or degrees of the mystic union. From the following chapter onwards I shall have to allude to them. I take them as St. Teresa described them in her last work, *The Interior Castle*. In her *Life*, written by herself, the differences are perhaps less easily distinguished. We have: 1°. The incomplete mystic union, or the prayer of quiet (from the Latin *quies*, repose, which expresses the impression experienced in this state); 2°. The full or semi-ecstatic union, called also by St. Teresa, the prayer of union; 3°. The ecstatic union or ecstasy; 4°. The transforming or deifying union, or the spiritual marriage of the soul with God.

6.—Analogies and differences between these graces. As we shall see later on by the descriptions, the three first degrees are fundamentally

but one and the same grace, which we can call the non-transforming union. They constitute respectively the weak state, the medium state, and the strong state of the grace. In a word, they are, above all, three degrees of intensity. In the prayer of quiet, the soul is a vessel only half filled with the Divine nectar; at times it may contain but a few drops. In the full union, it is filled to the brim. In ecstasy, it runs over and is in a state of ebullition. And so there is a unity between these three degrees. It is well to remember this when reading St. Teresa, as it will guide us through the numerous descriptive details that she supplies. As to the spiritual marriage, we shall see that it does not bring the preceding states to perfection by strengthening, but rather by modifying them. 7.—What we have just said of the three first degrees gives a fair idea of the marks that distinguish them one from the other. In the same way, we do not need any elaborate explanations in order to grasp the differences existing between a hill, a mountain, and a chain of mountains; or between a house, a mansion, and a palace. But there is a way of being still more precise, by defining the lines of demarcation and choosing them in such a way as to be easily discernible. In order to do this, let us characterise each degree by one of its effects. 8.—Here are the definitions that can be applied to the three degrees below the spiritual marriage. The mystic union will be called: 1°. The prayer of quiet, when the divine action is not strong enough to hinder distractions; or, briefly, when the imagination still preserves its liberty; 2°. Full union, when it possesses the two following characteristics: (a) its strength is so great

that the soul is fully occupied with the divine object; not diverted, that is to say, by any other thought; in a word, it has no distractions; (b) on the other hand, the senses continue to act more or less, so that it is possible, by a greater or lesser effort, to put ourselves into relations with the exterior world, by speaking, walking, etc.; it is possible to come out from our prayer; 3°. Ecstasy (and this is the universally accepted definition) is when the divine action has a considerable force, and all outside communications with the senses are interrupted, or almost entirely so. Thus we are no longer capable of any movements, such as are voluntary at least, nor are we able to come out of our prayer at will. We see that these definitions have nothing vague about them: each degree is differentiated from its predecessor by a new fact, and this fact is directly and easily discernible. Leaving the intensity out of the question, the full union differs from the prayer of quiet by the absence of distractions, and ecstasy differs from full union by the complete alienation of the sensible faculties. It is far from being the case that mystics have confined themselves to this scientific method in their classifications. 9.—Such, then, is the non-transforming mystic union, divided up into three welldefined types. But we must not exaggerate this idea of separation; and let us say at once that it is possible to pass from one type to another by imperceptible transitions. The result is that, in practice, we often hesitate to classify a grace decidedly under such or such a one of these denominations. We can merely say: it is very near to this or that type. Thus, in the scale of colours, we think of blue, green, and yellow

as being quite distinct things, well-defined types. But this does not prevent their being connected by an unbroken chain of intermediate shades. We can only describe these shades by attaching them to the fundamental colours as closely as may be. We say, for example, it is a green inclining to yellow. It is impossible to proceed otherwise; and besides, this language is quite sufficiently clear. 10.—Other kinds. We shall see that all the other kinds referred to by the mystics (prayers of silence, supernatural sleep, inebriation, jubilation, wound of love, etc.) are only different ways of being of the four preceding degrees. They are not successive degrees. By treating them as such, mysticism is wrongly complicated. 11.—History of the individual soul. St. Teresa has thought of the four preceding degrees as being real stages, successive periods, spiritual ages or graduated states, that is to say; always, of course, excepting those special cases where God intervenes. The soul generally remains for some time in each state before passing on to the next; and the passage is difficult. And thus many souls stop on the road. In the Interior Castle, the saint gives the name of Mansions to the periods corresponding to each degree of prayer. By this she does not mean that during these phases the soul remains uninterruptedly in one special prayer without any goings back. It is sufficient to have the prayer sometimes, but without passing beyond it. 12.—Those who remain stationary would do well to ponder a thought that should engender humility: it is that God has perhaps called them to mount up higher. Every seed contains in itself the power of development; if it comes to nothing, it is that it has



encountered some obstacle. St. Teresa suggests that this obstacle is often imputable to 43 us. And therefore, instead of feeling a certain pride because we have arrived at the prayer of quiet, we ought to ask ourselves fearfully why we have not gone beyond it. 13.—General aspect. Already in ordinary prayer we have found that there were four degrees (ch. ii) which usually were also halting places. The degrees of the mystic union follow those of the ordinary union. The spiritual marriage, which is the supreme degree here below, is itself only the foretaste of a yet higher state, the beatific union of eternity. 14.—Slightly different classifications. The Ven. Mary of the Incarnation, Ursuline, reckons three halting places only, because she amalgamates the second and the third (*Histoire*, by the Abbé Chapot, Part IV, ch. iv; or *Vie*, by an Ursuline of Nantes, ch. xx). St. John of the Cross does not think of distinguishing between the first three degrees. His one desire is to reach the last, the spiritual marriage. All that lies before this state seems to form but one whole. It is of small moment to him whether there are separate hostels on this road; he wishes the soul to sojourn there for the shortest possible time. So that, as far as he is concerned, the true mystic halting places are reduced to two: (1°) the transforming union, and (2°) all that leads to it. And, further, St. Teresa's three first degrees seem to him to be chiefly a time of probation. He expresses this idea by giving to them all collectively the name of the soul's second purgation. He also calls it the night of the spirit. And this is certainly not because we are deprived of light; but because these lights are but darknesses, and often painful darknesses, when

compared with the full radiance which awaits us at the end. 15. — Questions of terminology. The state that I have called full union is sometimes referred to by St. Teresa as the prayer of union, without any descriptive adjective. She was probably afraid of coining a new word, and so she preferred to particularise that of union, which had a far wider significance. This method has one drawback: language is deprived of a general term which is not replaced by another, and which, moreover, is perpetually wanted. The saint herself has not been able to avoid employing it in many other cases. For one thing, this restriction applied to the word union might seem to suggest that in the first degree of the mystic state—in the prayer of quiet, that is to say—union with God is not yet experienced. This would be a gross error, one into which St. Teresa, however, did not fall, since she calls the prayer of quiet “a close union with God” (Life, ch. xiv, 3); only this union of the powers is imperfect, distractions wage war against it. The soul is not “yet altogether absorbed in God” (ibid., ch. xv; 3). Following Scaramelli, many writers have wished to avoid the drawbacks that I have just pointed out. And they have therefore added a qualifying term to the word union. They say simple union, without explaining what they mean by this term. It might be objected that the union with God which the soul experiences in the ordinary way, and which is constantly written about in ascetical works, is still more deserving of this name; it is in some respects far simpler. And if we are by way of speaking of the mystic states only, it is the prayer of quiet which should be called the simple union. In fact, (1°) it is a

union; (2°) a mystic union; (3°) it is the lowest degree of this series, and therefore the simplest union. I have adopted the expression: full union. In her *Life*, chapter xvii, 7, St. Teresa makes use of the equivalent term, saying: perfect union (*entera union*). She does this when speaking of a closely allied state, of which she says: "There is another kind of union which, though not a perfect union, is yet more so than the one of which I have just spoken." She had just expressed the same idea with regard to the union to which we are now referring, saying: "This state of prayer seems to me to be a most distinct union of the whole soul with God" (*ibid.*, 5), It has been suggested to me that this expression, full union, was not a happy one, because it would apply with greater truth to ecstasy or to the spiritual marriage. But the same thing might be said with regard to the word quietude, which signifies state of repose; from the points of view both of the soul and of the body, ecstasy would have the first right to this name. But it has been instinctively felt that a good reason existed for applying it to the first degree of the mystic union. The intention was to compare this state, not with those that follow, but with those that went before. And the impression that the soul experiences as she passes from meditation to the prayer of quiet is thus rendered. She says to herself: What repose! It is this that strikes her. She is not thinking of what will follow later on. And equally, when the soul passes from the prayer of quiet to the next degree, she says also: What plenitude! And we wish to give it a name that indicates this new sentiment also. The same argument might be used with regard to the

expression: affective prayer. For all the subsequent degrees are affective. And yet we reserve this name for the state that first makes this ardent affection felt; and in the same way the name of prayer of simple regard is given to the first state that exhibits simplicity.

#### **Chapter IV Historical Explanation of the Word Contemplation**

1.—Difficulty. If we want to understand the ancient writers, we must be acquainted with a word that they constantly employ—namely, contemplation. And the first thing to remember is this, that they do not all give it exactly the same signification; if we do not notice this fact we shall group together a number of passages which, when closely looked into, will be found to contradict each other. 2.—Let us first suppose that the word contemplation is employed without any qualification. When it is thus used as the opposite of the word action, it often signifies all kinds of prayer, including discursive prayer and the recitation of the Office. And, further, it refers to the contemplative life; that is to say, the whole of a life wherein prayer plays a large part. It is the contrast between Martha and Mary. This is one first signification. 3.—Classical definition. If the word contemplation is opposed to the word meditation, the sense is already restricted. It even seems at first sight to have a clear and distinct meaning. Various authors appear to be of this opinion when they give it the following definition: It is a simple regard, accompanied by love; or this other equivalent: It is a

simple and amorous gaze. But is not such a phrase open to various interpretations? Alas! yes. For the simplicity of acts, of which it is a question here, can be understood in a wider or narrower sense without the reader's knowing which is intended. Is the simplicity complete, or only considerable? Does it bear upon acts of the imagination, or of the memory, or of the understanding, and including a simplification of the will? Each person understands it in his own way. 4.— Thus with some authors there is no intermediary between meditation and contemplation. This reverts perhaps to the classification that includes affective prayer in the last-named state. And the preceding definition may give countenance to this view. For the understanding then is simplified; its regard is more simple. The will alone has retained its multiplicity of acts. This is the second sense of the word contemplation, but it is somewhat rare. Others, such as Alvarez de Paz, allow contemplation to begin only when the will itself has become simplified; in a word, the first step is that which we have rightly named the prayer of simplicity. It is clear that affective prayer is not, in his eyes, a part of contemplation, because, he explains the two states in separate and successive treatises; we have thus a third interpretation of the word. It is this that Courbon has adopted (Part III, ch. I). St. John of the Cross requires that there shall be something further still: a latent mystic state. I shall explain this presently, when speaking of the first obscure night (fourth sense). With St. Teresa, the sense is yet more restricted. It applies only to the manifestly mystic states (fifth sense). 5.— Here, then, are five different significations for the same word.

Conclusion: when anyone quotes an author who is speaking of contemplation, we must always ask ourselves what, taking the context into consideration, he really had in view. It is also the same, unhappily, with many other expressions in the language of mysticism. For instance, quietude, union, silence, sleep, recollection, etc. Authors are far from all understanding them in exactly the same way, especially those before St. Teresa, or who lived at about the same period. 6.—Qualifying terms. In order to avoid these ambiguities, many writers have added qualifying adjectives to the word contemplation. They distinguish two kinds of contemplation. That which they call infused, passive, extraordinary, or eminent, is nothing else than the mystic state. The other, called acquired, active, or ordinary, is defined as follows by Scaramelli, who is the echo here of all his predecessors: "It is that contemplation which, with the aid of grace, we can acquire by our own endeavour, and particularly by a long practice of meditation; although, strictly speaking, it is not due to all these efforts" (Tr. 2, No. 69). In plainer language, it is the prayer of simplicity. That prayer, which has been described by different names, is always the same intermediary between meditation and the mystic state. 7.—History of this expression. I do not think that the expression, "acquired contemplation," was employed before the seventeenth century, except by Denis the Carthusian (*De Fonte lucis*, ch. viii, fifteenth century). It occurs in 1609, in a Spanish work by Fr. Thomas of Jesus, who regards this word as being one that is in use amongst the mystics (preface). The other writers of the early part of the seventeenth century,

such as Suarez, the Ven. Louis du Pont, St. Francis of Sales, and Alvarez de Paz, are not acquainted with the term. 8.—Cardinal Brancati, writing towards the end of the seventeenth century, proves that the Fathers were acquainted with acquired contemplation, although they did not give it a special name, and that they had therefore distinguished it from infused contemplation. For at times their writings are urgent upon the subject of a simple regard, as something that is dependent upon our own will, while at others they imply that it is not so dependent. Now, this resolves itself into admitting two contemplations of opposite characters, and these characters are exactly those by which we define the acquired and the infused contemplations (Op. 3, ch. x). Two later writers, Lopez de Ezquerria and Fr. Honoré de Ste-Marie, have proved this same thesis at great length. The first-named insists strongly upon the existence of acquired contemplation, and quotes passages from twenty-five of the Fathers (Prologue, No. 14), and is very severe upon those who regard this prayer as a modern invention (Nos. 10, 11, 15). The second says: "Although the Fathers and ecclesiastical writers of the first eleven centuries did not know these two kinds of contemplation under the names acquired or infused, active or passive, they have none the less spoken of the two modes of contemplation which these names signify" (Tradition, etc., Vol. I, Part II, d. 3, a. 3). Fr. Honoré develops this idea by the aid of a large number of quotations. He adds that Richard of St.-Victor (*De gratia contemplationis*, Book V, ch. i, Migne ed., col. 167) is the first to have dealt very explicitly with acquired

contemplation; but neither does he give it any special name. Richard sums up his theory in chapter ii. Studying the different degrees of Christian contemplation (he is not concerned with any other; col. 169 A), he distinguishes three degrees, the last of which is ecstasy, and he says: "The first degree is obtained by human industry, the third by divine grace only, and the intermediary degree by a blending of both these actions" (col. 170 B). 9.—The Quietists. A few words must be said here concerning certain errors in relation to perfection and prayer. By the word contemplation, the quietists of the seventeenth century unanimously understood the prayer of simplicity, but carried to absurd lengths (see Molinos, prop. 23, Falconi, Malaval, d'Estival). They also made use of exaggerated expressions in order to describe its good effects. Molinos says: "By acquired contemplation we arrive at a state in which we commit no kind of sin, neither mortal nor venial" (Prop. 57). Mme Guyon proclaimed that the supreme degree of her prayer was superior to ecstasy and other divine manifestations; which is simply puerile. This conclusion was a consequence of their fundamental principle that all action is an imperfection, and that the immobility of our faculties must therefore be the ideal, towards which all our endeavours should tend. Hence the name of quietists, which expresses their exaggerated tendency to repose. This absurd principle once admitted, we can understand how greatly they would esteem a state of prayer in which the soul becomes simplified and its action less. But this esteem started from a false premise which has had more than one unfortunate



result. 10.—But because the prayer of simple regard has been thus extolled by the quietists, we need not conclude that it is dangerous, for we should then fall blindly into a snare set for us by the Devil. When he cannot make a direct attack upon practices that are inspired by God, he tries to bring them into discredit by exaggerations or an admixture of falsehood. These practices thus become suspected even by well-intentioned persons who have not the leisure or the talent to separate the good grain from the tares. The prayer of the quietists cannot be confused with the real prayer of simplicity. In the first case, all activity is suppressed as far as possible; in the second, we make use of it to the best of our powers. In one we think of nothing at all; in the other we apply ourselves to some idea, or feeling, or act of the will. These are very clear distinctions, both as to tendencies and results.

## **Chapter V First Fundamental Character of the Mystic Union: God's Presence Felt**

1.—The course to be followed when expounding the mystic states. We are acquainted with their general definition, and the names of the four degrees of extraordinary union with God (ch. iii); but we still know nothing of the inmost nature of this union. This is what we must now explain. Lucidity has always seemed difficult of attainment in these matters. Two opposite courses present themselves. The one consists in a study of the details, describing one set of special states, and leaving it to the reader to construct the general idea. The other begins with this general aspect, and descends subsequently to the details.

Those who prefer the first method have only to read St. Teresa's beautiful descriptions. I have adopted the second one, as more expeditious. The ordinary man prefers speed to everything else. Details do not usually interest him, but only the main lines. So you begin by offering him the one thing that he demands. He seems to say: Try in an hour to make me understand exactly what mysticism is. This can be done. The method, however, is not a new one. In fact, the majority of Latin treatises of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries begin with generalities on contemplation. It remains to be seen whether they have always chosen the most important characteristics, and not those easiest of comprehension.

2.—The inmost nature of the mystic union. This is shown in the two following theses.

3.—First thesis. (1°) The mystic states which have God for their object attract attention at the outset by the impression of recollection and union which they cause us to experience. Hence the name of mystic union. (2°) Their real point of difference from the recollection of ordinary prayer is this: that in the mystic state, God is not satisfied merely to help us to think of Him and to remind us of His presence: He gives us an experimental, intellectual knowledge of this presence. He makes us feel that we really enter into communication with Him. (3°) In the lower degrees, however (prayer of quiet), God only does this in a somewhat obscure manner. The manifestation increases in distinctness as the union becomes of a higher order.

4.—Explanation. The present thesis does not seek to define the exact physiognomy of the knowledge that is received. This

will be the object of the following thesis. For the moment, it is sufficient to understand what an abyss separates ordinary prayer from the mystic union. There is a profound difference between thinking of a person and feeling him near us. And so when we feel that someone is near us, we say that we have an experimental knowledge of his presence. In ordinary prayer, we have only an abstract knowledge of God's presence. 5.—Demonstration. I do not pause at the first part of this thesis because it is universally admitted; and it is the same when the second part when it is a question of full union and ecstasy, because two explicit passages from St. Teresa are quoted by everybody. The saint here explains how some ignorant directors had maintained to her that God is not present in the soul. She adds that in receiving the prayer of union she had experimental proof to the contrary. But we must show that it is the same with the prayer of quiet also. I do not know that this has ever been openly denied before our days. But several authors seem to have ignored it. And yet St. Teresa is quite as definite upon this point. Twelve conclusive passages can be cited. I will add to these some quotations taken from other authors. Their statements are fully confirmed by experience. It is of little importance that, in the works of Dionysius the Areopagite and other primitive writers, this thesis is rather hinted at than expressed. It suffices that St. Teresa, followed by so many others, gives it to us explicitly. In mystic as in dogmatic theology, formulas become more exact as the centuries go by. The primitive mystics often content themselves with rapid outlines, or they enlarge complacently upon the more

evident but less important characteristics. Thus they are especially struck with the fact that the knowledge is sublime and obscure, and that the love is ardent and unreasoned. Farther on I will give a direct refutation to an error opposed to this thesis. 6.—It would be impossible to insist too strongly upon the importance of the proposition just established. Those who are ignorant of this fundamental truth have no accurate conception of mysticism. For them everything will remain obscure and incomprehensible. 7.—The degree of evidence that it affords. The third part of the thesis says that at times the reality of the divine presence in the prayer of quiet is only apparent in a somewhat obscure way. This point is not contested. We shall see presently that this is so especially with beginners; such little light as God gives them being in part veiled by their prejudices or ignorance. But, for the moment, it is not our business to study the measure in which a beginner attains to a consciousness of his state; the important thing is to say in what this state actually consists, and what a man who is already instructed, and whose attention is awakened, comes really to find there. 8.—The difference between divine love and the mystic union. We may say that this latter begets divine love, that it is a union with God by love. But if we stopped here, we should not have said everything. We must add that this love is called forth by a known, experimental possession of God. This is where it differs from love which is felt in the ordinary way of prayer. Divine love does not of itself make God known as being present in the soul, except by deduction. You would have the same feeling for

absent friends. You are united to them in memory and in heart; but to clasp their hand is a very different thing. 9.—Objection. And yet when divine love becomes very ardent, we are led to say: I feel that God is working within me. And this leads us to add immediately: Therefore He is within me. And so we declare God's presence within us? 10.—Answer. No doubt; but you only arrive at this point by reasoning. By way of experience, you know only one thing—that your soul is inflamed with love. By a rapid deduction you then say to yourself that God alone could be the author of such a state, and by a second argument you conclude that He is present. But in the mystic union the soul proceeds quite otherwise. She has an experimental knowledge, analogous to that of the senses which do not reason; the soul, then, perceives; she does not conclude. To sum up, the ardour of the divine love does not suffice to determine that a state is mystic. You may say, if you like, that it is seraphic, which is quite different. 11.—Comparisons with the ordinary exercise of the presence of God. The analogy between them is twofold: 1° the object is the same—God present; 2° the two exercises deserve the name of the prayer of repose, although in varying degrees. But there are profound differences. The thesis has told us that, in the one, the soul thinks of God; in the other, it really feels Him. The first is the result of a simple act of faith; the second adds to this an experimental knowledge. We can have the former at will; the latter only when it pleases God to manifest Himself. 13.—A confusion to be avoided. In spite of the fundamental differences which have just been pointed out, some authors, though a few only, such as Cardinal Brancati,

have confounded the prayer of quiet (interpreted, let it be clearly understood, in the sense in which St. Teresa uses the word) with the ordinary exercise of the presence of God, and even with the prayer of simplicity. This means that they have not taken account of the second proposition in my first fundamental thesis. They are thus reduced to making the difference between the ordinary state and the mystic state a mere question of intensity. 13. — Cause of this confusion. What has misled them is, doubtless, that, in order to form an idea of the prayer of quiet, they were content to have recourse to the etymology of the word (which simply signifies repose). Therefore all tranquil prayer, so they said to themselves, must be called the prayer of quiet. But the question should be put differently and from the standpoint of history. The sense of a word is fixed by usage; there are shades of meaning which etymology does not show. They ought to have said: St. Teresa has attached a special signification to this word. What is this signification? When compared with the older meaning, does it involve any restriction in the sense? There is no doubt as to the answer. The saint has restricted the sense of the word quiet, and language has become more precise with regard to it. Before her day, each author understood it in his own way, and sometimes gave it only a vague signification. At the time of St. Francis of Sales the change was too recent to be invariably adopted. The language of mysticism was far from being fixed; and, the holy doctor and St. J. F. de Chantal take the word quiet, sometimes in its ancient, wide sense (in which case it included even the prayer of simplicity), sometimes in the new and

restricted sense adopted by St. Teresa. How many readers are there who have never suspected this! 14.—The dispositions required for a high degree of contemplation. We understand now why the learned have not more aptitude for entering into the mystic state than the unlettered. This could scarcely be explicable if these states consisted merely in having profound or subtle ideas about God. On the contrary, theologians and men of genius would then present a very favourable disposition; grace, following in the train of nature, would have almost nothing to do in order to raise them to a high degree of contemplation. But the thesis has taught us that it is a question of an experimental knowledge. Hence the natural power of the intellect, or the amount of learning, do not come into it at all, A peasant receives the impressions of sense just as vividly as an academician. On the other hand, scholars regain their place of superiority when it is a question of theoretical discussions. But this is not mental prayer. 15.—Doubts of beginners. If we lay the preceding and following theses before them, they will make no objection. The truth will appear evident to them. But if they have not read any mystic writings, if they have not been taught the exact manner of interpreting what they experience, it will be very difficult for them to arrive by themselves at the truth. This is because, in the prayer of quiet, God as yet only manifests Himself obscurely. The evidence that He gives of His presence is not yet strong enough to triumph over certain preconceived ideas which I am going to point out. On one side they are impelled to say: "It is God. He is there." But on the other hand they think they have strong reasons for rejecting such

a thought. Their minds become confused, and they no longer know what to believe. 16.—It is particularly during the time that the prayer of quiet lasts that the soul instinctively believes in the presence of God. It is afterwards that she begins to reason and falls back into uncertainty. Let us note well that this uncertainty does not bear upon the existence of a particular spiritual impression (which I shall describe farther on), but only upon its cause. The beginner says: "I have experienced something extraordinary, and probably supernatural. It is an impression of a special kind, and one of which I have hitherto known nothing, and of which the majority of Christians know nothing either. It contains a religious sentiment and it unites me to God. This is indisputable; but what a strange way to pray!" The delicate point is the daring to admit to ourselves that it is God Himself of whom we were thus conscious, and that we were really in touch with Him. And so we find reasons alternately for either opinion. 17.—Preconceived ideas. There are several kinds of preconceived ideas which suffice to veil the knowledge of God's presence. One is due to a feeling of humility and prudence. We say to ourselves: "Is it possible that God should grant me so great a grace? No, I must find some other explanation." And we hope to discover one eventually. The second preconceived idea common to beginners is due to their ignorance of mysticism. It consists in believing that the graces of interior prayer are quite different from those which they are now experiencing. The Lives of the saints have nearly always spoken to them of visions. This is how they also ought to begin, so they think. They



ought to see Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and the angels. If they imagine anything else—the manifestation of God Himself, for instance—they picture it in quite another manner. It should be resplendent, showing the three Divine Persons or certain of their attributes. It should also cause a vehement, overflowing love, such as the saints had in their raptures. But this contemplation has quite other characteristics, being obscure, confused, tranquil. It cannot, therefore, be God who is manifesting Himself. Another prejudice found amongst beginners will be explained later on (ch. viii, 7). 18.—Thence follow interior sufferings. For if it is not God who makes Himself felt, whence can such a state proceed? Is it the devil? Is it disease? And the soul is full of anxiety. She consults directors. But sometimes these directors themselves are ignorant of mysticism, and are no less embarrassed than the penitent. Sometimes, too, the soul explains her interior state so badly that they can hardly be blamed for believing her to be subject to illusions. The great remedy is either to discover a wise director who is versed in mysticism, or to read a book in which there is a good description of this state. The soul will then recover her peace (see also ch. ii, 48). 19.—The error diametrically opposed to the above thesis consists in admitting the following proposition: the mystic states (or their inferior degrees, at any rate) do not contain any new fact, any element of a distinct order, any mode of operation specifically different from those of ordinary prayer. They only differ by the intensity of certain elements: a more sustained attention, a more clearly felt peace and joy, a deeper understanding of the truths of religion, a more ardent

love. Freethinkers are obliged to imagine things in this way to facilitate their purely naturalistic explanations. But as the same idea may have occurred to Catholics, it will be useful to give a direct refutation of this conception of mysticism (whether it be considered as bearing upon mysticism as a whole, or only upon the inferior degrees). 55 1° When ancient writers agree in saying that we cannot attain to the mystic states by our own efforts, they speak of an absolute, total impossibility; in a word, we cannot procure them for ourselves even in a low degree (ch. i, 1). Now, this would not be so if the ordinary state of mental prayer were only a low degree of the mystic states. 2° Mysticism has always been held to contain a large element of mystery; this is shown by the etymology of the name. The writings of the mystics abundantly justify this idea. Any impartial person studying the great descriptive writers, such as Ruysbroeck, Blessed Angela of Foligno, St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, the Ven. Mary of the Incarnation (Ursuline), Ven. Marina de Escobar, etc., must feel that where prayer is concerned they speak of things with which ordinary Christians have not the least acquaintance: they are even tempted to call them unintelligible. From the moment that we could teach the substance of the science in these words —“See what all pious people experience in their prayer, and then intensify it in your thoughts” —there would no longer be any difficulty to solve in mysticism. A man who has never seen a mountain finds no difficulty in imagining one, because he has, at any rate, seen a hill. It would be the same thing here. And for the same reason an explanation of mysticism could be

compressed into five lines. Why, then, should ancient writers have been at pains to indite such huge volumes, excusing themselves all the time for undertaking a task that was above human capacity? But this is explained if the mystic state is an enigma, if it contains a new fact, and is not merely the intensification of an old fact known by everybody. 3° If in mysticism we descend from the general view to the details, we shall see that the above thesis gives the key to many difficulties which are to be met with in the old writers—for instance, in their descriptions or their terminology: we shall have more than one proof of this; which the opposite system cannot succeed in giving. Let us quote some examples at once: (a) It is certain that St. Teresa, when describing the prayer which she calls quietude, did not merely intend to speak of a remembrance of God or of a high idea of the Divinity. This fact is self-evident. But it must be denied unless we accept the thesis. Let anyone in the same way read Blessed Angela of Foligno over again, and try to interpret her visions as being anything else save an experimental knowledge! (b) So, too, we should have to say that a large number of writers have been wrong in distinguishing two kinds of contemplation, the acquired and the infused. Why, indeed, embarrass oneself with learned terms if between these two things it is only a question of the degree of intensity with which they are experienced? 4° We shall see farther on that there is an intellectual vision of Jesus Christ and the saints (ch. xx). Their presence is made known to the soul, but without the manifestation of any material form. So, by analogy, we must admit that there is in the same way an

experimental and intellectual knowledge of the presence of God. 5° If we admit that mystic contemplation differs from the ordinary state only by the vividness of the light and the love, it is a contradiction to say afterwards that there are mystic states which are very weak and hardly perceptible. And yet all writers agree that this is so. 6° We have seen (18) that when a soul begins to receive the mystic graces in a very evident way, she feels surprise and even anxiety. Now, the contrary should occur if the system that I am impugning were the true one. "If the basis of the mystic state," (says 56 a recent writer) "were but a knowledge and a love of God, felt with an intensity which may vary in strength, we do not see what could disquiet the souls that are led by these ways. Such effects, being good in themselves, cannot instil anxiety into the conscience. The soul that feels them is happy in them; she feels herself drawn towards God, and this can only strengthen her and inspire her with confidence" (M. l'Abbé Caudron, *Revue du Clergé Français*, June 1st, 1906). What surprises and distresses the soul is the feeling that she is entering a wholly new world. It is this, too, that alarms certain directors who would otherwise have no objections. 20.—Question. We can imagine that a soul might never experience the sensible (felt) presence of which the thesis speaks, and still, however, have vivid lights upon certain mysteries of religion, such as the Incarnation, the Redemption, and the Holy Eucharist, with the result that she is filled with a very ardent love. Can we say that such a soul is in the mystic state when she receives these graces? 21.—Answer. No, not if these lights are not

revelations in the strict sense of the term. And this by reason of our definition of mystic acts (ch. i, 1). We do not give this name to lights which only differ in intensity from those which everybody can produce. All that can be said is that the prayer just referred to deserves the name of ordinary as to kind, and of extraordinary as to elevation. It is a high and an excellent way, but different from that which is described by St. Teresa and her school. Is this a common way, or does it even ever exist in practice? The question cannot be solved a priori. The facts must be observed. But this would necessitate numerous and difficult inquiries which no one has as yet thought of making.

### **Chapter VI Second Second Fundamental Character of the Mystic Union: The Interior Possession of God: The Manner in Which it is Felt**

1.—The spiritual senses. The first thesis has told us that in the mystical union we have an experimental knowledge of the presence of God. We shall now add that this knowledge is the result of an impression, a spiritual sensation of a special kind. Hence a question arises: Can this spiritual sensation be compared to anything that is already known, to one or more of those sensations by which we prove the presence and the nature of material objects? Or must we say that there is no existing analogy with the natural order? In other words, does the soul possess intellectual spiritual senses, having some resemblance to the bodily senses, so that, in an analogous manner and in divers ways, she is able to perceive the presence of

pure spirits, and the presence of God in particular? This is the question to be dealt with now, and our general conception of the mystic states will thus become more exact. 2.—By the spiritual senses we do not, of course, mean the imaginative senses—the faculty, that is to say, by which the imagination imitates and recalls to our minds colours, sounds, etc. This would not be the way to enter into real correspondence with pure spirit, but at the most with corporeal objects, such as the material symbols which represent these spirits. It is a question here of a purely intellectual imitation. 3.—There is a spiritual sight. We know this even without studying mysticism. Faith teaches us that eternal happiness will consist in seeing God. And by this word we mean to signify a mode of knowledge of such a kind that we are instinctively led to compare it with bodily sight. Otherwise the word would have no exact meaning. So in Heaven the angels and the Blessed see one another. A host of comparisons describing Heaven are derived from light, and therefore allude to sight. Even the devils see themselves and are seen. 4.—There is a spiritual hearing. For the saints and the Blessed speak to one another. It is true that for this they have no need to utter sounds, to employ definite language; it is sufficient that they should desire to communicate their thoughts. But this communication may be called speech on the part of the transmitter, and hearing on the part of the receiver. In the same way God has often spoken intellectually to the prophets and to other saintly souls. In Heaven He speaks to the angels when He gives them His direct commands. We shall hear Him also; for love constrains Him to enter into

relations with His friends in all possible ways. God will not enclose Himself in an eternal silence while the elect are chanting His glory. 5.—Is there a spiritual touch?—Here it is the mystics who will reply, and by an affirmative: if it is a question of God, that is to say, for with regard to the angels we have no data to go upon. The ignorant will exclaim here also. If we tell them that in contemplation we attain sometimes to the sight and the hearing of God, they will accept it easily enough, because no ideas and words are employed save those to which they are accustomed. But that there should be another way of attaining to God, and that the best means of giving an idea of it should be to compare it to a touch, is a fact which surprises them above measure. But it is this precisely which is a part of the second fundamental truth of mysticism. Those who do not accept it in its entirety will not have a really exact idea of the states of union, and their general conception of these states will consequently suffer. However, bearing in mind their predispositions, I will divide the thesis into three parts. In the two first I will content myself with statements which no one could think of disputing. I shall not introduce the words touch or spiritual senses, keeping them for the third part only, as a useful supplement. They are, as a matter of fact, striking pictures and interpretations of things which are experienced; but we can do without them if need be, and so the mistrust that they might excite will not reflect on the essential part of the thesis. 6.—Is there such a thing as a spiritual taste and a spiritual sense of smell? Again the mystic answers yes, and we must not be surprised. For in the corporeal order the senses

of taste and smell are only a special kind of touch; so that if we admit the sense of touch in the spiritual order we can have no difficulty about admitting these other senses also. They also are interpretations of certain shades of union. 7.—With the mystics, the words to see God, to hear, and to touch Him are not mere metaphors. They express something more: some close analogy. We now come to the thesis which indicates the second fundamental character of the mystic union. 8.—Second thesis. 1° In the states inferior to ecstasy we cannot say that God is seen save in exceptional cases. We are not instinctively led to translate our experiences by the word sight. 2° On the other hand, that which constitutes the common basis of all the various degrees of the mystic union is that the spiritual impression by which God makes known His presence, manifests Him in the manner, as it were, of something interior which penetrates the soul; it is a sensation of imbibition (saturation), of fusion, of immersion. 3° For the sake of greater clearness, we can depict what is felt by describing the sensation by the name of interior touch. 9.—Demonstration of the first part of the thesis: namely, that God is not ordinarily seen either in the prayer of quiet or in that of full union. Experience proves this superabundantly; and St. Teresa states it distinctly. This truth stands out also in the expressions which various writers employ to describe the inferior states. All their comparisons are drawn from other things than sight. They say that we repose in God, that we are in His arms or on His bosom, that we plunge into Him as into an ocean, that He floods the soul (*illapsus divinus*), etc.. If God unveiled His Face a little, they



would not fail to tell us so, for it would be more easy to understand. 10.—This fact also shows us why the majority of those who possess the prayer of quiet find such a difficulty in making themselves understood. If they could say: "I see God," their language would be perfectly clear. But they realise that this would be inexact. And, on the other hand, a want of instruction prevents them from finding the proper expressions to employ. They are therefore reduced to making use of such vague and perplexed phrases as this: "I feel God in some sort of way." 11.—Demonstration of the second part of the thesis. The enunciation of the thesis tells us that the soul feels God as something interior that penetrates her. This does not at times prevent God from being felt at the same time as something exterior. There are in this case two simultaneous impressions instead of one. 1°. All those who have had experience of the prayer of quiet testify to this feeling of interior possession. They are aware of it more especially when the eyes are closed, because they are not then drawn and distracted by outward things. They perceive that the basis of their prayer consists, not in a better comprehension or formulation of some abstract truth, but in plunging into some, I know not what, divine atmosphere. 2°. Certain words of St. Teresa, quoted in the preceding chapter, state explicitly that God is felt interiorly. 12.—Objection. It is true that in other extracts from this same chapter, speaking of the prayer of quiet, she contents herself with saying that the soul feels herself near to God. This language can be explained: (a) the saint wished especially to indicate that God becomes present. Now for this purpose it was useless to distinguish between

feeling Him in us or near us; (b) the comparisons that she used obliged her to be content with the expression near to, under pain of weakening the analogy. Thus she was likening the soul to the aged Simeon, when he felt that it was the Saviour whom he held in his arms. In order to follow up the idea she had to say: and so does the soul feel God near to her. To give another example. In the Interior Castle (First Mansion, ch. i), and previously in the Way of Perfection (ch. xxx), she describes the soul as a castle in which God occupies the central mansion or room. Hence, under pain of a mixed metaphor, it was necessary to say that, as the faculties of the soul advance from room to room, they draw near to God, and not that they are immersed in Him, which, however, would have been the true representation of the fact. The words near to should be taken here as opposed, not to the interior of the soul, but to the innermost place of this interior. And, further, upon three occasions the saint employs the words near to, even when it is a question of ecstasy, which, however, is a state in which God takes interior possession of the soul. But the foregoing comparison is a constraint upon her, because the soul has not yet arrived at the central mansion. It is clear, then, that the near to must not be taken in a narrow sense. 13. — Many persons to whom the mystic state is familiar, have told me that the following comparison depicts with great exactness both the interior possession of God, which is its basis, and the physiognomy of the impression by which it makes itself felt. We may say: it is in exactly the same way that we feel the presence of our bodies when we remain motionless and close our eyes. If we then

know that the body is there, it is not because we see it or have been told so. It is the result of a special sensation, of an interior impression which makes us feel that the soul permeates and vivifies the body. It is an extremely simple sensation, and one that we should try in vain to analyse. And so it is with the mystic union; we feel God in us, and in a very simple way. 14.—Demonstration of the third part of the thesis: namely, that the feeling experienced can be described by giving the sensation the designation of interior touch. I have already advised those who might feel startled by this language to omit this third part. It is enough for them to know that the mystic impression, 1° is not of one kind only; 2° that, fundamentally, it resembles neither sight nor speech (see the first part): 3° they will say that this fundamental quality belongs to a third species, refraining from stating precisely whether its analogy is to be found amongst the material sensations. They can call it inexpressible. Personally, I think that we should speak thus when it is a question of the Humanity of Jesus Christ or of that of the saints, when they are known intellectually. The impression then received cannot, so it seems, be compared to a touch, because the object is felt at a distance; and yet although, for want of another name, it is called a vision, it is neither sight nor speech. However, those who are surprised by the expressions touch or Divine contact probably exaggerate the sense which the mystics attach to them. They fancy that these terms imply some metaphysical doctrine on the possibility of the contact of spirits. But no: we simply wish to depict an impression by a comparison, and with this

end in view we do not pretend to say anything beyond this: that everything happens as if there were a touch. We now come to the proofs: 1° The expression "interior touch" is quite logically led up to by the fact already admitted, that an interior touch is felt. In fact, in the material order we make use of the word touch each time that it is a question of knowing experimentally any object contiguous to us; while if the object is at a distance, we make use of the words see and hear. And then it is not with the object itself that we enter into immediate relations, but the radiations or vibrations which it sends out to us. Now it is a question here of a spiritual object which is not remote; it manifests itself by uniting itself with us, dissolving into us, as it were. And it is the word touch, therefore, that best expresses the analogy. We can also say: the words sight, hearing, and touch designate here purely intellectual acts. But we understand that they express different circumstances. The first shows that the object of the knowledge is the inner nature of the Divine Being Himself; the second that it is one of His thoughts only; the third that it is more especially a uniting, fusing action which He exercises upon the soul. 2° We have the testimony of various authors, such as St. Teresa. In her second letter to Fr. Rodrigo Alvarez, written a year previous to the composition of the Interior Castle, the saint takes the exercise of the five spiritual senses as a point of departure for her description of all the states of mystic union. For in speaking of the lowest degree, she says: "The first prayer of which I was conscious,—in my opinion supernatural,— ... is a certain interior recollection of which the soul is

sensible; the soul seems to have other senses within itself then, which bear some likeness to the interior senses it possesses." The word senses, being in the plural, indicates that it is a question of senses differing amongst themselves, but resembling those of the body. Otherwise she must have said: "There is one sense which resembles the physical senses, but only when they are taken collectively." On the other hand, the saint allows, as I have said, that in the prayer of quiet and in the full union we are not admitted to see or hear God. It follows, therefore, that the three last senses only can be called into play, that is to say, touch and its derivatives. 3° The idea of touch is expressed by divers comparisons which the mystics have employed. Thus Mother Mary of the Incarnation, Ursuline, compares the soul that experiences the mystic union to a sponge filled with water (*Vie par une Ursuline de Nantes*, ch. xx, p. 439). If this sponge were endowed with life, it would feel the water which fills it. In her *Life*, compiled from her manuscripts by her son (Book IV, ch. ix, p. 687), we find also the comparison of respiration. This comparison depicts the spiritual impress by the analogy of the delicate touch by which we feel that a vivifying air is penetrating into our lungs. With regard to the idea of immersion, see No. 39 bis. Many writers follow St. John of the Cross in saying that in the mystic state there is a union of substance with substance. This, like the word touch, is a mere manner of speech: they employ it as opposed to the knowledge of a remote object, and resort to the same language, as though it were a question of the contact of a material object and of the touch which then

results. They wish to indicate a special mode of knowledge. Others employ the expression substantial touches. Here the adjective, which seems useless, is intended to show that it is not a case of a simple moral touch, as when we say that God touches the heart of a sinner, or that a preacher touches his audience. 15.—Objection. Scaramelli and, after him, Fr. Séraphim (Theol. myst., No. 160) see a separate degree of prayer in the divine touches. This would seem to argue that in the other degrees the spiritual touch is not felt, and that it is therefore not the common basis of all mystical union. I reply that such is not their intention; and Fr. Séraphin states this himself. They make a degree, not of all touches whatsoever, but of one special kind only, those that are sudden and violent. They are wrong, however, in giving the name of degree even to these violent touches and in endeavouring to assign them a fixed place in the series of states of prayer. It is nothing more than a manner of being of one of the degrees—namely, ecstasy. 16.—To sum up. The physiognomy of the mystic union may be described as follows: during the union, when it is not too exalted, we are like a man placed beside one of his friends, in complete darkness and silence. He does not see him, therefore, he does not hear him; he only feels that he is there by the sense of touch, because he holds his hand in his own. And so he continues to think of him and to love him. 17.—The material touch may, by increasing in strength, become a clasping and an embrace. It is the same with the spiritual touch. In the prayer of quiet, when it is not very strong, it is a simple imbibition which is tranquilly enjoyed. But at

times the two spirits embrace one another, which is to say that sudden and affectionate claspings take place between them. This superabundance of grace is not, I think, frequent with beginners; and when they at length come to experience it, it is at first only for a few seconds at a time. If afterwards they were to attempt to reproduce this special impression, they would find it impossible to do so. 18.—How wonderful will be the union enjoyed in Heaven. From what has gone before it follows that God can be not only seen and heard, but breathed in, grasped in a sweet embrace. By this we can see how complete our happiness will be in eternal life; for God will not only show Himself, He will give Himself to us. Many Christians form a very incomplete idea of Heaven. They know that we shall see God, that we shall rejoice in the magnificent revelation of His infinite nature; but this is all. They picture Him as a stern prince, isolated upon His throne, proudly keeping his subjects at a distance, admitting them only in the character of spectators. But God will do much more than this. He wishes to be the fragrant air that we breathe, the wine that will inebriate us, the life of our life, the impassioned Lover of our souls. He will vouchsafe to us the “kiss of His mouth” and will receive ours in return. He will not be content until He is merged into, almost identified with the beloved soul that has given herself to Him. He desires an intimate and mutual penetration. Heaven is not merely the vision of God, it is fusion with Him, in love and in possession. If this fusion did not take place the soul would suffer an insatiable thirst. How could the soul behold the Divine beauty, and not go out towards it with her whole desire? In

order that we may catch a glimpse of these wondrous blessings, God grants a foretaste of them to His friends on earth. It was thus that he showed to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob the promised land wherein the chosen people were one day to dwell. 19.—The gift of wisdom. The preceding theses explain why it is that the mystics say that their contemplation is produced more especially by the gift of wisdom, understanding this word as they do, that is to say: as a sweet-savoured knowledge of divine things. They rely upon an etymology that is peculiar to the Latin, and derive *sapientia* from *sapere*, which has two very different meanings, to be wise and to taste. The soul in the mystic union indeed tastes God and rejoices in Him. According to Scaramelli, “this is precisely the office of the gift of wisdom (at least, carried to a certain degree) to render God present in the soul, and so much the more present as this gift is the more abundant. This gift brings the soul near to God and it causes her to feel and taste His most sweet presence” (Tr. III, No. 27). 19 bis.—But if mystic contemplation is produced by gifts of the Holy Ghost, the converse, namely, that every act produced by certain gifts is mystic, is false. For that would be tantamount to saying that these gifts never operate in ordinary prayer. Now, such a thesis has never been laid down. It is not in conformity with St. Thomas’s teaching, which holds that the gifts are not reserved for difficult acts alone. And further, if this proposition were true, mystics would swarm upon our globe. For at confirmation, and even at baptism, every Christian receives these gifts, and no one can hold that they continue in the state of pure habit without any



actuation. The proposition that I am contesting has, however, been enunciated in a Catholic Review as being as clear as it is simple, and as giving the key to mysticism. But the author has not thought of bringing any documentary evidence in support of his theory. And even were it true, this doctrine would be practically sterile as far as directors are concerned; it could not furnish them with any sign, any means of discernment. For let us suppose that a person, surprised at what he experiences in prayer, and suspecting the presence of the mystic graces, comes to ask our opinion. Instead of laboriously reviewing the various characters described by the mystics, we should have to reply: "The whole question resolves itself into knowing whether certain gifts of the Holy Ghost have operated within you. Which one is it?" He would be astounded. We must have recourse to characters which are immediately verifiable. 20.— And, in particular, the gift of wisdom has a wider scope than the production of the mystic states. There are, in fact, two ways of tasting an object: the one indirect and inferior, which is to enjoy it in thought and memory; the other direct and superior, which is to possess the actual object itself, to enjoy it really and experimentally. This higher way is that of the mystic union. All Christians become participators in the inferior mode in the Sacrament of Confirmation. 21.— The difficulties of mysticism are now surmounted, as far as the task of describing them goes. The points that the uninstructed find disconcerting may be reduced, in almost every case, to two. They cannot understand 1° that God should make His presence felt experimentally: 2° that it should take place

otherwise than by sight or speech. If after our explanation there should still be some obscurity in their minds, their best course will be to pass on, admitting these formulas blindly, as is done with the postulates required in certain sciences. Afterwards the other characteristic marks of the mystic action will be easily grasped. At most the ligature (ch. xiv) will astonish them slightly. But the difficulty here will not be to understand it, but to find its true cause. The search after first causes is never, however, an easy one. The difficult part of descriptive mysticism is thus reduced to very little. There is a short tunnel at starting, upon this road, but when this is passed we are in broad daylight for the rest of the way. A professor of theology once told me that his idea of mysticism had hitherto been quite wrong, and that he had never therefore had the patience to study it. He had regarded it as a long chain of propositions, unintelligible to the ordinary man, and so intricate that there was nothing between understanding it altogether or not at all. We shall see that this, happily, is not the case. So courage! we are now out of the tunnel. 21 bis. — The extracts belonging to this and the preceding chapter are taken from fifty different authors. This, I think, is sufficient to show that, instead of going out after new inventions, I am giving the true tradition.

## **Chapter VII The Mystic Union: Its Ten Subsidiary Characters. Description of the First.**

1.—Enumeration. The two theses given above have taught us the two principal characters of the mystic

union. This union has ten subsidiary characters, as will now be successively explained. I number them in continuation to the two fundamental characters. 3° It does not depend on our own will; 4° The knowledge of God accompanying it is obscure and confused; 5° The mode of communication is partially incomprehensible; 6° The union is produced neither by reasonings, nor by the consideration of creatures, nor by sensible images; 7° It varies incessantly in intensity; 8° It demands less effort than meditation; 9° It is accompanied by sentiments of love, of repose, of pleasure, and often of suffering; 10° It inclines the soul of itself and very efficaciously to the different virtues; 11° It acts upon the body and is acted upon in return; 12° It impedes to a greater or lesser extent the production of certain interior acts; this is what is called the ligature. 2.—In employing the expression subsidiary characters, I have not meant to say that they were devoid of importance, but that, theoretically, they were less important than the two others that went before and of which they are, so to speak, the consequences. These two are, in fact, the only characters that make us acquainted with the basis of the employment given by God to the soul in the mystic state. The others indicate the effects or the accompaniments only. Certain of these effects, such as divine love, are produced invariably and without any exceptions. Others may occur here or there. 3.—The unity of the states in the mystic union. Farther back I was content to say that the four degrees of this union are not disconnected graces, but the progressive development of one and the same grace (ch. iii, 6). We now have proof of this, since these states resemble

each other upon so many points. They have the same elements: namely, the twelve characters enumerated above. The differences will come from the degree of perfection with which these characters are found. This proposition is obvious when we read St. Teresa, and take the trouble to compare the descriptions that she gives of each degree (see also ch. xxv, 20). In the same way Fr. du Pont regards all these graces of union as only one considered fundamentally (Life of Father Balthazar Alvarez, ch. xiv). 4.—The third character has already been given; it is an absolute powerlessness to procure the mystic states for ourselves. It is from this that I have drawn my definition of the states (ch. i). But it is as well to return to it for the sake of adding some complementary details. I shall not quote from St. Teresa in proof either of this or the two succeeding characters; because we have only to open her Works to see that she speaks of them incessantly. 5.—The powerlessness in question shows itself in six ways: 1° As has just been said, we cannot bring about the mystic union in ourselves when God does not give it; anyone can prove to himself that to will it is not sufficient; 2° In the same way its coming cannot be foreseen, whatever preparations we may have tried to make. Beginners are often surprised at the unexpected manner of its arrival. They were not thinking of it, or simply striving to lift up their hearts towards God, perhaps without much success. And all of a sudden a state of recollection of a quite special kind took possession of them without their knowing why. They allow themselves to float with the current, because they saw from the first that was a holy

occupation. They postponed the task of examining it more closely to another time. Their part lay in consenting to an unforeseen action; 3° If this union is granted to us, we cannot make it more intense, however much we may desire to do so. We plunge ourselves in God only in the precise measure in which He wills it; 4° And it is in the same as to the kind of mystic union. We shall see that this favor may differ in the matter of its presence. Now, it in no wise depends upon our will to have one kind of union rather than another; consequently we can foresee nothing with regard to it. 5° Those who have this union from time to time only, usually find it ceases abruptly as it came; and this without their participation. 6° We cannot make it cease merely by an interior act of the will. We can influence it by indirect means only, by walking or seeking much external distraction. In this way we can diminish it, or even cause it to cease altogether. 6.—Advice to directors. From the last remark it follows that a director is demanding the impossible if he advises or orders anybody in a general way to quit the mystic union and to return to the ordinary way of prayer. All that could be done would be to give up prayer; which is not at all the same thing. The person directed should show his good-will, however, by trying gently to obey. The result, it is true, is a foregone conclusion. But no matter. Obedience may require us to make the attempt, but it cannot exact success. 7.—Another consequence of what has gone before is that in the mystic union we feel our absolute dependence upon the divine will with regard to this favor: it lies with God alone to give it, to augment it, or to withdraw it.

Nothing can be more calculated to inspire us with sentiments of humility. For we see clearly that ours is a quite secondary part, that of the pauper who stretches out his hand for an alms. In ordinary prayer, on the contrary, we are inclined to attribute the greater part of the success to our own talents. This dependence, continually felt, produces also a filial fear of God. For we see how easily He can punish us for our infidelities by the instantaneous loss of everything. 8.—The cause of this powerlessness. The above theses give us an insight into the reason why the mystic union is not placed at our disposition like ordinary prayer. It is because this union gives us an experimental possession of God. An illustration to make this clear. If one of my friends is hidden behind a wall, I can always think of him when I wish to do so. But if I wish really to enter into relation with him, my will is no longer sufficient. The wall must disappear. In like manner God is hidden. With the aid of grace it is always within the power of my will to think of Him, which is ordinary prayer. But it is clear that if I wish really to enter into communication with Him, this will is no longer sufficient. An obstacle must be removed; and the Divine Hand alone is powerful to accomplish this. 9.—But if we cannot produce the mystic state at will, we can at least dispose ourselves to it. And we can do this by the practice of virtue, and also by a life of interior and exterior recollection. 24). Sometimes the soul is taken sudden possession of by the mystic union while reading some pious book or hearing God spoken of. In this case the reading or the conversation is not the cause, but the occasion of the grace received. This

grace has God for its sole cause; but God takes account of the dispositions in which He finds us.

### **Chapter VIII The Fourth and Fifth Characters of the Mystic Union**

1.—The fourth character of the mystic union consists in the fact that the knowledge of God, of which it is partly composed, is obscure and confused. Hence these expressions: to enter into the divine obscurity (oration in Caligne), or into the divine darkness, to contemplate God in the darkness. These names may be applied to all the mystic states. Some authors, however, reserve them for certain ecstatic visions. There is a great deal of opinion in the matter. Certain very sublime visions are called the great darkness.

2.—Beginners who have read nothing on the subject of mystic contemplation never suspect that it always remains indistinct. They are even convinced of the contrary; and this doubtless by analogy with our exact knowledge concerning material things. Hence their astonishment when the prayer of quiet is first granted to them; they see in it a preliminary state only, out of which some distinct knowledge will soon make its way. This prayer is for them like some great white canvas stretched over the walls of a room. They are waiting until the painter's brush or a magic-lantern slide should throw upon it certain definite figures and colors. Vain expectation! This state continues without perfecting itself further, and terminates in the same way: Beginners feel a little disappointed that God does not organize things more in accordance with the quite natural and more

agreeable plan which they have imagined. 3.—The fifth character of the mystic union consists in this: that the mode of communication is but half understandable. It is for this reason especially that these states have been called mystic. It is desired to convey the idea that they contain something mysterious, and this even for the instructed. There is more than one how and why which have never been cleared up (see St. John of the Cross, *Obscure Night*, Book II, ch. xvii). 4.—All the divine communications have this character of manifesting the divine attribute of incomprehensibility. They always contain something that we wish to understand better. With regard to God's other attributes, they nearly all continue hidden in the prayer of quiet; but this one, on the contrary, strikes us from the outset. And it only becomes more apparent as the soul mounts up to higher modes of knowledge. 5.—Expressions that need interpretation. I have said that these states are in part incomprehensible. It would be an exaggeration to say that they are totally so. If we seem at times to suggest this, it is a mere manner of speaking. We exaggerate the idea in order to make it more evident. If, strictly speaking, we understood nothing of our state, we should not know that we were in communication with God, or even that we were praying. We might fancy ourselves attacked by some strange malady. 6.—Example. St. Teresa often says that "we enjoy favor without knowing what it is" (see *Interior Castle*, Sixth Mansion). We must understand this abbreviated phrase thus: we enjoy this favor without completely knowing what it is. We know it in part, because we perceive that it is the divine action,



and even a certain possession of the Divinity. 7.—I have already pointed out a prejudice common with beginners. Here is another sufficiently resembling the first. They believe that the mystic states present hardly any element of mystery. Meditation and other inferior states were easy to understand. By analogy they fancy that this condition will continue. They forget that a great change has taken place. Hitherto they performed, in appearance, at least, none but natural acts in their prayer. These acts, therefore, could cause them no surprise. But they are now penetrating into a new world: they are manifestly entering into the supernatural, into the divine. This unknown land is full of mysteries. If, however, we remain for a long time in one degree, we become so accustomed to it that we no longer take any heed of its incomprehensible side. It is the same in the natural order with thousands of the phenomena round about us. While children are for ever asking the why and the how of things, we ended by forgetting that there are any questions to inquire into. Beginners often hope to be able to accomplish an exhaustive self-analysis, but they finish by proving the uselessness of their efforts. 8.—Hence the disquietudes to be found in those who have but lately arrived at extraordinary prayer and are not yet instructed in mysticism. All that is mysterious gives rise to distrust. 9.—And just as the soul experiences difficulty in understanding her state, so she finds it very hard to describe it, especially if she has read no mystic writings. She makes use of such vague expressions as the following: “I feel something that draws me to God, and I find in it happiness and repose”; adding: “I understand

nothing of it" (see St. John of the Cross, *Obscure Night*, Book II, ch. xvii). At the sound of this last sentence a skilled director will pick up his ears, recognizing here one of the signs of the mystic state. But others will merely conclude that it is some preposterous kind of prayer which had better be changed as soon as possible. This difficulty in describing our state is due not only to its being partly incomprehensible, but to another character of the mystic union which I shall explain in the next chapter: namely, that it is produced without any sensible images; and yet if we wish to depict it we can only do so by making use of some such images. We are obliged to invent them; if we are not assisted by a book, this task is not easy one.

### **Chapter IX The Sixth Character of the Mystic Union**

1. — The sixth character of the mystic union consists in this, that the contemplation of God is not produced by reasonings, or by the consideration of created things, or by interior images of the sensible order. This contemplation has, as we have seen, quite another cause: a direct illumination from God, and, to make this still clearer, a supernatural knowledge of His presence, a spiritual sensation comparable to the sense of touch. The ancient writers convey these various ideas briefly by saying that mystic contemplation takes place without any intermediary (*sine medio*), or that it is immediate. We all say as much with regard to communication by touch. This knowledge without acts of reasoning and without images bears a resemblance to that of angels; and it is

sometimes called an angelic mode of knowing. But there are differences also, notably that of clearness.

2.—The existence of this character. Everyone allows that the mystic union is not the result of any act of reasoning; and this is why it is called contemplation, which signifies a prayer of simple regard. Even beginners are struck with this difference. They feel that their new prayer no longer resembles the old. The mind no longer travels over a consecutive train of thought, following up, developing. They feel themselves occupied with a sensation, plunged into an atmosphere which they breathe. Nothing more different can be imagined. So, too, the consideration of created things has nothing to do with it. And, besides, this operation would, as a rule, presuppose acts of reasoning. It now remains to prove the argument with regard to sensible images. Many theologians have been reluctant to admit that these images do not constitute the efficient cause of mystic contemplation; at most, they will allow this to be so in the case of raptures. 1° The experience of souls given to prayer decides this question absolutely, even as to the prayer of quiet. If we were to ask them what image it is that gives rise to this contemplation, they would be astounded by the strangeness of the question. When philosophers wish to study the functionings of the human mind in the natural state, they very properly resort to observation. Let them therefore allow mystics to do the same in the supernatural state. This question does not really admit of argument. 2° In St. Teresa's long descriptions of the prayer of quiet she has never suggested the presence of any imagery. With regard to the higher

states, she often speaks of the suspension of "all the faculties," and says that the inferior faculties (the imagination and the power of reasoning) then remain inactive. 3° A large number of passages declare this character plainly. St. John of the Cross comes back to it incessantly, and he even refers to it in a state that is not fully mystic: the Night of the Senses. He has selected this last expression to sum up his teaching upon the subject. What he wishes to suggest is precisely this disappearance in prayer of that which is due to sense. Ruysbroeck likewise perpetually describes mystic contemplation by saying that it is above images and forms (distinct concepts). Scaramelli (Tr. 2, chs. xv and xvi) quotes St. Bernard, Hugh and Richard of St.-Victor, St. Bonaventure, Denis the Carthusian, Lyranus, and Alvarez de Paz in proof of this doctrine. 4° Should anyone refuse to admit this classical thesis, he ought to tell us which are the images of the prayer of quiet that produce union with God. Does the divine action consist in the representation of God the Father as an old man? or the Blessed Trinity as a sphere? or the Divinity as a cloud? Even if some saint had seen these symbols for a brief period of time, does anyone suppose that he could have made them the subject of his constant contemplation? Who would have the patience to apply himself for any length of time to so simple a spectacle? 3.—The mystic writers' habit of expressing themselves by the use of images has often been a source of misunderstanding on the part of the ordinary man. Seeing that the words marriage and spiritual senses are employed, they say: this language proves that they are not speaking of purely

intellectual facts, but merely of pictures constructed by the imagination or by the sensible emotions. It all takes place, therefore, in the inferior faculties. Not always. The meaning of these expressions must be decided by the context. When we wish to express intellectual things, we are condemned to make use of human language which is very imperfect and derives from corporeal objects. This is a necessary evil. In the same way, and for the sake of making themselves easily understood, the sacred writers speak of God's arms, of His countenance, etc. No one dreams, however, of accusing them of believing that God possesses a real body. 4.—Objection. But the schoolmen, on the contrary, have insisted upon the principle that our thoughts are always evoked by images. 5.—Reply. Yes, this is so in the natural order, and consequently in the operations of the ordinary supernatural which resemble those of nature. But the schoolmen recognize that a higher supernatural state exists, one in which the soul operates after a purely intellectual manner and without any sensible images, whether they be those that excite the intelligence or even, at times, those that accompany its action. This is why the schoolmen, with St. Augustine (In Genes., Book XII, ch. vii, xxiv), distinguish not two, but three sorts of visions: the corporeal, the imaginative, and the purely intellectual. St. Thomas implies the same doctrine when he distinguishes three ways of attaining to the knowledge of God: the first by the spectacle of the world; the second by supernatural illuminations, preceded by sensible images (Example: the visions of the prophets; or simply the knowledge of the Person and the acts of Jesus Christ and the

saints). There also, he says, the soul acts "according to her" natural "mode." Finally, "by the third manner, the soul rejects all the objects of sense, surpassing all things and her own self in her conception of God" (*De Verit.*, a. 15, ad. 3). As to the possibility of these higher acts, see also Suarez (*De Orat.*, Book II, ch. xiv, No. 4). As to knowing the precise degree of prayer in which the soul thus begins to dispense of images, it is a question which had no sort of interest for dogmatic theology, and which mysticism has taken it upon itself to solve. 6.—The concomitant action of the faculties. Here and there, however, some images and acts of reasoning may be found mingling with mystic contemplation and seeming to aid in completing it. But these acts are present as a mere accompaniment only, and not as causes. They may sometimes be attributed solely to the action of grace; but more often they proceed, at least in part, from our own action, which we add to God's action. I shall refer to these later on as additional acts. For instance, it may happen that, while enjoying the divine communications, I may be searching for words and comparisons in order to describe it afterwards. I am thus making acts of the imagination. But they do not belong to the foundation of my mystic state. It is something that I superimpose to it. In entering into the mystic way, contemplative souls do not, therefore, lose the power of raising themselves to God by the considerations of created things and other ordinary means. But, in addition to this, they have an infused light also, and they thus revert in some measure to the desirable state that was once bestowed upon Adam. "Man," says St. Thomas, "in a state of innocence, had

a double knowledge of God and of divine things; the one by way of an interior inspiration which he possessed in common with the angels, and the other by means of sensible things; and this is the mode which is proper to mankind.... In that contemplation to which he was raised by grace, he resembled the angels" (De Verit., q. 18, a. 2). 7.—The triple attitude of our faculties. Let us now see how our three faculties —the understanding, the memory, and the imagination—act with regard to the divine communication. Each of them has its triple manner of operation, which we can sum up the following words: quiescence, concurrence, and strife. 8.—1° Quiescence. The faculties may be at rest and abstain from trying to add anything to that which they receive. The intellect is content to drink deep draughts of the experimental knowledge vouchsafed to to it; it is wise to stop there. The memory and the imagination, having nothing to receive, seem to slumber; and as a rule this is the best thing that they can do. 103 9.—2° Concurrence. If the memory and imagination should awake, they sometimes try to aid the prayer. For instance, the imagination goes in search of the words and comparisons that I have referred to above. Its assistance could very well be dispensed with, but it is a great thing not to be at war with such capricious faculties. As long as this concurrence lasts, we can say that all the faculties are united to God. But, with respect to the memory and the imagination, this is so in a very low degree only, as in the case of ordinary meditation. They make additional acts. They see a banquet served up; but as it is not intended for their entertainment they, at any

rate, show a certain amount of zeal by bringing their own provisions to the feast. 10. — 3° Strife. The state of quiescence or of concurrence is never of long duration in the prayer of quiet. Distractions soon make their appearance. The three faculties resemble frolicsome children, who are soon weary of sitting quietly at their mother's side. They want to be running about and playing. From time to time the attention reverts to the divine action which has been continuous, and then loses sight of it once more; the mystic union again becomes unconscious, unperceived. In the same way, a man stands with his eyes open before some extensive landscape. If his thoughts wander, his eyes still continue to receive the impression of the objects before him. And when his attention returns, he feels, though we know not how, that the sensation has not been interrupted. (With regard to distractions in the prayer of quiet, see St. Teresa, *Life*, chs. xv, xvii; *Way of Perfection*, ch. xxxiii; *Interior Castle*, Fourth Mansion, ch. i, 3). 11. — Some persons have found that the prayer of quiet was accompanied by fewer distractions in its earlier days than afterwards. How is this fact to be explained? One would expect that the divine action would increase in perfection as time went on. The following, so it seems to me, is the probable explanation. It shows, too, that it would actually be thus in all cases, except for a special intervention of grace. On God's part the action is doubtless the same as at the outset, neither more nor less. But this action combines, as must always happen, with our human nature, and from this side there reasons why there should be a decline of attention after a certain lapse of time. At first our



curiosity is excited, and with it the hope of progress. Little by little these sentiments become deadened, and the imagination then resumes its sway. We experience similar results when we undertake some new study that interests us keenly. Distractions are then few; but they return as soon as our interest begins to flag. 12.— Is there a remedy for distractions in the prayer of quiet? St. Teresa states that she had found none. Distractions are most frequent when the prayer of quiet is present in a low degree only; it is then a great test of patience. 13.— Additional acts. I have already made use of this expression. I must give its exact definition. To begin with, I applied the names constitutive or fundamental acts of the mystic state to those acts that belong necessarily to the state; such as thinking of God, tasting Him, loving Him. On the other hand, I described as additional acts of the mystic state those acts, other than distractions, which are not proper to the state; that is to say, are neither its cause nor its necessary consequence. This term expresses that an addition is made, whether voluntarily or not, to the foundation of the mystic union; it is a many-coloured embroidery, applied to a material of a uniform hue. Thus, to recite an Ave, or any vocal prayer whatsoever, during the prayer of quiet, is to make an additional act, since it is not necessary to the existence of this state. And it is the same when we apply ourselves to acts of reasoning or considerations upon various subjects, such as death, sin, etc., none of these things been essential to the mystic union. Our natural activity leads us to produce these acts, because it often happens that the mystic union is not sufficient to occupy us fully; we want to

complete and to assist the divine action. I will explain the proper course to follow later on (ch. xiv, 33). And yet these additional acts do not always proceed from our desire for activity. Then they come from the strongly marked divine attraction. God is free, should He choose to do so, to cause the memory, for instance, of one of the mystery of Our Lord's Life, to return to us frequently, through the mystic union. It is true that it is then an addition to the union, but it is one that is not detrimental to it. My definition does not include distractions amongst the additional acts. These are prejudicial to all prayer. We must not confound them with others, such as vocal prayers, that are good in themselves and may only be inopportune at times.

14. — Abbreviations to be avoided. In place of saying: additional acts, some ancient authors have merely said: acts. It is impossible fully to realise all the ill effects that have resulted from this true general expression. For these writers then went on to enunciate such principles as the following: "In supernatural prayer there are often no acts," or, "we must not be afraid of suppressing all acts." If they had said additional acts, the propositions would then have had a clear and correct signification. They would then mean: "In supernatural prayer there are often no acts that are foreign to it, such as vocal prayer, acts of reasoning, considerations, distinct reflections," or, "we must not be afraid of suppressing all such acts as are extraneous to the foundation of the prayer." But in the over-abbreviated form given to them, these phrases become very inaccurate. The opponents of mysticism have seized upon them eagerly, and have declared that we wish to suppress even the exercise of

the thought and the love of God, which things constitute acts, and so reduce the man to the condition of a block of stone. Some souls of good-will, on the other hand, have declared anxiously that they fail to understand how to occupy themselves aright in the mystic state. And long dissertations have been entered upon in order to explain to them that there are acts and acts. Time would have been saved had this distinction been emphasised by the use of some expressive terms at the beginning. 15.—Another abbreviated expression to be avoided. Instead of saying that mystic contemplation, when deprived of additional acts, comprises neither acts of reasoning nor any extraneous ideas, some mystics have employed a stronger expression. They have said: "The person thinks of nothing," or, "he loves God and possesses Him without knowing anything about it." These are mere figures of speech. For all the schoolmen are in agreement on this point, namely, that there is neither love nor enjoyment without knowledge. Again, if it were not so in your prayer, if you were not thinking of God in it, how would you know whether it is He whom you love and whether you are praying at all? The right expression is this: "The mind does nothing, save that it adheres to the divine action," or, "it thinks of nothing material or earthly, of nothing that occupied it habitually in the natural order, of nothing, either, of all those things that are developed in books of meditations." According to Bousset, when St. Teresa says that "the understanding does not act," she merely means to indicate that no discursive acts are made (*Mystici in tuto*, Part I, Book 1, ch. i). In the same way, Bousset

explains that we must not abuse St. Francis of Sales' comparison of the statue. "Comparisons must be kept within their proper limits, and it is fatal to push them to extremes. Thus the saint's statue is motionless, not by the cessation of all acts, but only by the cessation of the most turbulent acts" (*États d'Orasion*, Book VIII, No. 15). 16. — Excuses for this language. How can these writers have come to employ such a manifestly incorrect phraseology? This is easily explained. Suppose that a traveller leaves a country where he has seen a great variety of objects—houses, palaces, trees, people and animals—and upon awaking in the morning he finds himself in some vast desert, arid and sandy or upon the high seas. Ask him: What do you see? And instinctively he will reply: Nothing. And if you remonstrate with him for this language, if you urge that he sees the sky and also the sand or the sea, he would answer: Very true, but that is what I call nothing in contrast with the multitude of objects that I have left behind. And, in the same way, these writers are expressing their first feelings of astonishment, the first impressions of solitude and silence that this prayer has made upon them. They exaggerate this impression in order to make it more striking and to describe it in a few words. 17. — They know quite well that certain underlying things have to be taken for granted in their words, but these things, in their eyes, are quite evident. The instructed in mysticism often read between the lines also. It was thus that St. Teresa, when still undecided as to her way, read a little treatise, entitled *The Ascent of the Mount* (*Subida del Monte Sion*). She came across this sentence: "In the prayer of quiet one can think of

nothing." But she knew how to interpret its meaning, and was greatly consoled at recognising in it her own prayer (Life, ch. xxiii, 13). The uninstructed, however, are less advantageously placed. The study of their own interior operations fails to supply them with facts to supplement the omissions of their teachers. And so here, as with the other over-abbreviated sentences, they see only insoluble enigmas which are an insult to their good sense. Let us bear this disposition in mind, and confine ourselves for the future to the language of strict accuracy. Authors have wished to cut their explanation short, and their obscurity has resulted in interminable disputes. And then, to elucidate matters, all the treatises have been lengthened out; the question whether it is possible to love without knowledge having been the cause, especially, of the expenditure of a perfect flood of ink. There is no objection to the use of the abbreviated phrases when we are speaking of things that everyone is familiar with, for the meaning is then obvious. But it is quite otherwise with mysticism. The things that are left to be understood without being expressed will always lead to misunderstandings here. So let us be careful to avoid them. 18.—Is there a state of the prayer of quiet in which the will only is united? No: if the expression is used, it is only upon condition that it is not taken literally. For in its natural sense it means: "We still love God, but without thinking of Him in any way." This would be absurd. If the mind were in no way united; that is to say, if it were no longer at all occupied with the divine object, we should not love Him, and there would be neither love nor possession, and the will would be no more

united than the other faculties. 19.—First objection. If anyone tastes honey or some rare vintage, it may happen that he is wholly absorbed in this pleasure, without adding any considerations or acts of reasoning. Now, to enjoy pleasure belongs to the will. So the will alone would seem to be affected. 20.—Reply. When we speak of anyone being entirely engrossed with this pleasure, the existence of some knowledge is understood, only no notice is taken of it. For the pleasure necessarily proceeds from knowledge. You know the honey as being present and acting upon you. But you are chiefly occupied with the agreeable effect which results from it. Taste, like the other senses, is, first and foremost, an instrument of knowledge. But these operations of the senses can be accompanied by either pleasure or pain. There are always two acts instead of one: to know and to possess; but the attention can be occupied especially with the second. 21.—Second objection. St. Teresa sometimes makes use of the expression: the will alone is united. And it is the same with St. Francis of Sales in his Treatise on the Love of God. Is this expression accurate? 22.—Reply. We must interpret the language in accordance with what we have just said. We have an additional proof of this in the context. For, while saying that the will alone operates, they credit it with acts of knowledge which, however, have nothing to do with it; the will, therefore, is really accompanied by knowledge, and consequently is not quite alone. When reading these authors, then, how should we interpret this expression: the will alone is united? We must look to the context for the sense. Now, St. Teresa applies it to

a case where the soul possesses God, although with a certain liberty of the understanding, which preserves some power of arguing, of reasoning (making her say that the understanding is not united), although with a host of small interruptions due to distractions. St. Francis of Sales has the same idea in his mind at times. At others, on the contrary, he means that the understanding is wholly attentive, without distractions and without additional acts. And then its activity retires into the background, and we are only conscious of the love and the possession which are dependent upon the will; and we say for short: The will alone operates, or alone is united. If modern writers wish to continue making use of these abbreviated phrases, let them at least remember to tell us what they mean by them! But, for the sake of greater clearness, it is better to avoid using them for the future. 24.—Prayer of silence. We have seen that all the mystic unions merit the name of prayer of repose (chs. II, 19; III, 15). In the same way we can give them the name of prayer of silence, since the noise of arguments and vocal prayers in a great measure disappears. This name begins to be applicable, in a certain degree, even to the prayer of simplicity. There are some cases, however, when it is applicable to the mystic union in a quite special manner. I mean at those times when neither distractions nor additional acts occur. All sounds are hushed. The soul is wholly immersed in an act of possession which seems to endure without any variation for a certain length of time. It is as though it were crystallised. This is the silent prayer of quiet. This state is also called spiritual sleep, or sleep of the

faculties, in order to indicate that the memory and the imagination slumber—that is to say, that they do not act. The understanding remains awake with regard to God, but it sleeps with regard to all objects apart from Him. 25.—We may form some idea of these states by an analogous fact of the natural order. Suppose that you are looking at a peaceful scene—such as a rural landscape. It is in your power, for a few minutes at any rate, to close the awareness of your mind to the memory of all other things, to all acts of the reason, to the formation of any sentence whatsoever. You merely gaze and recognise the presence of the object of your contemplation. This is a very faithful picture of the prayer of silence, of the prayer of quiet, freed from all that is opposed to it. Add to this such sentiments of love as are found in a mother watching over her sleeping child, and the resemblance is still more striking. 26.—It follows, therefore, that we must not make the prayer of silence or the sleep of the powers into special degrees of prayer, neither should we strive to find them a fixed place in the stages of the mystical life. They are simply names given to the different ways of being that the mystic union may possess at certain moments. Scaramelli admits that this is so (Tr. 2, No. 149); and yet he has set himself to classify these varieties as successive degrees. 27.—Explanation of certain words. If we do not want to be led astray by certain writers, we must be acquainted with the terms that they employ: to feel in the soul's centre, or in the depths of the soul. It does not occur to them to define these expressions, as they considered their signification sufficiently obvious. But they do not all give the same breath of meaning.



There are at least two points upon which they are all agreed, namely: 1° that the words refer to the soul with regard to its reception of the consciousness of the divinity; 2° that it is a question of a knowledge that exists without the co-operation of the senses, or of the sensible faculties, or of the reason. The soul is considered as a sort of sphere, the sensible faculties forming a surface and establishing a means of contact with the exterior world. But this sphere has an interior part also, a centre that is removed from the material world. Many writers stop short there, and say: all mystic union takes place at the soul's centre, which simply means: apart from sensible images and acts of reasoning. Others, such as St. John of the Cross (*Living Flame*, Stanza I, line 3), distinguish several degrees of depth in the mystic union, according as the soul is farther removed from the operations of the senses and of the imagination. The last degree, the true centre, that is to say, may be defined by them as the spirit in the enjoyment of the spiritual marriage. This, in other words, is the idea that St. Teresa symbolises by the Mansions of her Interior Castle and their leading up to a central chamber, the Throne-room. We see that a certain latitude exists as to the use of these words. We can do without them. In themselves they are of slight importance. 28.—The word summit, or supreme point of the spirit (*apex mentis*), has the same meaning. The reason is called the superior part of the soul, in opposition to the sensible faculties and appetites. The summit is commonly regarded as that which is uppermost, and this, in mystic contemplation, is the mind. Since the words centre and summit have no exact signification

in themselves, they must never be employed to define a state of prayer without previously defining them. Otherwise it would merely be to explain one obscure thing by another that is still more obscure.

## **Chapter X The Seventh and Eighth Characters of the Mystic Union**

1.—Seventh character. It consists in this, that these states exhibit continual fluctuations. The mystic union does not continue at the same degree of intensity for five minutes together. The divine ocean, into which we have penetrated some few steps, has waves that advance and retire, an ebb and a flow. 2.—And this is a source of suffering. For during the ascending. We hope to rise higher than ever before. But it is not to be; and behold! we begin to descend again. During the first phase, God is like the mother, showing a sweetness to her child and allowing it to come quite near, and then the sweetness is withdrawn. And we may wait in this way for years, just as the paralytic man in the Gospels waited by the pond of Bethsaida for the coming of the angel. Throughout this repeated successions of risings and fallings the mean level may continue about the same for a considerable time. 3.—The eighth character consists in this, that the mystic union requires much less effort than meditation; and correspondingly less again as the state is a higher one. There is none at all in ecstasy. These facts are evident from the comparison that St. Teresa makes use of to depict the successive degrees of prayer in the Book of her Life (ch. xi). She regards the soul as a gardener, watering his garden with ever less and less labour.

4.—In the prayer of quiet an effort is still required. This does not consist in procuring the substance of the prayer for ourselves (God alone can bestow it), but: 1° In driving away distractions: a labour that is never wholly successful. This must be done gently, so that we do not injure the mystic union itself. 2° In producing here and there such additional acts as we have an attraction or facility for. 3° In restraining the weariness which the semi-aridity causes when the prayer of quiet is experienced in a low degree, and in resisting the temptation to discontinue the prayer.

5.—Fatigue. From the moment that labour and renewed effort are required, there 115 is a certain amount of fatigue. We scarcely heed this if the prayer of quiet is intense, and we continue at prayer without difficulty for three or four hours together. But if the prayer of quiet is weak, fatigue is felt after half an hour or an hour. The state of health is also a factor here. The fatigue will be still more apparent if we make a retreat of several days in silence, and if during that time the prayer of quiet is nearly always present in a low degree only.

6.—Other causes of fatigue. 1° In the case of all mental work, and even of simple reading, a difficulty of application after meals is experienced by those who are not in robust health. The process of digestion concentrates the vital activity upon the stomach at the expense of the brain, and to combat this would entail a considerable tax upon the head. Experience shows that it is generally the same with regard to the prayer of quiet. This kind of union is not yet sufficiently strong to withstand the physiological law.

7.—2° So in the natural life, we find that with many persons prolonged continuance in an

unchanged position is a cause of anæmia and consequently of fatigue. The unused muscles atrophy, and the respiration and circulation of the blood becomes enfeebled. Doctors combat these effects by contrary causes. They order exercise, either by manual labour or by walking. Now, the supernatural states do not bring us into a miraculous condition of being. They may need to fatigue, therefore, by the mere fact of the immobility of the body if we engage almost daily in very long prayers. This result must be corrected by physical exercise, which restores the natural energy to the circulation and respiration. 8.— A difficulty. But whatever the cause of the fatigue, how should we act in the following case? An anæmic person, having plenty of spare time, feels an attraction for very prolonged prayer. He regards this attraction as coming from God, inasmuch as he usually enters to some slight extent into the mystic state at these times. But, on the other hand, he finds that these exercises exhaust him; while external occupations restore his vitality. 9.—Reply. Given these data, it would seem to me to follow that until he receives some new orders he should give himself to prayer with great moderation, and in such a measure only as not to cause any great fatigue. God indicates the line of conduct from the moment that He does not give the means of resisting the feeling of exhaustion. St. Teresa teaches a similar doctrine. Speaking of inability to meditate, she says: "This comes most frequently from bodily indisposition.... Meanwhile, the more we force the soul on these occasions, the greater the mischief and the longer it lasts. Some discretion must be used in order to ascertain whether

ill-health be the occasion or not. The poor soul must not be stifled... and so it is not always right... to torment the soul to the doing of that which is out of its power. There are other things then to be done— exterior works, as of charity and spiritual readings, though at times the soul will not be able to do them. Take care, then, of the body for the love of God, because at many other times the body must serve soul” (Life, ch. x, 23). In the lives of the saints we often read of exceedingly prolonged prayers, and we are tempted to accuse ourselves of cowardice when we do not try to imitate them. This is an exaggeration if we do more than our strength permits. This aptitude for prolonged prayer is a highly desirable thing (ch. xii, 9), but it is a special gift; we do not have it merely because we try to produce it. I said just now that in the case of fatigue we must exercise moderation with regard to prayers that are not of obligation. I did not say that we must discard them altogether. The fatigue is not usually so great as to necessitate such an extreme measure. To say, “I will resume my prayer in better times, when the winds of grace are more favourable,” would be a mere pretext. In such a case we should run the risk of waiting for years. Let us steer a middle course, that of short alternations; taking a quarter or half an hour for prayer and then returning to active life, that is to say; then after a certain time coming back to prayer again, and so on. Let us not be afraid of asking for this grace—one that is as rare as it is precious:—of being able to remain for a long time in prayer without fatigue and without distractions.

## Chapter XI The Ninth Character of the Mystic Union

1. — The ninth character of the mystic union is that it is accompanied by sentiments of love, of repose, of pleasure, and often of suffering. 2. — Sentiments of love. These are always produced by the mystic union. But it sometimes happens that the love is very calm and even almost imperceptible. It then seems no stronger than in ordinary prayer. Take notice, however, that it is a question of love felt, and not of that which shows itself by works. We shall speak of this latter in the ensuing chapter (see also ch. xxiv, 22). At other times the soul's ardours become very apparent under the influence of the mystic union. They may even be violent (see *Interior Castle*, Sixth Mansion, ch. ii; Relation I, addressed to St. Peter of Alcantra, 1560; Second Letter to Fr. Rodrigo Alvarez). In the case of St. Stanislaus Kostka, the heat became so burning at times that he used to apply cloth steeped in cold water to his breast, in order to obtain relief. These great transports probably occur only when the soul has attained to the full union. They are often accompanied by a real anguish, an intense desire to see God). 3. — Whatever the strength of this love, we feel that it is produced of itself without our doing anything to bring it about; we even feel that if we wish to strengthen it (and we secretly desire this) it would be labour lost. We are in the passive state. We can barely accept what we receive. 4. — Sentiments of pleasure. Even with regard to the prayer of quiet St. Teresa often speaks of "the great delights" that are enjoyed. This is so in the case of ecstasy; but with the prayer of quiet, experience shows that many souls

enjoyed no such great happiness. On this point the saint was speaking chiefly of herself. She received exceptional favours, probably on account of her great trials, or the part she played as the Foundress of the Order. And, further, it is to be believed that when ecstasies receive the inferior graces, it is in a much more perfect manner than others. There is always pleasure inherent to the prayer of quiet. But at times, and even when it is of considerable strength, we are hardly aware of it. In such a case we should feel more enjoyment, although of another kind, when reading an interesting book or engaging in conversation. 5.— At certain moments, however, the prayer of quiet causes sudden and very ardent spiritual delights. This probably does not happen with beginners. It is with this grace as with the spiritual embrace: it is experienced at first for a few seconds at a time only, by gusts, as it were. The two graces are now separated, now united. This, doubtless, is the grace that St. Teresa wished to describe when she says that we sometimes inhale, as it were, some delicate perfume. It is important to note that it is then not a mere sweetness, the fragrance produced by the thought of God, but it is a way of tasting God Himself. Of course, we must not reject this pleasure on pretence of self-mortification. It is sufficient if we see in it a means of uniting ourselves with God, and not an end in itself. The object of mortification is to remove all that imposes any obstacle to the divine union, not that which favours it. We can say the same in the case of other spiritual consolations. 6.— Spiritual intoxication. When this delectation is ardent or of long duration, it produces a kind of spiritual

intoxication that at times resembles a partial slumber, and at others is full of ardour (see St. Teresa, *Life*, ch. xxvi). 7.—We apply the term jubilation, to a fervour of love and joy such as the soul could hardly contain. Our utmost efforts are required to hide it from those about us. 8.—Extraneous influences. The pleasure caused by the prayer of quiet is influenced by the dispositions that the soul brings to the prayer. It makes itself more clearly felt if we are passing through a period of peace or joy. And it is the same when these graces have a certain novelty for us. On the other hand, if we are going through a period of sadness, of trial, the pleasure caused by the prayer of quiet may be in part disturbed or veiled. 9.—Apart from the times given to prayer God sends numerous crosses to those whom He grants the favour of the mystic union. The unlearned in mysticism fancy that the soul enjoys continual consolations, and they sometimes go on to say contemptuously: “Personally, I prefer to be led by a more rugged road, that of the Cross.” But God, as they should understand, does not dispense His intimate friends from the Cross; quite the contrary. 10.—And, further, the mystic state brings with it sufferings which are peculiar to it and which may be felt even during prayer. I will enumerate them: 11.—1° There are the sufferings of the beginners who have not been instructed with regard to these things. 12.—2° One great cause of suffering is the need to possess God more fully. The stronger and more exalted God’s communications, the more acute becomes the thirst for a still more complete communication. St. Teresa tells us of the martyrdom that she underwent at certain times, and



which she describes in her Hymn: "I die in that I do not die." The soul then arrives at the anguish of love (see Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, ch. xi, and Second Letter to Fr. Rodrigo Alvarez). Even in the prayer of quiet the suffering is very keen at times. To illustrate the possibility of the statement let us imagine a man who, wishing to hear a magnificent concert, can merely with great difficulty get access to a small crack in a partition, where he would catch fragments only of the harmony. What he hears would obviously cause him pleasure, but, at the same time, all that he misses would be a sorrow to him. It is possible, therefore, to feel both pleasure and grief at the same time, although in proportions that vary according to the circumstances of the particular case. 13.—When the sentiments of pleasure and suffering are of almost equal strength and are both very ardent, the resulting state takes the name of wound of love. To show that the simultaneity is possible, and that it is so in a strong degree, here is a new simile. Also it will show us the physiognomy of the state. Something of the same kind is experienced in human love when it is violent. A great sweetness is felt, the lover does not wish to quit the thought of his beloved; he enjoys it. But at the same time he feels his heart torn because of his absence from her, or because of the difficulty in conversing with her freely. There is thus a mingling of joy and of sorrow. So, too, it is possible to have delicious experiences of God and of His love, and to feel at the same time the secret anguish which is nothing other than the thirst for God, kindled by Himself. Sometimes the suffering has another cause: we are conscious of the desire to serve God, and at the

same time we feel that we are doing almost nothing for Him. It may be also that we cannot say why we suffer. 14.—Beginners, perhaps, do not feel the suffering, caused by the privation of God, to any great extent. They were overjoyed because they have made a step forward, and they are upheld by the hope, often ill-founded, that from to-morrow they will advance still farther and will experience something new. But these illusions fade away last. The cold reality appears, and if the soul preserves her hopefulness it is by virtue alone. She feels how hard it is always to remain riveted to the same spot, and never to hear the divine concert in all its fullness. What a torture this is! 15.—We can therefore understand how some weak souls may suffer from discouragement. We are astonished at first when St. Teresa, quoting herself as an example, tells us that certain persons, after attaining to the full union, have abandoned everything and have returned to the frivolities of the world. This grievous fall surprises us less when we see what continued trials have to be resisted. A person who had arrived at an habitual state of the prayer of quiet told me one day that he often began his prayer with these words: "Oh, my God, I know that I shall suffer during this exercise, and I am happy that it should be so. But while resigning myself joyfully to Thy holy will, I pray Thee that Thou wouldst bring me at last out of this miserable state in which Thy justice hath hitherto detained me." 16.—3° When the prayer of quiet is weak there is another kind of suffering, that of tedium. God does not send us sufficient material to occupy us fully. We should like to supplement what

He gives us by certain exercises, so as to avoid a state of semiidleness. But we shall see farther on, speaking of the ligature, that we find a great difficulty in doing so. We are therefore reduced to remaining with very little 121 occupation, restraining our natural activity. It is what we might call a semi-aridity. If this state extends over several weeks the tedium that results becomes extremely painful. 17.—Where the temperament suffers from a need for action and variety, the temptation to give up the prayer becomes very strong, and the person is ready to persuade himself that he will do more good and exterior work. 18.—4° And, finally, the soul suffers because of the alternations of grace. There are periods of abundance, but also of dearth, in which the mystic state disappears completely at times, even in the case of an ecstatic. See the example of St. Joseph of Cupertino. 19.—To sum up, the cause of suffering in the prayer of quiet does not lie in the prayer itself but in that which is lacking in it. In itself it may be the cause of slight pleasure, but not a distaste or lassitude. This is a surprising fact. For nothing similar occurs in the natural order. If every day, for years together, we were obliged to read the same page exclusively, or to listen to the same melody, our patience would not hold out: we should soon become desperate, and beg for mercy. Here it is quite the contrary. This monotonous, incomplete occupation, this air, repeated a thousand times, is always enjoyed. What we ask is that the possession of this blessing should become more perfect. 20.—We must not count on outside consolations amidst the sufferings. Those round about us, having experienced nothing similar,

understand nothing of our complaints. It is not their fault. 21.—We then begin to wish to meet with a soul that has arrived at the same degree. We would confide in it, rejoice together over the same joys, be inspired by the same hopes, warn each other of pitfalls to be avoided. St. Teresa approves of these mutual confidences. In fact, when these meetings take place we derive a certain consolation from them, but less than we had hoped. These communications eventually become exhausted, and the friend can finally do but one thing only: show that he understands our painful aspirations and that he sympathises; that he is powerless to satisfy them. He cannot raise the cruel veil that hides God from our eyes. If he is a saint, however, one resource remains. He can hasten our deliverance by his prayers. With regards to friends who have not received the mystic graces, there is no reason, as a rule, for giving them our confidences; we must deny ourselves this indulgence, and repress our longing to talk. If we yield to this need we shall often suffer for it. After the first moments of curiosity, your friends' doubts will increase more and more, and they will perhaps ended by giving you the reputation of being a visionary.

## **Chapter XII The Tenth Character of the Mystic Union**

1.—The tenth character consists in this, that the mystic union is accompanied, and this often in a very visible manner, by an impulsion towards the different virtues. God does not come empty-handed, so to speak, to the soul, and His sanctifying action is so

much the stronger and more sensible as the prayer is higher. St. Teresa tells us this constantly. The soul who permeates herself with God in the mystic union feels that she thus, without knowing exactly how, permeates herself with love, humility, and devotion.

2.—To begin with, divine love is the natural effect, as it were, of this kind of prayer, and it would of itself suffice to excite the soul to virtue; provided, that is to say, that she had a certain spiritual grounding. It gives an inclination for solitude, because God is more easily found there. It shows itself by aversion from sin and detachment from all that is not God; and it thus removes all obstacles to perfection. It teaches humility; for we love to make ourselves of no account before those whom we tenderly love and of whose superiority we are conscious. Finally, it impels to generosity and to the spirit of sacrifice. And at the same time God provides occasions for the exercising of these dispositions; He sends trials of all kinds, temptations, sickness, want of success, injustices or contempt. He imposes the most grievous sacrifices.

3.—And the remarkable thing is that certain virtues are sometimes given quite suddenly. St. Teresa refers to these instantaneous changes in the soul, and she symbolises them by the figure of the ugly, crawling worms becomes a beautiful, swift-flying butterfly. Certain faults have always resisted our efforts, our examen of conscience. And then, suddenly, as we passed to more advanced or deeper prayer, we find our faults corrected without any industry of our own. In this way, God wills to show His power to the soul. Speaking of the effects her ecstasies brought upon St. Teresa, it has been truly said: “Both time and effort,

these two conditions indispensable to all human operations, are absent here, and yet there is a complete and enduring change. What does this signify? That this transformation has not come about naturally." God thus gives us a lesson in humility. He has two opposite ways of teaching us by facts and making us realise clearly that our virtues depend chiefly upon Him: He either seems to abandon us at times to our weakness, or He gives us a sudden increase of virtue that we have not been able to foresee. 4.—But, besides this, the mystic state often brings with it a direct impulsions towards humility and towards one of its results, the joy caused by humiliations. If the unlearned in mysticism are unduly alarmed lest the souls that are given to prayer should fall into the sin of pride, it is because they lose sight of the fact that the supernatural virtues possess this character of bringing the virtues in their train, that of humility especially. They cry out: Draw not too nigh to God; but if you do, then beware of pride. It is as though they said: Do not go to drink at the one source of humility; you would imbibe the poison of pride. A moderate fear is sufficient, one that will serve to keep us on our guard, but not one that makes us shun God as we would dangerous company. 5.—Possible falls. We must not think that these greater aids will necessarily hinder the soul from being unfaithful to grace. We must be ever on our guard. Speaking of exit see itself, St. Teresa says: "It is clear from this,—and for the love of God, consider it well,—that a soul, though it may receive great graces from God in prayer, must never rely on itself, because it may fall" (Life, ch. xix, 20). 6.—The unreasonable

demands of certain directors. Nor must we exaggerate the influence of the inferior mystic states. Certain directors imagine that the prayer of quiet should so transform the soul that no defects, not even such as are involuntary, should be visible in her anymore; they think an admirable person should shine forth in her every word and action. This prayer tends, doubtless, to correct defects and to augment the virtues, but not with the force of the succeeding degrees. It does not imply that the person is already a saint, but it aids him to become one. It may have the effect, for instance, of making him bear joyfully with some infirmity or disappointment; this would already be a service not to be despised. Let us also note that amongst natural defects there are some that in no wise hinder attainment to a high state of virtue; to be slow and always behind-hand, for instance, in work, or precipitate and anxious; or, again, to be too silent or over-talkative in conversation, or to show an occasional want of clearness of perception in business, etc. These involuntary defects are often the result of the temperament. They are irritating to other people, but they may be associated with great self-denial, and they do not hinder God from granting the mystic union to the soul, especially if the person strives to enlighten and correct himself. And, for the sake of maintaining him in humility, God may permit him to strive all his life long without much result. The true obstacle lies in a lack of love and generosity. The director, therefore, should not say: "What! you pretend to have attained to the prayer of quiet? This is an illusion, for you have such and such a defect which offends those about you." That is not the question.

The façade of the house may have preserved its very ordinary aspect. But the important thing to know is whether there is progress within. Yes or no? Has there been an increase of solid virtue, such as obedience, kindness towards others, a joyful acceptance of contradictions, sickness, or humiliations? The rest will come in due time. Let us add that exaggerated reports are sometimes carried to a director concerning the person in whom he is interested. How many right actions are ill-interpreted because the hidden motives are unknown! How many excellent souls always fail to understand those who are not of their own particular way of thinking, whose little practices and theories as to the management of affairs differ from their own! The director has to be on his guard. 7.—In those who are favoured with the prayer of quiet, humility should produce three effects amongst others. 1° Instead of speaking of their happiness to all comers, these souls will carefully hide their graces, except from their directors. As to others, they will only open themselves up to them in a case of real utility. 2° Instead of regarding themselves as having entered into a spiritual aristocracy, dispensing the soul from all the obligations that are imposed upon the common herd, they will redouble their zeal in the discharge of the duties of their state; if they are Religious, they will give the example of fidelity to the least observances of the Congregation. 3° Instead of thinking only of enjoying the celestial consolations and forgetting their practical application, they will tell themselves that these joys are, above all, a preparation for sufferings, and particularly for humiliation; they should be ready to be forgotten,



counted for naught, put in the lowest place, reprimanded, thwarted, and perhaps calumniated as to their conduct or opinions. We must accept generously in advance these sacrifices of pride; the perfection of our spiritual condition can be gauged by the degree of this acceptation. 8.—When God leads the soul on to great sacrifices, we must be on our guard lest we fall into an excess of zeal. Let us say a few words about a very popular devotion which may tend to illusions. In our days the onslaughts of impiety awaken a need of expiation in saintly souls. As with other things, so here also there is eagerness for new practices that profess to surpass all the old ones in efficaciousness. And certain authors have gone to extremes on the subject of self-immolation, and they circulate their ideas abroad in a multitude of little leaflets. There are two ways of understanding expiation in the life of a “victim.” The first consists in a courageous and even joyful acceptance of all inevitable sufferings, doing this in the motive of reparation in union with Jesus crucified. A certain number of voluntary acts of penance are also added. All pious persons can aim at this method. We may call it living in the spirit of a victim. The second way goes on to ask for sufferings, not to attempt to avoid those that have serious results, to offer even life itself. The second manner should be regarded as quite exceptional. As a general rule, we should do better not to make these requests; they incline to illusions, and are often the outcome of pride. It is a mistake, especially, to recommend them to everybody indiscriminately, as is the case in the tracts to which we have referred. It is true that persons are advised to

consult a director before so offering themselves, but the directors are not informed as to the proper course to follow. They are left to guess at it, and experience shows that the result has not always been successful. Such exaggerated exhortations have an unsteady effect upon many minds. These persons talk only of offerings, or vows of self-immolation; instead of setting themselves to bear their daily crosses—which is a very difficult task—they dream of imaginary trials in some distant future. They offer their lives as if it were the simplest thing in the world. It would be more painful and more useful, perhaps, were they to dedicate this life wholly to the defence of the Church in the purification of society. There is every reason to preach prayer and penance in order to save the Church and the Holy Father and the people led away by anti-religious doctrines and revolutionary ideas. But to move the people is just as necessary and quite as difficult to achieve. These pious little leaflets say little or nothing on the subject. These rash petitions are sometimes granted; but we must not therefore conclude God's approval. He merely wishes to give a salutary lesson in humility and prudence. We then see these excitable people besieging their directors for consolations. They weary them with their lamentations, regretting that the trial did not take another form. This one has great disadvantages, they say. But they all have disadvantages! What such persons really want is suffering in appearance only; thorns that have no points. But in that case this parade of generosity should not be made, nor should they offer themselves for all conceivable sufferings: loss of health, that is to say, of interior and exterior

tranquillity, reputation, and fortune! If, however, anyone should have an attraction to the second manner, the director should first satisfy himself that the person is of a well-balanced mind, and that this desire is not the outcome of his sudden enthusiasm produced by a sermon or leaflet on the subject of expiation. And then, as a noviciate is necessary for all laborious and permanent states, he will require a very long noviciate, during which the first way of expiation is to be practised with perfection. This condition will seldom be fulfilled. These solid proofs of generosity and endurance will scarcely be given. Finally, if the person obtains permission to ask for sufferings, they must exclude temptations and interior sufferings, and also such exterior trials as react upon others, such as illnesses that are distressing to nurse. Other people have trials enough of their own. The vow of greater perfection should be preceded in the same way by a long noviciate. St. Teresa made it at the age of forty-five. But it had to be restricted in her case, because, in spite of her great lights, scruples resulted (Life, by the Carmelite of Caen, etc., ch. xi). 9.—I have said that the mystic states create a tendency to recollection (No. 2), and consequently to solitude; but we must take care not to fall into error by exaggerating this disposition. Without thinking of profiting by the leisure moments that our occupations fairly leave us, we try to dispense ourselves from all exterior occupations. We murmur against our Superiors when they do not fall in with our plans which we fancied to have come straight from Heaven. Religious who have been consecrated to the active life has been known to say to

themselves: "I have spoiled my life. My attraction shown me that I was made for a purely contemplative state. I should then have found God in prayer, and I should have attained to a close union with Him." And then they give themselves up to regrets, conceive a distaste for their vocation, and take steps to change their occupation or even their Congregation. The starting-point of these ideas was good and came from God; it was an attraction to recollection. But false notions came and mingled with them and caused the deviation from the right path. The conclusion no longer bears the divine Hall-mark; it is all discontent, disgust, disobedience, unrest, sterile dreamings, or the blind pursuit of a new life, the difficulties of which are ignored and upon which it is now too late to embark. The cockle has grown up alongside of the wheat. Again, you say: "My attraction shows that I was intended for the purely contemplative life." It may be that it merely shows that you are meant to be recollected amidst the active life, and to be so to a greater extent than such or such another whose attraction is different. The circumstances in which you are placed prove that this last interpretation is, in all probability, the only reasonable one. You say again: "I should have found God in prayer." Nothing proves it. Everything depends on His good pleasure. How often, when going to your morning prayer or to your annual retreat, have you not thought that the solitude was going to draw God down to you; and yet you have continued in your aridity? Are you sure that it would be otherwise in the new life of which you are dreaming? It is true that solitude is of itself a preparation for union with God; provided, however,

that we do not neglect the duties of our state. But there are other preparations also: namely, self-abnegation, the active life accepted through obedience, etc. And, as a matter of fact, a large number of souls have been known to arrive at the highest contemplation, although they were occupied with the care of the sick, teaching, or an absorbing administrative work. Instead of losing time in dreaming about some other position, they utilised such opportunities as had fallen to their lot. And then God consented to do the rest. 10.—Given that we are in possession of the mystic union, can we conclude that we are in a state of grace? If we merely have revelations and visions, the reply would be in the negative. The Holy Scriptures tell of visions that were sent to sinners, such as Balaam, Nabuchodnosor, and Balthasar. But we are speaking here of the mystic union. This is the answer: Those that receive this union, without any special revelation as to their state of grace, have merely a moral certainty that they are admitted into friendship with God; but it is a much higher certainty than that which the ordinary Christian deduces from the evidence of his dispositions. We can, in fact, have a moral certainty that our state of prayer is none other than this mystic contemplation, such as the generality of writers understand it. Now 1° this union contains a continuous act of perfect love, and this would be sufficient to place us in a state of grace, even if we were not in it already. The evidence of the mystic union is a positive proof, therefore, of the state of grace. It either supposes it or produces it; 2° it is admitted that this contemplation is brought about by

certain gifts of the Holy Ghost which necessarily suppose a state of grace. It is not in the plan of God's Providence to produce the acts of the gifts without the gifts themselves; 3° in this contemplation God manifests His friendship to the soul; what He accords to it is a friend's presence. We have a moral certainty, then, and the mystic union is thereby rightly regarded as a first development of sanctifying grace, a preparation for the final expansion which will be the beatific vision. "The mystic life, what is it if it be not the life of grace becoming conscious, and as it were experimental?" (Fr. Bainvel, *Nature et surnaturel*, ch. ii, 5). But a still stronger assurance can be imagined, when given by such a distinct revelation that the mind would be absolutely convinced of its reality. What has just been said will serve to reassure the mystic souls that are assailed by violent temptations. They often continue in a state of anxiety, fearing to have yielded in greater or less degree. They should say to themselves that, even if their fears as to some great fault were well-founded, they have been restored to the state of grace by the very fact that the mystic union is granted to them once more. 11.—The supernatural states of prayer have the effect of inciting the soul to virtue. And does the practice of the solid virtues lead, in its turn, to the mystic graces? Not necessarily, but it is the best disposition for inducing God to grant them. What He chiefly desires for us is eternal happiness, and therefore sanctity. This is the "one thing needful." The rest is but a means. If we labour earnestly at our real end, God will show Himself generous to aid us in one way or

another. If, on the contrary, we are negligent, He will usually be sparing with His gifts (See ch. xxviii, 24).

### **Chapter XIII The Eleventh Character of the Mystic Union**

1.—The eleventh character consists in this, that the union acts upon the body, which in its turn acts upon it again. 2.—In the case of ecstasy, it is clear that the mystic union acts upon the body. It is from this that the definition of the degree is derived. This action is exercised in four ways: 1° The senses cease to act, or they convey a confused knowledge only. According as the cessation of action on the part of the senses is complete or almost complete, the ecstasy itself is called complete or incomplete. 2° As a general rule, the limbs become immovable, and one can neither speak nor walk nor make any gestures unless God restores this power miraculously. This last state is called mobile ecstasy. Here are some examples of this exception. St. Catherine of Siena, St. Catherine of Ricci, and St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi spoke during their ecstasies. We thus have accounts of what they saw or heard. St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi spoke so rapidly at times that six secretaries were required to take down her utterances (Vie, by Ceparì, ch. vii. Eng. trans., Orat. series, ch. xxviii). She sometimes walked during her ecstasy. On one occasion she even climbed up one of the columns of the church without the aid of a ladder. This occurred frequently with Catherine Emmerich when she was Sacristan and it was necessary to clean or decorate cornices or other places that were, humanly speaking, inaccessible (see M.

Ribet, *La mystique divine*, Vol. II, ch. xxxii). St. Frances of Rome heard her Confessor's questions when she was in an ecstasy, but not those of other persons. She composed verses of hymns at these times, which she sang. She moved and made gestures corresponding to the consoling or sorrowful pictures that were passing before her; she took part in these scenes, getting ready the manger, for instance, which seemed to her to be about to receive Our Blessed Lord upon His Nativity. 3° The respiration is almost arrested; sometimes it seems to be completely so. It is the same with the heart-beats, and consequently the pulse. In all these things there are 141 differences of degree, according as the contemplation is more or less deep. Sometimes, at certain moments, there has even been ground for fearing that death has supervened. 4° The vital heat seems to disappear, a coldness sets in at the extremities of the limbs. To sum up, everything seems as if the soul were losing in vital strength and motive power all that it gains from the side of the divine union. Farther on I shall say a few words as to certain accessory phenomena. 3. — The prayer of quiet. Since the mystic state has an influence on our organs when it becomes very strong (as in the case of ecstasy), we can imagine that it would also begin to have a certain action in the prayer of quiet, which is only a lesser degree of the same state. Experience confirms this *a priori* idea. But the degree of influence is not the same with everyone. I think it is more marked in persons with delicate constitutions. In any case, if this influence is not felt in the prayer of quiet, it will certainly begin to be felt when the union is more profound, although still inferior to ecstasy.



Sooner or later it will be experienced. Otherwise there would be no continuity between ecstasy and the state that precedes it: there would be a sudden leap when passing from one kind to another. 4.—Let us now enter more into detail: 1° The effect upon the eyes. This can only be observed properly if, while the body is immovable, the eyes remain wide open and fixed. Several persons have told me that they then only saw the objects about them as though they were veiled by a whitish mist. It is like an evenly dispersed fog, or the smoke of incense. This fog has its fluctuations, like the prayer itself. And with the prayer it increases in strength at times, and then diminishes in the same way. If the eyes are closed, the influence of the prayer of quiet is less easily shown. The union then has to be very strong. The eyes feel as if they were being darkened; so much so that at certain moments, when the state is at its deepest, it is as though one were in complete darkness. The cause is the same as that given above. The eye partially loses its power of sight. The result just now was that external objects could no longer be seen distinctly; here it is the light through the eyelids that begins to disappear. On the other hand, certain persons have told me that they do not ever remember to have experienced this impression of a fog. But in the majority of cases their testimony proves nothing either way, for they say that they have never made the experiment. They have always instinctively closed their eyes. They are right in doing so, for in this way one is more recollected. And if they did not, the sight might be greatly fatigued, as it would remain riveted to one fixed point. And then, further, in the case of the mist just referred to, the

eyes would necessarily make an effort to penetrate it, and there would be a second cause of fatigue. 2° The hearing loses its activity less easily than the sight. 3° Certain persons feel that their limbs become slightly less mobile. The fingers seem to lose their power of grasp. 4° The respiration is influenced to a certain extent. It seems to become feeble at times, and then it has sudden reawakenings. We feel the necessity for obtaining the requisite amount of air by taking a deep breath. 5° Sometimes, when the prayer of quiet becomes stronger, a slight chilliness is experienced in the hands and feet. 5.—Since the prayer of quiet acts as a check to bodily movements, these in return should react so as to impair the prayer of quiet. Experience confirms this expectation in an undeniable manner; but with this restriction, that very brief movements have but a slight and momentary influence. 6.—Thus, when we walk, read, or, more still, look about us, we feel that the divine action is diminishing. But that the prayer of quiet, if it is frequent, should disappear altogether, we must continue to move about or to divert the attention. When, on the other hand, we only move momentarily, to cough, for example, or change our position on our chair, or to give some brief information, the diminution is insignificant, or transient. We return at once to the former state, more especially if the eyes have been closed. 7.—St. Teresa blames those who will not stir at all for fear of marring the prayer of quiet. The saint does not go so far as to say that certain prolonged or violent movements would have no result. They would certainly do so. She implies this herself later on, for

she adds: "It is good... at the most to let fall at times some sweet word, as one that gives a blast ["soufflé léger" in the French translation] to a candle when he sees it out to kindle it again, which if it be burning serves only to extinguish it (Way of Perfection, ch. xxxi, p. 95). The saint then admits, as not being detrimental acts in which the body participates, provided that it does so in a slight degree only. 8.—It follows therefore, that there is a way of quitting the prayer of quiet or diminishing it when necessary. We begin to walk or to move to and fro. 9.—Let us suppose the case of a person who has voluntarily quitted this supernatural prayer, by moving or attending to some business on account of which he had been disturbed. If after several minutes' interruption he comes back again to his prayer, will the supernatural prayer return? I do not know that we can give any general reply in cases where the prayer of quiet only occurs occasionally. For everything depends upon God's free will; the state may return or it may not. But if the prayer of quiet is habitual during the times of recollection, the mystic state goes on again as though it had not been interrupted. It does not matter although it is interrupted several times running. It is as if we broke off momentarily from reading a book and then returned to it again. If it were a question of ordinary meditation, it would annoy us to have the threads of our thoughts cut in this way. We should require to pick them up again with an effort. Here we have merely to give our consent; it is instantaneous and without effort. 10.—Tears. The mystic state does not produce these necessarily. St. Teresa does not speak of them in her

own case except in connection with very sublime contemplations. She says (Life, ch. xix, 2) that "in the beginning" she found herself in a flood of tears when she came out of her ecstasy. She attributes them to "an exceeding great tenderness" for God. She gives the same reason in the Interior Castle (Fifth Mansion, ch. ii, 6): "It [the soul] is bitterly grieved at seeing them [all men] offend Him." She again alludes to tears in the Way of Perfection (ch. xix). Elsewhere she recognises that the temperament is a factor in this matter. "You must also notice that bodily weakness may cause such pain, especially with people of sensitive characters who cry for every trifling trouble. Times without number do they imagine they are mourning for God's sake when they are doing no such thing... the cause may be an accumulation of humour round the heart, which has a great deal more to do with such tears than has the love of God" (Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, ch. vi, 7). We might translate this sentence into modern phraseology by saying that with certain persons ecstasy may perhaps have, not a moral effect, but a purely physical action upon the lachrymal glands. 11.—Phenomena that accompany ecstasy. In the case of ecstasies we meet occasionally with the following phenomena which concern the body: 1° The body rises up into the air. This is what is termed levitation; 2° Or it is enveloped in a luminous aureole; 3° Or it emits a fragrance. These phenomena are not a necessary effect of the mystic union itself, like those that we have just described above (2.) They are superadded to it. When God produces these exceptional phenomena, it is usually with the object of giving credit to one of His

servants whom He has charged with some important mission: such as the founding of a religious Order or reviving the Faith in any country. On these questions, see M. Ribet, *La mystique divine*, Vol. II; and ch. xxii, 67, note. Let us say a few words regarding levitation.

12.—Levitation. Here are the circumstances. 1° Sometimes the ecstatic develops a considerable strength in his ascents. Thus we read in the *Life of St. Joseph of Cupertino* that on three occasions he seized one of his companions and carried him up with him into the air. He was present one day at a ceremony in which ten men were vainly endeavouring to hold up and fix a heavy Cross. He darts forward, flying as though he were a bird, lifts up the Cross like a feather and fixes it in its place (*Vie*, by Mgr. Bernino, chs. x and xii). The same saint, when saying Mass, adopted an attitude which, had it been natural, would have necessitated considerable effort. “At the moment of consecration he raised himself up so that he touched the ground with the tips of his toes only, and remained in this position until after the Communion”. St. Gerard Majella, a Redemptorist lay brother (died 1755), when speaking one day to the Prioress of a Convent, fell into an ecstasy. He seized the parlour grille, as if with the object of restraining his fervour. The grating yielded and bent in his hands as though it were soft wax (*La Stigmatisation*, by Dr. Imbert, Vol. II, ch. xxvii, p. 420). St. Michael of the Saints, a Trinitarian (died 1625), being in an ecstasy, ran across the fields at such a pace that eight Religious who were trying to bar the way were unable to stop him were unable to stop him (*Vie des Saints*, by Collin de Plancy and Abbé E. Daras, July 5th, p. 255). 2° When

the body is lifted up into the air it often becomes as light as a feather, so that a breath is enough to set it in motion and to cause it to float like a soap-bubble (see 144 the facts quoted by Dr. Imbert, Vol. II, ch. xviii). 3° At other times the ecstatic's body cannot be moved. It is as resistant as a rock (see Dr. Imbert, Vol. II, ch. xviii). We have the instances of Margaret Agullona, a Franciscan Tertiary (died 1600), and of Giles of Santarem, a disciple of St. Dominic. St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi became sometimes so heavy during her ecstasies that they could not move her. They were not even able to stir her arm or her hand. But "when she had recovered the use of her senses, she felt pain in such of her limbs as had been too roughly handled" (Vie, by Ceparì, ch. vii). Generally, with ecstasies, the body is immovable only when lying on the ground. 4° There is no fixed rule with regard to the height to which the body ascends. When St. Francis of Assisi had withdrawn to Mount Alverna, his only companion being Brother Leo, his confessor, this latter saw him lifted up sometimes to a man's height from the ground, sometimes above the highest trees, and at others so high that he was no longer visible (Vie, by Chalippe, Book IV). 5° At the conclusion of the ecstasy the body redescends slowly, without injuring itself. One day when Blessed Thomas of Cori (died 1729) was giving Communion, he rose up in an ecstasy as high as the vaulting of the church, still holding the Ciborium. He then gently and gradually descended, and went on giving Holy Communion (Vie des Saints, by Collin de Plancy and Abbe E. Daras Jan. 11th, p. 472). 6° St. Teresa tells us that she was seized with great fear on the first

occasion when she felt herself thus lifted up (Life, ch. xx, 9). 7° In St. Joseph of Cupertino's numerous ecstasies it was remarked that his garments were always harmoniously arranged as though by another hand (Vie, ch. xxii). With regard to the naturalistic explanation of levitation and of the stigmata, see ch. xxxi. 13.—At the beginning of this chapter we considered the effects produced upon the body by the mystic union, during the actual time of the prayer. It will be well to ask if it has any after influence upon the health. As regards ecstasy, let us consult the lives of the saints. St. Teresa states that ecstasy, "however long it may last," has never injured her health. "Nor do I remember, however ill I might have been when Our Lord had mercy upon me in this way, that I ever felt the worse for it; on the contrary, I was always better afterwards. But so great a blessing, what harm can it do?... It thus robs us of our bodily powers with so much joy, in order to leave them greater" (Life, ch. xviii, 15). The only inconvenience that the saint experienced was fatigue. "If the rapture lasts, the nerves are made to feel it" (Second Letter to Fr. Rodrigo Alvarez, Life, p. 457). She also says: "Even on the following day, I have a pain in my wrists and over my whole body, as if my bones were out of joint.... So then, though I do all I can, my body has no strength to move for some time; the soul took it all away. Very often, too, he who was before sickly and full of pain remains healthy, and even stronger" (Life, ch. xx, 16, 29). It has been observed that with other persons the ecstasy has produced a considerable degree of physical weakness afterwards. Dr. Imbert cites several examples, such as St. Elizabeth of Hungary

(Vol. II, ch. xvii, pp. 273, 274) and Dominic of Jesus-Mary Ruzzola, General of the discalced Carmelites. His is an extreme case. After his ecstasies "he experienced severe pains. His bruised limbs made it impossible for him to stand or move. He even vomited blood." The Ven. Mary of the Incarnation, Ursuline, speaking of the ecstasies that she had while still in the world, adds: "I came out of this state after an hour or two in profound peace and great sweetness of spirit.... As to my body, it emerged from this prayer more enfeebled than would have been the case after the most frightful austerities, but, nevertheless, always able to attend to my ordinary occupations" (*Histoire*, by Abbe Chapot, Part I, ch. iv). Another striking example is that of Blessed Mary of the Incarnation, Carmelite (Madame Acarie). At the age of twenty-eight, says her biographer, "God's onslaughts took her with yet greater impetuosity and with such a violent trembling that it made her bones crack, and wrung from her piercing cries as if she were being stabbed to the heart.... She expected that they would cause her death, so much so that she once told M. Fontaine, her confessor at Pontoise, that on several hundred occasions she had gone to bed not expecting to live until the morning" (*Vie*, by André du Val, Book I, ch. v; see also Book II, ch. xiv). St. John of the Cross, speaking of high raptures, says that they are not "always attended by such terrors and shocks of nature as in the case of those who are entering into the state of illumination and perfection [the mystic union]... and as in this kind of communications, namely, of ecstasies and rapture. For in others [those who have reached the spiritual marriage] they take



place with greater sweetness" (Spiritual Canticle, Stanza XIV, line 5, p. 84) He had previously dealt with the subject at greater length. Speaking of the "Beloved," he says: "The soul, because of its intense longing after the Divine eyes, that is the Godhead, receives interiorly from the Beloved such communications and knowledge of God as compel it to cry out, 'Turn them away, O my Beloved.' Such is the wretchedness of our mortal nature that we cannot endure—even when it is offered to us—but at the cost of our life, that which is the very life of the soul and the object of its earnest desires, namely the knowledge of the Beloved. Thus the soul is compelled to say, with regard to the eyes so earnestly, so anxiously sought for, and in so many ways —when they become visible—'Turn them away' " (ibid., Stanza XIII, line I, pp. 68-9). "So great, at times, is the suffering of the soul during these ecstatic visitations— and there is no other pain which so wrenches the very bones and which so oppresses our natural forces—that, were it not for the special interference of God, death would ensue.... Such graces cannot be perfectly received in the body, because the spirit of man is lifted up to the communion of the Spirit of God, Who visits the soul, and it is therefore of necessity, in some measure, a stranger to the body. Hence it is that the flesh suffers, and consequently the soul in it, by reason of their union in one person" (ibid., stanza 13, line 1, p. 69). Elsewhere he again says that with the more advanced "ecstasies, raptures, and dislocations of the bones occur at times" (Obscure Night, Book II, ch. i, p. 374). Sometimes the weakness comes, not from the ecstasy itself, but from the

transports of love that follow it. In her youth, the Ven. Anne of St. Bartholomew, one of St. Teresa's companions, fell ill from this cause, and it was thought that she would die (*Vie*, by Fr. Bouix, 2nd ed., Book II, ch. v). To sum up, the divine ecstasy is far from being prejudicial to the health; but the limbs may feel a great fatigue from it at times. Benedict XIV, on the other hand, maintained that this fatigue indicates that the ecstasy is not divine, but purely the result of ill-health. It is not possible to agree with him here. He does not rely upon the lives of the saints, but on the mere statement of the physician Zacchias (*De canon.*, ch. xlix, No. 5). 14.—With regard to the prayer of quiet, we have seen that if it is greatly prolonged it may be the indirect cause of a certain fatigue (ch. x, 5). As we see that this sometimes happens in the case of ecstasy, it will be well to inquire whether the prayer of quiet produces this fatigue directly. It is very difficult to decide on this question of fact. For those anæmic persons who receive this prayer, recognise several other causes of their sickly condition. I have never been able to learn that they had come to any conclusion as to whether this supernatural state played an important and particularly a direct part in the matter. 15.—Stigmata. Several ecstasies have borne on their feet and hands and side, or upon the brow, the marks of Our Saviour's Passion, accompanied by corresponding and very acute sufferings. These are the visible stigmata. Others have had the sufferings only; these are the invisible stigmata. St. Catherine of Siena's stigmata became at once invisible in response to her request. The pain was usually so intolerable that she said that a miracle

alone prevented her dying from it (Bolland., April 30th, No. 195). The existence of the stigmata in the case of many saints is so well-established by historical proofs that, as a general rule, it is no longer disputed by unbelievers. M. Georges Dumas, professor of religious psychology at the Sorbonne, admits it distinctly in his article in the *Revue des deux Mondes* (May, 1907), while seeking for a naturalistic explanation. 16.—The sufferings form the essential part of the visible stigmata. The substance of this grace is compassion for Jesus Christ, the participation in His sufferings. There could be no reason for our bearing the symbol without having something of the reality, according to the measure of our moral strength and in conformity with our condition. There would be danger of pride in appearing as though we were honoured with a privilege, and there would not be the merit of a painful ordeal as a compensation. Finally, if the stigmata really comes from God, it is a miracle prolonged for years together; it cannot consist in a mere spectacular effect. The sufferings of the stigmata occur even where there is no hæmorrhage from the wounds. As a rule, other trials are added to these. "The life of those who bear the stigmata," says Dr. Imbert, "is but a long series of pains which lead up to the divine malady of the stigmata, and then form an escort, as it were, continuing with it up to the hour of death" (*La stigmatisation*, Vol. II, ch. x, p. 126). 17.—It seems to be historically proved that all those who received the stigmata were ecstasies. As a rule, they had visions in keeping with the part of fellow-sufferers with Jesus Christ: Our Lord showing Himself to them in the bloodstained garments of His

Passion. Amongst apparitions of this kind (and they are numerous) we may cite as very characteristic those that were granted to St. Catherine of Ricci, of the third order, regular, of St. Dominic, near Florence. Her ecstasies of the Passion began when she was twenty years old (1542), and for twelve years they were reproduced weekly with minute exactness. The ecstasy lasted exactly twenty-eight hours, from midday on Thursday until four o'clock on Friday afternoon (Bull of canonisation), being interrupted only so that the saint might receive Holy Communion. Catherine conversed aloud with the actors in the various scenes that were present before her; her frame imitated the gestures, attitudes, and various movements of Our Lord's body during His sufferings. The drama was subdivided into scenes, about seventeen in number, which began at a regular hour. On coming out of her ecstasy her limbs were covered with wounds produced by the rods, cords, etc. (Vie, by Fr. Bayonne, Vol. I, ch. ix; English: Life, by F. M. Capes, ch. vi). For several months the saint, distressed by the celebrity that these ecstasies of the Passion brought her, caused her Religious to pray that she might be delivered from them. This prayer was granted. We have had facts similar to these, and remarkable for the length of their duration, in the nineteenth century. Maria von Möerl, the ecstatic of Kaltern, in the Tyrol (1812-68), after prolonged sufferings, began at the age of twenty to have ecstasies. A year later she received the stigmata, and during the thirty-five remaining years of her life she had the ecstasy of the Passion regularly every week from Thursday evening until Friday evening. Each

scene was reflected in her attitudes (see Dr. Imbert, Vol. I, ch. xxxii; and Léon Boré, *Les extatiques du Tyrol*.) 18.—The number of those who have received the stigmata. Dr. Imbert, who has made extensive researches on the subject of stigmatisation, comes to the following conclusions: 1° No stigmatised persons were known before the thirteenth century; the first case of which a description was given being that of St. Francis of Assisi. 2° Since that time this writer reckons 321 cases, with regard to which there is every reason to believe in a divine action as the cause (Preface, p. xxi). He thinks that others would be found by searching through the great libraries of Germany, Spain and Italy (*ibid.*, p. xii). 3° In this list 41 are men. 4° There are 62 saints or Beati of both sexes (*ibid.*, p. xvi). 5° There are 29 persons who lived in the nineteenth century. 6° There have been false stigmatics. These were finally found to be simulating the stigmata and sanctity, in order to make themselves interesting (Vol. II, p. 1).

#### **Chapter XIV Twelfth Characteristic of the Mystic Union: The Ligature**

§ 1. General Aspect 1.—The twelfth character consists in this, that the mystic union impedes, to a greater or lesser degree, the production of certain interior acts which could be produced at will in ordinary prayer. I will go into the matter more fully later on (12, 24). 2.—This impediment is called the ligature of the faculties (Bossuet, *États d'Oraison*, Book VII, No. 21), and, when it is very strong, the suspension of the faculties. This last word does not signify suppression

(as when we say that a certain action is suspended), but that the faculties are no longer applied to their ordinary object. They are seized upon, riveted, by a higher object. The word *ligature* indicates that the soul is in the condition of a man whose limbs are bound more or less tightly by bands, and who can only therefore move with difficulty. 3.—The existence of the *ligature* in ecstasy is as obvious as possible. Save in exceptional cases, one thing only can be done: to receive what God gives. We are bound with regard to all beside. Consequently we foresee that there will be something analogous in the prayer of quiet, which is a lesser ecstasy; the law of continuity renders this idea *a priori* probable. And the expectation is so fully confirmed by experience that the question is one in which mystics have been most deeply interested. It has, as we shall find, many practical consequences. 4.—In the prayer of quiet we do not begin to take real notice of this impediment until the day when the mystic grace surprises us during vocal prayer, which it tends to interrupt; or when, not finding sufficient occupation in our prayer, we endeavour to complete it by reflections or vocal prayers. We are then conscious of an obstacle. 5.—True signification. In the prayer of quiet, the *ligature* does not amount to an absolute impossibility. Thus we can begin to recite a vocal prayer such as the *Paternoster*, But after two or three words, some unknown and secret force often stops us. We hesitate and stammer. A new effort then enables us to resume, and so it goes on. We should soon be weary if we attempted to continue the struggle. The proper course is to resign ourselves, as I shall say later on. 6.—When we are in the degree of

meditation we find nothing resembling this obstacle. We may not, perhaps, feel an inclination to recite a vocal prayer. But that is an impression of a very different kind; and the effort to begin once made, we can generally continue without difficulty. But the opposite occurs here., Even the partial powerlessness that occurs in aridity is less marked. 7.—Intensity. The ligature is weak when the prayer of quiet is weak. They generally increase together in strength during the course of the same prayer. But, in process of time, the prayer of quiet acts rather less than at the beginning. The impression of repose that accompanies the prayer of quiet equally becomes strengthened as the union itself becomes stronger. It is very likely that this impression is an effect of the ligature. St. John of the Cross points out that there is a first beginning of the ligature in the state, slightly lower than the prayer of quiet, which he calls the night of the senses. 8.—What does it affect? Let us examine in detail the acts with regard to which this impediment is felt. They are those that I have previously called additional acts. Further, it is only a question of voluntary acts, such as the recitation of a vocal prayer. But if it is God who is producing these additional acts in the soul, the thought of a Christian truth, for example, no difficulty is experienced. Nor does the ligature, when occurring in a weak degree, oppose any obstacle to another class of involuntary thoughts; namely, distractions. We have seen that these, unhappily, are not always prevented. And this is a fact worthy of notice: in the prayer of quiet there is one rule of action for voluntary and another for involuntary thoughts. The one (which, however,

appear to be useful) are hampered; the others (which are certainly harmful) find no impediment. 9.—We can enunciate the foregoing principles under another form by saying: the mystic state usually has a tendency to exclude everything that is foreign to it, especially such things as proceed from our own industry, our own effort. 10.—Finally, also, we may give this definition of the ligature: it is an impediment experienced with regard to the voluntary production of additional acts during the mystic state. 11.—The impediment may affect two kinds of additional acts: prayers and reflections. I will examine these facts separately, and afterwards point out the rules that should be followed. § 2. Some Facts Concerning Prayer, whether Interior or Vocal 12.—With regard to the prayer of quiet, four cases may occur over and above those where it is very weak. ° If it is a question of very simple desires, of short and wordless petitions, there is no difficulty as a rule. We can introduce them here and there in our prayer, provided that this is not done too frequently. We can thus send up a crowd of desires to God. 14.—2° Let us now consider such petitions or affections as are purely interior, but formulated in words. We have almost as much facility here as in the first case, so long as these utterances are very short and are repeated without variation, such as: “Jesus, mercy.” Acts that are not varied adapt themselves well enough to the mystic repose. 15.—3° But it is otherwise with regard to recitations, properly so called; made, that is to say, vocally, although in a low tone of voice; for these suppose long and varied phrases. They can only be said conveniently when the



prayer of quiet is weak. Also there are times when we are unable to recite the Rosary or the Breviary while standing still. We are obliged to move about; to walk, as has been said elsewhere. In this way the prayer of quiet is, as a rule, warded off sufficiently to enable us to perform our exercises. 16.—Exception. And yet, if there is a great abundance of graces, it is sometimes impossible to regain a full freedom of action, as happens in the case of ecstasies in the intervals between their ecstasies. St. Catherine of Ricci, having entered her convent at the age of thirteen, was subjected, during two or three years, to great humiliations on account of her extraordinary union with God. She was drawn to Him so powerfully that she seemed like a person half asleep, showing aptitude neither for the Choir nor for manual labour, and appearing stupid at recreation. Nobody suspected the cause of this abstraction; she let herself be accused without making any defence, not knowing that she ought to have opened her heart at least to her Director. So that they treated her as if she were some gentle and harmless idiot who is allowed to be at large (Vie, by Fr. Bayonne, Vol. I, chs. iv, vi; English: Life, by F. M. Capes, ch. iv, pp. 32-3). St. Philip Neri was often unable to say his Office unless he took alternate sentences with a companion. "Otherwise," says his historian, "he experienced great difficulty. For the ecstasy seized him, and he lost himself in God" (Bolland., May 26th, No. 183 of the second Life.) St. Joseph of Cupertino could not manage to say his Office. St. Ignatius was dispensed from it for the same reason. He was compelled to interrupt his Mass several times, so that it took him at least an hour, in

spite of his wish to observe the limit of half an hour which he had fixed for his Religious. In the above instances, the case for dispensation from the Breviary is just as good a one as that arising from a sick headache or any other illness. 17.—It is well to be acquainted with the examples of these three saints, for they meet an objection that is sometimes heard. “If your prayer thus prevents your performing exercises that are of obligation, it cannot come from God, for if it did He would be contradicting Himself.” The answer is that God is no more contradicting Himself here than when He sends an illness that hinders the hearing of Sunday Mass or keeping the Friday abstinence. When a law of the Church is morally impossible of execution, it ceases to oblige. God would be contradicting Himself only were He still to impose the obligation while taking away the power of fulfilling it. 18.—4° Recitations made aloud. Here the faculty returns in a great measure. Priests generally find no serious difficulty in reciting the prayers of the Mass. How can this be, when we said just now that there is a difficulty in the case of vocal prayers recited in a low voice? The reason is that when these prayers are said aloud there are a great many movements of the chest, throat, etc. In reading, too, the eyes are in motion. This, as we have said, is itself an obstacle to the prayer of quiet in any intense degree. And, further, in saying Mass there are changes of position between all the prayers. And, finally, the fact of standing erect, often with the arms raised, of itself demands a slight but continuous effort, which is sufficient to prevent a strong absorption in God. And the same man who cannot recite his Rosary during

the day without a great effort can say his Mass quite easily. 19.—It is the same with singing the Office in choir. Wishing to inform myself as to the facts (instead of trusting to a priori ideas), I have made various inquiries on this subject in convents of the Contemplative Orders. The most usual reply has been that a slight impediment exists, but is easily overcome; a material recitation of the words can, at any rate, be accomplished, the attention being mainly fixed upon the divine interior action. Others, but as a rare exception only, have stated that the impediment might be very strong; and others, again, on the contrary, have said that they had never heard of this difficulty. Further inquiries into this question are very desirable. 20.—The first of these replies, then, would seem to give the best representation of the habitual facts. These once accepted, it remains to give the reason. The explanation is the same as above. During the recitation in common, or in singing, the body executes a number of movements; the lungs are actively employed, the eyes are attentive to the text, and are continually in motion. And then the verses of the Psalms are only said alternately. Consequently, the efforts required, instead of being continuous, are made easier by a series of short pauses. The noise going on all around contributes to prevent a very strong union. But it also affords a special facility for recitation, and thus helps the struggle against the ligature. For it is rhythmic, and it therefore carries us along with it and produces a need to imitate it. Physiologists tell us that movements become in this way automatic, because the rhythmic sounds act directly upon our organs. There is no longer any

necessity for a great effort of the will, and there is consequently more facility. 20 bis.—Where a person experiences great difficulty with regard to the recitation in common, we should not reproach him, for he does not deserve it. And, further, in the case of certain impressionable souls, this method might have quite the opposite effect to that which was intended; the emotion produced by the fear of fresh rebukes would paralyse them still more, And still less should we persuade them that they have not the vocation to a contemplative Order. We must trust in God and in time to put everything right. 21.—Restrictions that should be noted. Let us note that the preceding facts would be inaccurately expressed by this simple formula: the prayer of quiet hinders the saying of vocal prayers. Broadly speaking, this proposition is true enough; but in order to be quite accurate, I have been obliged to add certain modifications bearing either upon the intensity of the prayer of quiet (12), or upon the nature of the prayers, distinguishing four different cases. The reply varies slightly with each. I would gladly have avoided this little complication in my explanations. But it does not rest with us to simplify facts. 22.—These hard and fast formulas have the drawback of provoking reasonable objections. And, further, they lead to chimerical rules of conduct, for these rules then respond to cases of conscience which do not exist in practice. 23.—Praying quietude. We have seen that, with regard to certain acts, there is more or less liberty and no ligature of the faculties. At times we even experience the opposite condition to the ligature; this is the impulsion of the faculties. For instance, some request formulates itself almost

irresistibly and we have then what may be called the praying quietude. This shooting impulse presents a curious contrast to the repose that we continue to feel. One would say that it was the play of a fountain issuing from some tranquil pool. 23 bis.—I said also that there is a state called jubilation. The soul then feels a need to overflow in ardent colloquies, or even to break out into singing. When this occurs in the prayer of quiet, it is another partial exception to the ligature. We may call this species the quietude of jubilation. St. Teresa points out that a similar case may occur in the full union; we speak, compose verses, etc. (Life, ch. xvi, p. 124, on the third state of prayer). Some Facts Regarding the Thoughts and Reflections 24.—Various cases have to be considered. Here again we must carefully avoid such hard and fast propositions as this: the prayer of quiet prevents our thinking of Our Lord, of His mysteries, or of the virtues. Let us take four different cases, still leaving on one side that in which the prayer of quiet is very weak. 25.—1° It is generally easy, during the prayer of quiet, to think of Our Lord's Person, or of that of a saint, provided that it is done simply and without reasonings and that there are interruptions. We can thus produce acts of love towards Our Saviour from time to time. 26.—2° With certain persons, or at certain times, it is the same with regard to the mysteries, provided that they look at them in a simple manner, calling lovingly to mind Our Lord's interior dispositions, for example, or those of the Blessed Virgin upon such or such an occasion. 27.—3° The contrary occurs if we wish to turn our attention to any developments or to the reviewing of the

circumstances of some historic fact. Unless the mind turns as of its own accord to these considerations, we should then find a real resistance. 28.—4° When the period of ecstasy is reached (sometimes even before this time), a great facility for the contemplation of these mysteries is again experienced. But this depends upon God, whether He sends a special light or no, and not upon the reappearance of the reasoning faculty. We then see several different things in one and the same ray of light, which is a simple one; our own efforts could not achieve this. In the same way, in Heaven, we shall have several simultaneous kinds of knowledge without any research. 29.—Consequence. From this last remark it follows that the prayer of quiet should be regarded as a period of transition in which certain exercises become difficult, but only temporarily so. If we mount higher we find them again, and that under a more perfect form. 30.—Accusations of idleness. This accusation has often been levelled against the prayer of quiet. There is an apparent foundation for this charge. The rather marked absence of images and acts of reasoning seems, at first sight, to leave the soul slightly empty, and the ligature appears to heighten this lack of occupation. And then, too, nothing new is learnt in the way of doctrine. 31.—Reply. 1° The soul, on the contrary, has a very perfect occupation: that of thinking of God, feeling Him present and loving Him; and this without counting all the reflections that come of their own accord to join themselves on to this state. We need only repeat here what has been said concerning the same objection as applied to the prayer of simplicity. 2° We shall see that this

occupation is the best that could be desired. People fancy that the practical resolutions will lack force because they are not led up to by numerous reflections. This is an error which has already been refuted in connection with the prayer of simplicity. But it is even more evidently false here. For we have seen that the supernatural degrees of prayer are accompanied by virtues produced without any reflections of our own. We accumulate a reserve of spiritual energy. If the soul seems idle, God is not so. Let us take another comparison, showing this hidden action. Anæmic subjects often resort to an air-cure as a treatment. They go to the country, or the seaside, or the mountains, and there they simply fill their lungs with pure air. They are apparently idle, but their surroundings exercise a hidden action upon them, which transforms them without their knowing how. And it is the same in the mystic state. We seem sometimes to be doing scarcely anything; but we are plunged in a divine atmosphere, which acts upon us. It is life-giving; and in it the feeble soul recovers her strength. It is warm; and the frozen soul begins to burn with love. It is a treatment that is quite unlike the common way, but none the less good for that. And then, how should it be otherwise? Why should God depart from His ordinary rules in order to communicate Himself to this soul if it were not to advance her in sanctity? Is God going to work for the soul's amusement only, without requiring any practical fruit of her? The unlearned need have no anxiety about this so-called idleness. The soul is in good hands. She needs but to correspond to grace.

32. — When, after having been Confessor to St. Teresa,

Father Balthasar Alvarez became Master of Novices, he had to weather a great storm on the subject of the apparent idleness of the prayer of simplicity and the supernatural states. Some of his brethren denounced him to his General as teaching a profitless kind of prayer. "They suspected him of despising the method of praying by reasonings and meditations, which is practised in the Society of Jesus and is approved by the saints, and of wishing to conduct our subjects by other strange and dangerous modes of prayer." Father Balthasar Alvarez then drew up a formal apology, a great part of which has been preserved in his Life by the Ven. Louis du Pont (ch. xl), and which received the approbation of the General. Let us hope that this refutation, and so many others that have succeeded it, will prevent this discussion being renewed.

§ 4. The Three Rules of Conduct Relating to the Ligature 33.—Here are three general rules similar to those that have been given for the prayer of simplicity.

34.—First rule, concerning those acts which the ligature renders difficult in ever so slight a degree during prayer: we must never do violence to ourselves in order to produce them. In a word, we must accept God's action just as it is, instead of resisting it.

35.—Reasons. Because if we did otherwise, we should be struggling to no purpose. We might succeed for a moment, but not for longer. The only definite result would be that we should have fatigued ourselves and have interrupted the supernatural state. All mystics agree in laying down this rule; there is not one that is more universally accepted. The action of the will upon the ligature may be compared to its action upon our respiration. We



can accelerate or retard it, but only within certain limits, and if we exceed these limits it is only momentarily; it is a struggle, and causes fatigue. 36.— If the prayer of quiet is very weak, the difficulty arising from the ligature is hardly felt. But in order to apply the third rule, it is enough that we have no taste for certain acts during prayer. For we are then drawing near to the prayer of simplicity, and this broad rule has already been given for it. It applies here even more necessarily. Scrupulous people will object that their case is often doubtful. They do not know whether their want of inclination and facility do not proceed from idleness. The answer is that, when in doubt, we have the right to do as we like. We may incline without scruple, then, to the side that we prefer. And they will probably prefer 157 the repose. And then, practically, this doubt will not occur if we take a rapid survey of a sufficient number of devotions together. 37.— Another very important reason for the first rule is sometimes given. It is that conformity to the will of God requires that we should not resist His action. This argument was already applicable to the prayer of simplicity. For God's will showed itself there by the taste and the facility that were experienced and by the difficulty of changing our methods. But in the prayer of quiet these reasons are even more forcible. God not only gives the attraction, but He introduces a new element; not only have we a leaning towards a discontinuation of all movement, but we feel this to be inevitable. If the difficulty arising from the prayer that God sends us were merely an insignificant one, we could more easily suppose that He asks us to surmount it. What

makes the divine design so clear is that our only choice lies between leaving our prayer altogether or taking it as it is. 38.—Consequences of this rule. 1° With regard to prayersthat are not of obligation, they may be omitted without scruple when a difficulty is experienced. And the same will hold good in all non-essential acts, in examinations of conscience and other exercises. At other times they served to excite devotion, but they may now become an obstacle to a more perfect union. And, again, we are not to force ourselves with regard to readings that fatigue us and for which we no longer feel any inclination. 2° On the other hand, with prayers that are of obligation, we shall strive, without any violence, to accomplish them. We shall begin to walk to and fro, for instance. 3° The director should not insist upon great efforts being made with the object of producing the acts of ordinary prayer. Those who give such orders do so in good faith, but show their ignorance of mysticism. Or else they think the struggle a very slight one, or that the ligature proceeds from the Devil. These are errors. See St. John of the Cross with regard to directors (*Living Flame*, Stanza III, line 3: especially § 11 and following). 39.—Second rule, concerning those acts for which we feel a facility when at prayer: it is advisable to accept them. But if we do not do so, our action must, at any rate, not be the result of a preconceived determination, we must not say to ourselves with pride: The thought of Our Lord or of the virtues is an exercise for beginners; contemplation of the Divine Being alone is henceforth sufficient for me. Or again: The exclusion of any remembrance of Our Lord is the road leading to contemplation; this

remembrance would be an obstacle to it. This was the language of the quietists. They held that souls desirous of attaining to perfection should a priori prohibit all distinct thoughts and desires in their prayer. We have seen that our first rule is based not on this absurd system, but upon the moral impossibility in which we find ourselves of producing these acts. This reason vanishes, therefore, when the impossibility itself disappears. There is then no further reason for remaining inactive. 40.—It is advisable, on the contrary, to add our action to the divine actions, in such a measure as not to hamper it. This maxim sums up the two preceding rules. Thus, during the prayer of quiet, we shall go forward gently. With regard to distinct affections, we shall be consent to produce those for which we feel an inclination and at such times as we feel it. 41.—The quietists spoke with contempt of Our Lord's Sacred Humanity and of His mysteries. They wished these subjects of contemplation to be put on one side. This doctrine is contrary to the spirit of the Church, for she invites us throughout the year to celebrate in her Feasts the principal events of Our Lord's life. It is ingratitude, too, light-heartedly and systematically to forget Him to whom we owe everything, including this supernatural prayer which is so precious for our sanctification. Finally, the object of supernatural prayer should be to give us a love of suffering. Now, according to the opinions of the masters, the chief means of attaining to this end is by thinking often and with love of Our Saviour's Passion. Even during St. Teresa's lifetime, the illuminati of Spain, the precursors of Falconi and Molinos, were preaching

quietism (1575). The Spanish Inquisition brought about their partial disappearance; Fr. Balthasar Alvarez refuted their teachings. Their twelfth proposition recommended that the Sacred Humanity should not be made a subject of meditation. 42.— Breadth of Application. If, at such or such a time, we find difficulty in thinking of Our Lord, or in praying to Him, we must not be uneasy. All that is asked is: 1° That Our Saviour should play an important part, and the greatest possible part, in our spiritual life as a whole. It is not a question of any particular hour; 2° That there should be no obstinate exclusion on our part. Instead of rejoicing in this difficulty, as if it were a perfection, we should regret it as a natural infirmity and look forward to the time when we shall recover our freedom. 43.— St. Teresa states that she was for some time under a delusion upon this point (*Life*, ch. xxii). She adds that since then certain pious persons had seemed to her to have false ideas also, but that the divergence of opinion between her and them was perhaps apparent only (*Interior Castle*, Sixth Mansion, ch. vii). When we read her writings upon this subject with care, we see that she did not ask that persons should force themselves in prayer (first rule), but simply that they should observe the other two rules. 44.— Third rule, which is to be followed when we are not at prayer: there are many moments in every day when the ligature is not so strong as to hinder us from praying or thinking of Our Lord and the virtues. We must take advantage of them. The opportunity will often be afforded by reading, sermons, or the public Offices of the Church. 45.— These rules enable us to reconcile (which appears

difficult at first) the powerlessness caused by the mystic state with the duty of honouring and loving Our Lord Jesus Christ. § 5. Various Remarks 46.—The anxieties of beginners. We have seen that when beginners are uninstructed, the mystic state causes them various kinds of anxieties. The ligature is a new cause of fear to them. “Not only am I idle (they say to themselves), but something hinders my praying. This action can only come from the Devil.” No; prayer does not become open to suspicion because of the ligature. And we may go farther, and say that if it were never felt we should have to admit that, in all probability, we were not in the mystic state, since we should be without one of its most invariable characters. God, however, is of course free to make exceptions here. 47.—The influence of exterior occupations. These usually hamper the prayer of quiet and cause it to disappear, even when the part taken by the body is very small. This is the case with conversations or reading. But God gives a special grace at times, so that these two very different occupations persist together for a considerable time. St. Teresa is astonished at this, and remarks that one is wholly attentive to neither of the two subjects. This mixed state may be called the acting prayer of quiet. It is only in a degree bordering upon the spiritual marriage that the two operations cease to impede each other. 48.—In Church, however, the prayer of quiet is not hampered by any well-rendered music which we hear with pleasure. These strains, which indirectly, at any rate, excite to divine love, blend easily with the supernatural action. The two form a soothing whole which leads on to God. This facility

forms a contrast to the irritation caused at other times by the comings and goings of the faithful, and the scrapings of their chairs on the floor. If we listen to a preacher, rather more effort is required to follow him. But the difference is not great, for it is still a question of receiving only.

### **Part III A Study of Each of the Degrees of the Mystic Union Separately**

#### **Chapter XV The Two Nights of the Soul, the Borderland of the Mystic State**

1.—Having considered the twelve characters of the mystic union, we must now study in detail each of the four stages that constitute it. This task will be performed in the following chapters; but first we must go back a little and describe a state of prayer which forms the extreme borderland separating ordinary prayer from the mystic union, properly so called. We shall even find that it contains, although secretly, something appertaining to this last state. If I speak of it so tardily, the reason is that we cannot understand its nature properly unless our ideas are perfectly clear with regard to the prayer of quiet. We cannot speak satisfactorily of a frontier without first showing the country that lies beyond it. 2.—As St. John of the Cross has given us a careful description of this state, and has called it the first of the two nights of the soul, we had better explain what it is that he understands by these two nights. He gives this name to two successive states of prayer, or, as he expresses himself, two degrees of the contemplation of God.

These states are the cause of sufferings; but the sufferings are a secondary element only, a consequence. People make mistakes about this sometimes, because of the difficulty of defining the exact nature of the principal element, the contemplation of God. They prefer only to consider the sufferings, which have nothing mysterious about them (aridity, the sight of our sins, etc.). In a word, instead of endeavouring to penetrate into the saint's real meaning, they are satisfied with adapting his language to ordinary things which are already familiar to them. I have already alluded to these two nights. But we must go into the subject more fully. § 1. Description of the First Night 3.—Definition. If we judge by appearances only, by things that we can observe directly in ourselves, that is to say, the first night of St. John of the Cross is a prayer of simplicity, but possessing characters, and two in particular, which constitute it a special kind: 1° it is a state of aridity, either sweet and tranquil, or, more often, bitter and painful; 2° and the simple gaze is directed almost wholly and uninterruptedly towards God. The saint has also called this state the night of the senses. The first half of this expression shows that the knowledge given by God in this prayer is obscure, and that He deprives us of certain other knowledge that we possessed before; the second indicates that the divine action no longer makes use of the sensible faculties: namely, the imagination, the sensible memory, and the reasoning faculty, which last, using words as it does, employs the two other faculties. The acts that they then produce, proceed from our natural activity only. In all this, of course, there may be

variations of degree. 4.—We find in this state five distinct facts, which I shall term its elements. Two are perceived in the mind, two in the will, and the fifth is hidden (see St. John of the Cross; especially *Obscure Night*, Book I, chs. viii, ix, x, xi; *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book II, chs. xiii, xiv, xv). In each case I shall quote passages from the saint's writings, so that the reader can satisfy himself that I have represented his ideas correctly. 5.—First element. This is an habitual aridity, of great strength at times. Not only is there no inclination for reasoning, for following up a thought, or applying ourselves to any subject whatsoever, but the mind is powerless to do these things, or at least it cannot persist in these acts. The imagination can hardly act at all, unless it be to embarrass us with distractions. So far there is nothing extraordinary. Those who are still in discursive prayer pass through quite similar periods of dearth. But what follows will be different, and will establish a distinction between the two neighbouring states. 6.—Second element. This is a memory of God simple, confused, and general, returning with a singular persistence which is independent of the will. It alone escapes the powerlessness caused by aridity, and more than this, it obtrudes itself. At one time it triumphs over distractions, at another it is overcome by them. It is a continual alternation of success and failure. 7.—Explanation. I said that this memory is simple. It cannot be still further reduced. It is a thought similar to that which occurs to us when the Name of God comes up in the course of conversation. The mind does not begin reasoning in order to develop all that this idea contains. It does not enlarge upon God's



attributes, His benefits, His rights, etc.; otherwise it would not be in aridity. And, much more, we learn nothing new. 8.—I then referred to the singular persistence with which this memory returns, in spite of distractions, when we are at prayer. It is the same during the day, notwithstanding exterior occupations, if we try to recollect ourselves. In this respect the soul may best be compared to the needle of a mariner's compass. In a squall of wind, it seems to offer no resistance. But the storm once over, it returns obstinately to its original position. So, after being carried away by distractions, the mind comes back invariably to its one and only attraction. So too, do the reeds bow before the blast, and then straighten themselves and lift up their heads again to the heavens. 9.—Finally, I said that this return often takes place independently of the will. For it is not from inclination that we always revert to this arid idea of God which generally has nothing pleasing about it. It recurs independently of us. This point, like those that went before, stands out in all St. John of the Cross's explanations. 10.—Here we have facts (the attraction towards an idea that is always the same, for example) that were not met with in the degree of meditation, or even in that of the prayer of simplicity, and they prove that we have travelled away from it. At the same time we find very strong analogies with the prayer of quiet from the point of view of what I have called the second element. First it is a contemplation, a simple gaze that recurs frequently. Then, as in the prayer of quiet, the proper object of this gaze is one alone: it is God. Further, and particularly, it is not freely and by inclination that we choose this object. It

is imposed upon us; while the others are not so; far from it. Here is a beginning of the passive state. 10 bis.—The degree of clearness of this special kind of prayer is not always the same. “It is, however, true that in the commencement of this estate this loving knowledge is, as it were, imperceptible, because it is then wont to be, in the first place, most subtil and delicate and, as it were, unfelt; and because, in the second place, the soul, having been accustomed to meditation which is more cognisable by sense, does not perceive and, as it were, does not feel this new condition, not subject to sense, and which is purely spiritual. This is the case especially when, through not understanding his condition, the spiritual man will not allow himself to rest therein, but will strive after that which is cognisable by sense” (Ascent of Mount Carmel, Book II, ch. xiii, p. 103). 11.—Third element. The memory of God is loving. With certain persons it is consoling. There is an attraction for it, but this seems to me to be rare. In general, there is a painful and persistent need for a closer union with God. In these two instances we are not disposed to procure this union for ourselves by our former devotional exercises; we rather feel a distaste for them, we feel that they are incompetent to bring us to the good that we are seeking. What, then, do we seek? At first, we wished to be inflamed with divine love. But now, on the contrary, the aridity of the mind extends to the will also. We are inert all along the line. No soaring flights, no great ardours! And this grieves us; we blame ourselves for this coldness, and are inclined to regard it in the light of a punishment from God. The coldness is not, in reality, as great as it appears; a little

spark of divine love remains hidden under the ashes. The proof lies in this persistent longing for God. We see from this that the night of the senses must not be confused with lukewarmness, for the characteristic of that condition is the absence of any want or desire for a more intense spiritual life. But even if God should satisfy this thirst for divine love, a deeper desire would still remain to torture the soul. To love Him is a beginning only, and it does not suffice. He has made us for something more than this: to possess Him. 12.—But to what kind of possession do we aspire in this state? Do we know exactly what it is that we desire? If we have ever had the prayer of quiet transiently, the desire becomes defined. It is this that we long to regain. It is there, as we understand, that we can plunge into the balmy atmosphere, where, untrammelled by methods, we shall breathe the divine love. 13.—But if, on the other hand, we have not yet received this mystic grace, the desire is more vague with regard to its object, and the uneasiness is only so much the greater. We suffer from an unsatisfied longing, without being able to say exactly what it is that we desire. Reading the lives of the saints gives us some inkling as to the object of our search; for we find there, more or less vaguely described, some of the higher states of union with the Divinity. We learn that, over and above the thought of God, there is, further, a possession of God. We turn our eyes in this direction, but without obtaining any very clear idea of what it is that we are seeking. But God, who gives this blind instinct, knows whither it leads. The longing by which these two classes of souls are tormented makes us think of the impulse which

brings about the migration of the swallows. When the bad weather approaches, they get ready to fly away in search of a better climate. The older birds, those that have made the journey already, remember and know exactly what it is that they want. It is the charming country of which the German ballad sings: there, Far away, "is the land where the orange-tree grows, Where golden fruits ripen, where blossoms the rose. Where the bird is more buoyant, nor tires on the wing, Nor the honey-bee ceases from pilfering." The young birds, who are without this experience, make up for it by the marvellous instinct which suddenly awakens in their breasts. They set out, without knowing why, towards a country that they have never seen. But, alas! there is a difference between us and the swallows. They depart when they choose. But we, on the contrary, do not change our supernatural country at will. We are caged, held captive by the limitations of our prayer; we beat against the wires, but they resist us. Thou alone, O God, canst unbar the door. In pity, open! 14.—I said that we felt no inclination to seek God by the help of our former devotional exercises; we only take them up again as a last resource. Those, on the other hand, who are suffering from ordinary aridity have but one desire—to return to meditation. Whence we see that the third element, like the second, is characteristic of a state which must not be confused with the ordinary way. 15.—We can sum up all this by saying: the night of the senses is 1° a simple gaze; 2° an aridity; 3° with this peculiarity that the soul finds a facility for one single memory only, that of God; 4° it has also one single desire, that of possessing God more fully;

finally, 5° this shaping of the soul's course is not due to her own efforts. 16.—Fourth element. It affects our natural tastes. It is a persistent action of grace, designed to detach us from all the things of sense, even such as are lawful, and to imbue us with a distaste for them. Nature opposes itself to this action and suffers from it. In this conflict the soul may incline to one side or the other. When speaking just now of the longing for union with God, I instanced a particular case of the divine action, and I said that we were no longer led to seek this union by way of our former exercises (14). These, as a matter of fact, contained a considerable element of the things of sense. It is a question now of a much vaster action. It extends even when we are not at prayer, to all our passions, to all forms of sensible knowledge or inclinations, and seeks to turn our hearts away from them. The mystic state will continue this work later on. St. John of the Cross describes this inner travail at great length. He occupies the whole of Book I of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and the first chapters of the *Obscure Night* in reviewing all our appetites, which he connects with the seven deadly sins. He declares this conflict to be the sign by which we should judge as to the probability of our being really in the night of the senses. 17.—I have called attention to the fact that the soul may resist this action of grace. This is because God does not sanctify us in spite of ourselves. If He inspires the inclinations, He leaves nature free to act in opposition to them; we may choose for ourselves. St. John of the Cross admits the existence of this resistance, for he says that the work of purification may be very prolonged. Otherwise, it would be

almost instantaneous. When the grace of detachment is thus resisted, experience shows that the person may often go on for some time without being aware of it. This occurs with those who are overwhelmed with exterior occupations. Nature inclines them to take pleasure in a distracting activity and to plunge into it to excess, were it only for the sake of escaping the tedium of their interior desert. They only realise their error later on, when a book or a clearsighted Director leads them to moderate their excesses, to reserve a larger share of their activity for their spiritual life, and not to fly from their inward purgatory. 18.—The four elements enumerated above are things that can be observed; not that we perceive them distinctly at the end of an hour's prayer, but if we take a general survey, covering several weeks or months, their detection will usually be easy. Quite a number of persons, after reading the above descriptions, have told me that they had found the exact reproduction of their own experience. It is proved by experience, then, that the state of prayer there described exists, and that it is not rare. We have yet another proof of its existence—namely, the testimony of St. John of the Cross. For the passages that I have quoted show that all the characters of this state have been referred to by him, and that it is to these characters, as a whole, that he has given the name of the night of the senses. If anyone were to deny this last proof because he puts a different interpretation upon the words of St. John of the Cross, the proof of experience would remain in all its force. Finally, the existence of this state may be foreseen a priori. We have only to admit that the prayer of simple regard, directed towards God, may

be arid, painful, and persistent. And this fact must, at least, seem probable. 19.—Fifth element. I will call this the hidden element. For we do not perceive it directly, as in the case of the other four. We must attain to it by the reason. It consists in this: God begins to exercise upon the soul the action that characterises the prayer of quiet, but He does this in too slight a degree for us to be conscious of it. We may say, then, that the night of the senses is the prayer of quiet in a latent, concealed state. It only needs to be strengthened afterwards and to pass on to the visible state. 20.—A comparison will help us to form a general idea of the development of the mystic union in the soul. It is that of a tree, the seed of which is hidden at first in the earth. The roots that are sent down secretly in the darkness constitute the night of the senses. Then a frail stem is put forth and emerges into the light; this is the prayer of quiet. The tree grows, and finally, when it is covered with flowers and fruit, represents the spiritual marriage. This is the final end of its development. We see now why I said that the night of the senses is the borderland between ordinary prayer and the mystic union. We must rank it with the first if we depend upon the things that we see, and with the second if we penetrate to those that are hidden. It is an incomplete mystic union. We can sum up this fact by saying that the night of the senses merits the name of sub-mystic union. 21.—Proofs of the existence of the fifth element. To establish this thesis we have two kinds of arguments. The first are taken from St. John of the Cross. 1° We can satisfy ourselves at once that he admits the existence of a hidden element since, when speaking of the four

visible elements, he is satisfied with calling them "signs," "marks," of the night of the senses. This last is different, then: it is something more than they; it has an underlying part. 2° To the first night he gives the name of infused contemplation (*Obscure Night*, Book I, ch. x, p. 355); and it is on account of this quality, he says, that "it is therefore expedient for the soul which is in this condition not to be troubled because its faculties have become useless". Otherwise it would be hardly different from those that remain idle. Here it receives something, although this something is visible only in its effects. He also says that in the aridities of the night of the senses, the soul "is conscious of strength and energy to act, because of the substantial nature of its interior food which is the commencement of contemplation, obscure and dry to the senses. This contemplation is in general secret and unknown to him who is admitted to it" (*Obscure Night*, Book I, ch. ix, pp. 350-1). 3° This thesis is implied in several comparisons developed by the saint. When he distinguishes three nights instead of two, he says: "The three nights are but one divided into three parts" (*Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book I, ch. ii, p. 11). Now, the third, with him, is the spiritual marriage, and the second, as will be shown later on, is already the mystic state. The night of the senses itself, then, is mystic in a certain way and in essence; otherwise they would not be parts of one whole; the saint would certainly not have said that the spiritual marriage was one with ordinary prayer. The same idea is expressed by the simile of the fire that consumes the wood (*Obscure Night*, Book II, ch. x; and *Living Flame*, Stanza I, line 4). He shows us that



this fire is one, but that it produces successively three different effects: it blackens the wood, it covers the outward surface with flames, it transforms it into itself. The first of these actions symbolises the first night. Elsewhere he makes a comparison between the night of the senses and the night of the spirit. "Secret contemplation keeps the soul in this state of anxiety until, in the course of time, having purged the sensitive nature of man in some degree of its natural forces and affections by means of the aridities it occasions, it shall have kindled within it this Divine love" (*Obscure Night*, Book I, ch. xi, p. 357). Again, he says: "The purgation of sense is merely the gate and entrance [solo es puerta y principio] of contemplation" (*Obscure Night*, Book II, ch. ii, p. 375), which implies that they are of the same inner nature. He says also that God ordinarily leads into the second night those who have been called in a marked degree into the first night (*Obscure Night*, Book I, ch. xiv, p. 371). We can understand this if we admit that the essential part of the mystic grace has already begun to be received. The seed is sown; it is in the order of nature that it should develop and put forth a stem 22.—The direct argument in favour of this thesis is that it gives us the obvious explanation of the deep-reaching analogies which we have shown to exist between the prayer of quiet and the night of the senses. Otherwise we should see no reason for them. 1° Each is a contemplation, a simple regard, that is to say; 2° their object is the same and is very restricted; 3° they come into being of their own accord without our so much as thinking of them; 4° they exclude the former exercises, the imagination and the reason

(each in its turn); 5° finally, when the prayer of quiet is very weak, either in itself or because we are moving about, we find that it scarcely differs to any appreciable extent from the night of the senses. We see that a continuity exists between these two states. If we do not admit the thesis, not only do we fail to see any reason for these analogies, but this state seems a most fantastic one. What can be God's object in thus imposing one single idea upon us, while so many others are useful to us? Why put so many obstacles in the way of our former devotional exercises, which are excellent, in order to replace them with an inadequate occupation? Let us note that this assemblage of analogies does not exist with a prayer of simplicity of any kind whatever; which, besides, is not regarded as belonging to the mystic union in its hidden state. 23. —I have just represented the night of the senses as always containing the hidden element. But, it has been objected, are there not sometimes exceptions? May not certain—it may be, rare —souls receive this degree in an incomplete manner? They might possess the four elements that can be observed, but not the latent beginnings of God's mystical action. This opinion is so closely allied to my own that I should hardly dare to condemn those who prefer it. Perhaps St. John of the Cross meant to speak only of what happens almost always. The arguments merely establish a strong probability in favour of the thesis, and do not therefore absolutely exclude all exceptions. 24. —History of this state. It is clear that before St. John of the Cross's time thousands of souls had passed through this arid contemplation. But no one had taken the trouble to

study it; no one had distinguished it either from common aridity or from the neighbouring mystic states. They did not perceive the hidden element which gives it all its value, and they consequently attached no importance to it. St. John of the Cross made this most helpful discovery. We must attribute it both to his own perspicacity and to the assistance of the Holy Spirit. This is the really important discovery that we owe to him. § 2. Various Details Regarding the First Night 25.—Sufferings accompanying this state. St. John of the Cross may well describe the night of the senses as a purgatory. Several kinds of sufferings are to be found there, as follows: 26.—1° Tedium. It proceeds from the first element, which is aridity. The faculties are restive at being thus kept without employment. They desire movement, variety; but here they are condemned to an incessant absence of movement and a monotonous occupation! And, unhappily, this state is inevitable. We cannot change our prayer at will. When this trial lasts for several days, even so it is exceedingly wearisome. But it is sometimes prolonged for several years; and it then becomes intolerable, provided, that is to say, that, instead of going in search of outside consolations, we maintain ourselves in recollection. 27.—How may we remedy this suffering to a certain extent? By making use of a book whilst we are at prayer. When the weariness is excessive, it is a solace only to make some little attempts, although we may have satisfied ourselves that they rarely succeed. 28.—2° There is also the torment of distractions, which is another consequence of aridity. It is more severe than in the prayer of quiet, because there we have a certain

compensation—the possession of God. 29.—3° The third element is a source of sufferings; for it is the thirst for a closer union with God, and it remains unsatisfied. There is something in it that is analogous to the pain of loss that tortures the holy souls before their entry into Heaven. Those who have never left the ordinary way feel little or nothing of this painful and constantly renewed longing; and they are inclined to be astonished at it. But they ought to admit that God does not give the same attractions to everyone alike. With a loving cruelty He may quite well enkindle a great craving for eternal blessedness, breathing into us a home-sickness for the Divine Essence, that true country of our souls. Some people go farther than astonishment. They condemn this disposition, and say that the distress is fanciful. “It is simply the work of your imagination,” they exclaim contemptuously; “a foolish dream. Think of something else, and you will be cured.” Exactly! But that is just what cannot be done. And we ought to congratulate ourselves that this is so, for if we were to succeed and accomplish the impossible, we should be deprived of a great grace: the loving memory of God. 30.—4° The fourth element also brings sufferings, for human nature groans under this conflict with the sensitive appetite. “The first night, or purgation, is bitter and terrible to sense.... They now find nothing but insipidity and bitterness” (*Obscure Night*, Book I, ch. viii, pp. 346-7). Those to whom God sends great trials of this kind often feel overpowered with sadness, and they are astonished and say to themselves that this sadness is causeless. But they are mistaken. There is doubtless no special cause such as

a reprimand or sickness. But there is a general cause which they have overlooked. It is this: Other souls have a certain inclination for even the humblest of their habitual occupations; they like to exercise their faculties in this way and to escape the tedium of inaction. It is in this manner that persons in the world, even such as are occupied in the most futile fashion, ward off low spirits. So with the workman who takes a pleasure in his work. But suppose that God secretly removes this natural pleasure in all earthly things, without, however, giving us a taste for those of heaven, our faculties are then applied incessantly to subjects that are distasteful to them; and a perpetual atmosphere of sadness results. 31.—5° If we have not been instructed as to the existence of this kind of prayer, we have doubts as to the goodness of such a way. We say to ourselves: "This state is too vague to deserve the name of a prayer. I must therefore try to find another." Nothing hinders our seeking, but it will generally be in vain; we cannot get out of our desert. We must accept this situation generously. This anxiety is due to a narrow idea as to what prayer should be. It consists essentially in a loving converse with God; now we have that here, painful as it may be; and we draw strength of action from it—if we allow grace to lead us on to generosity. Or we say, again: "In the time devoted to prayer I do nothing more than when I unite myself to God during the day. Now, this is not enough." I beg your pardon; it is enough for you, and God wills that it should be so; either in order to exercise you in patience, or to lead you to the mystic states. Nothing is so calculated to quiet these doubts as the knowledge that we are in a

state known and approved by the masters of the spiritual life. But for this, instruction is necessary. The remedy would be to comfort our hearts with thoughts of faith. 32.—6° The Devil often makes the ordeal harder by other sufferings, which, however, are not (as in the case of those that went before) the natural consequences, as it were, of this arid contemplation. He torments us with scruples, for instance. Or again: God allows us to suffer from sickness, the failure of our undertakings, grave temptations, or the worries incidental to our surroundings, etc. (see *Obscure Night*, Book I, ch. xiv). 33.—Amidst all these sufferings the superior part of the soul may experience peace and joy. This is only the case with fervent and truly mortified souls: the Cross has become their happiness. St. John of the Cross describes this desirable condition, which, however, so it would seem, is only met with when the soul has reached the mystic state: “The soul delights to be alone, waiting lovingly on God, without any particular considerations, in interior peace, quiet, and repose, when the acts and exercises of the intellect, memory, and will, at least discursively—which is the going from one subject to another—have ceased; nothing remains except that knowledge and attention, general and loving, of which I have spoken, without the particular perception of aught else” (*Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book II, ch. xiii, p. 102). The saint recognises that this ideal is not realised in the case of those who do not yet understand their state. “This striving, notwithstanding the abundance of loving interior peace, disturbs him in the consciousness and employment of it” 34.—The utility of these trials is

very great. The sufferings experienced here are highly meritorious, and the universal distaste which God inspires in us for all created things is a powerful means to perfection. St. John of the Cross, when eulogising this state, goes as far as to say (he is speaking of beginners): "After all our exertions to mortify ourselves in our actions and passions, our success will not be perfect, or even great, until God Himself shall do it for us in the purgation of the Obscure Night" (Obscure Night, Book I, ch. vii, p. 345). This statement does not seem, however, to be absolutely in accordance with experience. I think that I have met with souls who have arrived at the mystic state without having passed through the night of the senses but only through other great trials which resulted in detachment. In the period previous to the prayer of quiet they felt a loving attention to God, which, however, had nothing bitter or painful about it. 35.—What is the issue of these trials? In a word, if we are in the night of the senses, are we sure, sooner or later, to arrive at the mystic state? St. John of the Cross distinguishes two cases. If the night of the senses is present occasionally only, and if during the intervals we revert to ordinary meditation, it seems to him that God is probably merely proposing to purify the soul without intending to lead her higher. In the contrary case, the saint admits that the soul is generally destined for the mystic state. The probability is that she will reach it. The saint adds: "God does not elevate to perfect contemplation everyone that is tried in the spiritual way, and He alone knoweth why" (Obscure Night, Book I, ch. ix, p. 353). There is a similar difference with regard to the

fate of seeds carried by the wind; some remain on the surface of the ground and die; others penetrate into it and grow. The fact is still better explained if we admit that in exceptional cases certain souls experience the night of the senses in an incomplete state only, without the hidden element, that is to say. They would not have received the least germ of the mystic state, and we must not be surprised, therefore, that this state does not come to maturity. The probability of attaining to the mystic union is greater when the soul has already received it several times before falling for any considerable period into the night of the senses. We can hardly admit that God would have bestowed such a gift in order to withdraw it altogether, unless there had been a grave infidelity to grace. 36.—We must cheer ourselves by these thoughts, so as to resist the temptation to discouragement, which leads to that of relaxation. Those who, in spite of their aspirations, thus find themselves in a prolonged state of aridity, conclude from this that they are abandoned by God on account of their infidelities, and they carry the absurdity to the point of declaring that this rejection is final. The hope of success would have sustained them in the conflict, but when they believe that they can say: "It is clear that I shall never succeed"; they lose all their courage and abandon themselves easily to frivolities and dissipations. This lack of confidence in the divine goodness, or this relaxation, hinders them from meriting His deliverance; and God is thus obliged to prolong this purgatory. The farther they go, the greater the temptation to despair. The director should encourage and console those who are thus tried, and



should not treat them as if they were tepid or negligent. 37.—Can the duration of the trial be foreseen? Are there certain Providential laws or signs that permit the prediction of a speedy deliverance? Alas! no; so says St. John of the Cross: “But how long the soul will continue in this 181 fast and penance of sense no one can with certainty tell” (*Obscure Night*, Book I, ch. xiv, p. 371). He adds: “But those souls that are to go forward to so blessed and exalted a state as this of the union of love, however quickly God may lead them, tarry long, in general, amidst aridities, as we see by experience” 38.—In order to shorten our time of trial we must, on the contrary, guard our recollection carefully, and pray insistently for deliverance. We then have a vocation for the mystic state; and when anyone has a vocation, they ought to pray that it should ripen, and that quickly. Unhappily, it is found to be very difficult to ask to be cured of aridity, for it paralyses and makes us incapable of every kind of petition. The devil, on his side, also dissuades you from it. He wishes to keep you in this state of suffering and darkness, and also in tepidity and dissipation, if he can do so. He trembles lest you should enter into the mystic union. 39.—Rules of conduct for souls in the first night. There are three rules to be followed relatively to prayer. They have been given for the prayer of simplicity, of which this, if we judge by appearances, is only a special case. The first rule told us not to do violence to ourselves in order to produce acts with regard to which we feel a difficulty or a distaste. Therefore, in the night of the senses, we must learn to content ourselves with our arid contemplation, with the vague and general

thought of God, that is to say, with a painful aspiration towards Him. Those who are passing through this trial often torment their directors "to teach them how to pray," by which they mean a very full prayer. They inquire after new books, hoping to discover some infallible method. These temptations are a proof of goodwill, but they will fail. For if they were to succeed they would require the use of the sensible faculties, the paralysing of which is the precise object of the night of the senses. The only thing, then, is to resign ourselves to this terrible situation: frankly to accept a prayer the foundation of which is repose in suffering. It is true that we shall often be assailed by a scruple. This rule, we shall say to ourselves, presupposes powerlessness. But is mine real? Can I not, without putting undue pressure on myself, follow up and develop a point of meditation? You will find that you cannot. This is the reply that we should make to those directors who, with a considerable show of irritation, say: "What a complicated soul! Please do as everyone else does." The penitent would desire nothing better, but he cannot. Let us accept the divine action, then, as it comes to us. § 3. The Second Night of the Soul 40. — Its nature. St. John of the Cross gives the name of the second night of the soul to all those mystic states that are lower than the spiritual marriage, but held in esteem in so far as they contain obscurity and even sufferings. He also refers to it as the night of the spirit. And this is correct, since throughout the whole mystic series the spirit continues in the divine darkness. Finally, he calls it the second purgatory. It is true that in the mystic state there are great joys. But we have

seen that they are plentifully mingled with sufferings. 41.—The interpretation of the saint's meaning that I have just given has sometimes been disputed. It has been said, for example: the second night consists merely in a penetrating insight into our miseries and our nothingness. I do not think that it is quite as simple as this; if it were so, the saint could have explained it in a few lines. I shall discuss in another chapter the, as I think, inaccurate way in which the saint's teachings have been summed up by certain writers. But let us not be surprised at these divergences amongst commentators. The saint has not attempted to proceed rigorously by the help of complete definitions. When a state contains several elements, he points them out sometimes only here and there, and this in some other connection—by associating them with some rule of asceticism, for instance; and he thus makes only imperfect classifications. And so, when quoting from him, I have had to take my passages from various parts of his works. It is easily understood that commentators may thus pass over some essential phrases without noticing their import. 42.—Here are a few extracts which justify my way of understanding the second night: 1° "This [second] *Obscure Night* is a certain inflowing of God into the soul.... Contemplatives call it infused contemplation or mystical theology" (*Obscure Night*, Book II, ch. v, p. 380). This passage alone would serve to prove my thesis. The saint adds: "God secretly teaches the soul and instructs it in the perfection of love, without efforts on its own part beyond loving attention to God, listening to His voice and admitting the light He sends, without

understanding how this is infused contemplation... So when the divine light of contemplation shines into the soul not yet perfectly enlightened, it causes spiritual darkness, because it not only surpasses its strength, but because it obscures it and deprives it of its natural perceptions. It is for this reason that St. Dionysius and other mystic theologians call infused contemplation a ray of darkness, that is, for the unenlightened and unpurified soul...". 2° "The way of the spirit... is also called the Illuminative Way, or the way of infused contemplation, wherein God Himself nourishes and refreshes the soul without the help of any active efforts that itself may make" (*Obscure Night*, Book I, ch. xiv, p. 370). The saint repeats that this night contains a contemplation. Now he shows us what it is that is synonymous in his eyes with this last word: "Mystical theology, which is the secret science of God, and which spiritual men call contemplation" (*Spiritual Canticle*, Stanza XXVII, p. 148). 3° When describing the man who has gone through the night of the senses, the saint adds: "... He must change his garments. This God Himself will do.... He will change them from old into new by infusing into the soul a new understanding of God in God, the human understanding being set aside, and a new love of God in God..." (*Ascent of 183 Mount Carmel*, Book I, ch. v, p. 21). 4° The soul seems to say: "In poverty, unsupported by any apprehensions, in the obscurity of the intellect, in the conflict of the will, in the affliction and distress of memory ... I went forth out of myself [during the first night], out of my low conceptions and lukewarm love, out of my scanty and poor sense of God... I went forth out of the scanty

intercourse and operations of my own to those of God; that is, my intellect went forth out of itself, and from human became Divine ... it understands no more within its former limits and narrow bounds.... My will went forth out of itself transformed into the Divine will ... all the energies and affections of the soul are, in this night and purgation of the old man, renewed into a Divine temper and delight" (*Obscure Night*, Book II, ch. iv, pp. 379-80). 5° Comparing the two nights, the saint characterises the second as follows: "For this is a certain fire of love in the spirit whereby the soul, in its dark trials, feels itself wounded to the quick by a certain impression and foretaste of God, though it understands nothing distinctly because the intellect is in darkness.... And inasmuch as this love is infused in a special way, the soul corresponds only passively with it, and thus a strong passion of love is begotten within it. This love has in it something of the most perfect union with God [the spiritual marriage], and thus partakes in some measure of its qualities which are chiefly actions of God, in the soul rather than of the soul, which is consenting unto them in simplicity and love" (*Obscure Night*, Book II, ch. xi, p. 406). 6° The saint says that ecstasies belong to this period, and that they definitely diminish towards its close (*Obscure Night*, Book II, ch. i, pp. 374-5). 7° We have proved above that the first night belongs already to the mystic state, although unconsciously. The second night, being the development of the first, should therefore belong to the mystic state also, and in a higher degree, which can be nothing but the conscious state. 8° When we take a general review of the saint's rules of conduct for the second night, we

see that they resolve themselves to this: accept the fact that the mind rises to a new and higher mode of operation in this prayer. And in the same way, in the first night, they are reduced to this: accept the fact that the senses, the sensible faculties, that is, cease to act. 9° Finally, it is clear from the whole of Book II of the *Obscure Night* that the spiritual marriage is the outcome of this second night. Now, this is true of the mystic states only. The same idea is indicated by the title of the first Treatise: *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*. This ascent has the summit for its goal. Now, the saint says that the summit is "the high estate of perfection, called here union of the soul with God" (*Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Prologue, p. 1, and Book I, ch. xiii, p. 50, No. 3). § 4. *The Question of Terminology* 43. — The signification of the word faith for St. John of the Cross. The saint constantly says that we attain to the perfect union by the way of faith. Is this to say that mystic contemplation is merely a knowledge by faith? which would seem to suggest that it is not experimental. All depends upon the wider or narrower sense in which we interpret the word faith. In the broad sense it signifies all supernatural knowledge of a degree lower than the beatific vision. But between faith, taken in a more restricted sense, and the intuitive vision, there is an intermediary; namely, infused knowledge, which is also described as faith illumined by a gift of the Holy Ghost. Faith, strictly so called, rests solely upon the testimony of another, that is to say, of God. Infused knowledge goes farther; by it we begin to see with more or less clearness. Mystic contemplation is an act of infused knowledge. Now, St. John of the Cross takes the word

faith in the first and wide sense, and he can therefore say that mystic contemplation is inside the domain and way of faith. But the usual sense is the second. It is to be feared, therefore, that readers may interpret in their usual sense things that the saint said in his own. The quietists based their position upon this false interpretation, which seemed to attach importance only to the simplified prayer, which they described as naked faith. Briefly, they thus strove to confuse mystic contemplation with acquired contemplation, the only one that they held in esteem. 44.—Even taking the word faith in this restricted sense, it is still true that, when judged by certain characters, mystic faith and mystic contemplation bear a great mutual resemblance. 1° They proceed from a supernatural illumination; 2° they are above reason; 3° they are obscure; 4° finally, contemplation bears upon matters of faith. It is within the order of faith.

### **Chapter XVI Further Details Regarding the Prayer of Quiet (the First Stage of the Mystic Union)**

1.—Let us recall the definition. It is a mystic union in which the divine action is not yet strong enough to hinder distractions. It is called by St. Teresa “the second manner of drawing the water which the Lord of the vineyard has ordained” (Life, ch. xiv, i); the “fourth mansion of the Interior Castle” and “the enjoyment of the presence of God” (Interior Castle, Fourth Mansion, ch. ii, i°). I need not describe this state under its general aspects here. This has already been done implicitly, for the various characters that I have previously pointed out in connection with the

mystic union, as a whole, apply equally to the prayer of quiet as a particular instance of the union. They are merely less marked than in the higher degrees of prayer. It only remains, therefore, to describe certain details peculiar to this state. § 1. Its Successive Phases

2.—Here is the order that God usually appears to adopt for the first mystic graces. 3.—1° At first the prayer of quiet is most commonly given from time to time only, and then merely for a few minutes together; the space of an Ave Maria, for instance. (It is the same with the full union.) This is what happened to St. Teresa, who was then twenty years of age (*Life*, ch. iv, vi, 9). This grace comes abruptly, then, and when you are not expecting it. You are suddenly taken possession of by an unaccustomed state of recollection which you cannot help noticing. You are overtaken by a divine wave which penetrates you. You remain motionless under the influence of this sweet impression. And then it all vanishes with equal suddenness. Beginners feel surprised at this, for they find themselves seized by an action the nature of which they do not entirely understand. But they yield themselves to this inclination because they see at first sight that the occupation is a holy one. They put off to a later date the task of examining it more closely. With other persons, however, these graces seem to have come gradually, imperceptibly. 4.—2° The time when this grace first begins to appear. This usually takes place when the soul has already arrived at the neighbouring state of prayer: the prayer of simplicity, or rather to the night of the senses, that is to say; and it is into this last state that she usually falls back when she is not experiencing the prayer of quiet. It is often



at about the period of the first appearance of this grace, sometimes before, sometimes after, that the prayer of simplicity becomes arid. 5.—3° Cessation or diminution. A degree of prayer is not a definite state, excluding reversions to former states. After bestowing certain mystic graces upon the soul, God sometimes sends a long interruption, lasting several years, it may be. This was so with St. Teresa. She had eighteen or twenty years of almost unbroken interruption (Life, chs. viii, 4; xxiii, 13). This is sometimes (but not always) a punishment for our infidelities. If we are to continue to receive these favours, God desires us to renounce our many frivolities and to enter resolutely upon the way of the Cross. It may be, also, that He wills to put our trust in His goodness to the proof. The devil whispers: "Why should you pray? You are rejected; you will never regain those lost blessings". But God would have us hope, like Abraham, against all hope. 6.—4° Finally, a time often comes when the prayer of quiet is not only very frequent, but habitual. We then possess it as our state, at will, as it were.‡ (See St. John of the Cross, Ascent of Mount Carmel, Book II, ch. xv, pp. 112-13.) In this case it occurs even outside the time of prayer, and every time that the thought of God presents itself, in conversation, for instance. Nothing more than this is required in order that we should be seized by the divine action. If this action is strong, then we find our occupation interfered with; but usually it all disappears rapidly. At other times the divine operation has, as it were, a mute influence which persists in the midst of external affairs. But even when the soul reaches this point, she is not certain of being called to mount higher. 7.—

Alternations of intensity. When we have thus reached the period when the prayer of quiet is habitual, we are not, however, exempt from interruptions in its abundance. At times the mystic state takes strong possession of us; at others it is weak. So that life is a series of alternations of wealth and semi-poverty. Here, again, there, are sometimes real retrogressions. The prayer of quiet ceases to be habitual: it once more becomes brief or of rare occurrence. § 2. How is the Director to Recognise whether a Person has had the Prayer of Quiet? 8.—The director may be led in various ways to ask himself the following question: Has such or such an individual received the mystic union? Sometimes the person in question has felt fearful on account of the silence and repose of his prayers, which condition he takes for sloth. And then it is necessary for the director to know whether it is the prayer of quiet or the prayer of simplicity. And then, at times, certain details seem to indicate that something extraordinary has taken place. He feels it himself in a confused way, and wishes to be enlightened on the subject. 9.—Given that it has seemed advisable to try to clear up this point, the director must have recourse to interrogations. What shall he ask? The most natural and sensible method is to see if the prayer presents all the characters of the mystic union without any exceptions. These characters have been shown above to amount to twelve; we need but run through the list, adding to each head some of the additional details belonging to it. We must take care that the question is not put in such a way as to suggest the answer. A bare yes or no should also be mistrusted. These may be easily

uttered without reflection. If we decline to confine ourselves to these interrogations from a list, prepared in advance and carefully drawn up, we run the risk of omissions and, consequently, of an imperfect understanding of the situation. A doctor, in his diagnosis of a case, is not satisfied with two or three questions due to the inspiration of the moment. 10.— In this interrogation a precaution is to be observed with regard to the two fundamental characters. To begin with, at any rate, we must pass lightly over the first, and not inquire whether the person has really felt God's presence. The idea of such a grace appears too presumptuous to a beginner. We should meet with doubts and objections. It is enough to know if he was thinking of God and of His presence; if the basis of the occupation was that of being united with Him, of being recollected. The matter can be gone into more closely at a subsequent date. So, too, with the second character. We must put our questions in strict conformity to the statement of the thesis; that is to say, avoiding the terms spiritual senses, spiritual touch, upon which the beginner has not yet reflected sufficiently. I did not observe these precautions myself when I was explaining the two fundamental characters. And this was because the director's object is completely different from mine. He is not asked, as I am, to state a doctrine precisely, but to utilise certain personal information. He has not to fathom the hidden nature of the mystic state, but to judge of an individual. And for this it is wise, at the beginning, at any rate, to confine ourselves to facts that the person directed can supply with certainty and without hesitation. 11.—As to the ten subsidiary characters,

they are perfectly evident. However slightly marked his state may have been, the person will recognise them without difficulty. In fact, although these ten characters are supernatural, as to cause, they belong to the common order if they are considered in themselves, and they are therefore more easily perceived by our understanding. They nearly all consist simply in the exclusion of certain natural acts, the exclusion of sensible images, for instance, or of physical movements, or discursive acts, or facility in analysing our own state, etc.... Acts of this kind being already known to us, their absence is therefore recognised without any effort. But it is otherwise with regard to the two fundamental characters. It is now no longer a case of something excluded, but of something positively received, and this, too, in the supernatural order. God must give us fresh light if we are to discern them clearly. 12.— This method is a very easy one for the director, who has not to wander about at random and hew himself a path in an unknown country. And it is easy also for the person directed, for he requires no preparation, no previous examen in order to give clear and accurate replies. But it would be quite otherwise if, instead of asking him for answers to definite questions, we were to call upon him to draw up an account of his spiritual life. He would fatigue himself by searching about for ideas and words, and it would usually end in vague and indefinite phrases. 13.— Objection. When anybody describes the mystic state, which he believes himself in all good faith to have experienced, and makes use of very accurate expressions, there is always the fear lest he should simply be repeating

what he has read in mystical books, repeating them without understanding them? I reply that no one can repeat so many difficult things without contradicting himself and wandering away from the point. When he has been dealing with anyone (who is in good faith, that is to say) for some considerable time, a skilful director will be perfectly able to judge whether he has experienced what he is relating. There are a thousand shades that cannot be invented. But an ignorant confessor might make mistakes. The objection would equally argue that doctors could never rely upon their patients' accounts of their symptoms. May they not be repeating phrases that they have read in medical journals or chemists' prospectuses? 14.—The particular case inquired into by the director will often be doubtful. This is so when the various characters of the mystic union are not very clearly manifested. Or, again, the director has to deal with someone who is not instructed in these matters, able to observe the facts clearly and accurately, and knowing or instinctively selecting the proper terms to be made use of. There is often even a contradiction in terms. In vain do we question such persons in the endeavour to assist them. In their emotion they answer everything at cross purposes or almost at random. 15.—In these doubtful cases we must not be too set upon putting these questions, but wait quietly, for a long time, it may be. There is only one point that must be decided: has the person in question passed beyond the way of meditation? To know more would be useful, but is not necessary. In fact, if the director undertakes this inquiry, he does so especially for the sake of solving these two practical

problems: 1° Should the person be allowed to pursue his way? 2° Should he be allowed to dispense himself from certain devotional exercises? Now, in order to answer the first question, there is no need to distinguish between the prayer of quiet and the prayer of simplicity. The points with regard to which we have to satisfy ourselves are the same in each case, namely: 1° that the occupation is good and holy in itself; 2° that there is facility or even an attraction with regard to it; 3° that it is profitable. 16.—As to the second question, namely, whether such or such a vocal prayer or devotional exercise should be omitted, it is sufficient to ask what is the motive that prompts this desire for its suppression. Is it caprice? a desire for singularity? or is a real difficulty experienced? In this last case we shall give the rule of not forcing oneself in the matter. And the director will be at particular pains to reassure those souls to whom these new paths are a source of fear. 17.—By like arguments we should see that if the director, or the person directed, supposes wrongly that the prayer has advanced beyond that of simplicity, this illusion has no practical ill-effects. But the contrary is the case with illusions where the person wrongly believes that he has received revelations. Again, if a man has had an extraordinary prayer and fancies that he has arrived at the full union, when he is merely at the prayer of quiet, it is of small importance. 18.—If the director has detected the presence of an extraordinary degree of prayer, should he conceal his opinion from the persons concerned, in order to keep them in humility? He should at least enlighten them sufficiently to enable him to point out the proper

course to follow and to dispel their fears. I should even prefer him to act still more frankly, and give them a book in which a good description of their state is to be found. There is a very simple way of maintaining in humility a person who has not gone beyond the prayer of quiet. Instead of trying to persuade him that he has experienced nothing extraordinary (which makes too great calls upon his ingenuousness), it is only necessary to explain that his degree is a very small thing in comparison with those to which other souls have attained. We shall thus be saying nothing but the truth. 19.—The person who believes himself to be thus favoured will do well, on his side, to seek for enlightenment with regard to his state. This is the way to avoid false rules of conduct and to co-operate with the divine action. But we must avoid too much selfanalysis. By over introspection we do not arrive at a clearer view of our state; we only disturb ourselves uselessly. 20.—Degree of certainty. I will suppose that the person in question is regarded as sufficiently serious-minded to allow of reliance being place in his answers. But if, on the contrary, he were to be of a credulous disposition and badly balanced, the examination would be almost useless. His statements would be of little value. But it is easy to be informed in advance upon this point. Such defects manifest themselves on a hundred occasions. I will further suppose that the prayer inquired into presents all the above-mentioned characters clearly. I say that we can then be morally certain that it is the mystic union. What might be feared is a counterfeit of the Devil or one proceeding from our own minds. We will show that this double fear would be groundless.

21.—And, to begin with, the Devil cannot imitate the mystic state. Both St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross hold this doctrine. In the first place, there is one character that the Devil would be careful not to imitate, at least, sincerely; and this is the impulse towards virtue. And then the actual foundation of this prayer is beyond his powers; while the contrary holds good with regard to revelations and visions, such, at any rate, as are not purely intellectual. For, according to the teaching of the Schools, neither good nor evil angels can act directly upon the intelligence or upon the will. They operate upon our interior faculties only, the imagination and the feelings, and this by the agency of the body alone. The Devil, like the good angel, may awaken sensible images, as well as pleasure and emotions of the same order. But all mystic writers declare that this disturbance of the lower faculties is powerless to produce the mystical knowledge of God and the union corresponding with it. 22.—In the same way there can be no counterfeit proceeding from our own minds. The true mystic contemplation has an assemblage of characters that we can never reproduce at will. The imitation will be so gross as to be instantly apparent. And no writer has thought of pointing this out as a possible danger, while quite the opposite is the case where revelations are concerned. And then there is one circumstance that can always reassure the director and the penitent himself: it is this latter's astonishment with regard to his prayer; his objections, his difficulties. His constant attitude of mind may be summed up thus: "I should never have imagined that things would happen like this; a different way would be better." But if this state



were a product of his own mind, it would fit in with his preconceived ideas instead of shocking them. He would not be incessantly asking that his prayer should be explained to him. He would find it perfectly intelligible. 23.—The imagination is especially powerless to imitate the mystic union, because it can represent sensible images only, and this is the exact opposite of the state in question. And, further, those in whom this faculty predominates, have no inclination towards this union. Their attraction is towards apparitions of Our Lord and of the saints, and converse with them. And they feel nothing but weariness in a prayer that is without images and acts of reasoning. In a word, imaginative persons tend, naturally and strongly, to feed the imagination and not to condemn it to fast. § 3. Some other Observed Facts 24.—Natural sleep may quite well, alas! overtake us during the prayer of quiet. Some persons who suffer from fatigue are very prone to this infirmity during the morning and evening exercises. A semi-slumber may also be experienced under the following conditions: Take a man who is subject to insomnia at night, for instance. He is then in a state of drowsiness, midway between the lucidity of the waking state and sleep; now he is more fully awake, now he slumbers, to return once more to a certain degree of consciousness. If he were in the natural state during this time, the imagination would alternately go off upon some capricious excursion, and then persistently bring back to him the remembrance of some work with which he had been much engaged. But if he has the prayer of quiet each time that he thinks about God, this prayer often

replaces, in part, the wanderings of the imagination. It is not a special state of prayer, but the mingling of two states; in one the drowsiness is natural, and the other supernatural. 25.—On the other hand, has ecstasy or any one of the neighbouring states sufficient strength to dispel sleep completely for several hours at the least? I believe so; but we are reduced here to simple probabilities. I even think that ecstasy may do more than this, and in a good measure take the place of sleep without causing any inconvenience to the body; so that no more fatigue is felt during the day than if the natural rest had been enjoyed at night. This would explain why some saints could pass a great part of their nights in prayer, as St. Francis Xavier did, without becoming worn out. St. Peter of Alcantara, so St. Teresa tells us, went for forty years without sleeping more than an hour and a half each night (*Life*, ch. xxvii, 18). 26.—Gifts that are added to the prayer of quiet. I have already pointed out that in this prayer the claspings of the mystic union may become the spiritual embrace, and that at certain moments the soul is taken possession of by a very ardent delight. 27.—A third grace may also supervene: we begin, but in a very low degree, to have a certain sight of God. We do not attain to Him by an interior touch only. A new manner of acting seems to be produced in the soul, and it is compared to a look. This look inclines towards something external, subtle, mysterious, immense, something that can be compared to a misty and luminous atmosphere. But we feel that this is not a material light, that this space is not that in which material bodies exist. If it is weak, we perceive it before us and

above us only; otherwise it surrounds us on all sides; it is of uniform appearance in all directions. In vain should we try to analyse this sensation in order to understand it better; we should discover nothing new. At the same time it produces great pleasure without our being able to explain why. It causes scarcely any ligature, and is not affected by walking or external movements. It differs here from the mystical touch. 28.—This manifestation is sometimes still more accentuated. We are then aware, in this immensity, of a majestic Being who fills us with fear and love. At times we even feel His gaze. St. Teresa appears to have alluded to these pre-visions in ch. xvii, 8 of her Life. She speaks of a variety of the mystic union having the two following characteristics: 1° that God “constrains the will and even the understanding, as it seems to me, seeing that it makes no reflections, but is occupied in the fruition of God: like a person who looks on, and sees so many things that he knows not where to look—one object puts another out of sight, and none of them leaves any impression behind.” Certain divine attributes, then, are seen; 2° this state, although an absorbing one, is connected with the prayer of quiet. For the saint says that it is inferior to the full union (which she had previously described), and she confirms this estimate by adding that the soul suffers from distractions in it. 29.—It has been said that the prayer of quiet makes God felt as being present in the soul. But in the special case under our notice, God manifests Himself as present outwardly at the same time. And further, if this light is strong, if it becomes an abyss of brightness and exercises an attraction over us, then, instead of being

led to fall back upon ourselves in order to enjoy God, we wish to precipitate ourselves out of our bodies, to go and lose ourselves in that spiritual cloud and to attain to a fuller possession of Him who conceals Himself therein. In the case of ecstasies, this outward tendency often shows itself unconsciously by their gestures and attitudes: their eyes and arms are raised towards Heaven. To sum up, the impression of exteriority does not constitute the basis of the prayer of quiet, but is merely added to it at times. 30.— This act of sight, all intellectual as it is, does not seem to me to be separated from an accompanying act of the imagination. The imagination, which has a need of action, seeks to imitate the intellectual impression by representing a luminous space. It gives a minimum of representation. But this is what proves its presence to me: several persons have said to me: "I see a sort of whitish atmosphere." Now, to speak of colour is to point to an element that belongs to a sensible faculty. And in the same way they spoke of seeing it in front of them. This localisation of the Divine Being implies a co-operation of the imagination. We must not, however, go so far as to claim that the imagination does everything here, and that it is an illusion to believe in the existence of an intellectual and supernatural sight. The clear proof to the contrary is that no pleasure could be experienced in contemplating such an attenuated and impoverished image, and that no one would try to return to it. Who would resign themselves to gaze for any length of time at a material mist or a sheet of blank paper? 31.— At the risk of appearing over subtle, I add a last instruction. As it is not of great importance, the reader

need not linger over it if he finds it unintelligible. It is this. When God sends the intellectual light of which I have spoken, even in a low degree, certain exterior circumstances may affect our facility for discerning it. Let us suppose that we are in some lighted place. If the eyes are shut, we might think that it would be more easily distinguished if the eyes were open, for then we could be more readily attentive. But we find, on the contrary, that the task of discernment is then less easy. The cause must be sought in the imaginative act, which, as I have said, comes to associate itself with the intellectual impression. According as it is itself more or less distinct, it renders this impression more or less apprehensible. Let us see what occurs with the imaginative act in the two cases referred to. If the eyes are closed, they only see the luminous eyelids, and thus receive the sensation of a white, uniform expanse, without any fixed outlines. The imaginative act, being quite similar, is no longer discernible as distinct from the bodily impression, in spite of the attention brought to bear upon it; and the supernatural vision, which is weak and subtle, suffers from this confusion. If, on the contrary, the eyes are open, they perceive a multiplicity of objects, of various forms and colours. It then happens, and this is proved, that this variety causes the imaginative act (which, as we have just said, is of a quite contrary kind) to stand out in contrast to it. It becomes more perceptible, and with it the intellectual vision. 82.—I described farther back the sufferings experienced in the prayer of quiet. The same kind of sufferings were found also in the first night of the senses, the painful aspiration, for instance, after a fuller possession of

God, and sometimes tedium. This shows us once more that the states of prayer follow each other continuously. There is one difference, however—namely, that in the prayer of quiet you have begun to enter upon this possession. § 4. Of an Illusion that is Easily Avoided 33.—Real revelations are, generally speaking, only received when the period of ecstasy has been reached, or nearly so. Those who have not passed beyond the prayer of quiet, or an infrequent full union, should be on their guard against the idea that they may hear supernatural utterances. Unless the evidence is irresistible, they should attribute them when they occur to the activity of their own imagination. 34. —But may not these revelations occur, at least, in diminutive? May we not have very distinct inspirations which dictate the proper line of conduct under difficult circumstances when the reason is silent or is even inclined in the opposite direction? As a general rule, nothing of the kind is received. There is a danger here of illusions, which may be very grave if we have not been warned, but which vanishes if we are prepared. Finding herself in a new and extraordinary state, the inexperienced soul is inclined to say: “The whole tenor of my life is now doubtless about to become extraordinary. God, who is doing so much for me, wishes to be my counsellor. There will be no further need for a prudent study of the arguments for and against in important circumstances. An inner voice will point them out to me, and I shall merely have to follow these indications blindly.” Such a contention is exaggerated. God has given you no undertaking that He will direct you Himself. You take a great deal

upon yourself by attributing such obligations to Him. He has done very much for you already by inclining you strongly to virtue. If, then, you feel that some idea takes possession of your mind and endeavours to impose itself upon you, as though it were a divine inspiration, do not conclude that this is so in reality and that you must follow it. Continue, like those who are still in ordinary prayer, to weigh the pros and cons, and to decide at your leisure in accordance with the rules for the discernment of spirits. We shall see farther on that it is necessary to act with the same reserve, even with regard to revelations properly so called. 35.—It is greatly to the Devil's interest that you should act in the contrary manner, that you should consider yourself as being inspired, and even a prophet. You will in this way commit great imprudences which will destroy your credit with those about you, so that you will not accomplish the good to which your state of prayer should have led, and you will bring these states into contempt. People will say: "See what they lead to!" They only lead witless or badly instructed people to these lengths; but you will not get your adversaries who are full of prejudices to understand these distinctions. It is a duty here not to compromise your reputation for good sense and prudence. Mysticism would suffer for it. It is not the prayer of quiet, however, that we must blame for these blunders, but a quite accidental circumstance—namely, the ignorance of those who receive it. 36.—The exaggerated terms in which certain authors speak of the prayer of quiet, and of the "admirable lights" which, according to them, are received in it, help to foster the above illusion. They

speak truly, in the sense that God is felt as being present. But the reader generalises, and believes that distinct counsels are constantly received. Others say: "In the prayer of silence we must listen to God. Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Some very good authors have made use of these expressions. But they may be wrongly understood. Certain readers will conclude from them that in the prayer of quiet God really converses with the soul in supernatural words, and not merely by the familiar voice of conscience. There is not the same drawback when this language is used with reference to ordinary prayer, for it is then evident that the expression, "listening to God," is purely metaphorical. As an instance of these exaggerations let us quote a seventeenth-century writer who, really little in sympathy with mysticism, shows himself over-enthusiastic in this passage: "The conscience of these souls," he says, "is an exact and perfect book.... The Holy Spirit generally says and does everything, while these souls have only to read and look at what is happening.... The Spirit of God in them is a real teacher who instructs them incessantly." It may, perhaps, be so in the case of certain ecstasies, at certain moments, at least. But it is a wild fantasy to depict the inferior degrees in this fashion. The saints themselves were not content "to read and to look" in the divine book. We see, for example, that certain great founders of religious Orders—St. Dominic, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Ignatius, and St. Francis of Sales—groped about, as it were, to a large extent before they found the true form of their Institute or of many characteristic rules. It was not sufficient for them, therefore, to turn over the



leaves of the divine book. There is another significant fact: during the great Western Schism the saints were not all of one mind, not even those who had the gift of reading consciences. St. Vincent Ferrer and Blessed Peter of Luxembourg proclaimed the legality of the Avignon Pope; and St. Catherine of Siena, with St. Catherine of Sweden, the daughter of St. Bridget, were on the side of his rival. The Holy Spirit did not choose to intervene, in spite of the great advantages which would have resulted. Far more, the angels themselves are not always informed of the divine intentions. For Daniel saw the angel of the Jews in conflict with the angel of the Persians. If they had read in the eternal book, the question at issue would have been decided. 36 bis.—I have put souls on their guard against the inspirations or impulsions that they believe themselves to receive relating to their conduct. But the contrary attitude should be recommended for things seen suddenly and luminously with the eye of faith, and which give a higher comprehension, not of novelties, but of truths held by the Church. Such illuminations can be accompanied by no drawbacks; they are, on the contrary, very precious graces. 37.—At times the above illusion occurs in a modified form. Here the person does not count on the gift of prophecy, or even on inspirations in cases of difficulty. He merely expects more help than if he had continued in the ordinary way. So far there is nothing that is not quite reasonable. But here is where the illusion begins; he is inclined to say: “I need not exercise such great care over my conduct; God will be responsible for preserving me from all faults and all imprudences. And, further, He exhibits a special

friendship towards me; now friendship knows how to turn its eyes away from seeing slight faults." This would be a very unsound argument. Here, again, God has never engaged to preserve you from faults, and still less from blunders. You are tempting Him. The Devil is inciting you to an exaggerated confidence, as he did with Our Saviour in the desert, setting Him upon the pinnacle of the Temple and saying to Him: "Cast Thyself down, for it is written that He has given His angels charge over Thee, and in their hands shall they bear Thee up, lest perhaps Thou dash Thy foot against a stone." On the contrary, you must use your wisdom and good sense. With regard to familiarity with God, there are two kinds of familiarity, as with men. The bad kind consists in no longer attaching any importance to small faults. 88.—History shows us by two celebrated examples, those of Fr. Falconi and Mme. Guyon, that, in spite of extraordinary graces of prayer, we may fall a victim to false ideas which we wrongly attribute to God. They were the great apostles of quietism: the one in the first part of the seventeenth century, and the other towards its close. Fr. Falconi, of the Order of Mercy, who died in Madrid in 1658, was apparently of a high virtue and possessing great gifts of prayer, so much so that he was raised to the dignity of Venerable. His Life, written by his friends and disciples, equals that of the greatest saints. Nothing is lacking: ecstasies, prophecies, and miracles. Even when rejecting the greater part of these interested eulogies (which Rome does not seem to have taken seriously), it is still probable that Falconi received at any rate, for some time, very great graces. His absurd doctrines

rendered them sterile. Three of his works were circulated for a long time before being condemned (see the Bibliographical Index at the end of this volume). Mme. Guyon offers an analogous case. When we read her *Life*, written by herself, and it appears to be sincere, we are led to regard it as probable that she really had the prayer of quiet in her youth. She then gave admirable examples of patience amidst all the contradictions with which she was surrounded. But she intoxicated herself with quietistic theories, and persuaded herself that she had a vast mission in the Church. She put faith in one of her revelations, according to which, equally with Our Lady, she was pre-eminently the type of the Spouse celebrated by the *Canticle of Canticles* and the *Apocalypse*. Her director, who was rather her disciple, the Barnabite Fr. La Combe, encouraged her in these foolish fancies. The fruit of the earlier graces that she had received was lost. Fr. Falconi and Mme. Guyon would seem, then, to have received everything that was necessary for sanctity. In spite of their good faith, they only ended by harming souls and becoming a wound in the Church's side. 89.—

Conclusion. Those who begin to experience supernatural states of prayer should not exaggerate the confidence that they feel in being the object of a special providence on God's part. God has not promised to perform miracles in order to preserve them from false notions and imprudences of conduct. It is for them to be on their guard and to accept serious direction.

## Chapter XVII Details Regarding the Full Union (The Second Stage of the Mystic Union)

1.—Definition. After the prayer of quiet, or incomplete union, comes, as I have already said, the full union, or semi-ecstasy, which St. Teresa calls the prayer of union (*Interior Castle, Fifth Mansion, ch. ii, 1*), or third water (*Life, ch. xvi, 1; xvii, 7*), or fifth mansion of the interior castle. I have said elsewhere that Scaramelli and many other writers after him have employed the term simple union, which suggests an inaccurate idea. Let us begin by recalling our definition: It is a mystic union 1° of such strength that the soul is fully occupied with the divine object; in a word, there are no distractions. But 2° the senses continue to act, or partially so, at any rate. By a greater or less effort, moreover, it is possible fully to re-establish relations with the external world, to move, and thus come out of our prayer. 2.—Where it differs from the prayer of quiet. The fundamental difference is that the soul is plunged more deeply in God. The clasping of the mystic union is much stronger. And hence follow several consequences; the first mentioned in my definition is the absence of distractions. The second is that the personal effort is reduced almost to nothing. Finally, the third is that there is a much greater certainty of God's presence in the soul. St. Teresa regards this last character as the surest mark of this prayer (*Interior Castle, Fifth Mansion, ch. i, 8*). 3.—Discussion. According to this, there would be nothing really new in the full union. The facts would be the same as in the prayer of quiet, only their intensity would be greater. But is it quite

certain that no other important differences exist? I do not think that there are any. We must turn to St. Teresa for the reply, for she was the first to establish a distinction between this state and the neighbouring prayers; and it was she also who introduced the usage of giving it a special name. Up to then, no one had noticed that there was an important stage between the lower degrees of union, called the prayers of repose, and that of ecstasy. St. John of the Cross continues to look at things as a whole, and with him the word union has a more general sense. And still less must we endeavour to solve the problem by quoting yet earlier writers who employ the word union. They also understood it in its wide sense. This matter settled, St. Teresa proceeds to ask herself, in the *Way of Perfection*, in what the prayer of quiet differs from that of union; these words being, of course, understood in the restricted sense that she had given them. Now, she does not think of indicating any new feature in the second of these states. She refers to two only of the characters of which I have spoken: the absence of distractions, and the almost total disappearance of effort on the part of the soul. She had already given expression to this last thought in her *Life* by the comparison of watering a garden. Now she compares God, not to a fertilising water, but to a food, to milk or manna. What she desires to call attention to is the difference in the effort, not the difference in the result, for this result is the same—namely, to possess in ourselves the divine food. 4.—The old writers who have followed St. Teresa in describing this state make mention of no other differences. For they merely repeat, with the addition

of superlatives, what they have already said of the prayer of quiet. A modern writer, however, very reliable on other points, seems to hold (without bringing forward any proofs) that, while this state lasts, it contains a new element – namely, a beginning of the transforming union. For he gives this definition: “It is an interior sensation by which the soul is made aware that God is uniting Himself with her and making her participate in His life.” But this transient participation takes place at the most in certain raptures, and this is probably what St. Teresa calls espousals (Interior Castle, Seventh Mansion, ch. ii, 2). The saint says plainly: “I think the union which takes place in the prayer of [union], though not actually the spiritual espousals, resembles the preliminaries that take place when two people are contemplating a betrothal.” She adds that her future Spouse then visits the soul, as He wishes her to get to know Him better (*ibid.*, Fifth Mansion, ch. iv, 2). 5. – Objection. St. Teresa compares the soul in the enjoyment of the full union to the silkworm enveloped in the cocoon that it has spun for itself. And then it comes fresh from this state like “a lovely little white butterfly” (*ibid.*, Fifth Mansion, ch. ii, 5, 6). This comparison seems to imply a transformation, and refers consequently to the spiritual marriage, which is called the transforming union. 6. – Reply. You yourself admit that, according to the saint, the soul does not merit the name of butterfly until she has left this prayer. During the prayer itself, and each time that she falls back into it, she is merely like the silkworm. It is therefore a question of a transformation in behaviour, and not of a new

manner of operation during the continuance of the mystic state. All the context helps to convince us of this. And, further, the saint tells us that the butterfly must undergo a new and final metamorphosis, and that it will have to die in order to take on the life of Jesus Christ through the transforming union (Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, ch. xi; Seventh Mansion, chs. ii, iii). The transformation does not take place, then, in the full union, nor even in the ecstasy. 7.—The condition of the sensible faculties. When the union is strong they begin to be in a dormant state, as it were; all feeling is partially lost, or rather, as St. Teresa seems to say, the soul is too absorbed to notice them, which is not quite the same thing but rather less pronounced. 8.—Intensity. St. Teresa says that this may be either more or less. It is an intermediate state between the prayer of quiet and ecstasy, and it is one which may fall at times to the first of these states or rise to the second. At first sight it seems that St. Teresa is contradicting herself when, speaking of the third water (Life, ch. xvi, 4), she says “the faculties of the soul now retain only the power of occupying themselves wholly with God,” and at the same time she declares that it is possible to compose verses in order to give expression to the soul’s joyful intoxication. But she takes it for granted that this last case can only occur at moments when the union is greatly diminished; or, again, it is a question of a derogation of the mystic state such as has been referred to elsewhere: God allows us to do two very different things simultaneously in exceptional cases. To sum up, the essential character of the mystic union is the absence of distractions. The remainder is merely

an accessory, and may simply serve to distinguish the subdegrees. 9.—Duration. According to St. Teresa (Interior Castle, Fifth Mansion, ch. ii, 6), the union in its plenitude does not last half an hour. It then falls back into a lower degree —the prayer of quiet; but it may increase again afterwards. It is the culminating state which is of such short duration. We shall see that it is the same in the case of ecstasy. 10.—There is reason to believe that, apart from the time of prayer, those who receive the full union frequently feel it, to a certain extent, in all their exterior occupations. They often have a continuous although fainter and more confused sentiment of union with God. Courbon says that this is so, and several persons have told me the same thing. If this sentiment were strong, it would usually interfere with their occupations.

### **Chapter XVIII Ecstasy (The Third Stage of the Mystic Union)**

§ 1. Definition and First Series of Facts 1.—Definition. Let us recall our definition of ecstasy, but adding to it some supplementary details. Supernatural ecstasy is a state that, not only at the outset, but during its whole existence, contains two essential elements: the first, which is interior and invisible, is a very intense attention to some religious subject; the second, which is corporeal and visible, is the alienation of the sensible faculties. This last expression signifies not only that sensations no longer penetrate to the soul, but that it would be extremely difficult to produce them, either if one wished to do so oneself, or if other persons endeavoured to incite the action of the organs



of sense. I have already defined what is understood by complete or incomplete ecstasy. 2. — Explanation of the definition. 1° I am only defining supernatural ecstasies here. Farther on I shall define natural ecstasies and inquire whether any such phenomena have ever existed. 2° The beginning of the definition may be slightly modified by saying that the soul is in a mystic state interiorly. I do not specify exactly whether it is a question here of union with God, of supernatural locutions or the apparition of a saint. We shall see presently whether any ecstasies are produced by one of these apparitions without the accompaniment of the extraordinary union with God as present at the same time. I shall occupy myself exclusively in this chapter with the ecstasy that includes union with God. 3° I have been careful not to present the alienation of the sensible faculties as being produced by the interior state. This would be to prejudge a delicate question of causality which will be studied farther on. It is enough for the moment to know that one element accompanies the other, without inquiring into their connection with one another. I have already dealt with the four physiological facts that characterise ecstasy. 8.— Various names. St. Teresa describes ecstasy under the name of the fourth water (Life, ch. xviii and fol.), and as the Sixth Mansion of the Interior Castle. Several authors have been in error when quoting from this eighteenth chapter of her Life. As the saint tries to avoid using the word ecstasy, she often employs the more general term of union, and then these passages are wrongly cited as referring to the preceding degree, the full union. The evident proof that it is a

question here of ecstasy is that the state described responds to the definition of ecstasy: according to the saint, there is alienation of the sensible faculties. (The early writers often give to ecstasy the name of elevation of the spirit, or flight of the spirit (*excessus mentis*)). 4.—Various kinds of ecstasy. It is called: 1° Simple ecstasy, if it comes on gently, little by little, or if it is not of great strength. As a rule, it is then thought not to contain any revelations; 2° Rapture, when it is sudden and violent; 3° Flight of the spirit, when, says St. Teresa, “the soul suddenly feels a rapid sense of motion that appears to hurry it away” (*Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, ch. v, i*). “I cannot say whether the soul dwells in the body meanwhile; I will neither affirm that it does, nor that the body is deprived of the spirit” (*ibid.*, 10). See also the Second Letter to Fr. Rodrigo Alvarez). 6.—Some special features. 1° These raptures are “very alarming, especially at first” (*Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, ch. v, i; Life, ch. xx, 4*). 2° This violent motion cannot, as a rule, be resisted (*ibid.*, *ibid.*). But in the case of simple ecstasy, resistance is possible, at least, at the outset. 3° The body “continues in the position that it was in when the rapture came upon it” (*Life, ch. xx, 23*). 4° God nearly always reveals secrets of the supernatural order in raptures, and as a rule it is felt that the understanding has been amplified. 5° After a rapture, there may be a difficulty in resuming the ordinary exterior occupations, and this sometimes continues for several days (*Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, ch. iv, 18; Life, ch. xx, 29; xl, 11*). 6° The memory of what has been seen is retained; but the soul does not usually know how to express this exalted knowledge by

means of our human language which is so imperfect, and which is obliged to make use of images (see Benedict XIV, De canon., Book III, ch. xlix, No. 12). 7° When the soul comes out of a rapture that has overtaken her in the middle of a conversation or a prayer, it often happens that she continues the phrase where it was broken off. St. Francis of Sales was doubtless acquainted with this fact; for one day, when Sister Anne Rosset had fallen into an ecstasy while conversing with him on divine love, he said to the Sisters: "Note carefully what she says when she comes back to herself." And, as a matter of fact, she then went on with the conversation that had been interrupted (*Œuvres de Ste. J. F. de Chantal*, Migne ed., Vol. I, p. 979). A similar fact is related in the Life of the Ven. Jeanne of the Cross, of the Order of Poor Clares of Roveredo, in the seventeenth century. As she was speaking one day to the Sisters on the divine perfections she fell into a rapture that lasted for seven hours. When she came out of it she "took up the thread of her discourse at the point where she had interrupted it" (*Vie*, by Bede Weber ch. xiii). Dr. Imbert cites similar facts which occurred to St. Thomas of Villanova, Blessed Nicholas Factor, Francis of Cocogliedo, Giles of Santarem, Mary of Maille, and Paul of Sogliano (Vol. II, ch. xvii, p. 275). 8° Some saints used to utter a cry as the rapture seized them: this was the case with St. Peter of Alcantara, for example, and St. Joseph of Cupertino. The latter, when questioned on the subject, declared that his cry was a simple outburst of love (*Vie*, by Bernino, ch. xxii). See Benedict XIV, De canon., Book III, ch. xlix, No. 11. Towards the end of her raptures St. Frances of

Rome often uttered moans. These were caused by the, at times, violent suffering that she experienced when obliged to tear herself from the celestial vision. The saints who appeared to her had to preach resignation to her, and even to reproach her (Bolland., March 9th; see especially *Visions*, 13, 14, 34, 37). 6.—The age at which the saints became ecstatics. Dr. Imbert has compiled the following table: “St. Hildegard, Catherine of Racconigi, Dominic of Paradise, St. Catherine of Siena, at the age of 4; St. Peter of Alcantara, Blessed Osanne of Mantua, St. Angela of Brescia, Mother Agnes of Jesus (of Langeac), at 6 years of age; Blaise of Caltanissetta, at 7; Christina of Stommeln, at 11; Agnes of Montepulciano, at 14; Mary of Agreda, at 18; Veronica of Binasco, at 40; and St. Teresa, at 43. 7.—Duration of the ecstasies. I am led to believe that it is the exception when they do not last more than half an hour. In the *Lives of the Saints* we have instances of a great number of ecstasies that lasted for several hours. One of the most remarkable is that of St. Thomas of Villanova. When reading the Office for Ascension Day, says the Bull of his canonisation, he was seized by an ecstasy, and remained suspended in the air for twelve hours. There have been ecstasies that lasted for several days; Blessed Angela of Foligno, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Clare of Montefalco, 3 days; Blessed Colomba of Rieti, 5 days; Ven. Marina de Escobar, 6; St. Ignatius, 8; St. Colette, 15; St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, 40 (Bolland., 1st Life, No. 151). 8.—Objection. St. Teresa says that ecstasy lasts “but a short time”. 10). She even speaks of half an hour. 9.—Reply. It is not exactly that. The saint is careful to tell us that it is a question not of the

ecstasy itself, but of its greatest intensity. In short, the alienation of the sensible faculties does not disappear to be resumed later on. No instance of interruptions of this kind is cited. It is not a descent from the mountain's summit to the plain, but only to a lower ridge, except just at the last. It is a case of oscillation between a maximum and a minimum which is very much above the prayer of quiet. 10.—Frequency. This has been very great with several of the saints. With some, their life has been little else than a series of ecstasies. This was so with Blessed Hermann Joseph (of Steinfield), a Premonstratensian Canon of the thirteenth century, St. Michael of the Saints, St. Catherine of Ricci, and St. Joseph of Cupertino. It was the same with St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, excepting during two periods of her life. Blessed Raymond of Capua, who became General of the Dominicans, has written the life of his penitent, St. Catherine of Siena. He states that he has seen her thousands of times in an ecstasy. Much the same thing has been said of St. Colette. The most astonishing case is that of Maria von Möerl. During the last thirty-five years of her life her ecstasy was continuous. She only came out of it in obedience to her confessor's orders, which were given either upon the request of a visitor or that she might attend to her daily household affairs. For she continued to manage the housekeeping in her humble family. "She thinks of everything, cares for everything, forestalls the needs of those who are in her care, and owing to her sound common sense everything about her is perfectly organised" (Goerres, Book IV, ch. xxi). 11.—Influence upon the health. 12.—The recall. A certain procedure, which goes by

the name of the recall, is often followed with regard to ecstasies. Their Superior or confessor—in a word, someone to whom the Church has given spiritual authority over these persons—gives them the formal order to return to the natural state. This order is sometimes exterior and oral, uttered aloud, that is to say, so that it reaches the ecstatic; sometimes it is mental, or its equivalent, the sound of the voice not reaching the person's ears. Before describing the results of these recalls, let us put a preliminary question. 13.—Who is it that really obeys when an order is thus received during an ecstasy? In reality, it is God who obeys, notwithstanding appearances. For if the act could be attributed to the ecstatic, 1° he would have to hear the order. Now, persons do not usually hear while they are in an ecstasy; 2° even if we suppose this condition to be fulfilled, he must be able to carry out the order. Now, no one can come out of an ecstasy at will. With reference to the Superior, then, the ecstatic is in the state of a person who is asleep. 14.—It does not follow from this that the Superior cannot issue an order to the ecstatic, but only that he should not do so lightly, from idle curiosity or vanity. 15.—Results Of the mental recall. Experience shows that it is sometimes successful. But more often, according to Scaramelli, it is ineffectual (Tr. 3, No. 192). Fr. Séraphin also speaks of not having succeeded with the mental recall (Théologie mystique, No. 194). The following reason may be given. In consenting to execute the order given, God wishes to glorify the spiritual authority of the Superior. The intervention of this authority should therefore be made openly. 16.—Results of the exterior recall. It is regarded as

historically proven that this is invariably successful, if the ecstasy is of divine origin. No known saint has proved an exception to this rule. It is not easy to establish this thesis clearly a priori. Scaramelli gives this reason only: the person is not withdrawn from the ranks of the living; he therefore remains subject to the authority of the Church. But the same thing can be said when it is a case of natural sleep; and yet the order is then ineffectual. 17.—There is a partial exception pointed out by Fr. Séraphin. When the ecstatic is ill, he makes a movement like one who is trying to awake. He thus shows his obedience. But for physical reasons that we are ignorant of, he comes to himself with great difficulty only (*Théologie mystique*, No. 197). 18.—Experience shows that ecstasies obey a representative of the Superior equally with the Superior himself. 19.—If, while giving the order exteriorly, the Superior has the interior will not to be obeyed, the ecstatic remains in the same state. It is the same if, instead of an absolute order, it is given conditionally, or merely in the form of a request. Finally, the Superior has no right to obedience if he orders a miracle; for instance, if he tells an infirm ecstatic to get up and go into the church. If the Superior wishes the ecstatic to answer a question without coming out of the ecstasy, I am assured that he is not always obeyed. He has no right to get information by this extraordinary means, even upon spiritual subjects. It is not seemly that God should be interviewed, so to speak. 20.—And conversely. If the recall succeeds, are we certain that the ecstasy is divine? No. It being admitted that the Devil is able, strictly speaking, to simulate ecstasy outwardly, he

could do the same as to obedience. He would not go so far as to give the interior disposition to this virtue, but he would produce the appearance of it, for the moment, at any rate. 21.—Does the ecstatic know that he is recalled? Many ecstasies have answered in the negative (see Dr. Imbert): St. Joseph of Cupertino, for example (Vie, ch. xxix); God merely withdraws, the subject not knowing why. But there is an example of the contrary also. Joseph a Spiritu Sancto quotes the case of the Ven. Dominic of Jesus-Mary. If his Superior, even when absent, ordered him to come out of his ecstasy, he heard God say to him: “Resume the use of your faculties and obey the order that I give you by the mouth of your Superior” (Vol. III, disp. 18, q. 3, No. 169). Maria von Möerl was a similar case. 22.—Fr. Séraphin says that he has proved that the recall nearly always causes great suffering to the ecstatic. He has met with one exception only, which was when the ecstasy followed closely upon Communion, and the Sacred Species were not yet consumed at the moment of the recall (Théol. myst., No. 194). It is not known whether this is a general law. Fr. Séraphin concludes from this fact that the recall should be made very seldom and only by necessity. I know another director who has proved that the recall, if made suddenly, produces a violent and painful shock. To avoid this result, he ordered the person in the rapture to return slowly, progressively, for instance, in the space of a quarter of an hour. If he specified the moment, the rapture ceased exactly at the time fixed. The Ven. Anne Madeleine de Remuzat’s Superior relates that she found her one day in an ecstasy in her room: “I told her to rise up



under obedience.... At this word 'obedience' she came back to herself, but so exhausted that I had to put her to bed" (Vie, ch. xii). § 2. What it is that takes place in the Soul during the ecstasy 23. — Intellectual visions of the Divinity. In the preceding degrees God permitted the soul to lose herself in Him more or less deeply. But, ordinarily, He did not allow Himself to be seen. In rapture, the contrary usually happens. Several attributes that have been hidden now begin to manifest themselves. One of the sublimest communications which is often referred to by writers, is the intellectual vision of the Blessed Trinity. Even if we did not know by the Church's teaching how many Persons there are in God, and how they proceed One from the Other, we should come to know it, and, by way of experience, through seeing it. We shall return to this vision later on. The Ven. Marina de Escobar relates that she sometimes saw intellectually one of the Divine Persons without the other two: either the Word (Vol. II, Book II, ch. xxxi, No. 1), or, more often, the Holy Ghost (Vol. I, Book II, ch. xxxiii, § 4; xxi, § 3 and 5; xxiv, § 1 and 3; Vol. II, Book I, ch. xlvi, No. 2; Book II, ch. xxx, No. 3). 24. — Blinding contemplation. When God thus allows His attributes to be seen, a certain obscurity always remains. It is a singular thing that the stronger the light, the more dazzled, blinded, does the soul feel. It is in this way that the sun would blind an owl and cause it suffering. An excess of light produces almost the same result as darkness. It is a mingling of knowledge and of ignorance, the ignorance being what strikes us the most. The attribute of incomprehensibility manifests itself more and more. We bury ourselves in the "divine

darkness." 25.—Incommunicable attributes. This effect of blindness is produced not merely by the too great strength of the divine light, but by the nature of certain attributes that have been manifested. Some of these attributes are a thousand times more incomprehensible to us than the others. The terrifying obscurity that they produce is called "the great darkness." These profounder attributes are those that no creature can possess: those that are incommunicable. For example: infinity, eternity, the creative power, universal knowledge, immutability, a-se-ity (the absence of an external cause), the absence of any real distinction between the attributes and their fusion in an indefinable and higher good that contains all other goods. The divine nature may be compared to the solar sphere. When our eyes contemplate this orb, they at first see the flaming exterior surface only. But through the fissures in this surface astronomers perceive the great semi-obscure central nucleus. So in God there are, as it were, two strata of attributes. Those on the surface can send out their light to creatures and be reflected in them. We already know these attributes in them. For example: beauty, justice, mercy, and intelligence. But above is the semi-obscure of the central nucleus of the incommunicable attributes. The creature does not receive their radiance. And because our reason has nowhere encountered them, it stands abashed before this unexpected manifestation. And there results for us a special obscurity; the joy of attaining to a new and a marvellous knowledge is mingled with the uneasiness of feeling that we are not fitted to understand them properly. 26.—Contemplation that

is called "by negation." The greater part of the incommunicable attributes can only be apprehended by our infantine intelligences, or described indirectly, by means of the negation of known things. But they exist in God in the positive state, and it is as positive quantities that infused contemplation attains to them, thus surpassing the reason which confines itself to the negative idea. And so when writers say that the contemplative proceeds by negation, they merely intend to allude to the imperfect and negative language that he is obliged to make use of, in order to describe what is perceived. In the ordinary way of prayer there is an acquired contemplation, which is also called contemplation "by negation." But this is not a state of prayer. It is rather a way of forming ideas about God, by declaring that such a perfection is not in Him after the same manner as it is in creatures, but that it is present in a higher way. It is a negation followed by an explanatory affirmation. We must not confuse these philosophical mental operations with prayer, and still less with the mystic state. It is true that many of the early writers speak of it as a kind of prayer. This is, I think, due to an over-literal interpretation of Dionysius the Areopagite. If anyone were to try to uphold this interpretation, I should say to him: "Have you really met with contemplatives who can occupy themselves for an hour together with these negations?" 27.—The great darkness is sometimes pierced by the blaze of a rapid flash of light which we readily interpret as the light of glory, because it seems to show God as He is. 28.—Comparison of the beatific vision with intellectual visions of the divinity. Let us first question the

descriptive mystics, and then the theologians who complete what the mystics have begun. The former content themselves, as a rule, with two statements which give the impression that they experience. They say, first, that the knowledge given to them is experimental, and this is an analogy with the vision enjoyed by the blessed in Heaven; they say also that it is never without a certain obscurity; and this is a difference. Now, in reality the difference goes much deeper. The vision of the mystics is of another nature altogether; it does not manifest God "such as He is in Himself" § 4). 29.—Has it ever happened to certain souls to possess the beatific vision, in the strict sense of the word, transiently? The question has been argued at great length by theologians, so I will merely refer the reader to their writings. Definite experiences on this point are lacking. Upon the whole, it is generally admitted that this grace is possible, but excessively rare. The difficulty begins when we wish to decide if the favour has been accorded to this or that saint in particular. We are reduced on this point to reasons of fitness or of sentiment, which do not convince everybody. God is not obliged to do everything that seems suitable to us. Has He done it, yes or no? That is the question; it remains obscure. 30.—I said farther back that the full plenitude of the understanding is retained during the rapture; it even seems to be enlarged and that there is a growth of activity in the higher faculties. All ecstasies affirm this fact, which stands out in all that they tell us concerning the mysteries that have been revealed to them. Magnificent sights, profound ideas present themselves to the mind. They are powerless to

explain in detail what they have seen, however. This is not because the intelligence has been as it were asleep, but because it has been raised to truths which are beyond the strength of the human understanding, and they have no terms by which to give expression to them. Ask a scholar to express the intricacies of the infinitesimal calculus in the vocabulary of a child or an agricultural labourer! As Fr. de Bonniot remarks: "It is not enough to say that the language which is adapted to the ordinary operations of the human mind is necessarily insufficient; the ideas themselves, those ideas by which we understand everything, because they are the basis of our judgments, are no longer applicable to the intuitions of ecstasy which are of an infinitely higher order" (*Le miracle et ses contrefaçons*, Part II, ch. vii, § 2). Certain sceptic philosophers hold, on the contrary, that there is a diminution of the intelligence in ecstasy. For this they are obliged to reject the testimony of ecstasies themselves, the actual data, that is to say, upon which our arguments should be based. This a priori rejection is the consequence of their religious system. According to them, there is no such thing as the supernatural. Hence they are obliged to deny all states of soul which are raised too far above those that we see every day. Further, many of these unbelievers are Monists, not admitting any personal God as distinct from the world. Consequently, anyone who claims to rise to the real knowledge of this Being and to gaze into His very depths, is simply suffering from hallucinations: his cause is condemned in advance. He claims to see admirable attributes and perfections. But how can he see them when nothing of the kind

exists! These philosophers, I have said, like to think that not only is the intelligence not amplified, but that it is impaired, and so much the more as the ecstasy is deeper. According to them, the ecstatic has merely freed himself, after a more or less painful struggle, from the multiplicity of ideas and images. He arrives at something subtle at an almost imperceptible "residue," at one single idea (monoideism), which is merely an attenuated image. In high raptures, the soul rises to a yet simpler degree: stultification, which they qualify, through politeness, with other less offensive names, such as loss of consciousness or of personality. For the support of this theory they rely upon certain somewhat exaggerated expressions that mystics have sometimes employed, and which are easily explained by the context; as when they say that the understanding has ceased to act (see ch. ix, 15). If ecstasy really or even partially extinguished the faculty of knowing and loving, directors of all ages would not have failed to pursue it with their anathemas, as being time ill-spent; but they knew that the contrary was true. 30 bis.—This theory of unconsciousness, then, falsifies facts in a most audacious way and replaces them by fantastic descriptions. Some authors prefer a less drastic system. They adopt the emotional explanation. This concedes that the ecstatic is not plunged into a kind of deep sleep. On the contrary, he experiences violent emotions which cause him to lose the use of his senses. Then, as nothing new comes to take their place, it follows that his mind should apply itself solely to some trivial idea; so trivial, indeed, that the writers do not think of paying any attention to it. This

second system is less opposed to recorded facts than the first, since it does not reduce the ecstatic's occupation to zero; but it denies half the facts that are positively affirmed by the mystics; it admits the emotional part of the ecstasy, and rejects a priori the intellectual part which belongs to the superior order. Another objection can be offered to the two preceding theories. Mystics admit that, as a rule, the period of ecstasy is not reached suddenly. It is generally preceded by a series of phenomena on a lesser scale, the least of which St. Teresa has called the prayer of quiet. If any theory explains ecstasy, it ought, in due proportion, to explain its diminutives. But they never attempt this, because they see too plainly that it would not be successful. If ecstasy were a mere state of stupefaction, as the first theory teaches, the state that preceded it should be the beginning of this lamentable condition, but this in no wise corresponds to the classical descriptions. Mystics and their directors would be suspicious of this psychological poverty and would repel it. If, on the contrary, as the second system requires, ecstasy resolves itself into an immense outpouring of love, will they say that this vehemence begins with the prayer of quiet? To do so would be contrary to experience. Do they say, on the other hand, that the person is often very calm and almost cold? But then this lack of warmth in the will would be associated, by supposition, with a trivial idea. In what does such a state deserve to be called mystic? In what does it differ from the most ordinary mental prayer? Why does it cause surprise and even terror in beginners? The true mystic theory, on the contrary, responds fully to these questions. It tells us

that this surprise, this feeling of mystery, arises because a new faculty appears in the soul, giving intellectual perceptions. It matters little that this mode of knowledge is weak in its beginnings; it astonishes and terrifies, as does everything that is new and unexplained. The emotional theory fails completely here. 31.—Spiritual sufferings during ecstasy or at its close. We must not think that the only sentiment experienced during or immediately after the ecstasy is one of joy. There are ecstasies, or transports of love, which are more or less painful (see St. Teresa, *Life*, ch. xx; and *Interior Castle*, Sixth Mansion, ch. xi). This depends upon the attributes that God manifests and the secondary knowledge that He adds to them. If, for instance, we see God's infinite goodness, His holiness and His hatred of sin, and if at the same time we are enlightened as to our own unworthiness, the contrast will be so striking that we shall feel a sentiment of self-disgust and horror. We then understand the saints' utterances, saying that they are great sinners, and even exaggerating this to the point of saying that they are the greatest of sinners. No expression seems to them strong enough to render the feeling of repulsion that they experience towards themselves. Hatred leads people to overwhelm their enemies with abuse; and the saint, in the light of God's brightness, has come to hate himself, in so far as he is a sinner. 32.—Or, again, God shows the severity of His judgments upon the lost, and He makes us see that His judgments are just. Before this angry Father the soul trembles, she feels as though threatened by His wrath. So little more is needed that she should herself become the object of this Divine justice! She ranges



herself on the side of this justice and wishes herself the victim of a thousand pangs in order to satisfy it. 33.—And even when God manifests the abysses of His love, the inebriation that this sight causes, changes into torture if God shows us that this love is forgotten. What do I say? Blasphemed, cursed by sinners and the damned. The soul suffers for God, Who is forgotten, and for her fellows, who so madly renounce all these eternal joys. Her zeal for souls and her powerlessness to lead them back to God becomes a martyrdom. 34.—The sight of God may also be the cause, after the ecstasy is over, at least, of great suffering; because it is not yet possible for the soul to possess Him completely (St. Teresa, *Life*, ch. xx, and *Interior Castle*, Sixth Mansion, ch. xi). 35.—Sufferings of another kind have been sent to the saints during their ecstasies. God causes the scenes of the Passion to pass before their eyes. Like the Blessed Virgin on the way to Calvary, or rather throughout her whole life, they participate in all Our Lord's sorrows. Blessed Angela of Foligno gives vigorous expression to this idea when she says that contemplating "that sharp sorrow which was in the soul of Christ ... I was transformed into the sorrow of the Crucified" (*Visions and Instructions of Blessed Angela of Foligno*, ch. xxxi, pp. 111, 113). 38.—Should we be fulfilling the precept as to the hearing of Sunday Mass if we had been all the time in an ecstasy? Theologians who have gone into this question say yes. The Church's intentions have been sufficiently complied with. 37.—Does the soul acquire merit while in an ecstasy? Let us consider this question, although it has little practical importance. The essential thing is to

know that ecstasy contributes powerfully to sanctification, we need not understand how this takes place. The most general opinion is that the soul does then acquire merit. St. Teresa gives a reason for this view, based on common sense. She says "that God should do her so great a favour to the end she lose her time, and gain nothing as to meriting in it; this is not credible" (*Conceptions of the Love of God*, ch. vi, p. 375). Suarez also thinks that the contrary "is improbable." This argument is considerably strengthened by the following considerations: 1° that ecstasies have lasted for several hours in the case of many saints, and have been very frequent. How much time would thus have been spent without meriting! It will be objected that these graces gave the saints strength to bear meritorious trials afterwards. But God could accomplish the same result in a few minutes. St. Teresa refers to visions that were only momentary, and which, however, brought her considerable fruit (*Life*, ch. xxviii). 2° And especially there have been long ecstasies at the moment of death. St. Teresa died after an ecstasy of fourteen hours; St. Aloysius Gonzaga under similar conditions; and St. Alphonsus Rodriguez after three days of ecstasy. The *Menology of the Society of Jesus* states that the Portuguese Fr. Laurence Rebello was in an ecstasy for twelve days before his death (1679). He came out of it only long enough to kiss his Crucifix. Now, this is just the time when it would be regrettable to lose merits by an anticipation of the joys of Heaven which will endure for all eternity. 38.— Objection. In order to merit, you must be free. Are you free in ecstasy? 39.— Reply. Exactly; with regard

to acts of love we hold that this is so in a certain measure. St. Thomas says that the beatific vision is alone capable of compelling the will absolutely (1°, 2nd q. 10, a. 2). According to him, when any good is offered to us with some admixture of imperfection (and this is the case with contemplation, because of its obscurities), a certain measure of liberty always remains with us. We may not perhaps go so far as to hate the object, or to choose a different act, but it rests with us to produce these acts or not, or to produce them with more or less strength or rapidity. 40.—In the lives of several of the saints we see that prayers continued during sleep. Examples: St. Alphonsus Rodriguez and St. Vincent Ferrer. St. Teresa received this favour when her ecstasies first began (Life, ch. xxix, 9). It is advisable to ask ourselves by what signs we may distinguish ecstasy from the prayer that continues supernaturally during natural sleep. These two states have, in fact, two resemblances which lead to their being confused: in neither do the senses act, and in both there is union with God. Writers do not say whether there are really any differences and, if so, in what they consist. Is it a simple question of intensity, so that the word ecstasy would only be used when the interior occupation is extremely strong? Is it that the body needs to be extended and supported, as in the case of ordinary sleep, and that there are moments when there is a confused feeling of consciousness? Or, again, is the decision to depend upon some extraneous circumstance, the fact that it is the usual hour for going to sleep, for example? This is a question that should be cleared up. § 3. Errors regarding Ecstasy: How it is Confused with Certain

Conditions of Ill-health 41. — In our days doctors have made a careful study of certain states of ill-health which they liken to the ecstasy of the saints. But the majority are careful not to confess that the resemblance is merely external; it holds good with regard to the bodily phenomena only, which are of no importance. There is, on the contrary, a profound dissimilarity from the point of view of the soul, as I am about to show. Let us remark in passing that most of the doctors who occupy themselves with religious psychology are mental specialists. Being constantly with persons suffering from hallucinations, they are inclined to identify with them anyone whose state of mind is exceptional. They are fond of busying themselves with mysticism, instead of leaving this study to theologians; they see in it an extension of their own special subject. 42. — They have begun by likening ecstasy to lethargy and catalepsy, which also paralyse the limbs, but there the soul is deprived of knowledge. Just as well might we confound sleep with the ecstasy of the saints. In the latter the soul is filled with light and joy. 43. — Then they have gone on to try to identify ecstasy with the hypnotic state. Physically, there is again a certain analogy here with ecstasy. Certain sensations are abolished. And, further, the person can assume the attitudes of prayer by suggestion. And yet, even from the point of view of the body, there are differences at times. For true ecstasy always produces an effect of calm and dignity; at the Salpêtrière Hospital, on the contrary, you often see convulsive and repulsive movements. I speak, of course, of cases where these sick persons are left to themselves and to their own natural attacks. If, on the

contrary, they act under the influence of a hypnotiser, their state can no longer be compared with that of the saints. A new element comes in. These hypnotisers can order them to assume noble or pious attitudes. The saints have no need of this extraneous influence.

44.—But it is from the point of view of the soul that the differences are so obvious, whether during the ecstasy or apart from it. 45.—To begin with, during true ecstasy the intellectual faculty grows in a surprising way, as we have already said. The contrary effect is produced by false ecstasy upon the neuropathic patients in the hospitals. There is a diminution of intelligence to be set against a small display of imagination. A single absolutely insignificant idea, that of a flower or a bird, is sufficient to absorb the attention profoundly. Medical men describe this fact by calling it the narrowing of the field of consciousness and of knowledge. This is the point of departure for the theories in vogue that are intended to explain the hypnotic ecstasy. During the attack the sick person is induced to speak, but he merely utters commonplaces. And then the hallucinations under observation in the hospitals always consist of representations of the imagination. They are visual, aural, or tactile, and are therefore very different from the purely intellectual perceptions that are generally found in the saints. We cannot, therefore, set out from the hypothesis that the two kinds of phenomena are identical. 46.—Outside the ecstasy the difference is still more easily proved: 1° the patient, upon whom experiments are sometimes publicly made in the hospitals, emerges from them depressed, dull, and stupefied. He usually exhibits an

intelligence of a very mediocre kind, dominated by the imagination; there is no connection between his ideas; 2° but, above all, his will is very weak. And this, according to many doctors, is the fundamental character of hysteria. They explain the fact of his being unable to resist the suggestion made to him, by this unhealthy weakness. What another person orders firmly, he at once wills, especially if he has acquired the habit of yielding. These poor crazy creatures are barren dreamers, without will, incapables; 3° finally, the moral sense is of a very low order, and the same with the reason. We sometimes ask ourselves whether these neurotics have any real conception of duty, and if the idea of morality has any hold on them. In short, from a threefold point of view, we are confronted with a degenerate condition, an impoverished nature. We find the three diametrically opposite characteristics in the saints who have been favoured with ecstasy, and no one, consequently, has the right to liken them to those who are either mad or half-mad. 1° They are strong characters, the originators of projects that are vast and difficult of execution. St. Teresa, St. Ignatius, and many others are the proof of this. They are guided not by imagination, but by reason; 2° their will is so strong that they fight against all opposition in order to bring their enterprises to a successful termination; but they fight, above all, against themselves, and the prolonged labour which they have had to undergo in order to practise certain virtues fills us with astonishment. We, who think that we have iron nerves, do not feel ourselves capable of such a succession of efforts; 3° they all have a very high moral ideal with which they are constantly

occupied: the desire to forget self in order to devote themselves to the glory of God and to the temporal or spiritual good of their neighbour. They fly from honours, while often the one desire of hysterical subjects is to play a part before a little circle of spectators. The saint is not a degenerate, but a hero. To use a modern expression, he is a super-man. Another difference is that, after the ecstasy is over, the saints remember their visions. This is rare with neuropaths. 47.—The ecstasies who have founded religious Orders have been very remarkable for their energy and power of organisation. Even the women have shown themselves superior to many men. They had to find subjects, money, and lands, while fighting against a thousand obstacles. St. Teresa, at the time of her death, left 16 Convents of women and 14 of men. St. Jane Frances de Chantal left 87 Convents, 12 of which were directly founded by herself. St. Colette founded at least 13 Convents and restored the discipline in a great many more. Mme. Acarie, one of the foundresses of the French Carmelites, led a very active life, notwithstanding her continual ecstasies. These began soon after her marriage (at fifteen and a half: 1582). Her married life lasted thirty years; she brought up six children and skilfully repaired the fortunes of her family; her correspondence was considerable. She became a Carmelite in the last five years of her life only. St. Catherine of Siena, who died at the age of thirty-two, played a very considerable part in politics from the time she was eighteen, although she could then neither read nor write. She has been called “a statesman, yea a great statesman” (Émile Gebbart, in the *Revue hebdomadaire* of March

16, 1907). Other ecstasies have written books that argue an immense work, both of erudition and composition, and, consequently, great strength of will. Denis the Carthusian has left forty folio volumes; St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Alphonsus Liguori were surprisingly prolific writers. 47 bis.—3° An attempt has also been made to liken ecstasy to natural somnambulism, with which the “trances” of certain spiritualistic mediums have also been identified. There are various kinds of somnambulism. Some last a short time only. The person may compose verses or speeches. But it has been shown that the part played by the mind has been exaggerated here. It is not the mind, but the imagination, and especially the memory, that are at work. We merely obtain a series of reminiscences (see Dr. Surbled, *La Morale*, Vol. IV, Part II, ch. i). Other somnambulist sleeps last for days and weeks. But whatever the kind, it cannot be profitably considered until we have described in detail the mental condition of the subject of the attack. I do not think that this has been done. We are thus arguing about a state which is not clearly defined, so much so that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish it from the state called the first or normal state. And yet, without any more information, an attempt is made to compare it with ecstasy. There is one case of considerable difficulty which it is desirable to examine; it is that of certain somnambulists who, at first sight, seem to differ from the ecstasy of the saints in one point only — namely, that the mind is occupied with secular instead of religious ideas. The most striking case, after that of certain mediums, is presented by Helene Smith, of Geneva, which



Professor Flournoy has had under his observation for several years, and which he has described in his learned work, entitled *Des Indes à la planète Mars* (Alcan, 1900). During her spontaneous somnambulistic trances she spoke or wrote, and described all that took place in her vision. Sometimes she saw the inhabitants of the planet Mars; now she was living with Arabs or Hindoos in the fourteenth century. Her health was otherwise excellent, and her mind apparently well-balanced! Now, in reality this kind of vision is profoundly different from that of the saints: 1° The saints remember what they have seen, although they do not always find adequate terms with which to describe it. Hélène Smith, on the contrary, loses all recollection of her visions. 2° The faculties brought into play during the vision are not the same. With the saints, the imagination does not act during the height of the ecstasy, and is never more than an accessory; while the intellect is enormously strengthened, certain of God's transcendent attributes, and even the Blessed Trinity seeming no longer mysterious. With Helene Smith the imagination alone acts, and this in quite a sordid manner. Not one lofty thought, but only descriptions of houses, animals, and plants, all copied from those on the earth. They are Jules Verne's romances, but much more puerile. These are true psychological, functional differences. But there is also an ethical character which forms a feature of difference between them. The saints' visions show their divine origin because they conduce powerfully to difficult virtues, to a conflict with pride, sensuality, egoism. Hélène Smith's visions have no similar result. She is a worthy

young woman, nothing more. Her life is not transformed.—4° Neither must we confuse ecstasy with the disturbing illuminations and reveries produced by alcohol, ether, chloroform, haschisch, opium, morphia, or nitrousoxide. To begin with: (a) the physical state is quite different. For example, no one would confound an ecstatic's noble attitude with that of a drunken man. (b) The kind of knowledge is not the same. If, after taking the above-named drugs, a state of complete unconsciousness has not been arrived at, and the person still has intuitions, they "are characterised by a multiplicity of images which succeed one another without any logical order or real connection one with another; they bear the mark of essential incoherence. The mind has become the sport of whimsical, strange, and unexpected representations which pass before it" (Abbé Michelet, *Revue du Clergé Français*, Jan. 1, 1908, p. 40). With the mystic, all is coherent and exalted. In his book, *The Subconscious* (translated into French, Alcan, 1908), Professor Joseph Jastrow gives some interesting details with regard to the mental effects of anæsthetics, taken in a moderate dose so as not to produce complete loss of consciousness. It is then a kind of semi-dream. "Opium and haschisch often produce the sense of amplification". All objects are enlarged: houses appear enormous, the time that it takes to wind your watch appears a century; the man feels of athletic proportions and of more than normal importance. Mescal, a Mexican toxicant, produces the illusion of objects that change incessantly with the most brilliant colours. You see splendid butterflies; "a cigarette-box of violet hue shone like an amethyst."

Real objects are transformed by the brilliant surroundings into which they are plunged. The lines of "a white spear of grey stone" "were ... covered or hung with clusters of what seemed to be huge precious stones, but uncut, some being more like masses of transparent fruit," and everywhere the "vast pendant masses of emerald-green, ruby-reds, and orange, began to drip a slow rain of colours". "Ether seems peculiarly disposed in favourable temperaments—by what affinities we know not—to incite reflective, contemplative, philosophic visions; and with the suspension of all feeling of effort, with the vanishing of the objective world, the seer becomes intimately merged with his thought, has no feeling of reaching his conclusions by transitional steps, but soars in the realms of exalted truth, seemingly momentous, because potent to dissipate his most troubled, most baffling obsessions of doubt". These effects are still more marked by the inhalation of nitrous-oxide. Professor William James, who has tested it himself, says: "He is overwhelmed by an 'exciting sense of an intense metaphysical illumination. Truth lies open to the view in depth beneath depth of almost blinding evidence' ". But he found that the phrases by which he translated his fine discoveries were devoid of all significance. Jastrow quotes on this subject a typical account by Dr. Holmes: "The veil of eternity was lifted. The one great truth, that which underlies all human experience and is the key to all the mysteries that philosophy has sought in vain to solve, flashed upon me in a sudden revelation. Henceforth all was clear: a few words had lifted my intelligence to the level of the knowledge of

the cherubim. As my natural condition returned, I remembered my resolution, and staggering to my desk, I wrote, in ill-shaped, straggling characters, the all-embracing truth still glimmering in my consciousness. The words were these (children may smile, the wise will ponder): 'A strong smell of turpentine prevails throughout' ". Ecstasies have no need of anæsthetics in order to feel the intelligence expanded; and when they return to the normal state they remember the truths that they have contemplated and give proof of their great worth. It is an entirely different psychosis. (c) "When recovered from their intoxication, the alcohol drinker and the opium smoker remain in a stupefied condition.... Thought and action are diminished simultaneously. One would call it a wreck after a cataclysm. If the intellectual life has been weakened, the social life is far from being improved. Who ever became humbler, purer, more charitable, after intoxication?" The ecstatic, on the contrary, has become "better, both as to himself and others" (M. Michelet, loc. cit., p. 41). 48.—One last question remains. Cannot ecstasy be produced without illness but in a purely natural manner, by an intense concentration of the attention on a religious object? § 3; the reply will be that the possibility must practically be denied.—Those free-thinking, scientific men, who confuse the dissimilar states of which we have been speaking, too readily forget their scientific methods when they come to touch upon religion. As long as they are upon professional ground, their prudence, sincerity in observation, and distrust of all unproved hypotheses, are admirable. And, besides, if they chanced to depart

from these strict rules, their professional brethren would be there to call them to order. But as soon as they leave their own special province, they at once lose their fine scientific demeanour; they no longer verify facts. They make simplistic and a priori syntheses. But no matter! Their readers are no sharper than they, and equally wish these anti-religious theses to be true. It is really not worth troubling about. Only it is no longer science: it is imagination. 49.—Swooning. The preceding counterfeits of ecstasy imply that the nervous system is profoundly affected. But there is a simpler, less painful counterfeit: this is swooning. It may happen to one who is very anæmic, or exhausted by indiscreet penances. Any moderately strong emotion, if only an ardent movement of divine love, and they succumb. St. Teresa describes this state (*Interior Castle, Fourth Mansion, ch. iii, n. 12; Book of Foundations, ch. vi, p. 91*). This counterfeit of ecstasy occurs under the following conditions: 1° the person has begun to pray; and then 2° has fallen into this species of sleep, during which his mind has been entirely inactive; 3° and, naturally, on coming to himself again he remembers nothing. 50.—If these persons call this state prayer, it is only because there was prayer at the outset, perhaps even the true prayer of quiet. They argue in this way: "Since a grace of prayer was present at the beginning, it probably continued." But this is a wholly gratuitous hypothesis. Just as a tired person may quite well give way to natural sleep while receiving the prayer of quiet, so, with a worn-out constitution, he may fall into a fainting fit. The natural has quite simply succeeded to the supernatural. It is a pathological

condition. 51.—Scaramelli, who describes these states (Tr. 3, No. 82), considers, on the contrary, that this is a special kind of ecstasy. He calls it spiritual sleep, taking this word in a sense that is not St. Teresa's. He supposes, at least, that such a state leaves good effects behind it: the soul comes to herself again in a profound peace: the mind remains attached to God and detached from creatures. It is solely because of these effects that he judges the state to have been supernatural. But this argument is not conclusive. How do you know that these good effects are due to the prayer of any one particular hour, rather than to the spiritual life taken as a whole? You do not know it. You say that in coming out of this kind of sleep the person's soul is calm or full of ardour for action. But natural sleep produces these same restorative effects upon those who have been overcome with fatigue. A "good night" makes them alert and joyous. 52.—Let us firmly maintain this principle, proved by thousands of examples, that true ecstasies amplify the intelligence and the will instead of depressing them, and especially instead of annihilating them. If anyone tries to make us admit an exception, even a rare one, let us show ourselves very exacting with regard to the proofs. Now, Scaramelli has merely given us hypotheses. 53.—I shall explain later on how we may in practice distinguish the divine ecstasy from its diabolic or natural counterfeits.

## **Chapter XIX The Spiritual Marriage (Fourth and Last Stage of the Mystic Union)**

1.—Definition. The supreme goal of all the mystic unions is called the soul's spiritual marriage with God, the transforming union, the consummated union, deification. St. Teresa also calls it the seventh mansion of the interior Castle. She speaks of it only in this last treatise, which she composed five years before her death. When she wrote her other works, she had not yet been raised to this degree. Of these various expressions, that of transforming union is the most accurate, and it indicates the inner nature of this grace better than the others. The words spiritual marriage are constantly employed. But we should note that, taken alone, their sense is vague. And then various significations have been given to them in religious literature; they sometimes mean all union with God by love, or even by grace. And hence arises a great difficulty in knowing what we are intended to understand when pious souls tell us, without any explanations, that they have arrived at the spiritual marriage. Question them as we may, we cannot discover the sense in which they use these words. Perhaps they merely wish to express that they feel closely united to God, that they have a very ardent love for Him. Gently, and little by little, we shall be able to correct their ingenuous ideas by showing them, for instance, to what a very ordinary level of virtue they have attained.

2.—The transforming union is a mystic state containing three principal elements.

1° A union that is almost permanent, persisting even amidst exterior occupations, and this in such a manner that the two different operations do not interfere with one another.

2° A transformation of the higher faculties as to their manner of operation (hence

the name of transforming union). 3° Generally a permanent intellectual vision of the Blessed Trinity or of some divine attribute. Let us enter more into detail.

3.—First element: an almost permanent union. “Unless she [the soul, entered into the seventh mansion] first deserts God, I believe He will never fail to make her sensible of His presence” (Interior Castle, Seventh Mansion, ch. i, 11).

4.—I have said “almost permanent,” because here and there it may undergo an eclipse. “This mansion differs from the rest in that, as I said, the dryness and disturbance felt in all the rest, at times, scarcely ever enters here...” (Interior Castle, Seventh Mansion, ch. iii, 8). If there are intervals at times, “yet such intervals are very short” . . . Our Lord occasionally leaves such persons to the weakness of their nature. The venomous creatures from the moat round the castle, and the other mansions, at once join together to revenge themselves for the time when they were deprived of their power. True, this lasts but a short time—a day perhaps, or a little longer ...” (Interior Castle, Seventh Mansion, ch. iv, 1, 2). We see that when the mystic union attains to a higher level, it also often increases in frequency. At the outset (the prayer of quiet) it was brief and transient; then it came to be habitual in prayer. Finally, it is no more subject to interruptions.

5.—I have said that this union persists amidst exterior occupations. The result is that there are then two simultaneous operations of a very different kind; we express this fact by saying that the soul appears divided. In this state, says St. Teresa, “she seemed divided from her own soul.... She complained of her soul as Martha did of Mary, saying that it always



enjoyed solitary peace while leaving her so full of troubles and occupations that she could not keep it company. This may seem extravagant to you, my daughters, for though the soul is known to be undivided, this is fact and no fancy, and often happens" (*Interior Castle, Seventh Mansion, ch. i, 14, 15*). St. John of the Cross speaks of this division of the soul even with regard to states lower than that of spiritual marriage: "When these favours are shown to the soul... in the spirit only, the higher and lower portions of the soul seem to it—it knows not how—to be so far apart that it recognises two divisions in itself, each so distinct from the other, that neither seems to have anything in common with the other, being in appearance so separated and distinct. And, in reality, this is in a certain manner true, for in its present condition, which is wholly spiritual, it has no commerce with the sensitive part" (*Obscure Night, Book II, ch. xxiii, p. 452*). Ven. Mary of the Incarnation, Ursuline, is a striking example of this double state of soul. Her exterior activity was remarkable, and she showed great talents for "the mechanical arts, embroidery, and painting." Now (so her son tells us), "it seemed, according to the Jesuit Fathers, her directors, as if she had two souls, one of which was as much united to God as though she had nothing else to do but to engage in contemplation, and the other as much attached to exterior things as if she had been entirely occupied in them" (*Vie by an Ursuline of Nantes, ch. xx*). 6.—We had a transient instance of this division, only to a lesser extent, in the state that I described under the name of the acting prayer of quiet. 7.—This union does not completely

exclude temptations or interior sufferings. It is not easy to define those that may supervene. St. John of the Cross seems to say that such things no longer occur. "... The sensitive part, except in the state of the spiritual matrimony, never loses all its imperfect habits, and its powers are never wholly subdued. It has to... endure trouble and affliction in the lower part, and at the hands of the devil. But all this ceases in the state of spiritual marriage" (Spiritual Canticle, Stanza XV, p. 89). But farther on (Stanza XX) he allows certain occasional exceptions. St. Teresa seems to admit the existence of trials, but considers that they are of rare occurrence. She deals with this point in a general way only. "It is not intended that the powers, senses, and passions should continually enjoy this peace. The soul does so indeed" (Interior Castle, Seventh Mansion, ch. ii, 14). Other writings show that these sufferings may be violent at times. These trials of the soul or of the body heighten the feeling of division of which I was speaking just now. A person that I had to examine once wrote to me: "I have this feeling very vividly. There is an inferior part of me that lives on earth, that works, suffers, and is tempted; then there is another, that lives above, far off, in an unchangeable peace, and contemplates the lower part with astonishment and compassion. In the same way the inmate of a fortress sees the enemies in the plain, but feels almost entirely secure." St. Alphonsus Liguori employs another comparison: In this state, "when the passions appear, the soul sees them without being either saddened or tormented by them, even as a man above the clouds would see the storm raging below him without being touched by it"

(Homo. apost., Appendix 1, No. 18). The soul's centre might also be compared to the depths of the ocean, which continue motionless while the waves rage furiously on the surface. See two other comparisons given by St. Teresa (Interior Castle, Seventh Mansion, ch. ii, 15). 8. — And conversely, if the soul experiences the mystic union with God in a permanent manner, should we conclude that she has attained to the spiritual marriage? No; for St. Teresa received the grace of continued union towards her forty-fifth year, at the same time as the visions of Our Lord — that is to say, twelve years before the spiritual marriage; “When they had begun to insist upon my putting my visions to a test like this, and resisting them, the graces I received were multiplied more and more. I tried to distract myself; I never ceased to be in prayer: even during sleep my prayer seemed to be continual.... Neither was it in my power — though I desired and, more than that, even strove — to give up thinking of Him” (Life, ch. xxix, 9). This uninterrupted union does not, then, fulfil all the conditions necessary to the spiritual marriage. But it is a nearly allied state. The life is lived in common with God, without, however, the intimacy reaching its greatest degree: the fusion of two lives. 8 bis. — I have been speaking of the union with God that is felt during sleep. St. Teresa is not the only one to have received this favour. Blessed Margaret-Mary often had it, and it was the same with St. Alphonsus Rodriguez (Vie, No. 145). Mother Veronica of the Heart of Jesus (1825–83), the Foundress of the Soeurs Victimes of the Sacred Heart, often passed the whole morning in ecstasy, notwithstanding her arduous

labours; at night she scarcely slept, and "her heart continued to watch, remaining united to the Heavenly Bridegroom.... It was the same amidst the day's most absorbing occupations" (Vie, by Fr. Prevot, ch. xviii). 9.—The union of the spiritual marriage does not of itself bring about the alienation of the sensible faculties; or, since this state is continuous, the person would then always be in ecstasy. But at times it may be accompanied by ecstasies. As a rule, these ecstasies are rarer than in the preceding degrees. St. Teresa observed this fact in herself. "I, too, am astonished at seeing that, when the soul arrives at this state, it does not go into ecstasies, except perhaps on rare occasions; even then they are not like the former trances and the flight of the spirit..." (Interior Castle, Seventh Mansion, ch. iii, 10). This fact might well exhibit a certain number of exceptions. For with several saints, ecstasies have not seemed to diminish at the end of their life, and yet we may admit the probability of their having arrived at the supreme union. 10.—This habitual liberty which is left to the faculties, notwithstanding the interior contemplation, is a foretaste of life in Heaven. The angels and the elect, although plunged in the beatific vision, can converse with one another; and after the resurrection this vision will not be the cause of any alienation of the faculties. So, too, upon earth Our Lord had the full use of His human faculties, although beholding His Father face to face. 11.—Second element. The spiritual marriage may be thus defined: It is a state in which the soul is habitually conscious of the divine co-operation in all her higher operations and in the depths of her being. No union

of a more intimate kind can be imagined. This grace can be considered under another aspect, which gives a still higher idea of it: in concurring in our supernatural acts God makes them His own; He renders them divine and shows that He does so. There is therefore a transformation of the higher faculties with regard to their manner of operation. The soul is aware that in the supernatural acts of her intellect, her love or her will, she participates in the divine life, in those analogous acts that are in God. This is the essential part of the spiritual marriage.

12.—To explain the meaning of this sentence, let us remember that in Heaven we shall rejoice in the vision of God, but that we shall further feel that we participate in His nature. And, indeed, all good qualities that exist in the creature deserve to be called a participation in the divine nature. But it is a question here of a supreme degree, carried to such a height that, as far as is possible, man becomes like unto God. He is deified: *dii estis*. We get some idea of this transformation by the comparison of iron, which, when plunged into the fire, becomes like it; in a way it has become fire, without, however, losing its own nature. These expressions could not be employed in the case of boiling water. It has a certain participation in the nature of fire, but insufficiently. The natural qualities of the creature bear but this distant resemblance to the divine attributes. When theologians try to make the word participation still clearer, they are obliged to relinquish the attempt, and to declare that this grace is so much above all human conceptions that it must be regarded as a mystery. We shall not be able to form a correct idea of

its meaning until we ourselves experience it. Is it even possible to find an accurate comparison by which to describe it? No; all comparisons are necessarily below the reality; for they are borrowed from created things. Nothing really resembling it can be found. Otherwise it would no longer be a mystery, but merely a difficult question. 13. — Baptism and sanctifying grace already give us this participation in the divine nature, but it is in an unconscious state. It is otherwise in the spiritual marriage. We are then conscious of the communication of the divine life. God is no longer merely the object of the supernatural operations of the mind and will, as in the preceding degrees. He shows Himself as being the joint cause of these operations, the aid which we make use of in order to produce them. Our acts appear to us as being, after a certain fashion, divine. Our faculties are the branches in which we feel the circulation of the divine sap. We think that we feel God within us, living both for us and for Him. We live in Him, by Him, and through Him. No creature can manifest himself to us in this manner. In Heaven the mechanism of grace will appear in all its clearness; we shall thus see unveiled the “marriage” of two operations, the divine and the human, and even the predominance of the former, our “divinisation,” that is to say. The fourth and last degree of prayer is the anticipation, the more or less marked foretaste of this experimental knowledge. In the lower degrees the transformation has begun, but we know it only by faith. 14. — The mystics have fallen at times into exaggerations of speech by reason of their inability to describe all the sublimity of this participation. They speak of thinking by the eternal

thought of God, loving by His infinite love, willing by His will. They seem to confuse the two natures, the divine and the human. They thus describe what we believe ourselves to feel; like the astronomers, they speak the language of appearances. As a rule, they finish by correcting any such exaggerations of language into which they have fallen. So, too, they sometimes go as far as to say that they not only feel union with God in this state, but that there is oneness with Him. This is only a manner of speaking. St. Alphonsus Liguori sums up this language by saying: "In the spiritual marriage, the soul is transformed into God and becomes one with Him, just as a vessel of water, when poured into the sea, is then one with it" (Homo. apost., Appendix I, No. 18). 15.—Third element. In this degree, certain persons have a continual vision of the Blessed Trinity. St. Teresa even says that it is always so. This does not seem to be the case, however, with all who have come to experience the transformation in God, and who thenceforward possess that condition which constitutes the foundation of the spiritual marriage. I think that I know two such cases. One has had the vision of the Blessed Trinity a very few times only. The other told me that it is possible never to have had this vision. It is replaced by another that shows God ceaselessly without any distinction of attributes, or, again, it shows one amongst them in a brighter light than the others. Neither does St. John of the Cross speak of the visions of the Blessed Trinity as being connected with the transforming union. And yet he has written two treatises which turn almost wholly upon this degree (A Spiritual Canticle; The Living Flame of Love). He

contents himself with referring to a very sublime contemplation of the divine attributes. 16.— According to St. Teresa, this vision varies in clearness. “Although, however, it [‘this presence’] is not always seen by so clear a light, yet whenever she reflects on it she feels the companionship of the Blessed Trinity” (Interior Castle, Seventh Mansion, ch. i, 12). 17.— Conversely, if the vision of the Blessed Trinity becomes habitual, has the soul attained to the transforming union? No; for St. Teresa, after having described this continual vision in the first chapter of the Seventh Mansion, begins the next chapter thus: “We now come to speak of divine and spiritual nuptials.” She had also said: “... He, before consummating the celestial marriage, brings her into this His mansion or presence-chamber” (into this contemplation, that is to say). Thus the habitual vision of the Blessed Trinity is not necessarily completed by the transformation; and as long as it is not so, we are but on the threshold of the seventh mansion.” 18.— The part played by the Divine Persons. According to what has been said, the transforming union is a relation with God, of nature with nature, since it is a union of minds and of wills between them, and it is thus a marriage with God. But have the mystics stopped there? and do they not think of the marriage as contracted more especially with one of the Divine Persons, and as being thus a relation not only of nature with nature, but of person with person? I have not been able to arrive at anything conclusive upon this question. Several mystics, indeed, speak of a special union with the Word; but they give so few explanations that we do not know if it is a question of



the essential part of the spiritual marriage or of something that their piety likes to superadd to it. The Ven. Marina de Escobar went through ceremonies of marriage first with the Word (Vol. I, Book I, ch. xx, § 1; in 1598, at the age of forty-seven; § 2, in 1611, at the age of sixty; Book II, ch. xxi, § 4; in 1617), then with the Holy Spirit (Vol. I, Book II, ch. xxiii, §§ 2, 3, 4; in 1622). One of these revelations made known to her that the second of these marriages was the chief one. Perhaps the differences are not great. The transforming union establishes with the divine nature a relation that may very probably manifest itself separately as union with the Father, or with the Son, or with the Holy Ghost. 19.—The part played by Our Lord, as Man. It is, perhaps, simply that of one who introduces to the union, as happened in the case of St. Teresa: “The first time God bestows this grace, He, by an imaginary vision of His most Sacred Humanity, reveals Himself to the soul.... He may manifest Himself in a different way to other people” (Interior Castle, Seventh Mansion, ch. ii, 1). In the lives of the saints it is true that they speak of marriage with Jesus Christ. But this may be quite another union than that with which we are now dealing. The word marriage contains a metaphor which may easily be applied to different unions. To solve such questions with any certainty, we should have to be acquainted with several persons who had received this grace. 20.—Objection. It seems as if the union were contracted with Jesus Christ, since theologians tell us that He is the Bridegroom of souls and of the Church. 21.—Reply. This is, perhaps, in a very different sense. For the reasons that they bring are derived from the fact

of the Incarnation. They are applicable, then, to all Christians. Since they are not deduced from the special characters of the transforming union, it could not be concluded that this latter has as its effect a special union with the Word-Incarnate. 22.—It may happen that the spiritual marriage begins with a ceremony and rejoicings. But these are passing facts that must not be confounded with the marriage itself, which is a permanent state. For example, in certain Lives of the saints we read of the interchange of rings, of angelic chants, etc. These circumstances are not necessary; and, further, they may just as well symbolise simple espousals or other unions. 23.—Confusions to be avoided. From what has been said, we see that we must not suppose that the spiritual marriage consists in a perfect conformity to the will of God. This would be to confuse a state of prayer, a special mode of divine communication, that is to say, with a virtue, which is something very different. This virtue, however, is one of the consequences of the transformation. So, too, it is too vague to say, as has been done: It is a union with God by love. The same can be said of all the mystic states, and even of the entire spiritual life. 24.—Effect upon the virtues. “Besides, this company it enjoys gives it far greater strength than ever before. If, as David says, ‘With the holy thou shalt be holy,’ doubtless by its becoming one with the Almighty, by the union of spirit with spirit, the soul must gather strength, as we know the saints did, to suffer and to die...” (Interior Castle, Seventh Mansion, ch. iv, 15). 25.—Assurance of salvation. St. John of the Cross says that in this degree the soul is confirmed in grace. Scaramelli also allows

this, and St. Laurence Justinian (Tr. 2, No. 259). St. Teresa is not so positive. She merely says that imperfections only or indeliberate venial sins are committed here: "Wilfully they do not commit them [venial sins]...; as far as they are aware, they are free from mortal sins" (Interior Castle, Seventh Mansion, ch. iv, 3). But this does not make the future absolutely sure. The saint remarks this, saying that the soul is not therefore "certain to be saved and cannot fall again.... Whenever I say that the soul seems in security, I must be understood to imply, for as long as His Majesty thus holds it in His care, and it does not offend Him" (Interior Castle, Seventh Mansion, ch. ii, 13). Whatever opinion may be adopted, this, at least, is the case, that it seems to the soul that she can no longer sin, so fully does she feel herself to be participating in the life of God. This does not prevent her seeing very clearly at the same time that of herself she is capable of all kinds of sins. She sees the abyss into which she may fall, and the powerful Hand that sustains her. 26.—The espousals are the formal promise of spiritual marriage. St. Teresa even seems to say that they are a passing possession of the transformation. She says that the espousals take place during rapture. The full union does not rise to such heights. The saint calls it a simple interview of the future spouses (Interior Castle, Fifth Mansion, ch. iv, 2). In the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and the *Obscure Night*, St. John of the Cross seems, by the whole trend of his writings, to suggest that the transformation takes place by imperceptible degrees, at least from a certain period in the mystic life. He does not say this explicitly, however. In the *Spiritual Cantic*, on the

contrary, he says clearly that the transformation is only reached by the way of ecstasy: "The spiritual flight signifies a certain high estate and union of love, whereunto, after many spiritual exercises, God is wont to elevate the soul: it is called the Spiritual Espousals of the Word, the Son of God.... The first time that God so elevates the soul, He reveals to it great things of Himself" (A Spiritual Canticle, Stanza XIV, p. 74).

### **Chapter XXI On Revelations And Visions (Of Created Things) Descriptive Part**

1.—From the point of view of sanctification, these graces are of much less importance than the mystic union. Many Christians think otherwise. They are misled by the preponderating part given to revelations in the majority of the Lives of the saints. They imagine that these graces occupied as large a place in the existence as in the accounts of their lives. The compilers of these books have been led to treat facts in this way because the mystic union is so simple and intangible that ten lines have often contained all that a saint has been able to say on the subject, while visions lend themselves to long narrations. Also the writer understands them better. And, finally, he knows that by appealing to their imagination he will please his readers more. § 1. Divers kinds of Revelations 2.—There are three kinds of supernatural locutions, or words, corresponding in order of superiority to the faculties that come into play: the bodily hearing, the imagination, and the intelligence. 3.—1° The exterior or auricular locutions are heard by

the ear, as is the case with natural speech. Sounds are received, but they are produced supernaturally. 4.— 2° Imaginative locutions are also composed of words like the foregoing; but they are received directly without the assistance of the ear. They can be said to be received by the imaginative sense. They, with those that come after them, are included in the term interior locutions. 5.— 3° Intellectual locutions. This is a simple communication of thought without words, and consequently without the use of any definite language. “It is our Lord’s will” (says St. Teresa) “... that the soul should have some knowledge of what passes in Heaven and I think that, as the blessed there without speech understand one another ... so it is here” (Life, ch. xxvii, 12). The human mind itself sometimes dispenses with words. For when we are writing it often happens that we say: I cannot find words that express my thought exactly. Both good and bad angels can speak to us intellectually, but on condition that God intervenes to give us, momentarily, at any rate, the faculty to understand them. Otherwise they can only, in this world, act upon our bodies or imaginations. The same thing must be said with regard to intellectual visions of angels. 6.— St. John of the Cross makes use of an expression that I shall not employ, because it seems to me to be too obscure. He gives the name of intellectual “successive locutions” to speech that would be designated with greater clearness as apparent speech. It is that which is produced by the mind, either by its own activity alone or with a real foundation, defining and arranging certain truths that God has revealed to us or other seeming truths

presented to us by the devil. In reality, God says nothing, but this is how the illusion arises: In certain cases the mind “puts words and reasonings together so much to the purpose, and with such facility and clearness discovers by reflection things it knew not before [or that it had forgotten], that it seems to itself as if it was not itself which did so, but some third person which addressed it interiorly, reasoning, answering, and informing.... Thus the mind addresses itself to itself as if to some other person” (Ascent of Mount Carmel, ch. xxix, p. 189). Since these are not true words, I prefer to designate them accordingly. And, further, the word successive suggests that the true intellectual words never deserve this name. Now, the saint says the contrary in the following chapter. “Sometimes it is one word, at another two or more, and occasionally successive words, as in the former case; for they continue in the way of instruction to the soul” 7.—The visions also are of three kinds. 8.—1° Exterior visions, also called ocular and corporeal, are visions perceived by the bodily eyes. A material being is formed, or seems to be formed, outside of us, and we perceive it like anything else that is round about us. 9.—2° Imaginative visions are visions of material objects, seen without the assistance of the eyes. They are perceived by the imaginative sense. 10.—3° Intellectual visions are visions perceived by the mind alone without any interior image. We may thus see God or the angels, and even material objects, but in the same way as one would see angels intellectually, without any form, that is to say. These visions may be either confused or distinct. 11.—The visions that occur during ecstasy or in a dream, belong (save in

the case of a miraculous exception) to one of the two last categories, for, normally, the action of the eyes is suspended during the ecstasy. Some of the states that the Holy Scriptures call prophetic sleep may perhaps in reality have been ecstasies. 12.—When either good or evil angels appear in a corporeal or imaginative vision, what we see is not really them, because they have no bodies. It is a borrowed form. And, in the same way, when we see another man, we do not really see his soul in his face. When the devil appears under a bodily form, there is nothing to prevent him from giving himself the same charm, the same air of holiness, as a good angel. If the vision is intellectual, the mask falls off, except perhaps when the vision is very obscure. St. Bridget says that if we were to see an angel quite clearly we should die of pleasure, and that if it were a demon we should die with fright and horror (Book II, ch. xviii). 13.—It is possible also to have an intellectual view of our own soul. In the natural state we are conscious only of our mental activities, and we thence conclude the existence of our faculties. But God can raise us supernaturally to a higher knowledge, and show us our nature such as it actually is, and can even cause us to see our state of grace, etc. In Heaven we shall have all these kinds of knowledge. 14.—St. Alphonsus Ligouri truly remarks that “the revelations of secret or of future things, such as the mysteries of the Faith, the reading of consciences, the predestination of certain persons, their death, their elevation to some dignity, and other similar things, may occur in three ways: by visions, by locutions, and by a simple apprehending of the truth” (Homo. apost., Appendix 1, No. 22). 15.—History

proves that visions or exterior locutions have often been received, transiently, at any rate, by persons who were still in the way of ordinary prayer. The apparition to the children at La Salette would seem to be a case of this kind. But visions and supernatural locutions of a higher order are not usually granted, with any frequency, at least, until the period of ecstasy is almost reached. St. Teresa heard words before she had visions. Here is a summary of her graces and the order in which she received them:

16. — The progress of mystic graces with St. Teresa: 1° At the age of twenty (1535) she passed a year in a state of recollection and received the prayer of quiet or full union from time to time for “the space of an Ave Maria” on each occasion (Life, ch. iv, 9). 2° She afterwards relaxes in fervour, recovers it at the age of forty (1555), and is again favoured with the mystic union (Life, ch. xxiii, 2). Two years later St. Francis Borgia reassures her with regard to her way of prayer (Life, ch. xxiv, 4). Some time before this she had made the Exercises of St. Ignatius under the direction of Fr. Juan de Padranos. 3° At the age of forty-three (1558) she places herself under the direction of Fr. Balthasar Alvarez, who was twenty-five years of age, and she had her first ecstasy while she was imploring Our Lord to set her free from certain too natural friendships, with regard to which her Confessor expostulated with her (Life, ch. xxv, 6). She then begins to hear interior locutions (Life, ch. xxv), which raises a great storm against her. Her confessors order her to reject these locutions. She continues in a great agony of mind for two years. Her friends pray that she may be led by a way less open to suspicion. She



tries vainly to desire this herself (Life, ch. xxvii). 4° About two years later, at the age of forty-five, she is favoured with visions of Our Lord (Life, ch. xxvi, 6). These visions were at first intellectual (Life, ch. xxvii), and lasted continually for two years and a half (Life, ch. xxix, 2). She saw Our Saviour at her right hand and continually at her side, and walking with her (Life, ch. xxvii, 3), and St. Peter and St. Paul on her left hand (Life, ch. xxix, 6). St. Peter of Alcantara reassured her with regard to these favours towards the year 1560, and he thus put an end to her anguish and her resistance to them (Life, ch. xxx, 5). 5° Some time after the first of these visions she had some imaginative visions. On the first occasion she saw Our Saviour's Hands only (Life, ch. xxviii, 2); a few days later His divine Face; and finally she saw His whole Person. She saw Him almost always as He was after the Resurrection, in His glorified Body (Life, ch. xxix, 4). She never had any exterior visions (Life, ch. xxviii, 5; xxx, 5; Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, ch. ix, 3), nor heard auricular words (Revelation VII, 4, made for Fr. Rodrigo Alvarez, S.J., Life, p. 445). God the Father spoke to her at times, the Holy Ghost never, the Word very often, but always by His Sacred Humanity (Relation VIII, 20, 21, to Fr. Rodrigo Alvarez, Life, p. 463). 6° At the age of fifty-one (about 1566) she concludes the Book of her Life and composes the Way of Perfection. After her raptures were over she was seized by a most grievous pain, the yearning to see God. "This is my present state.... It is a communication made, not to console, but to show the reason why the soul must be weary: because it is far away from the Good which in itself comprehends all

good" (Life, ch. XX, 11, 12). "The sufferer gives vent to loud cries, which she cannot stifle ... there is great danger of death in this state. Short as is the time during which it lasts [in its greatest intensity], it leaves the limbs all disjointed ..." (Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, ch. xi, 3, 4). 7° At the age of fifty-seven (the end of 1572) she is raised to the spiritual marriage. This was fourteen years after her first ecstasy and ten before her death. She died at the age of sixty-seven (1582). She had composed the Interior Castle five years earlier. § 2. Descriptive Details concerning Interior Locutions 17.—We shall occupy ourselves principally with imaginative words. I shall follow St. Teresa (Life, chs. xxv, xxvi, xxvii; Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, chs. iii, iv). It is solely a question of true words. 18.—1° When do they occur? Often outside the ecstasy; and then it is frequently unexpectedly and when the mind is occupied with other things. "It may occur, too, when the understanding and the soul are so troubled and distracted that they cannot form one sentence correctly" (Life, ch. xxv, 6). So, too, when the locutions are intellectual it happens that "generally—so I think—the senses are not taken away, and the faculties are not suspended: they preserve their ordinary state" (Life, ch. xxvii, 9). "... If we see visions and hear words, it never is as at the time when the soul is in union in the very rapture itself.... The soul is then wholly in the power of another ... but when this instant is passed, the soul continuing still entranced, then is the time of which I am speaking; for the faculties, though not completely suspended, are so disposed that they are scarcely active, being, as it

were, absorbed and incapable of making any reflections" (Life, ch. xxv, 7). 19.—2° Clearness. The interior words "are very distinctly formed ... they are, however, much more clearly understood than they would be if they were heard by the ear" (Life, ch. xxv, 2). "The divine locution is a voice so clear that not a syllable of its utterance is lost". As a rule, the words that are counterfeited by the imagination are undecided, without consistency; the phrase hesitates and is left unfinished. 20.—3° Strength. "... There is no escape, for, in spite of ourselves, we must listen; and the understanding must apply itself so thoroughly to the comprehension of that which God wills we should hear, that it is nothing to the purpose whether we will it or not... My resistance lasted nearly two years [at the age of forty-two and forty-three] because of the great fear I was in: and even now I resist occasionally; but it is of no use" (Life, ch. xxv, 2). "The soul is like a person whose hearing was good, and who is not suffered to stop his ears, while people standing close beside him speak to him with a loud voice. He may be unwilling to hear, yet hear he must" (Life, ch. xxvii, 10). "Those Our Lord does not lead by this path may suppose that the soul can avoid listening to these locutions, and that even if they be interior it is at least possible to distract the mind from them, and so escape such dangers. This cannot be done" (Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, ch. iii, 27). 21.—4° Certainty. "The words, their effects, and the assurance they carried with them convinced the soul at the moment that they came from God. That time, however, is now past: doubts afterwards arise whether the locutions come from the devil or from the imagination,

although while hearing them, the person had no doubt of their truth, which she would have died to defend" (Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, ch. iii, 12). It is only afterwards that doubts may arise (Life, ch. xxv, 10). 22.—5° What feelings, what emotional states, do these words produce? "The second sign is a great calm [after the first moment, that is to say] and a devout and peaceful recollection which dwell in the soul, together with a desire to praise God.... If these locutions proceed from the imagination, they show no such signs, bringing neither conviction, nor peace, nor interior joy with them. ... But Satan could never counterfeit the effects spoken of; he leaves no peace nor light in the soul, only anxiety and confusion" (Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, ch. iii, 10, 16, 24). The saint also speaks of "the great aridity which remains in the soul after these evil locutions ... yet this disquiet is such that I know not whence it comes" (Life, ch. xxv, 13). 23.—6° The majesty of these words. "As to the divine locution, we listen to that as we do to a person of great holiness, learning, or authority ... for these locutions proceed occasionally in such great majesty that, without our recollecting who it is that utters them, they make us tremble if they be words of reproof, and die of love if words of love" (Life, ch. xxv, 9). 24.—7° Instantaneous knowledge. "The divine locutions instruct us without loss of time, and we understand matters which seem to require a month on our part to arrange" (Life, ch. xxv, 12). The meaning of these locutions is therefore fuller than that of our own words. 25.—8° The effects upon the conduct. There is one case in which these are very evident; it is when the divine locutions counsel or

command an interior disposition; for instance, if they bid the soul be at peace or correct some defect, they produce this change suddenly in the soul. "When Our Lord speaks, it is at once word and work" (Life, ch. xxv, 5), like the Word by which the world was created. St. Teresa says that this is the most decisive test of all, as proving that a locution is from God. On the other hand, "the words formed by the understanding effect nothing" (Life, ch. xxv, 5; Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, ch. iii). Locutions of this nature might be styled operative locutions. St. John of the Cross applies the name substantial to them, which does not suggest clearly the work that they perform (Ascent of Mount Carmel, Book II, ch. xxxi, p. 200). "The soul is not called upon to do or attempt anything with regard to these locutions, but to be resigned and humble." He adds that neither the intellect nor the evil spirit can imitate this action. This is easily understood, because the devil cannot seek to produce a real transformation of the will, in a good sense; and the intellect cannot accomplish it without the help of some previous considerations. The saint says that there exist, on the contrary, cases where, although the locutions are divine "and render it [the soul] ready to accomplish what is commanded", yet the effect on the mind is not great, which doubtless means that the efficacy depends upon our free-will, which may resist it. He gives as an example the divine command that Moses received to go and speak to Pharaoh. Moses angered God by his resistance. Words sent chiefly to enlighten the mind, such as prophetic warnings, or even commands to execute some exterior work, are generally of this number. 26.—9°

Persistence in the memory. "The third proof is that these words do not pass from the memory, but remain there for a very long time; sometimes they are never forgotten" (Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, ch. iii, 11). "The divine locution is a work done; and though some of it may be forgotten, and time have lapsed, yet it is not so wholly forgotten that the memory loses all traces of what was once spoken—unless, indeed, after a very long time, or unless the locution were words of grace or of instruction. But as to prophetic words, they are never forgotten in my opinion" (Life, ch. xxv, 10). 26 bis.—10° Whence do these locutions proceed? "Sometimes," says Alvarez de Paz, "they seem to descend from the sky, sometimes to be uttered near by or at a distance, sometimes to rise up from the heart's profoundest depths" (De Inquis. pacis, Book V, Part III, ch. vi). § 3. Details regarding Visions (of Created Things) especially the Imaginative Vision 27.—I will speak of those of Our Lord, following St. Teresa (Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, chs. viii, ix; Life, ch. xxviii and following). We take it for granted that it is a question of visions that are really divine. 28.—1° Their object. "... When Our Lord is pleased to caress the soul, He shows it in vision His most sacred Humanity, under whatever form He chooses; either as He was during His life on earth, or after His resurrection" (Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, ch. ix, 2). 29.—2° At what times do they come? Sometimes it is outside the time of the ecstasy, and they are then unexpected. Sometimes "a person is not thinking of seeing anything, nor has any such idea crossed the mind, when suddenly the vision is revealed in its entirety, causing within the powers

and senses of the soul a fright and confusion which soon afterwards change into a blissful peace" (Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, ch. ix, 7). At other times the imaginative vision occurs during the ecstasy, or even produces it. "The former vision, which, as I said, represented God without any likeness of Him, is of a higher kind.... These two ... visions come almost always together, and they do so come; for we behold the excellency and beauty and glory of the most Holy Humanity with the eyes of the soul. And in the other way I have spoken of – that of intellectual vision – we learn how He is God, is mighty, can do all things, commands all things, governs all things, and fills all things with His love" (Life, ch. xxviii, 14). "... So exceedingly great is the power of this vision, when Our Lord shows the soul much of His grandeur and majesty, that it is impossible, in my opinion, for any soul to endure it, if Our Lord did not succour it in a most supernatural way, by throwing it into a trance or ecstasy, whereby the vision of the divine presence is lost in the fruition thereof" (Life, ch. xxviii, 14). forgotten" (Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, ch. iii, 11). "The divine locution is a work done; and though some of it may be forgotten, and time have lapsed, yet it is not so wholly forgotten that the memory loses all traces of what was once spoken – unless, indeed, after a very long time, or unless the locution were words of grace or of instruction. But as to prophetic words, they are never forgotten in my opinion" (Life, ch. xxv, 10). 26 bis. – 10° Whence do these locutions proceed? "Sometimes," says Alvarez de Paz, "they seem to descend from the sky, sometimes to be uttered near by or at a distance, sometimes to rise up from the

heart's profoundest depths" (De Inquis. pacis, Book V, Part III, ch. vi). § 3. Details regarding Visions (of Created Things) especially the Imaginative Vision 27.—I will speak of those of Our Lord, following St. Teresa (Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, chs. viii, ix; Life, ch. xxviii and following). We take it for granted that it is a question of visions that are really divine. 28.—1° Their object. "... When Our Lord is pleased to caress the soul, He shows it in vision His most sacred Humanity, under whatever form He chooses; either as He was during His life on earth, or after His resurrection" (Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, ch. ix, 2). 29.—2° At what times do they come? Sometimes it is outside the time of the ecstasy, and they are then unexpected. Sometimes "a person is not thinking of seeing anything, nor has any such idea crossed the mind, when suddenly the vision is revealed in its entirety, causing within the powers and senses of the soul a fright and confusion which soon afterwards change into a blissful peace" (Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, ch. ix, 7). At other times the imaginative vision occurs during the ecstasy, or even produces it. "The former vision, which, as I said, represented God without any likeness of Him, is of a higher kind.... These two ... visions come almost always together, and they do so come; for we behold the excellency and beauty and glory of the most Holy Humanity with the eyes of the soul. And in the other way I have spoken of—that of intellectual vision—we learn how He is God, is mighty, can do all things, commands all things, governs all things, and fills all things with His love" (Life, ch. xxviii, 14). "... So exceedingly great is the power of this vision, when Our Lord shows the



soul much of His grandeur and majesty, that it is impossible, in my opinion, for any soul to endure it, if Our Lord did not succour it in a most supernatural way, by throwing it into a trance or ecstasy, whereby the vision of the divine presence is lost in the fruition thereof" (Life, ch. xxviii, 14).

## **Chapter XXI Revelations and Visions (continued) Illusions to be avoided**

1.—We distinguish two kinds of revelations. The one, called universal, are contained in the Bible or in the deposit of the apostolic tradition, and are transmitted by the organ of the Church. They came to an end with the preaching of the apostles, and are matters of faith for everyone. The others are called special or private. These have always occurred amongst Christians. I need only concern myself with this latter kind. 2.—With regard to the special revelations that have been made to the saints, belief in them is not required by the Church even when she approves them. By this approbation she only intends to declare that nothing is to be found in them contrary to faith or morals, and that they can be accepted without danger and even with advantage. "It matters little" (says Melchior Cano) "whether or no one believes in St. Bridget's revelations or those of other saints, these things have nothing to do with faith" (De locis theologicis, Book XII, ch. iii). Benedict XIV is quite clear with regard to this question. "What is to be said of those private revelations which the Apostolic See has approved of, those of the Blessed Hildegard [which were approved in part by Eugene III], of St. Bridget [by Boniface IX],

and of St. Catherine of Siena [by Gregory XI]? We have already said that those revelations, although approved of, ought not to, and cannot, receive from us any assent of Catholic, but only of human faith, according to the rules of prudence, according to which the aforesaid revelations are probable, and piously to be believed [probabiles et piè credibles,]" (De canon., Book III, ch. liii, No. 15; Book II, ch. xxxii, No. 11. Eng. trans.: Benedict XIV on Heroic Virtue, Vol. III, ch. xiv). Cardinal Pitra says the same: "Everyone knows that we are fully at liberty to believe or not to believe in private revelations, even those most worthy of credence. Even when the Church approvethem, they are merely received as probable, and not as indubitable. They are not to be used as deciding questions of history, natural philosophy, philosophy, or theology which are matters of controversy between the Doctors. It is quite permissible to differ from these revelations, even when approved, if we are relying upon solid reasons, and especially if the contrary doctrine is proved by unimpeachable documents 275 and definite experience" (Book on St. Hildegard, p. xvi). The Bollandists lay down the same principles (May 25, p. 243, No. 246, and Parergon, p. 246, No. 1). Granted that the Church assumes no further responsibility, a question then arises: "What is the last word regarding the actual authority of private revelations?—They have the value of the testimony of the person who witnesses to having received them, neither more nor less. Now, this person is never infallible: it is evident, then, that the points vouched for are never absolutely certain—except in the sole case where a miracle is

worked directly in favour of the attestation. In a word, private revelations have only a purely human or probable authority" (Fr. Toulemont on Private revelations in the Review, *Les Études*, 1866, p. 61).

3.—After perusing these passages, the reader will be less astonished when we say that even the revelations of the saints may contain errors occasionally. I will now endeavour to classify the different kinds of illusions that are to be feared. But first I must warn the reader against two exaggerated conclusions that he might be inclined to draw from the pages about to follow: 1° Seeing that the causes of illusion are numerous and difficult to avoid completely, he will perhaps conclude that all revelations should be rejected without examination. No; wisdom lies in the middle course: we should neither believe nor reject unless we have sufficient proofs: lacking such, we must not pronounce any opinion; 2° As examples of these illusions I will choose, by preference, those of the saints or other pious persons. It must not be concluded that the saints are always or even often mistaken. The instances of errors are not frequent; and where they occur they are not of any great importance. And further, if one of their revelations be false, it does not follow that it should be the same with their ecstasies, for ecstasy is much less subject to illusion. In making this selection, I have not acted in any captious spirit and with the object of diminishing the respect that we owe to the saints, but for a grave reason of utility. It is the best way of persuading certain pious persons to mistrust their own revelations, and of persuading their directors to do the same. If I were to quote cases of none but quite

ordinary souls, people would say: "Yes, certainly illusions are to be feared; but for ignorant people and beginners. As for the instructed and clear-sighted, they escape, especially when they are pious and of more than ordinary virtue (we always rank ourselves amongst the select few). If this were otherwise, God, who is so good, would be betraying the trust that we put in Him." But if this argument were applicable in our own case, it would be much more necessarily so still where the saints are in question. They were far more enlightened than ourselves and were the object of a much closer protection on God's part. And yet they have sometimes been mistaken. The facts are before us. But by this method there is no possible point of escape. All must frankly apply to themselves the rules of prudence to be given further on. We can no longer listen to the self-love that whispers: "These rules are excellent, but they are not meant for you. You are not like other men." Practically, in the case of those who have not attained to high sanctity, we can admit that at least three-quarters of their revelations are illusions. 3 bis. — I am led to believe that illusion is easier in the case of interior locutions (intellectual or imaginative) than with imaginative visions. They are much more nearly allied to the ordinary operations of the human mind in which ideas and phrases arise perpetually. If these are clear and sudden, an inexperienced person will conclude that he cannot have produced them himself. The illusion is due principally to an interpretation based on insufficient facts. There has been no fundamentally new act. On the contrary, the interior visual illusions are very superior, both with regard to accuracy and intensity,

to the current representations of the imagination. It is then more difficult, so it seems, to mistake one for the other. These considerations also explain why certain persons, like St. Teresa, begin to hear divine locutions in the waking state, before being favoured with any frequency, at least, with imaginative visions. It is that the first-named, as we have just said, are more closely allied to our own nature. God thus avoids too sudden transitions. 3 ter.—It is clear that revelations and visions are without danger and very useful if they are divine, for grace operates only for our welfare; and when it is likewise of such an extraordinary order it cannot be destined for a merely ordinary good. Holy Scripture is filled with facts of this nature which have rendered great spiritual service. St. Teresa often explains that this has been so in her case. I give no example, the thesis being so evident. The revelations that are due to Satan, on the other hand, always tend to produce evil or to hinder good. And, further, those produced by our own imagination are usually useless or dangerous. It is very important, therefore, in such a matter to learn to distinguish the true and the certain from the false or the doubtful, This will be the object of this chapter and the two succeeding ones. § 1. Five Causes of Error that may have had an Influence upon True Revelations, or Revelations Regarded as such, at Certain Periods and in Certain Countries. 4.—These five causes of error are: 1° faulty interpretations of revelations or visions; 2° ignorance of the fact that historic events are often given with approximate truth only; 3° the mingling of human activity with supernatural action during the revelation; 4° the subsequent, but involuntary, modifications made by

the person who receives the revelation; and, finally, 5° embellishments by secretaries or compilers of the Life.

5.—First cause of error. A divine revelation may at times be interpreted wrongly by the person who receives it.

6.—This may be due primarily to the obscurity of the revelation. God at times gives only a partial comprehension of its import. His communication has a deep meaning that is not understood; it is taken in the everyday sense, St. John of the Cross says on this subject: "... many prophecies and Divine locutions disappointed, in their fulfilment, the expectations of many of the ancient people, because they understood them too much according to the letter in their own way.... This is the way in which many souls deceive themselves in the matter of revelations and Divine locutions. They understand them in the letter according to their apparent meaning. For, as I have said, the chief purpose of God in sending visions is to express and communicate the Spirit which is hidden within them, and which is very hard to be understood. This is much more abundant than the letter, more extraordinary, and surpasses the limits thereof" (*Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book II, ch. xix, pp. 133–6). Like St. John of the Cross, Scaramelli cites various examples drawn from ancient history (*Tr.* 4, ch. xviii). To give a more recent instance, let us take the words heard by B. Joan of Arc in prison. She says in her examination: "I inquired of my voices whether I should be burned; and they answered me that I should trust in Our Lord, and that He would aid me.... St. Catherine told me that I should receive succour." Joan states that she interprets this utterance as indicating her deliverance. She adds: "As a rule,

the voices tell me that I shall be delivered by a great victory. And afterwards they say: 'Fear not because of thy martyrdom. It will bring thee at last to Paradise.'" These predictions were quite accurate. But Joan did not see their real significance. She thought, as she herself explains, that the word martyrdom meant "the great pains and adversity that she suffered in prison"; and the "deliverance by a great victory" caused her to think of something quite different to her death. 7.— We have an example of an interpretation that seems to be inaccurate, in one of St. Mechtildis's revelations. Her pupil, St. Gertrude, had asked her to pray that she might obtain "the virtues of docility and patience that she thought herself to need." St. Mechtildis related Our Lord's utterances to her on the subject, saying that Gertrude already possessed these virtues, and adding words of encouragement that concluded thus: "The patience (*patientia*) that pleases Me in her, derives its name from *pax* and *scientia* (peace and knowledge), She must so apply herself to patience as never to lose peace of heart in adversity, and have the knowledge that consists in knowing why she suffers: it is through love and as a mark of inviolable fidelity" (*Le Hérant de l'amour divin*, Book I, ch. xvi). The saint would have been right if she had understood these words as signifying that St. Gertrude's patience had its source in peace and knowledge, or again, that the word patience ought to remind her of two others; but the ambiguous words, "Patience derives its name ..." seem rather to suggest that the saint understood it to be a question of the actual etymology, a historic connection between these different words. If she accepted them in this sense, as Amort believes her to

have done, she was mistaken. For philologists know that the root of *patientia* has no relation to the word *pax*. Our Lord did not wish to give her a lesson in philology, but to remind her of a useful counsel. So, too, St. Gertrude relates that on Easter Day Our Lord said to her, when speaking of the word *Alleluia*: "Observe that all the vowels, except the *o*, which signifies grief, are found in this word; and that, instead of this *o*, the *a* is repeated twice." And then follows a description of the joys of the risen Christ that the saint could associate with each vowel (Book IV, ch. xxvii). The revelation may be a true one, if it is a question of a conventional signification given to the letter *o*. But by itself, as Amort remarks, this vowel serves as well to express pleasure as grief; and the others express grief equally with pleasure. However, it may have been otherwise in the language that the saint herself spoke. But even so, we must not turn what is simply a pious expedient for fixing the attention, into a philological decision. 8.—We have seen that there is sometimes only a partial understanding of a divine revelation; but cases may be quoted where it is even less than this. God does not make the meaning of the vision appear at all at first. Thus Pharaoh and his two servants had to have recourse to Joseph to interpret their prophetic dreams. Nabuchodonosor could not even recall the dream of the statue with the feet of clay. Daniel was obliged to repeat all the details to him; he did this, pointing out that such a supernatural knowledge was the sign of the truth of his interpretation. Daniel was equally the only one to understand the king's other dream: that of the tree which was cut down and of which the stump



alone was left, and the vision of Baltasar's feast. These visions were sent by God to men who were sinners, and those of the saints have sometimes been as unintelligible to them for a time. When St. Peter had the vision of the linen sheet containing all manner of beasts, a voice said to him thrice: "Arise, Peter; kill and eat." He thought the words referred to his food, all the more because the ecstasy came upon him when he was hungry and a meal was being prepared for him (Acts x. 10). He did not see the true meaning, which was symbolic; namely, the command to baptize the Gentiles without first laying upon them the ordinances enjoined by the Mosaic Law. He strove vainly to understand (*dum intra se haesitaret*, x, 17). The significance only came to him two days later, when called to Cesarea to the Centurion Cornelius, who wished to become a Christian. 9.—Or, again, false interpretations may arise, not from the obscurity of the revelation, but because, unknown to the person receiving it, it contains conditions that are understood but not expressed. It is wrong to take it unconditionally. It was thus that Jonas, when preaching the destruction of Ninive after forty days, was persuaded that it would be destroyed even if the inhabitants repented. God had decided otherwise, without acquainting him of the fact. On seeing that repentant Ninive stood and was spared, he "was exceedingly troubled and was angry," and he prayed that he might die (Jonas, iv, 1). Perhaps a false prophecy made by St. Norbert, founder of the Premonstratensians, may be explained in the same way. Here is St. Bernard's account of the circumstance (Migne ed., Letter 56; written about 1128): "I asked

him what he knew about Antichrist. He declared that he knew by revelation and in a very certain way that he would come in this generation. As I did not share this belief, I asked him his reasons. His reply did not satisfy me. He tried at least to persuade me that he would not die without having seen a general persecution in the Church." St. Vincent Ferrer offers us a yet more striking instance of conditions that must be understood, although they are not expressed in the prophecy. He spent the last twentyone years of his life (1398-1419) announcing that the Last Judgment was at hand, in the everyday sense of the word. He had learnt this by a very clear and unconditional vision, the truth of which he proved by his numberless miracles. These had amounted, by his own showing, to more than three thousand when he came to preach at Salamanca (1412); it was here that he worked the most famous of all these prodigies in support of his preaching, bringing to life for the space of fifteen minutes a woman who was being carried to the cemetery, and who confirmed his predictions. And yet this prophecy has not been fulfilled. This fact is accounted for by saying that it was conditional. The time of the great Western Schism truly merited the end of the world as a chastisement. But this misfortune was averted by the wholesale conversions wrought throughout Europe amongst Catholics, heretics, Jews, and Moslems by the saint's threats and miracles. 10.—We may believe that all prophecies of punishments to come are conditional; and it is the same with those promising special favours. As an example, we may give the promise concerning the Scapular. The Blessed Virgin appeared to St. Simon

Stock, the sixth General of the Carmelites in 1251, at Cambridge, and said: "Whosoever shall die clothed in this Habit shall not suffer the eternal fires." Theologians hold that this phrase, though at first sight unconditional, is not to be interpreted too rigidly. It is true that very great graces are attached to the wearing of the Scapular, and that we thereby create a kind of right to the special protection of the Queen of Heaven. But if anyone were to reject the aids of religion on his death-bed, it is clear that he would not merit this protection and that he would be lost. It would be the same if a man relied upon this promise in order to plunge more completely into vice (see Fr. Terrien, Marie, mère des hommes, Book X, ch. i). Also, speaking of this revelation, Benedict XIV says: "She does not say that those who have worn the Scapular will be preserved from eternal fire by this means alone, without having done anything else. Good works and perseverance in well-doing are necessary to eternal salvation" (De festis, Part II, No. 96). He points out, with Cardinal Bellarmine, that Holy Scripture sometimes promises salvation in connection with practices that cannot suffice by themselves, such as faith, hope, almsgiving, Holy Communion. So, too, many divine promises made to the religious Orders or to Confraternities suppose a co-operation, but this co-operation will be brought about by the great graces bestowed. 11.—Second cause of error. When visions represent historic scenes, those of the Life or Death of Our Lord, for instance, they often have an approximate and probable likeness only, although no intimation of this circumstance is given. It is a mistake to attribute an absolute accuracy to them. This is a

very natural mistake. For, at first sight, it seems that, as the visions are divine, all their details should be the faithful reproduction of the event, as to scenery, dress, the words and gestures, etc. Many saints have, in fact, believed that the event depicted took place exactly as they saw it. But God does not deceive us when He modifies certain details. If He tied Himself down to absolute accuracy in these matters, we should soon be seeking to satisfy in visions an idle desire for erudition in history or archæology. He has a nobler aim, that of the soul's sanctification, and to arouse in her a love of Jesus suffering. He is like a painter who, in order to excite our piety, is content to paint scenes in his own manner, but without departing too far from the truth. What would be the use of seeing the exact costume that the various persons were wearing on that particular day? whether their garments were red or blue? We have positive proof of these partial modifications. For some saints, beholding Jesus on the Cross, perceived that there were three nails only; others saw four. Consequently, it is clear that God has not chosen to decide this controverted question by a revelation.

12.—God has another reason for modifying certain details. Sometimes He adds them to a historical scene in order to bring out the secret meaning of the mystery. The actual spectators saw nothing similar. Catherine Emmerich believed Mary of Agreda to have taken literally a large number of pictures which she she should have understood allegorically and spiritually (*Vie de Jésus Christ*, by Catherine Emmerich, Vol. I, Preface by Brentano, ch. ix).

13.—So, too, in visions of Paradise, Purgatory, or Hell, God

only shows in part that reality which is so far beyond our powers of understanding. He adapts Himself to our nature by making use of symbols. The saints and angels show themselves to us with bodies, which they do not in reality possess; they are clothed in rich garments, and take part in processions or ceremonies. Heaven becomes a banquet or an exquisite garden. These pictures appear in accordance with the ideas of the person who sees them, or those of the painters of his day. We have an example of this in St. Lidwine's vision (see *Vie*, by Huysman, ch. viii), and in that of the Apocalypse of the four living creatures round about the Throne. St. John borrowed its chief features from Ezekiel, who himself took the imagery from the gigantic bas-relief of the Assyrian palaces which the Jews had ever before their eyes during the Babylonian captivity. All this should be understood in a spiritual sense. 14.—These considerations will enable us to understand how Amort, who has made a deep study of these questions, was able to say: "The revelations of persons whose sanctity and doctrine have been approved by the doctors and heads of the Church, contradict each other; for example, those of St. Bridget, St. Gertrude, St. Catherine of Siena". He quotes Baronius, as saying that St. Mechtildis and St. Bridget also contradict one another. 15.—We see, therefore, that it is imprudent to seek to remake history by the help of the saints' revelations, Blessed Veronica of Binasco saw Our Lord's whole life pass before her eyes, as did also St. Frances of Rome and Catherine Emmerich. The Bollandists have reproduced her accounts of these visions (January, 13), but they warn us in the preface that "learned

men" consider that they contain many historical errors. The visions of St. Frances of Rome have been still more explicitly criticised. In the life written by Maria Anguillara, who succeeded the saint in the government of her Congregation of the Oblates in Rome, the authoress expresses herself with the following reserve: "Many of the things that she saw when in ecstasy must be considered as being merely pious meditations and contemplations due to her own action, especially those that concern Our Saviour's Life and Passion; this is easily apparent in reading them. We cannot, however, deny that true revelations may be mingled with them. Leaving the task of discrimination to the pious reader and to Superiors, I will, without distinction, transcribe all that the ancient manuscript contains" (Bolland., March 9, 1st Life of the saint; Preface, No. 10). The third cause of error would also apply here. 16.—Third cause of error. It may happen that during a vision the human mind retains the power of mingling its notion with the divine action in a certain measure. We make a mistake, then, in attributing purely to God the information that is thus obtained. At times it is the memory that supplies its recollections; at others the inventive faculty that is at work. Various authors think that this danger is much to be feared when the person speaks during the ecstasy. For if he speaks, his sensible faculties have not completely lost their activity. They may then have a share in the revelation. Amort considers this a proof that St. Frances of Rome was a factor in her own visions, for she was neither silent nor motionless in her ecstasies. 17.—There is a danger of confounding the divine action with our

own, even in nonecstatic prayer, when God seems to send us a somewhat strong inspiration. No matter how brief and almost instantaneous it may be, we like to think that it is longer, and the illusion is easy, for we do not know the precise moment when the divine influence ends and ours begins. When a stone is thrown into a calm lake, the shock only lasts for a moment, but the water does not immediately resume its former immobility. A series of ripples continues to rise from the spot, as if fresh stones were falling there. So in the soul, a movement once produced does not come suddenly to an end with the action that caused it. It seems as if we were continuing to receive something; but the notion is purely human. 18.—Further, those who often have true revelations may become negligent about discerning their origin, and they then prophesy falsely. Sister Labouré, a Sister of Charity, who in November, 1830, received the revelation of the Miraculous Medal, foretold several events correctly (for instance, she announced forty years in advance, and with their exact date, the massacres of the Commune of 1870); but other predictions were not fulfilled. In such a case, so her biographer, M. Chevalier, tells us, she quietly acknowledged her mistake and would say: “Well, I have been mistaken; I thought that I was telling you correctly. I am very glad that the truth should be known.” 19.—What kind of personal ideas are we specially inclined to attribute wrongly to the divine influence, either during ecstasy or when in close union with God? They consist of two kinds: 20.—1° The ideas that appeal to our own desires. If we have a project greatly at heart, and still more if we are moved

by the imprudent desire to see it encouraged by a revelation, it will easily seem to us that God is speaking in order to advise or command its execution. 21.—2° Preconceived ideas in matters of doctrine or history; and also the recollection of anything that has struck us vividly in reading or conversation. Thus, when the person belongs to a religious congregation, his revelations are often coloured by its doctrines. This is due to the ideas with which his mind is occupied, and also to the opinions of his Confessors. These latter act upon him unconsciously by their repeated instructions and by their manner of putting their questions, which lead naturally to certain answers, and sometimes more openly, by allowing it to be seen how much they desire that a revelation should come to stamp their ideas with approval. The Life of St. Colette presents an example of the influence of these preconceived ideas. In accordance with the belief of her directors, she began by holding that St. Anne had been married three times and had had several daughters. She believed that she saw St. Anne appear to her with all her supposed family (Bolland., May 25, p. 247, Parergon, No. 8). Certain facts related in these disputed revelations are but reproductions of incidents belonging to the apocryphal gospels or legends of a later date. At the end of the Middle Ages and at the time of the Renaissance they were popularised by such books as Jacques de Voragine's Golden Legend. The errors that we have just enumerated have sometimes gone so far that it has been difficult to know how much value to attach to certain revelations made to the saints. Fr. Lancisius, quoted by Benedict XIV (De Canon., Book III, ch. liii,



No. 17; English trans., *Heroic Virtue*, Vol. III, ch. xiv, p. 404), says: "The revelations of some holy women [ecstatics] canonised by the Apostolic See, whose sayings and writings in rapture, and derived from rapture are filled with errors, and therefore are not allowed to be published." 22. — As one of the principal causes of error is due to the mental activity of the person who has the revelation, it is as well to quote some examples of these cases. 23. — Let us begin with St. Elizabeth, the Benedictine Abbess of Schœnau, near Trèves, and a friend of St. Hildegard (1129–65). She had many revelations on historical subjects, notably the martyrdom of St. Ursula and her companions, whose bones had just been discovered (1156). When these relics were brought to her she thought she knew supernaturally the names and the lives of those to whom they had belonged. To obtain more information, she plied her Guardian-Angel and the saints with questions. At first she did not venture to do this; but her directors unfortunately encouraged her in this dangerous curiosity. And, further, the revelations having ceased, she caused the community to pray urgently for seventeen days that they might be continued (Bolland., June 18; *Life*, No. 102). These were just the dispositions for being led astray. But the saint was persuaded, on the contrary, that all her revelations were the pure truth. She maintained this even on her death-bed, and was greatly astonished at encountering any opposition. She even went so far as to demand that they should be officially published during her lifetime. "I had just written the book of my revelations," she says, "when, on the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, my Guardian-Angel appeared to me and

dictated these words for the Bishop of Trèves, Cologne, and Mayence: 'Be it known from the great and terrible God and from me, the Angel of this book, that you are to make known to the Holy Roman Church and to all the people the words that are to be found in this work. Think not that they are women's tales! Almighty God is their author. What I say to you I say for all. Posterity has not endorsed the saint's opinions. Amort proves that these visions are full of historical errors, and he attributes the greater part, at any rate, to imagination. The Bollandists have accepted his conclusions (October 21, Prologue to the Life of St. Ursula, § 5). 24. — The Bollandists regard the revelations of Blessed Hermann Joseph, concerning St. Ursula, in the same light. But they do not for this reason dispute the other graces received by these two saints. They admit that Blessed Hermann prophesied truly and worked miracles. 25. — The study of the books written by St. Hildegard also shows us how human action can join itself to the divine action without our being aware of it. This saint must have received exceptional graces of infused knowledge and prophecy, otherwise we could not explain her influence upon her contemporaries. She herself recognized. But she was convinced that she had added nothing of her own to it. This is what she wrote at the age of seventy: "I am ignorant of all that I do not see in my vision, for I am illiterate; and when I write by virtue of this light, I set down no other words than those that I have heard" (Migne ed., col. 18, A; Card. Pitra, p. 333). And yet it is impossible to admit that all that this saint wrote came from God. For her works are full of scientific errors, and exactly

those errors that were prevalent in the twelfth century. 26.—We may then be allowed to think that God was content to quicken her intelligence and her imagination. In this state she was able to learn, to imagine, to remember in a far greater degree than would be possible in the normal state. But, unknown to her, much of her knowledge really proceeded from her frequent conversations with the theologians and learned men of her day, from tools that she had read, or the sermons that she had heard. It is very fortunate, let us add, that she was not in advance of the science of her time. If she had known the truths that have since been discovered in astronomy, physiology, and in physics, scientific men, instead of admiring, would have persecuted her, as has been the case with so many pioneers, and she would thus have lost a great part of her religious influence. 27.—In order to explain in a favourable light St. Hildegard's illusions on scientific subjects, we may admit the following hypothesis: God, it seems, may supernaturally convey into a person's mind a portion of the knowledge of the day, such as it is found in existing books or in the minds of contemporaneous scientists; whilst giving in some way a general warning that He does not guarantee the contents of this whole, and that it is therefore to be accepted only at the receiver's risk. Such a gift, although imperfect as regards certainty, would still be a magnificent one. Those amongst us who have toiled over our books during our whole lives, and who forget incessantly what we have learned, would be enchanted to possess such an expeditious process of learning and remembering. The important point to remark is that

God does not deceive the soul here, since, by our hypothesis, He has warned her in one way or another. God is satisfied with teaching supernaturally those things that the soul would have learnt naturally. As regards certainty, she is no worse off than ordinary learned men. Notwithstanding their confidence in their teachers, they admit that all science is subject to error, and that alongside of the solid and positive portions we find also some that are provisional and other that are falling into disrepute. If men fail to understand it aright, they have only their own want of cleverness, their mental inferiority, or their hastiness to blame. 28.—We will continue to give some examples, in spite of a very natural repugnance to discover either historic or scientific errors in saints whom we have delighted in regarding as infallible. But we must never be afraid of the truth. And, besides, the proofs that we give are useful: they justify the strict rules that we shall have to lay down later on upon the subject of revelations. In St. Frances of Rome's time they believed in a sky composed of crystal. Imbued with this idea, she declares that she has seen it, seen it distinctly, in the numerous visions in which she visited the firmament. It is situated between the sky in which the stars are to be found and the empyrean. She compares these three skies as to light and beauty; her confessor having asked their relative distances one from the other, she said they were further one from another than the earth from the nearest sky. Not knowing that the blue of the sky is merely that of the atmosphere, she attributes it to the sky in which the stars were supposed to be, and which would consequently be a solid body (Bolland.,

March 9, 1st Life, No. 30). 29.—St. Catharine of Ricci was perhaps also influenced by preconceived ideas. All her life she had a great devotion for Savonarola, who was a friend of the family. She wished to rehabilitate the memory of the fiery tribune who strove to transform all Florence into a cloister, who plunged into political struggles and died at the stake in 1498. She strove to make him an object of public veneration as a prophet and martyr. He often appeared to her surrounded with glory and followed by his companions on the scaffold; he twice cured her suddenly of a serious illness. These appearances seemed an obstacle at first to Catharine's beatification. The Promotor fidei, the future Pope Benedict XIV, opposed it on this ground, declaring that the Sister had sinned in invoking a man whom the Church had handed over to the secular arm (*De Canon.*, Book III, ch. xxv, Nos. 17-20. English translation: *Benedict XIV On Heroic Virtue*, Vol. I, ch. v, Nos. 17-20). This point was easily solved. But one more delicate still remained. To beatify Catharine, was not this to proclaim that these visions were divine? Now, according to these visions, Savonarola was a saint in the eyes of God, if not in those of men. A burning and controverted question had thus been decided by divine authority. Benedict XIII brought the discussion to a close by ordering Catharine's devotion to Brother Jerome, and consequently the apparitions which caused it, to be left out of the question (*Vie*, by P. Bayonne, Vol. II, ch. xvii. English *Life*, by F. M. Capes, pp. 270-1). This separating of the saint's virtues from visions amounted to a declaration of this principle: when a servant of God is canonised, it is his virtue

that is canonised, and not his visions. 30. — Whatever opinion we may form as to Mary of Agreda's revelations, taken as a whole, we are obliged to admit that they contain some errors. Thus she fancied that she knew by revelation of the existence of a crystal sky; that it was divided up into eleven portions at the moment of the Incarnation: this passage is omitted in the French translation. She learnt that the six days of the Creation were each of twenty-four hours' duration ; that from the Fall to Our Lord's coming, there were 5199 years to a day. With regard to space, she says that the earth's radius is 1251 miles. Amort has shown that these figures are false (*Observations*, prop. 2), like many others relating to dates and distances. He quotes twenty-one points on which she contradicts other revelations. Finally, she considers that it is a sin not to believe her. Now, this is a gross error. For the Church alone, and not any private revelation, has a right to impose belief on the faithful at large; and she imposes only such as are contained in Holy Scripture and tradition. Theologians have pointed out other descriptions as being probably the result of illusion. They are chiefly attributable to the desire to fill the Blessed Virgin's life with innumerable prodigies, showing a singular contrast to the simplicity of the gospels. We find in them all the pomp and splendour of the Spanish Court (see in the *Théologic mystique*, by Mgr. Chaillot, the censures passed upon this book at the Sorbonne and by Rome). Let us not, however, conclude from this that Mary of Agreda deceived herself also as to her purely intellectual visions of the Divinity (*Cité mystique*, Part I, Book I, ch. ii). Amort, who has criticised her a

great deal, begins by saying that, without doubt, "her virtues were heroic." "This stands out clearly," he says, "from her process of beatification which I read in Rome." He adds: "I unhesitatingly admit that she received wonderful lights from God; it is not likely that in her frequent raptures so virtuous a person, whose death was without any features that could shock us, should have been constantly deceived by the Devil. But did not her imagination lead her astray, reproducing what she had read or heard about the Blessed Virgin, or what she had seen in theatrical performances? I leave the Church to be the judge on this matter". The eulogy just quoted will not appear exaggerated to those who read the life of the servant of God by Samaniégo. It is very beautiful, and gives the impression of great sanctity and a high degree of union with God. With regard to her revelations, Amort remains doubtful. This seems the wisest attitude. For if many learned men, especially amongst the saint's fellow-countrymen, have been enthusiastic with regard to the Mystical City, others, no less numerous and learned, have refused it credence. They explain this book by the pious Sister's readings, combined with an exceptional power of invention, such as the great novelists have given us examples of (see Bossuet, *Remarques sur la mystique Cité*, at the end of Vol. XX, Lachat ed.). The psychology of Mary of Agreda, like that of St. Hildegard, is an enigma that we have not by any means completely solved. Clement XIV, of the Order of St. Francis, also showed that he regards her revelations as, to say the least, doubtful, since in his Decree of March 12, 1771, he forbids her Beatification to be proceeded with "on

account of the book". Once more, it is a question only of Sister Mary's revelations. Let us beware of thinking that, if they are false, it is the same with her sanctity and her extraordinary union with God. 30 bis. — Alain de la Roche, a Breton Dominican (1428–75), is honoured in his Order on September 8 with the title of Blessed. After teaching theology, he spent the last five years of his life in successfully instituting and propagating Confraternities of the Rosary in the north of France and in the Low Countries. He is not said to have had ecstasies, but he believed himself to have received many revelations, particularly of an historical kind. They served as the theme of his preachings upon the Rosary. Shortly after his death, the Carthusians of Gripsholm, in Sweden, published the manuscript containing the chief of these discourses (*Sponsus novellus Beatissimae Virginis Mariae*, 1498). After protestations from Frs. Quétif and Echard (*Scriptores ordinis praedicatorum*, Vol. I, p. 851) and from the Bollandist, Cuper (1733), the majority of writers, even those of the Order of St. Dominic, agreed in regarding these revelations as being of no value. "He was undoubtedly a religious of sincere piety, but one who was led by a feverish imagination to strange hallucinations" (*Analecta Bollandiana*, 1903, p. 219). Alain believed firmly in his revelations: "All these things," he said, "I affirm them and bear witness to them on oath, by my faith in the Blessed Trinity. May I be accursed if I have departed from the way of truth!" 31. — Fourth cause of error. A true revelation may subsequently be altered involuntarily by the person who receives it. This danger is to be feared with intellectual locutions.



After receiving them, the temptation to translate them into words cannot be resisted; but there is the risk of slightly modifying the meaning of the thought, and particularly of giving it a definiteness that it lacked. Suppose that someone speaks to you simply by signs—by a movement of the eye, for instance—you would understand. But if you try to translate the intention by words, you risk adding shades of your own invention. Thus when praying for one who is sick, you may receive an assurance of a cure; but God leaves you in ignorance as to whether it will be total or partial, sudden or slow, soon or late, or even physical or moral. It is difficult to translate this communication without making it more definite than it was originally. 32.—The danger is also great when the written revelation is very long and yet has been received almost instantaneously. It is not rash to believe that not all the words used were supplied by the revelation, and that the thoughts were not given in detail. They were developed later by the person who received them. St. Bridget recognises that this is sometimes so in her own case. In fact, in one of her visions Our Lord, without blaming her, remarks that she retouches her revelations, through not having understood them properly, or not knowing how to express them exactly (*nunc volvis et revolvis in animo tuo, nunc scribis et rescribis ea, donec veneris ad proprium sensum verborum meorum. Revelationes Extravagantes, ch. xlix*); and, further, He approves the saint's secretaries who in translating from Swedish into Latin add "colour and ornamentation." 33.—Fifth cause of error. I have just referred to secretaries. They may easily alter the text without any wrong intention.

For their own personality intervenes in the choice of expressions. They sometimes, with a certain amount of good faith, think that they can add whole sentences under pretext of making the thought clearer. "We know (they say to themselves) that this is what the saint wished to say." The account gains, perhaps, in clearness; but only half of it is revelation. We have examples of these cases where the accuracy of the text is disputed: those of Mary of Agreda, Catherine Emmerich, and Mary Lataste. We may read them for edification, but we do not know exactly in what measure their revelations, even supposing them to have been true originally, have been retouched. Many persons believe these writings to be a mixture. There would have been three concurrent actions: the divine revelation, the seer's own activity (which has interpreted or invented and perhaps supplied a good half of the results); finally, the embellishments made by secretaries and friends. Benedict XIV (*De Canon.*, Book III, ch. liii, No. 16; English: *On Heroic Virtue*, Vol. III, ch. ix, No. 16) examines one of St. Catherine of Siena's celebrated revelations (ecstasy of 1377), in which the Blessed Virgin would practically have told her that she was not immaculate. He quotes several authors who, for the sake of the saint's reputation, prefer to sacrifice that of her directors or editors, who are thus accused of falsification. He afterwards gives us Fr. Lancisius' opinion, admitting the possibility of the saint having deceived herself as a result of preconceived ideas (*Lancisius, opusc., De praxi divinae praesentiae*, ch. xiii). 34.—Compilers, like secretaries, have sometimes modified revelations. Thus, in the first German edition of Catherine

Emmerich's works, it was said that St. James the greater was present at the Blessed Virgin's death. It was afterwards seen that this statement was incompatible with the chronology of events in the Acts of the Apostles. In the recent Ratisbon edition the erroneous phrase has simply been effaced. This method is deplorable, for it robs the serious reader of a means of forming his opinions. The sentence should have been retained, adding a note saying: the Sister was mistaken here. Are they afraid lest this avowal should interfere with the sale of the book? Fr. Croset, who translated *Mary of Agreda* in the seventeenth century, softened down certain passages. I am told that in an edition that appeared at the end of the nineteenth century the style of this translation has again been retouched, making fresh suppressions.

§ 2. Five Causes of Absolutely False Revelations 35.— These five causes are: 1° Simulation; 2° an over-lively mind or imagination; 3° an illusion of the memory that consists in believing that we recall certain facts which never happened; 4° the Devil's action; 5° the inventions of falsifiers.

36.— First cause of falseness. To begin with, it may happen that the persons who claim to have received these revelations are untruthful and in bad faith. One of the best known examples is *Magdalen of the Cross*, a Franciscan of Cordova, who lived at the beginning of the sixteenth century. She was born in 1487, entered the Convent at the age of seventeen, in 1504, and was three times Abbess of her Monastery. From the age of five the Devil appeared to her under the form of different saints, and inspired her with a strong desire to pass as a saint herself. She was thirteen when he considered

that her soul was sufficiently possessed by the spirits of vanity, pride, and sensuality; he plainly declared his identity to her, and promised that if she would enter into an agreement with him, he would spread abroad her reputation for sanctity and would procure her, for thirty years at the least, all the pleasures that she desired. She agreed, and Satan became her councillor, although there were days when she would gladly have driven him away, so terrified was she at the fearful shapes that he took. Thanks to his aid, she realised all the outward appearance of divine marvels: ecstasies, levitation, predictions that were often fulfilled. She made herself the stigmatic wounds, and for eleven years persuaded others that she lived without taking any food; while procuring it for herself secretly. For thirty-eight years, up to 1543, she succeeded in deliberately deceiving the greatest theologians in Spain, the Bishops, Cardinals, Inquisitors, and great nobles about the Court. People came from all sides to consult her, and alms were showered upon her. Having been at death's door, she confessed everything publicly, and then regretted her avowals. Exorcism had to be resorted to before the Devil lost his hold over her will. Finally, she was condemned to be confined in another Convent of her Order (Amort, Book II, ch. iii; Görres, Vol. V. ch. xi; Bizouard, Vol. II, Book X, ch. iv; Dr. Imbert, Vol. II, p. 1). 36 bis. — Mgr. Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans, in a letter to one of his clergy, March 23, 1874, says: "Cardinal Albitius, who wrote about the middle of the seventeenth century, enumerates in his great work *de Inconstantia in fide* more than twenty condemnations pronounced in his time" by the Holy

Office against simulators. He adds that in 1747 a professed religious of the monastery of St. Clare, at Chieri, was condemned for the same reason; also, under Pius VII, one named Jeanne Marella (simulated stigmata); and in 1857, a certain Catherine Finelli (Letter published in *Le Correspondant*, March 25, 1874, p. 1105). 37.—Second cause of falseness. We will now suppose a person who is in good faith. He may perhaps be deceived by his imagination or his mind, that are over lively. It was said above that our faculties sometimes mingle their own action with the divine revelation. But, when the temperament is badly balanced or overexcited, they may do still more: they construct an altogether false revelation. Thanks to their feverish imaginations, such persons, during the most ordinary prayer, can pronounce interior words with such clearness that they seem to be said by someone else. Or, again, on particular days they have an extraordinary power of visual representation. A picture offers itself to their interior eyes with very vivid colours, almost equal to those shown by real objects. If a scene of Our Lord's life is in question, or some future event in which they are interested, they willingly believe that the picture is supernatural. There are even cases where the illusion may take the form of thinking that an intellectual vision of a saint has been seen. This is when it is obscure. For instance, you imagine, without any sufficient reason, that you feel the saint near you. It is necessary to be much more exacting as regards proof here than when it is a question of the presence of God. With regard to God, the error does not go to the lengths of affirming a presence that does not exist—

He is there; the question is simply that of knowing it He makes Himself felt. It is quite otherwise with the saints. The same must be said with regard to intellectual locutions. This is how St. John of the Cross speaks of them: "There are some men whose intellect is so quick and penetrating that their conceptions, when they are self-recollected, naturally proceed with great facility, and form themselves into these locutions and reasonings so clearly [it is a question of intellectual locutions as to make them think that God is speaking. But it is not so. All this is the work of the intellect, somewhat disengaged from the operations of sense; for it may do this and even more without any supernatural help whatever, by its own natural light. This is a state of things of frequent occurrence, and many delude themselves into the belief that ... God converses with them: they write down, or cause others to write for them, what they have experienced. And, after all, it is nothing" (Ascent of Mount Carmel, Book II, ch. xxix, p. 192). St. Teresa, it is true, says that when a person has had true visions or true locutions they can no longer be confused with the feeble imitations of the imagination. But for those who have never had experience of these divine favours the difficulty continues undiminished. 38.—It may happen that this imaginative power has an accidental cause. Cardinal Bona says that hallucinations may at times result from excessive abstinences, fasts and vigils; this excess enfeebles the muscular system and the faculties; they cause a predominance of the nervous system (De discret. spir., ch. xx, No. 3). Benedict XIV adopts this view (De Canon., Book III, ch. 1, No. 1; On Heroic Virtue, Vol. III, ch. xii, No. 1).

39.—Third cause of falseness. This is an illusion or special disease of the memory, which consists in thinking that certain facts are remembered, although they never existed. This illusion would seem impossible, and yet it is seen even outside mystic things: certain minds invent stories and sincerely persuade themselves that the incidents occurred. These are inventors in good faith. This case must not be confused with the preceding, where the imagination conjures up a picture, nor with another, much more common, that of romancers who relate imaginary anecdotes, as a joke, and finish by being half persuaded of their historic origin. Those that I am now speaking of are earnest persons who invent right and left, but who believe what they say, and this from the first moment of saying it. Some will relate their journeys in distant countries where their friends know quite well that they have never been. They describe the least details, which are always picturesque. Others believe that they have visited Kings, Bishops or other prominent personages, who have confided to them secrets or important opinions, or who have encouraged them warmly. Finally, others describe the fearful dangers that they have escaped, or the unworthy persecutions of which they have been the object. We are disposed to believe them, for their tone is one of such conviction; and then they enter into details with regard to time and locality and the conversations that took place, until we say to ourselves: It is impossible that the foundation of all this should not be true. And yet all is invented. These people are not mad; in all other things they are reasonable and intelligent, although

usually in a state of agitation and ebullition. How are we to explain their aberration? We do not know. But there is a strange confusion between the imagination, which constructs a scene, and the memory, which affirms that it took place. The reason no longer distinguishes between these two very different operations. They probably begin by thinking of the anecdote as possible in itself, then as possible for themselves, then as likely, then as probable, then as certain. It is after this unconscious elaboration, and when the illusion has come to its full maturity, that they relate the history to us. Let us not endeavour to explain this illusion, which is fairly common. Let us simply apply it to our subject. We will then suppose certain persons leading a very retired life and having the unfortunate turn of mind which I have just described. They will not be inclined to lay claim to long voyages, or dinners with political or literary celebrities. This would be too much; they have still enough good sense to understand that people would laugh in their faces. They will rather invent facts that cannot be disproved. An exalted piety will sometimes incline them to the side of revelations. They relate that they were visited by the Court of Heaven, and that Our Lady herself gave them her salutary counsels. If they have the "passion for persecutions," they invent or exaggerate those which they suffer from men or devils. The director will always find that his advice has little effect; which will be a first means of unmasking the illusion. There is yet another: that of informing himself as to these persons' lives as a whole. If they have the defect of romancing, they would show it in many other circumstances. It will



occasionally take some time to arrive at a clear view of the situation. But where is the need of hurry? 40.—Fourth cause of falseness. The Devil may give false revelations or visions. His action may sometimes be recognised by the circumstances of the vision. He can also produce alienation of the sensible faculties, trying to counterfeit the divine ecstasy. This case must be extremely rare, for hardly any undoubted examples are quoted. I have cited that of Magdalen of the Cross; but here it was a purely exterior imitation, and made in complicity with the person involved. In the seventeenth century there was an example of the Devil's action upon a young woman, Nicole of Reims, who seems to have been in good faith. André du Val gives her story at great length in *Mme Acarie's Life* (Book I, ch. vi). Nicole appeared to possess the most extraordinary graces; she was approved and consulted by a number of pious persons; she even seemed to labour for the conversion of souls; she organised public prayers and processions. *Mme Acarie* was alone in affirming that it was all due to the Devil. At last one day the young woman reverted to her natural state so completely "that she no longer had this sublime turn of mind, these beautiful discourses ... nor the appearance of these great virtues. She was very coarse, rough, and imperfect.... She married, and was on the point of becoming a Huguenot." 41.—Fifth cause of falseness. The inventions of falsifiers. Political prophecies have often been their handiwork. They were inspired by motives of political or pecuniary interest, or by the desire to mystify the public. We find an instance of the first motive at the time of the taking of Constantinople by

the Turks (1453). The future schismatic Patriarch, Georges Scholarios, who was secretly on their side, through hatred of the Latins, wished to dishearten the defenders of the city. With this object, and he afterwards admitted this himself, he composed false prophecies, upon which the people fed eagerly. One of these predictions announced that the assailants would begin by entering the city, but would suddenly be miraculously routed. At other times the authors simply wished to amuse themselves at the expense of credulous persons. A prophecy made by Cazotte, on the subject of the French Revolution, has often been reprinted. But now it is thought to have been composed after the event by La Harpe. It may have had a historical foundation, but a less marvellous one than it was made out to be. Suppose that the death of Louis XVI and the French Revolution were really foretold. These events were decided beforehand by secret societies; Cazotte, who was a high dignitary amongst the German illuminati, knew these projects and could easily foretell their fulfilment. Another famous prophecy is that of Orval; it was made in 1839 and was supposed to have been found in a book printed in the fifteenth century. It contains minute details relating to events of a date previous to the year of its publication. The rest is obscure. The Bishop of Verdun, in a circular letter of February 6, 1849, declares that the author was a priest of his diocese. "In the beginning," the Bishop says, "he had no object in this fraud other than an aimless amusement; but when time brought the fulfilment of some of his predictions, vanity on the one hand, and false shame on the other, caused him to persevere in a course of

action from which he was afterwards glad to escape." (This letter is quoted intact at the end of Fr. Pouplard's book, *Un mot sur les visions*). Later writers, such as the Abbé Curicque (*Voix prophétiques*), have disputed the genuineness of the foregoing confession, saying that it was wrung from him by intimidation, and they quote witnesses who stated that they had read a similar prophecy at the time of the Revolution. As no authentic copy of such a prophecy has been preserved, no one can say how far this resemblance goes. But even if the editor of 1839 embellished an ancient document, it is none the less true that he was a falsifier of facts. 42. — The different causes of falseness just enumerated have often been combined with the object of giving publicity to false prophecies of a political nature. These abound particularly at times of great political or religious disturbance, the popular imagination being then over-excited. In the thirteenth century St. Bonaventure complained of hearing to "satiety" prophecies dealing with the Church's troubles and the end of the world (*De profectu religiosorum*, Book III, ch. lxxvi). At the end of the fourteenth century, during the great Western Schism, "seers arose on all sides, and their visions gained such an influence and a circulation as had been unknown before.... In some of the gravest sermons reliance was put upon these baseless predictions" (Salambier, *The Great Schism of the West*, ch. vi, § 4). Gerson, who took part in the Council of Constance, at which the Great Schism and the struggle between the rival Popes was put an end to, says that there were then an incredible number of holy and mortified men who had false revelations at

this period, and that he has this information from credible witnesses. He adds: "Many believed that they had learnt by revelation and with certainty that they would themselves be the future Pope" (*De distinctione verarum visionum*). At the beginning of the sixteenth century Italy experienced a regular epidemic of politico-religious prophecies. This effervescence began with those made by Savonarola in Florence. Religious and hermits swarmed over the country, and while commenting upon the Apocalypse, they announced from the pulpit or in public places revolutions in the temporal and spiritual governments, to be followed by the end of the world. Peasants and young girls alike fell to prophesying. In the fifth Lateran Council, in 1516, Leo X was obliged to publish a Bull by which public prophecies by preachers were prohibited (*Pastor, History of the Popes*, edited by Fr. Antrobus, Vol. V, end of Introduction; also *Mansi, Collection of Councils*). Let us now come to the eighteenth century. There were "prophecies springing up constantly during the French Revolution, prophecies that were clear and full of detail with regard to past events, vaguer as to future occurrences and often refuted by facts when they thought fit to be definite; promising a deliverer who did not appear, and soon substituting another prediction, which was put forward in the character of an infallible utterance" (*Abbé Sicard, L'ancien Clergé de France*, Vol. III, Book III, ch. vi, p. 153). In the nineteenth century we have also epidemics of prophesyings: they announced the Comte de Chambord's reign, or that of the Naundorff. They took their inspiration from doubtful prophecies

regarding "the great Pope and the great King," which the Ven. Holzhauser had inserted in his Commentary on the Apocalypse in the seventeenth century. It is to be regretted that religious journals should so often have collected and spread abroad these absurdities which bring religion into discredit. In a letter already quoted (36 bis), Mgr. Dupanloup laments the great number of prophecies "that are hawked about on all sides by the enterprise of booksellers." "I have now," he says, "more than twenty volumes before me, from Belgium and France in particular". He recalls the words of Pius IX in his allocution of April 9, 1872: "I do not give much credit to prophecies, because those especially that have recently appeared do not merit the honour of being read"; and this other, of July 5, 1872: "A large number of prophecies are in circulation; but I think that they are the fruit of the imagination." The twentieth century is in no wise behind its predecessors. When, in 1901, the French Chambers were discussing at great length the laws that were destined to destroy the Religious Orders, prophetic imaginations came into play. Certain visionaries felt themselves impelled to go to the Holy Father to confide to him their predictions and secrets. One of their directors told me that on arriving in Rome his penitent was much surprised to find ten other persons who had come with the same intention. A cardinal listened to them very patiently, but audience with the Holy Father was refused to them. I have it from a reliable source that one of the present claimants to the French throne constantly receives letters from prophets and prophetesses who foretell his destinies and give him advice, professedly in

God's name. He is weary of them. 43.—Nothing is easier than to invent political prophecies in this way. It is only necessary to announce the advent of great misfortunes to be followed by extraordinary deliverances. These statements can be put about without fear, for no one can prove the contrary. A suspicious character in modern political prophecies is the fact that they never lead us to withstand wicked men, and never suggest any serious manner of resisting them. Some even predict that the world is to change suddenly, by a miracle. "A new era" is on the point of appearing; everyone will become holy in an instant. The conclusion drawn from such predictions is that we should fold our arms and wait. Since God is to do everything, and makes a point of proclaiming it in advance, it would be an indiscretion and foolishness on our part to wish to help Him and to anticipate His appointed hour. Let us, then, go on doing nothing! This is a convenient doctrine. I was objecting to one of these false prophetesses, one day, that the world seems, on the contrary, to become more and more wicked, and that we were proceeding in the opposite direction to the great renovation that she was announcing. She replied: "It is a good sign. God will not intervene until the evil is at its height." This answer teaches us nothing. When can anyone say that the evil is at its height? And, further, you declare that this maximum will be reached soon, and not in two thousand years. How do you know this? § 3. The Security of the Mystic Union, as compared with Revelations 44.—We have just seen that revelations are subject to many illusions. Our own action, especially, may counterfeit the divine action, or

mingle with it. This first drawback brings with it others still more grave. In fact, the revelations do not generally aim at being useful to the seer's own soul only; they lead to exterior acts, such as the teaching of a doctrine, the propagation of a devotion, prophesying, or embarking on some enterprise that requires considerable expense. If these impulses came from God, and from Him alone, no evil results could be feared. But in the contrary case, which is much more frequent and difficult to discover, the soul begins to tread in perilous paths. Hence it follows that revelations are usually a source of danger. 45.—On the other hand, with the mystic union there is nothing to fear. We will put things at their worst, and suppose that the state of prayer is nothing but a pure imitation. From the moment that this prayer claims resemblance with the mystic state and cannot be distinguished from it with any certainty, it is that it presents the same characteristics and, in particular, that it inclines the soul to divine love and the practice of the virtues. This result is excellent. Further, it does not lead to the exterior acts enumerated above, otherwise it would degenerate into revelation, which is contrary to the hypothesis. And thus it is completely inoffensive. And, moreover, I have made too great a concession. I have supposed that the mystic state could be counterfeited by the human mind or by the Devil. I have shown the contrary elsewhere. Therefore a state of prayer, which in all seriousness presents the general aspects of the mystic state, comes from God, and cannot thus be other than advantageous. 46.—Mysticism is so little studied, even in many religious Houses, that numbers of pious

persons confound revelations with the mystic union, or are, at least, unaware that these should be appreciated differently. They accordingly fall into one of the two following exaggerations: 1° If they are acquainted with the danger of revelations, they extend their adverse judgment to the mystic union and turn certain souls away from an excellent path. 2° If, on the contrary, they are persuaded, and rightly so, of the security and utility of the mystic union, they wrongly include revelations in this favourable verdict, and urge certain souls into a dangerous way.

### **Chapter XXII Revelations and Visions (continued) Course to be Followed in our Judgments With Regard to Them**

§ 1. Of the Degree of Probability or Certainty that can be Arrived at 1. — Let us first consider this question: Can we ever be morally certain that a revelation is purely divine? Yes; although when we think of all the causes of error that have been enumerated it would not appear to be so. 2. — And first, when We so wills, God can give a complete certainty, while the revelation lasts, at any rate, to the person receiving it. The light and the evidence are of such strength that any kind of doubt is impossible. A similar fact occurs in the natural order. Our senses are subject to many illusions. But it is none the less true that in a multitude of cases we feel that we cannot have been mistaken. 3. — Can we ever be certain that a revelation made to another person is purely divine? Yes. For the Old Testament prophets furnished indubitable signs of their mission. Otherwise they would not have been



believed, and, further, it would not have been right to believe them. For there were always false prophets who obtained a hearing from a section of the people and led them astray. Holy Scripture enjoined discernment in the matter. By what means can this result be obtained? That is the important but difficult question with which we shall deal in this Chapter.

4.—When a miracle is performed, and it is stated that it is worked with this intention, or when circumstances show this to be the case, it is an undeniable proof of the divine nature of the revelation. A prophecy fulfilled, will be the equivalent of a miracle if it was couched in definite language and could not have been the result of chance or a conjecture of the Devil. Apart from these rather rare means of forming an opinion, there is another which is slower and more delicate: the discussion of reasons for and against.

5.—This inquiry, in practice, usually gives nothing more than a greater or a lesser probability. And when this is so we must not be afraid to own it. Authors are often satisfied with vague utterances on these questions. They certainly speak of signs of discernment; but they forget to point out that, taken separately, these signs do not furnish a complete certainty and that their existence is not always easily detected. In the same way they speak of the divine action, but they do not always ask themselves whether it is absolutely without any admixture of another element. And yet this is an important point also.

6.—The right course to adopt, when judging of revelations or visions, can be summed up in the three following steps which I am about to examine separately: 1° To obtain detailed

information regarding the person who thinks himself thus favoured; 2° and also as to the actual facts of the revelation; 3° these data once obtained, to draw the conclusions that they admit of. In order to show that a revelation is divine, the process of exclusion is also resorted to at times. This consists in proving that neither the Devil nor the individual mind can have added their own activity to God's action, and that no one retouched the revelation afterwards. But this process differs from the preceding one only by the manner of classifying the information and drawing the conclusions. Practically the same inquiries have to be made, but in a less natural order. 6 bis.—Theologians, as such, have the following problem only to solve with regard to visions and revelations: Is this state purely divine, or is it not? It is only indirectly, and as a means of solution, that they will ask themselves this other, slightly different question: Is this state purely natural, or is it not? This second problem is often as difficult as the first. Psychology cannot yet furnish definite replies concerning certain supernatural operations of the human mind, such as those observed in hypnotism, somnambulism, telepathy, thought-reading, experiments with mediums, etc. With regard to these obscure facts we must maintain a very reserved attitude. In such matters we should pronounce in favour of the existence of the supernatural in simple and evident cases only. § 2. Seven kinds of Inquiries to be made Regarding the Person who Believes Himself to be thus Favoured 7.—Before examining the text or the circumstances of a revelation, we must know with whom we have to deal. There is a series of questions

for this purpose which I am about to enumerate. They show us the person from the triple standpoints of the natural, the ascetic, and the mystic. When it is a question of a canonised saint, this inquiry has already been made by the Church. 8.—1° What are this person's natural qualities, or what, on the other hand, are his natural defects, whether physical, intellectual, and, above all, moral? Amongst those who have known him at different times in his life, has he been regarded as sincere, cool-headed, and of sound judgment, being guided by reason and not by impressions? Briefly, is his mental equilibrium perfect? Or, on the contrary, are his descriptions of fact exaggerated, or are they even fabrications? Is his mind weakened by ill-health, vigils, fasts, etc.? If the results are favourable, they prove, with a certain amount of probability, that the chief causes of error enumerated in the last chapter are not to be feared. For such a person's habitual tendencies are calculated to save him from these dangers; but an accidental lapse is possible. 9.—2° There is an inquiry that relates to the intellectual qualities. It is well to know the degree of education that the person has received, what books he has read, and what information he may have acquired by frequenting the society of learned men. This will sometimes show us that certain revelations are less marvellous than they appear. We were inclined to call them supernatural, because of their erudition or a sublimity for which no other explanation could be found. But we must satisfy ourselves that this knowledge has not been derived from books or the conversation of theologians. We saw the case of St. Hildegard further back. 10.—

Another application. In order to prove that Mary of Agreda's revelations were divine, she has been described as being, as she herself says, an ignorant girl. But she could read. She was well acquainted with the Bible, which she quotes continually and comments upon. Cardinal Gotti, O.P. (+1742), has also shown that several of her revelations were borrowed from an apocryphal (or re-written) book of the fifteenth century, the Raptures of Blessed Amadeus, and another, the treatise On the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, falsely attributed to St. Jerome. Her biographer tells us "that having collected various treatises on this devotion [to Mary], she one night conceived a vehement desire to compose one herself" (ch. xix). She confesses to the assistance of theologians. "I have recourse to my director and to my spiritual father in the most delicate and difficult matters" (Part I, No. 24). When she wrote her book for the second time, she made use of fragments that had been collected by her second Confessor, "who conferred with her regarding the matters found therein" (Vie, ch. xxii). The upshot of all this is that she had other than supernatural aid in her work. She exaggerates when she says: "No human mind could have imagined this work" (Part III, No. 789). For example. I have spoken elsewhere of H el ene Smith, of Geneva, and of her somnambulistic states. The spiritualists were greatly impressed by the things that she related during her trances, and considered this sudden facility of speech an evident proof of the influence of another spirit. With remarkable patience and sagacity, M. Flournoy has shown that the majority of these accounts were simply the

reproduction of certain books, of which the subject remembered nothing in the normal state. We know already that in the somnambulistic state the memory undergoes a prodigious development at times. In the case of H el ene Smith, the imagination was equally powerful; during her crises she had created a new language, of 160 words, which she spoke fluently, but which she did not understand when she was not in a trance. She claimed that this was the language in use in the planet Mars. It has been proved to be an adaptation of known languages. Before believing that a medium is inspired, spiritualists should inquire carefully into his or her antecedents. 11.—In cases where the seer is educated, and his unaided account of the vision shows a talent for composition superior to that which he ordinarily displays, is there not at least some probability that he was subject to a supernatural action? Yes. But we cannot find a proof in this circumstance. The higher literary level reached in these pages may simply be due to the excitement that accompanies or follows a true supernatural grace. St. Teresa, describing the intoxication into which the full union threw her, says of herself: “I know one who ... composed, without any preparation, certain stanzas, full of feeling, most expressive of her pain: they were not the work of her own understanding, but, in order to have a greater fruition of that bliss which so sweet a pain occasioned her, she complained of it in that way to God” (Life, ch. xvi, 6). The saint has the wisdom not to claim that God dictates her verses; it is her own pious intoxication. Thus the talent displayed in the composition of certain passages is not a clear proof that God revealed

them to her. 12.—3° What virtues does this person possess? What has been his general level from the standpoint of perfection, whether before the revelation or afterwards? If before the revelation he was vicious, and particularly if of scandalous conduct, it is not likely that God has chosen him as the recipient of His favours, except for the purposes of his conversion. On the other hand, experience seems to prove that God has at times manifested Himself to simple souls of quite ordinary virtue, in order to found a pilgrimage or to suggest some useful undertaking. Thus at the beginnings of certain special revelations, it may be that an ordinary piety is sufficient. 13.—The important point is to know whether there has been much progress after the revelations. Have these states created a centre of moral energy? If a great advance in sanctification has been noticed, and if, further, this can be attributed to the revelations and not simply to other graces, there is a strong probability in their favour. It is not a certainty, because, as we have already seen, canonised saints have been mistaken at times. If, on the contrary, the seer of the vision has remained at an ordinary level of virtue, his visions must be regarded with suspicion. Such extraordinary means are not made to lead to a merely ordinary state of self-sacrifice. Lopez de Ezquerria says, with regard to this subject: "All passive and extraordinary communications proceeding from the good spirit ... produce an efficacious excitation to good works ... and the soul feels that this movement comes, not from herself, but from the divine virtue. She is conscious of an overflowing life, as it were, in her faculties turning

her away from created things and towards God and great actions. This motion, excitation, impulsion, is called the gift of excitation. To a greater or lesser degree it accompanies all supernatural favours and infused movements; and this without any exceptions. The Devil, on the other hand, produces no vision or illusion that does not end in a strong inclination to evil. This may not be perceived at once; but he soon shows himself openly by his results" (Lucerna, Tr. 4, No. 178). 14. — The author here quoted has told us that evil tendencies coming from the Devil may not show themselves at the outset. What the Devil cannot do is to incline the soul towards the solid virtues in a real and durable manner. But he can, by a ruse, feign to encourage them for a time for the sake of landing his victim in exaggerations and oddities. Provided that the end is evil, the road leading up to it matters little to him. Under his influence bodily penances will be pushed to the length of ruining the health ; they will be accompanied by disobedience, and will lead to disgust or will make the person ridiculous. Purity of conscience will degenerate into scrupulousness, humility into sloth or discouragement; while zeal will become indiscretion. In the saints' lives we see that Satan, on more than one occasion, has given exalted ideas of the active life to contemplatives in order to turn them aside from the state that they had embraced and in which they were being sanctified. His object was to engage them in profitless undertakings. On the other hand, he will represent the joys of solitude to those who are successful teachers or sick nurses. He tries to make them change their vocation at an age when it cannot be done. In all

these cases the tree is known, sooner or later, by its fruits. 15. — We have an instance of one of these ruses of Satan in the life of Blessed Jordan of Saxony, second General of the Dominicans. When crossing the Alps he was taken with a high fever. He was accompanied by a certain Prior, skilled in medicine, under whose obedience he had put himself in these matters, and who had ordered him to sleep on a feather-bed. The Devil, who wished to increase his illness so that he might not be able to preach, appeared to him during the night under the form of an angel, and, rebuking him severely for his self-indulgence, made him decide to lie on the ground. The next day the doctor renewed his orders. That night there was another apparition of the angel. The sick man again yielded to his injunctions. A third time the doctor repeated his order. Again the angel returned. But by this time Blessed Jordan had realised that obedience was the only safe path. He spat in the apparition's face, and it took to flight (Bolland., Feb. 13, Vie, by Cantimpré, No. 5, and Amort, Book I, ch. viii, after Castaldo, O.P.). 16. — Amongst those virtues that a revelation should bring in its train, one that should shine forth most brilliantly, and regarding which it is of paramount importance to be informed, is humility. It is the one most opposed to our nature and of which Satan has the greatest horror. If this virtue is real, it can proceed only from God, and is a very favourable sign. It is this that has led Gerson, rather exaggerating the value of the sign when taken alone, to say: "This is the first and the principal sign by which to decide the value of the spiritual coin: whatever may be in question, whether interior



warnings, overpowering instincts, ecstatic love, contemplations, raptures; if humility precedes, accompanies, and follows it without any contrary element, you may be sure that the work comes from God or from the good angel [in part, at least]" (De distinct. ver. vision., sign. 4). Pride, on the contrary, is a mark of diabolic illusion or imposture. It shows itself by contempt for our neighbour, an independent spirit with regard to Superiors and directors, by obstinacy in our opinions, by the refusal to submit to the necessary examination and by anger. It is a sign of pride, and therefore of illusion, to have a craving to divulge the graces that we believe ourselves to have received. Humility leads to their concealment, except in the somewhat rare cases of real utility.—4° What extraordinary graces of union with God does the person believe himself to have received previously, and what has been the verdict regarding them? If he has merely had strong sentiments of love of God, or even the prayer of quiet, it is best to reserve judgment regarding the revelations and visions, especially if they are of frequent occurrence. It is only in exceptional cases that these graces are granted, unless the soul is much further advanced in prayer. If, on the contrary, the person has reached the period of ecstasy, there is a probability in favour of the revelation, but nothing more, since the ecstatic saints have sometimes suffered from illusions, and their imagination came into action either during or after the divine visitation. 18.—5° And, moreover, what revelations or visions has he previously believed himself to have received, and what was thought about them? Has he made predictions? Were they

quite clearly expressed and clearly fulfilled, without its being necessary to resort to subtleties of interpretation? 19. — When an isolated prediction has come true, there is sometimes only a probability of its being divine, even where it is a question of human actions that are dependent upon free-will. For it may have been uttered at hazard and fulfilled by chance. And then the Devil conjectures many future events, because he knows the habitual trend of both the divine and the human will under similar circumstances. He is especially likely to be correct when it is a question of the populace, who often let themselves be carried away by unreasoning instincts which can be foreseen. Finally, the Devil, after announcing some unwelcome event, can assist in its realisation (see St. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book II, ch. xxi). 20. — We have an instance of a prophecy true in part, but which by its false elements had disastrous consequences at the close of the Great Western Schism. Benedict XIII, the last of the Avignon Popes, escaped to Spain by sea. P. Nider, O.P., relates how, in a town on the sea-coast, the Abbot of a monastery warned the inhabitants to be ready to receive the Pope. They laughed at such an unlikely prediction. But the wind, changing suddenly, carried the Pope's ship six miles back upon its course, and obliged it to enter the port in question. Benedict asked the Abbot how he had known of his arrival beforehand. He replied that he had read this prophecy recently in a book, which further said that the same Pope would triumph over all opposition, would return to Rome, and would rule there in peace as before. Seeing that the first part of the prediction

was fulfilled, Benedict believed in it, rejected the citation sent by the Council of Constance, was deposed and excommunicated, and died in exile in the Island of Peñiscola (1422) (quoted by Amort, Part II, preface). 21.—Let us now suppose that the predictions made are not fulfilled, and that there is no serious reason for supposing them to be conditional; it is then to be believed that they are not of divine origin. False prophets do not allow themselves to be easily discouraged by their repeated failures. They always find some good reason to explain them away, or they pretend that the event is only delayed! When necessary, they proceed to confirm their first utterance by some new revelation. 22.—6° Has this person suffered great trials before or after the revelations: sicknesses, contradictions, want of success, or delay in certain enterprises that he had at heart, etc.? The saints' lives are full of these trials. It is scarcely possible that crosses should not accompany extraordinary graces. For both alike are a mark of God's friendship, and each is a preparation for the other. If, then, a person who was supposed to be in the way of revelations had no crosses, the way would be open to suspicion. 23.—There is one trial in particular that necessarily, as it were, accompanies these extraordinary ways. Those who know the secrets of these paths, and more certainly still the public, will be inclined to show themselves sceptical or hostile when they hear them spoken of. "Why, they will say, do these things happen to this person rather than to others who are of greater virtue? It is all due to his imagination! We have no wish to be troubled with these difficult and perhaps unanswerable

questions." These criticisms and doubts are an excellent touchstone by which to test the person's humility, patience, and trust in God. If a novice in these virtues, he will meet opposition with words of irritation or discouragement; but if otherwise, he will not be astonished at the divine tarryings, and will continue, in perfect peace, to hope that God's designs will sooner or later be accomplished. 24. — We have a fine example of this patience in Blessed Juliana, a Cistercian prioress of Mont Cornillon, near Liège (1192–1258). She was chosen by God to institute in the Church the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament. She can be said to have passed her whole life awaiting God's appointed time without ever seeing the realisation of her hopes. Her visions on the subject began two years after her entry into the noviciate. She was then only sixteen (1208). Not until twenty-two years later (towards 1230) does she venture to submit her project to a group of learned theologians. They approved it; but her enemies avenged themselves for her reforms by bringing about the pillaging of her Convent by the populace. Sixteen years later (1246) success seems at last about to arrive; for the Bishop of Liège institutes the Feast in his Diocese. But he dies the same year, and one church alone, the collegiate Church of St. Martin, pays any heed to his order. The convent is again pillaged. Blessed Juliana, being calumniated, is forced to leave it. She wanders from place to place during the last twenty years of her life, and dies at the age of sixty-six, after a fruitless wait of fifty years' duration. All seemed lost; but an aged Archdeacon of Liège, who had formerly been one of the group of theologians mentioned above, became Pope under the

title of Urban IV. Six years after Blessed Juliana's death, in the Bull of 1264, he instituted the Feast of Corpus Christi for all Christendom, and caused St. Thomas Aquinas to compose the proper Office. But all was not yet completed. For the wars that disturbed Italy caused this Bull to be long forgotten. Finally, in 1316, John XXII celebrated the feast with all solemnity. More than a century had elapsed since the beginning of the revelations! (See *Vie*, by Le Pas; Desclée, 1893.) 24 bis. — Blessed Grignon de Montfort, the celebrated missionary in Brittany and La Vendée in the eighteenth century, also showed an heroic trust in God. He had known for some time that he was destined to form two new congregations: that of the Filles de la Sagesse, for hospitals and the instruction of poor children, and the Compagnie de Marie, composed of missionaries. It was only a year before his death that he was able to inaugurate these two foundations, and he only succeeded in getting together four Sisters on the one hand, and two priests, with a few lay-brothers, on the other. The work appeared therefore to be a failure. But Blessed Grignon knew that the tree would grow. And, in fact, at the beginning of the twentieth century the Sisters of La Sagesse numbered 5000, with 44 houses. 25. — The holy souls to whom God commits a mission of utility to the Church are not all thus obliged to submit to the long martyrdom of hope deferred. But they have other trials. As an example of rapid success, we may quote the case of Sister Catherine Labouré, of the Sisters of Charity. She saw in 1832 the striking of the Miraculous Medal that had been the subject of her visions only two years before (November, 1830); and

she took part in its distribution for forty-four years (1876) without, however, being known to the world. It was the same with Sister Apolline Andriveau, also a Sister of Charity. In 1846 she received the revelation of the Scapular of the Passion. In the following year Pius IX instituted this devotion. The Sister did not die until forty-seven years later (1894). 26.-7° Has the person taken three precautions that are regarded as indispensable for the avoidance of illusions: (a) fearing to be deceived; (b) perfect frankness with directors; and (c) abstaining from desiring these revelations? 27.—(a) It is clear, first of all, that to believe oneself to be safe from illusions is an excellent disposition for suffering from them. The soul is then like a city that takes no precautions against the enemy by which she is invested. Mary of Agreda does not seem to have been penetrated with this fear. On the contrary, she expected that not even her least revelations should be questioned. She declared that God said to her: “I desire that these revelations should be regarded not as opinions, or simple visions, but as certain truths” (Part I, No. 10). The Blessed Virgin is quoted as speaking in the same sense: “There is nothing of yours in this history, and you can no more attribute it to yourself than to the pen with which you write it. You are but the 304 instrument in the Lord’s hand.... If anyone fails to believe in what you have written, he will not injure you; the outrage will be to me and to my words” (Part III, No. 621; in the French translation, No. 619; and *Lettre à ses religieuses*, No. 9). Thus Sister Mary considers herself securely protected from all error, and that it is a sin not to share her conviction! 28.—(b) Manifestation of

the conscience is necessary. In such difficult matters we must not be both judge and one of the parties concerned. The Devil dissuades us from this sincerity, for, says St. Ignatius, he is afraid to see his wiles unmasked (Rules for Discernment of Spirits, 1st Week, 13), and he abhors such an act of humility. In revenge he leads us to unbosom ourselves without any reflection to friends who have no authority over us, which enables us to put their advice aside, if it does not please us. On the other hand, humble souls avoid publicity as much as possible. 29.—(c) The desire for revelations also exposes the soul to deception. It causes us to find a thousand subtleties by which to substantiate the visions that we believe ourselves to have had, and it excites the imagination to invent new ones. St. Augustine relates that his mother, St. Monica, only just escaped falling into illusion by this means. As she was striving to convert him and bring about his marriage, she wished to know by revelation the issue of her endeavours. False visions were the result. Happily she had previously enjoyed true visions; she perceived that these differed from the others, “by I know not what kind of relish which she knew not how to express,” and she was able to reject these empty appearances (Confessions, Book VI, ch. xiii). 30.—It therefore follows that a revelation should generally be regarded as doubtful if it has been desired. I say: generally; for in exceptional cases it may happen that this desire has been inspired by the Holy Spirit and is clearly recognised as being from Him. 31.—Mary of Agreda’s desire to know by revelation the events that she describes is regarded as an unfavourable sign. “This is so sometimes,” says

Cardinal Gotti, "even in questions of pure curiosity, which in no way help to perfection" (2nd Censure, presented to Clement XII; quoted by Mgr. Chaillot). Further examples occur in *La Cité mystique*, (where she is occupied with a scholastic question: the order of the divine decrees, where she wishes to know if in her infancy Our Lady was hungry, how she asked for food, if she wore swaddling-clothes, if she cried, if she was treated like a great personage. Far from reproving her, her confessors sometimes ordered her to make these indiscreet requests: they wish to know if the Roman Martyrology is correct, to obtain certain details regarding Our Blessed Lord's birth, to find the site of St. Elizabeth's house. § 3. Nine Points upon which Information should be Obtained, either with Regard to the Revelation, Considered in Itself, or the Circumstances that Accompanied it 32.—1° Is there an absolutely authentic text? Have not certain expressions been corrected as inexact or obscure, or have not certain other passages been actually suppressed? These things would be allowable if the edification of the public were the only 305 object. But it is otherwise from the critic's point of view; it means that we are depriving ourselves of very important data. Instead of curtailments, have there, on the contrary, been additions to the revelation? for the sake of accrediting certain doctrines, for instance? This would be a real falsification. 33.—2° Is the revelation in full accord with the dogmas and teachings of the Church, and also with the undoubted pronouncements of history and science? With regard to dogma, if one sure point alone be contradicted, as has happened many times in supernatural



communications, it is sufficient to allow us to affirm that the speaker is not one of God's envoys. If, on the contrary, a revelation contains no error, a conclusion cannot yet be drawn from this fact alone. The human mind may confine itself prudently within the limits of received truths. The Devil can restrain himself for a time, can give himself the appearance of truth as of holiness, so as to inspire confidence. He resembles those gamblers who intend to cheat; they begin by making their opponents win, that they may afterwards make them lose ten times as much again. It does not hurt him to make some concessions to truth for the sake of insinuating an error. Thus, in communications from spirits you sometimes find pages that are quite correct and (although more rarely) of a high tone of thought; but a dogma will be denied in them. If this snare is successful, the Devil will go further and will teach other errors. 34.—3° Does the revelation contain no teaching, or is it accompanied by no action that is contrary to decency and morals? In all divine visions there is a perfect propriety of bearing, gestures, and words (ch. xx, 38). The aberrations at which certain badly balanced persons have arrived through ignorance of this rule, and their absurd way of understanding what familiarity with Our Lord means, are hardly believable. If, for example, as has sometimes happened, an apparition professing to be Jesus Christ were to appear without clothing, we might be sure that it was not divine. On this subject see St. Bonaventure (*De profectu religiosorum*, Book II, ch. lxxvi, alias lxxv). More obviously still, the instrumentality of the Devil is plain in the case of

words or actions that are a clear offence against chastity. God's commandments bind all men without distinction. He dispenses no one under the pretext of friendship. On the contrary, the objects of His visit is to lead us further and further away from the life of the senses. 35.—Certain writers, such as Schram (old edition, No. 549; edition of 1848, No. 559), look with suspicion upon a supernatural revelation of other people's vices and sins, because of the temptation to a lack of charity and an exhibition of contempt or repugnance for certain persons. But this is a matter that depends upon the circumstances of the individual case. St. John of the Cross says that this knowledge of vices is to be attributed either to God or to the Devil, according to the case in question. "God sometimes represents to holy souls the necessities of their neighbours, that they may pray for them or relieve them." This utility is a favourable sign, and it is clearly perceived in the numerous saints who possessed the knowledge of the secrets of hearts. By its means they help in the 306 reformation of souls. St. Joseph of Cupertino, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, enjoyed this favour so habitually that persons were often unwilling to encounter them without having first cleansed their consciences (Scaramelli, *Tr. du discern.*, No. 28). St. Bridget saw the damnation of several persons. She drew a lesson from this knowledge for others. On the other hand, says St. John of the Cross again, "He [the Devil] is wont occasionally to reveal, falsely, but with great distinctness, the sins of others, evil consciences, and corrupt souls, with a view to detraction" (*Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book II, ch. xxvi, p. 183). 36.—This

knowledge of other people's sins is also often a mere illusion of the imagination. I have known two cases of women who saw visions and who were thus haunted by the rooted idea of the relaxation of religious Houses, or the clergy. They delighted in discussing these matters, in order, as they said, to bring about a reform. One at least of them has turned out ill. They had no other evidence by which to prove their facts than their revelations, which were sufficiently explained by the propensity of poor human nature to occupy itself with unbecoming subjects. Owing to a perversion of piety, these delirious imaginations finished by yielding to their natural cravings. In the middle of the nineteenth century another visionary, Cantianille by name, won the confidence of a pious but imprudent Bishop who issued an official publication of the text of her revelation, which was a horrible picture of the morals of the clergy in his diocese. He was obliged to resign. Satan obtained the result that he sought. It is true that St. Catherine of Siena in her Revelations speaks openly and forcibly of the vices of the clergy. But this was in the troublous days of the Great Schism, when the relaxation of the clergy was a matter of common knowledge. *Les Secret de Mélanie of la Salette* is thought by certain persons to have been modified by the imagination of the person who had the vision. One of the reasons relied on is that the text contains very harsh and unqualified accusations regarding the morals of the clergy and the religious communities from 1846 to 1865. History speaks quite differently, and indicates a period of fervour and apostolic zeal. It was the time of Pius IX, of Dom Bosco, the Curé d'Ars, etc., and of the spread

of Christian teaching throughout France. 37.—4° Is the information received useful for our eternal salvation? We can be sure that revelations are not divine when their subject is simply the acquisition of ordinary matters that are of no utility to souls. God does not go out of His way merely to satisfy curiosity. It is with revelations as with miracles: they do not occur without a serious motive. They are the works not only of God's power, but of His wisdom. 38.—We see, then, what is to be thought of those prophetesses who pretend to speak in the name of an angel or of a saint, and who at all hours and to all comers give audiences, during which inquiries are made regarding births, marriages, legal proceedings, diseases, the outcome of political events, etc. In spite of the religious *mise en scène*, they are simply fortune-tellers. Nothing is lacking but the conventional pack of cards or coffee-grounds. God does not stoop to run an Inquiry Office. Their clients (although deeply sceptical in many ways) are inspired with confidence by the fact that they are often fortunate in their predictions, and this without either the Devil's aid or being endowed with specially brilliant perceptions. The fact is that they know their trade. A glance enables them to seize the least indication of what they should say, or how they should correct what they have already said. They can even be successful only by replying yes and no at random. For when you play heads and tails, tails have as many chances as heads. They may be right, on an average, five times out of ten in this game. The idle inquirers forget the five unsuccessful cases; they only remember the others, and so sing the prophet's

praises. 39.—In spiritualist meetings the spirits are often occupied with mere trifles. They condescend to reply to idle questions or to provide a drawing-room game. They push furniture about, cause vibrations in musical instruments, and introduce small objects from outside. The medium will amuse you in this way for a whole evening, just as conjurors will do at a fair. Would spirits who have our eternal welfare at heart consent to lend themselves to such childish things. How far removed is all this from the office attributed by theology to our Guardian Angel! These puerilities become still more distressing when the spirits pose as being our deceased relations, or great philosophers. For if they endeavour to be serious, it is to dictate an appalling tirade of platitudes. Such are the high thoughts that occupy these beings immersed in the light of eternity! When these spirits claim to be those who were great savants on earth, we find that their intellect has become singularly enfeebled in their new life. They are no longer up to date in any subject. It has been proved that spiritualistic communications have not advanced science by a single step. No obscure point of history has been cleared up. No mathematical problem has been solved; no chemical formula or theory of physics has been revealed. Once only Aksakof and other spiritualists thought that they had found an exception. The spirits seemed to have explained a phenomenon that had resisted all the wisdom of men of science. It was a question of the retrograde movement of the satellites of the planet Uranus. But an astronomer, M. Flammarion, went to the root of this assertion and proved that the spirits' explanation was absolutely false (Las Forces

naturelles inconnues, ch. iii). 40.—A revelation is equally to be regarded with suspicion when its only object is the solving of some question that is in dispute, whether theological, historical or astronomic, etc. God leaves these discussions to the human intellect because we do not need them for our sanctification. Let us understand that eternal salvation is the only thing of any importance with God. For all else, says St. John of the Cross, it is “always His will that we should make use of our natural endowments” (Ascent of Mount Carmel, Book II, ch. xxii, p. 163).

41.—The revelation is also to be mistrusted if, although good from the spiritual point of view, it is a truism, occurring in all ascetic writings. God would not employ such great means for such a small result. It is rather probable that the person is thus unconsciously repeating things that he has learnt from books. Or, again, the Devil is amusing him with trifles until the day when having allayed his suspicions, he can become bolder.

42.—If the revelations or visions are very numerous, this circumstance, taken alone, does not constitute an unfavourable sign. In fact, no substantial reason can be brought a priori for the contrary opinion. And, further, it would be to condemn a number of saints; they have had revelations in very great abundance. Examples: St. Bridget, St. Gertrude, St. Frances of Rome, St. Catherine of Siena, Blessed Margaret-Mary, Ven. Agnes of Langeac, Ven. Marina de Escobar, St. Ignatius, etc. Many have left us enormous volumes, in which, however, everything that they wrote is not included. The opponents of these revelations have never thought of finding fault with this abundance,

and no apologist has supposed that objections would be made on this point. It is true that a letter of St. Francis of Sales (Migne ed., Vol. V, col. 1448) is quoted, which seems to condemn a nun because she had so many visions. But the context shows that the saint was not considering this circumstance alone; it is also stated that these revelations had no practical utility; they were mere words. 43.—We see here how we can turn these numerous visions to account indirectly. We can generally see clearly whether or no they have served any purpose. In the case of an isolated vision the answer might be doubtful. If the revelations are long or numerous, and if they contain nothing false, indecent, or futile, we may conclude with probability that they do not emanate from the Devil. For if this were so, he would fail in his object. As Samaniégo remarks (Prologue to the Works of Mary of Agreda, No. 26), it is not possible that he should always continue hidden. 44.—5° If we examine all the detailed circumstances that accompany the vision, the attitudes, gestures, words, etc., do we had the dignity, the gravity, in keeping with the Divine Majesty? Or, on the contrary, do we not perceive oddities, a grotesque deportment, convulsions, or a lack of restraint that are unworthy even of people who are merely rational and well brought up? (a) This alone should have sufficed to condemn the extraordinary events that took place towards the middle of the eighteenth century at the Saint-Médard cemetery, at the tomb of the deacon Pâris. The so-called inspired discourses were extravagant and accompanied by contortions and convulsions; the blows which these persons caused to

be inflicted, and their accompanying insensibility to pain, passed as miracles, but they were simply insensate practices, for they did no one any good. I do not speak of the acts opposed to morality that were subsequently added to these hideous scenes. Many Jansenists, however, saw in these things God's manifestations in favour of their teaching. (b) In spiritualistic communications we often find vulgar modes of speech that would offend us in good society. Great historic personages talk a Billingsgate language, and if the audience is in sympathy they soon descend to obscenities. Certain spiritualists are embarrassed by these facts, but they will not on that account admit the instrumentality of the Devil. They prefer to believe that the souls of the dead carry their vices into the other world, and that the offensive replies are given by the dead, who are still liars, or libertines, triflers, hoaxers, etc. (c) In Protestant countries gatherings, called "revivals," are organised from time to time. Crowds weep over their sins, but with a strange exaggeration, a kind of intoxication. We have here, let us not forget it, an excellent principle: ardent sentiments of the love of God and of repentance. But another element which has nothing divine about it, a neurotic exaltation which is contagious, mingles with it. Sometimes imitations of foreign languages, consisting really in a succession of sounds which of themselves have no meaning, are spoken. 45. — When the angels or the saints assume an apparent body in order to manifest themselves, this body never exhibits deformed limbs or an animal aspect. It would be unworthy of them. Forms of animals are only met with in very different cases, in



symbolic visions, such as Ezekiel's, or St. John the Evangelist's four living creatures. Perfectly rational allegorical explanations have been given of these forms. On the other hand, when the Devil appears to those who invoke him, he delights in taking repulsive shapes; he blends the human form with those of the vilest animals. Suarez regards it as being proved "by the admissions of sorcerers themselves," that Satan never reveals himself to them in a completely human shape; there is always a suggestion of something monstrous, such as the feet (*De angelis*, Book IV, ch. xxxv, No. 5). This idea of Suarez has sometimes been made light of, it being said that he included in this proposition all apparitions of the Devil, not excepting those which Satan wished to pass off as divine. But Suarez does not say a word implying this doctrine; and, indeed, it is not in accordance with facts. As de la Reguera (*Theol. myst.*, Vol. II, p. 666, No. 534) and Schram (first edition, No. 507; or No. 517 in the edition of 1848) remark, if the deformity of the apparition were visible, the ruse would be immediately apparent, and the Devil would exhibit a childish want of skill; if it were invisible, hidden either by garments or clouds, the Devil would be ill advised to give himself so much useless trouble making limbs which would not be seen; and, besides, what actual proof would there be of his doing so?

46. — Many authors have repeated, without discussing it, a statement of two seventeenth-century writers (F.F. Thyrœeus, 1600, and Del Rio, 1600). According to them, the Devil is never permitted to take the form of a dove or of a lamb in his apparitions, because these are symbols of the Holy Spirit and of Christ

(Schram, *ibid.*). But this twofold assertion is contradicted by facts, as we see in the life of St. Frances of Rome. For six devils presented themselves to her one day under the form of six beautiful doves. The saint saw through the deception, and they then changed into crows and tried to injure her (Bolland., March 9; 1st Life, Book III, No. 37). So much for the doves. But there were lambs also. One day the Devil took the form of a lamb that came and lay gently down at the saint's feet. She recognised him, and he became a furious wolf. Another time seven devils appeared to her as white lambs of an engaging appearance, declaring that they symbolised the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. She again recognised them, and they changed into wolves and tried to attack her. Another example: The celebrated Magdalen of the Cross, who worked wonders by the Devil's power, had an apparition of the Devil one day publicly, under the form of a dove. She claimed that it was the Holy Spirit (Görres, Book VII, ch. xi). Finally, if the Devil were forbidden to simulate these symbols, he would a fortiori be forbidden to represent Christ Himself, which he has sometimes, however, done. If he does not make use of these figures, or does so but rarely, we may attribute it to a much simpler reason: when he tries to entangle us in an illusion he must adopt means that are really powerful, such as the representation of a saint. The person seeing it will at once feel drawn to him by an impulse of devotion. But the sight of a symbolic animal, on the contrary, produces an impression of expectation; it allows time to reflect and to ask ourselves what fruit we can derive from this vision. In resorting but seldom to

these symbols, Satan shows his practical sense. That is all. If he risked using these unsatisfactory methods with St. Frances, it was for a special reason. The saint often saw symbolic doves or lambs in her visions. There was reason to hope that she would rely on the likeness and accept it from force of habit. Hitherto it has been a question of apparitions of the Devil, wishing to produce an illusion. But there is another very different case, which people forget to distinguish from the preceding: that of the Devil speaking during the exorcisms. He then sometimes takes the name of an animal symbolising a vice. Now, he has often stated that God does not permit him to apply to this vile purpose a symbol employed by the Church for holy things. He has declared that he cannot take the name of a dove, a lamb, or of a fish (the symbol of Christ in the Catacombs, because of the Greek word *ichthys*). 47.—Scaramelli seems over-severe in the following case. A person who was by way of seeing frequent visions of the Infant Jesus believed that he had one on Good Friday during a sermon on the Passion. This writer considers it unseemly that on such a day and at such a moment we should fix our thoughts on Our Lord's Infancy. He concludes it to be an illusion (*Trairé du discern.*, No. 87). But this line of reasoning proves too much. It amounts to the general admission that if on some Feast Day, and during a sermon, a spiritual consolation of a different kind takes possession of our souls, we should repulse it. No; there is no sort of obligation to do this. On the contrary, the thought of one mystery of Our Lord's life can throw light upon the others. This author adds that "other reasons had since been found to prove

that this person's visions were false." That may be so, but the foregoing reason was worthless. 48.—6° What sentiments of peace, or, on the other hand, of disquiet, has the person experienced during the revelation, or subsequently? St. Ignatius, like St. Catherine of Siena (Dialogues, ch. lxxi, English, p. 223), attaches great importance to this means of discernment. When it is a question of passing inspirations, it may happen that these sentiments are hardly perceptible; but it can scarcely be so in the case of such an extraordinary action as a revelation or a vision, unless, however, it proceeds, not from another spirit, but from our own activity. 49.—This is the rule that can be laid down: With those who are in good faith (we need speak of no others) the action of the good Spirit (God or one of His angels) is characterised by the gift of peace, joy, assurance, and courage, save perhaps at the first moment. Let us note this last restriction. At the first moment not astonishment only may be felt, but also anxiety, disquietude, and even fear. But a fuller survey restores the peace of mind. It was thus that the Blessed Virgin was momentarily troubled by the Angel Gabriel's salutation (Luc. i, 29). But her calm returned directly, and Mary listened to the message. Holy Scripture refers to the agitation that Abraham experienced, although transiently, in one of his visions (Gen. xv, 12); to that of Zachary, when the Angel Gabriel announced to him that he would be the father of St. John the Baptist (Luc. i, 12); of the shepherds at Bethlehem when the angels announced Our Saviour's birth (Luc. ii, 10); of the holy women, at the tomb where the angel was keeping guard (Mark xvi, 6, 8); of the apostles when

the risen Lord appeared amongst them, and calmed their fears by these words: Peace be to you (John xx, 19, 26). The first agitation may also be due to the fact that sensuality or pride rebel against the sacrifice demanded of them. But only the inferior portion of the soul is thus affected. When he thus gives peace, the good spirit does not act only upon the will, by inclining it gently to good, but upon the intelligence also: the idea seems natural to us, wise, and in conformity with what God would expect of us. Whether as light or as an impulse, God takes possession of the soul without any shock. St. Ignatius gives us a rapid picture of this way of acting by saying that "the good angel comes with sweetness, peace, suavity, like a drop of water falling on a sponge" (Rules for the discernment of spirits, II, 7). 50.—The Devil's action has diametrically opposite effects: when he acts upon these who are of good-will, he produces, except it may be at the first instant, uneasiness, sadness, discouragement, agitation, and darkness. St. Teresa adds that we often experience these feelings without discovering their cause (Life, see especially ch. xxv). At the first moment there may be a feeling of joy; if we search into the real cause we shall see that the Devil is suggesting some ideas that appeal to our passions or to some earthly tendencies, the desire for honours or sensible pleasures. But at the last his light, like the light of a storm, is scanty, shifting, interspersed with darkness. His impulsion is enervating, often contradictory, ending in disgust, discouragement. This action, says St. Ignatius, is "like rain in a storm, beating on a rock". In short, Satan's inspiration encounters a mysterious resistance in

souls of good-will. St. Teresa, like St. John of the Cross, often describes the character of the infernal action. The saint explains it thus: "I am thinking whether this may not be so because one spirit is conscious of the presence of another" (Life, ch. xxv, 13). 51.—From what has been said, it would seem that when one of these sentiments is well marked, the inference to be deduced from the resulting peace or disquiet affords a sure means of discerning true revelations from the false; because each of the two contrary spirits acts steadily in a contrary way. When these conditions as to clearness are fulfilled, there would be a moral certainty if we had to decide only between the good spirit and the diabolic spirit. But there is a third action, that of the human mind. For example, it will frequently happen that the revelation comes while we are in a state of deep recollection. This state of union will exhibit the character of the divine influence, namely, peace, which may quite well not be disturbed by the natural activity of our own mind even if it comes to the point of simulating supernatural words. It is not from this source that the feeling of peace proceeds, and consequently the peace is not of itself sufficient to prove that these words are divine. It only gives a probability to this effect. And, further, in practice it may be feared lest the person should be under a delusion with regard to the strength and persistence of the sentiment of tranquil joy that has been experienced, for: 1° Has the examination of his interior state been sufficiently exact and complete? 2° Was there not a secret desire to obtain such a counsel, such a reply from God? What he felt would then be a purely natural joy at

seeing his ideas approved. 52. — Desiring to punish a presumptuous feeling in St. Catherine of Bologna (Poor Clare) at the outset of her religious life, God permitted that she should not detect the diabolic action for some length of time, in spite of the disquiet that accompanied it. Feeling herself favoured with great graces, she had said audaciously to the Devil: "Know that you could send me no temptation without my perceiving it?" After this imprudent challenge she had false apparitions of Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin for five years. They reproached her with a lack of abnegation and obedience to her Superior; but she could not find out what it was that they required of her; then, as she afterwards endured violent temptations against these two virtues, she took the temptations for sins. All this threw her into a state of anguish. At the same time she fell into a dreadful aridity. What saved her from despair was the opening of her conscience to her Superior. God finally enlightened her completely with regard to this temptation (Bolland., March 9, 2nd Life, No. 10 and fol.). 53. — 7° It often happens that a revelation leads to the execution of some bold enterprise; the establishing of a new devotion, for instance, the foundation of a religious Congregation or pious Association, the remodelling of the constitutions of another, the correction of the relaxed state of a certain group of persons, the building of a Church, the inauguration of some work for which the available resources are insufficient, the preaching of a more refined spirituality which God is supposed to have reserved for our time (as being less gross, they say, than those that went before, etc.). In this case it is

necessary to see if the work is: (a) good in itself and in conformity with the spirit of the Church; (b) useful, and of a utility that explains such an exceptional means as a revelation; (c) opportune, if it responds to a new need; (d) if it injures any similar work which it would be better to support. (For the rest of the practical conduct of the matter, see ch. xxiii.) 54.—Amort says that the revelations of women are probably false when they lead to a wish to direct clergy and princes and to teach them, speaking with an air of authority For this is not the part that women should play in the Church—at least, not as a regular practice (*Sommaire des Règles*, § 3, rule 30). He instances this prudent trait in the Ven. Louis du Pont. He was director to the Ven. Marina de Escobar, and approved of her revelations as a whole, and was afterwards their editor. But he would never believe in those that she often thought she received from her Guardian-Angel, indicating various counsels that she was to transmit to the King regarding the management of his Court (Part I, ch. viii, Rule 24). 55.—Mary of Agreda, on the contrary, kept up a correspondence with Philip IV of Spain for twenty years. The King divided each sheet of his letters into two columns, and wrote upon the first only. The Sister replied upon the other. M. Germond de Lavigne has published a French translation of forty of these double letters. They are quite commonplace, and consist in general advice that anyone could have given. It is strange, too, that this Sister, who was so in the habit of receiving revelations, had none regarding the King's relaxed morality and his culpable carelessness concerning affairs for which he was



responsible. And yet she was in a position to exercise a great influence over her correspondent. Many of the letters amount to nothing more than the vague declaration that she is interested in the preoccupations made known to her by the King; 614 other letters have been published in Spain. 56.—8° Have the revelations stood the test of time and scrutiny? Without this condition, the favourable judgments that may have been passed upon them are not a sufficient guarantee. Amort thinks that it is only in exceptional cases that a revelation can be regarded as assured until after the death of the person who received it. In any case, when the revelations form a series, having a fixed object, such as the inauguration of a pilgrimage, we must allow events to unfold themselves and wait to pronounce an opinion until the vision has announced that the series has come to an end. If during this long period of waiting the revelation withstands all attacks, there is a great probability of its truth. 57.—9° If the object of the revelation was to institute a new devotion, have subsequent events clearly shown that God favoured this work in a special manner? For example, has it produced great fruits of grace on all sides? Have the Sovereign Pontiffs, the Bishops, favoured its progress? This character is found in a marked degree in the Scapular of Mount Carmel, the devotion to the Sacred Heart and the Miraculous Medal. § 4.—Conclusions to be Drawn from the Preceding Data 58.—In enumerating the points upon which it is necessary to inform ourselves, we have seen that a certain number of characters belong peculiarly to true revelations and visions, and others to those that are

false. When we have to prove that the action comes from the Devil, one of these signs alone is so clear at times that there is no room for doubt. But this is not so when it is a case of proving that the action is from God with no admixture of another action ; we have seen that no one character, taken alone, then leads to certainty. Is the problem insoluble, then, when there is no miracle to confirm the revelation? Must we always resign ourselves to possessing a slight probability only? In a word, will the conditions that are regarded as necessary never be sufficient? Here is the reply. 59.—Principle. Given that we desire to judge of the truth of one or more revelations, at least when taken as a whole, we may regard it as very probable, sometimes even as morally certain, that the conditions are sufficient, if those that are commonly regarded as necessary are all verified, and in an unmistakable way.—The assurance is so much the stronger as the characters are more striking. 60.—In order to prove this proposition, we can begin by bringing an argument based on authority. Gerson, who has made a special study of these questions, formulates the principle under an equivalent form. “We may,” he says, “be mistaken if we consult one sign only or a few; we must group a number of them together (*plura in unum conglobentur*)” (*De probatione spirituum*, *Consid.* 6). Schram adds: “The more numerous these favourable signs, the greater will our assurance be: From this assemblage (*ex horum signorum collatione*) we shall with prudence deduce, according to the particular case, a more or less strict certainty or a strong or medium or weak probability, or a favourable conjecture, or, on the

contrary, an uncertainty which will cause us to suspend our judgment" (Old edition, No. 572; 1848 edition, No. 582). Amort (Part I, ch. vi, Rule 22) adopts a like attitude. It may be said that, although the above principle has not been laid down by the majority of writers, the universal practice in all times and in all places has implicitly taken it for granted. We find that all authors, having to discuss the value of a revelation, content themselves with reviewing characters that, taken alone, are not a sufficient proof that the revelation is divine. If, however, the signs are favourable, they consider themselves justified in concluding it to be so, without any other explanation. They therefore admit by implication that these necessary characters are sufficient when they are found together. 61.—Arguments based on reason. 1° No other principle except this one has ever been formulated in order to establish the fact that a revelation is very probable or morally certain. If we refuse, then, to accept it, we have to say that the Church should have maintained a strictly reserved attitude regarding numberless revelations that have been made to the saints in the last 2000 years. It would have been a mistake to think it possible ever to depart from this expectant attitude. 2° It has always been admitted as a law of Divine Providence that God never permits evil to have all the characters of good. What will be the signs that can warn souls of goodwill? We cannot say beforehand, but they will be there. The wisdom and goodness of God require that this should be so. Therefore, if the examination of a revelation has been conscientious, if the man has done all that he could for his enlightenment, and if God has

allowed no signs of falsity to appear, we can conclude from this assemblage of circumstances that God wishes us to regard it as probable, and sometimes even as morally certain. 62.—Objection. In these researches must one always be afraid of having overlooked a circumstance that would have aroused serious doubts? 63.—Reply. No; not always, for these problems have been put so often that the conditions “commonly received” practically include all that can be said in the matter. The same objection could be made in all the problems of the moral order: for instance, You have come to regard such a man as honest, thanks to your long relations with him and the general opinion regarding him. Who knows whether you have observed him sufficiently? Or again: The critics admire the high literary excellence of such and such a work; all the rules seem to be in its favour. But perhaps there is one that has been forgotten, and which would be sufficient to change the verdict? And yet in these questions everyone allows that we can sometimes arrive at a certainty. 64.—The real drawback to the above method is that it requires much time and labour. But we must resign ourselves to this. It would certainly be much more convenient to have to verify two or three obvious characters only, furnishing evidence beyond dispute. In the same way, in deciding whether a book is a masterpiece, one would like to be able to settle the matter by putting a few short questions; and so also when forming an opinion concerning a man’s honesty. But this ideal cannot be realised in things that relate to the moral order. 65.—According to the above pronouncement, a revelation may possess

divine characters as a whole without this being so with regard to all the details. In fact, the reasons that prove the worth of the complete revelation are not always sufficient to justify all the elements of which it is composed. 66.—Short of positive proof to the contrary, however, the details have the benefit of the verdict pronounced upon the whole. The presumption is in their favour. 67.—In order to judge whether ecstasies are divine, we shall act upon the same principles as in the case of revelations, after having inquired into the person's character. The two chief points of evidence are as follows: 1° How has the soul been occupied while thus deprived of the use of the sensible faculties? Was she taken captive by intellectual knowledge of the higher order, carried away by an immense love? 2° What was her degree of virtue before attaining to this state, and what great progress has resulted from it afterwards? If the replies are favourable, the probabilities are on the side of the divine ecstasy. Neither the Devil nor disease can carry imitation to this point. As to the physiological effects, no conclusions can be drawn from them, as a rule. The alienation of the sensible faculties can quite well present the same appearances in a divine ecstasy and in its counterfeits. There may, however, be added certain phenomena that dispose of the hypothesis of disease and reveal a supernatural cause, whether divine or no: levitation, for example. 68.—With certain persons, in very close union with God, the slow study of the various signs has sometimes been aided, or even replaced, by a supernatural intuition. This is what is called the infused gift of the discernment of spirits; the other is termed acquired.

Scaramelli defines this infused gift as “an instinct or a light given by the Holy Spirit to discern correctly, in oneself or in others, the principle from which the soul’s interior movements proceed; whether it is good or bad” (Discern., No. 21). 69.—In some pious persons’ lives we find that they have not only asked God in a general way to confirm such and such a project or revelation by a sign; but they themselves fixed the sign, and especially its value as a mark of certainty saying: If such an event takes place, I shall regard it as indicating that God desires such and such a thing. Can we rely on this sign? We will leave out of the question the exceptional cases where the request is prompted by an inspiration of the Holy Spirit. By this fact in itself we possess the certainty that God will reply by means of the event. Let us suppose the contrary case. If a true and personal miracle has been asked for and it has taken place, God thus gives His approval. But more often He will not hear our request, it being an indiscretion to make it. This was why the Curé of Lourdes did not obtain the sign that he desired. He said to Bernadette: “Ask the Lady, in proof of the holiness of her apparitions, that the wild mountain-rose, now all shrivelled from the winter cold, shall blossom in this month of February.” The wild rose did not blossom, but God worked a much more useful miracle: a spring gushed forth. Blessed Angela of Foligno asked Our Lord, as a proof of the divine nature of His apparitions, to give her a precious stone or to light the taper that she had in her hand. Our Lord refused to give her this miraculous sign: “That which thou askest is a sign which would give unto thee joy only when thou shouldst touch it,

but it would not draw thee out of doubt, and in such a sign thou mightest be deceived. But I will give unto thee a sign, better than that thou askest; and this sign shall be continually with thee, inwardly in thy soul, and thou shalt always feel it. Moreover, this shall be the sign: thou shalt ever be fervent in love, and in the love of God, and enlightened by the knowledge of God within thee. And let this be a most certain sign unto thee, that it is I, because none can make this sign, save I alone. And this is the sign that I place inwardly in thy soul, and that is better than the other that thou didst ask. I place in thee a love of Me, by which thy soul will become inebriated, and fervent, and constantly glowing by reason of Me, so that thou wilt desire to suffer tribulations for the love of Me. And if anyone shall say or do unto thee evil, thou wilt take it for a favour, and wilt cry out that thou art unworthy of such a favour" (Visions and Instructions of Blessed Angela of Foligno, ch. xxix, pp. 104-5). 70.— We will now suppose that the event asked as a sign is not miraculous. If it takes place, the circumstances accompanying it can, with all probability, show the will of God, provided that all human means of information have previously been resorted to. This last precaution appears in the life of the Rev. Mother Marie de la Providence. Before taking an important decision she frequently fixed upon a sign and was heard on account of her immense confidence in the divine goodness. But she acted thus after much prayer and having realised the expediency of the decision. The fresh sign that she sought was only the final confirmation of several others, showing that it was time to act. Sometimes this sign was the sudden

arrival of the sum of money or other aid that was necessary for the enterprise, and then it was more than a sign—it was also the means of realising the project. If the event asked for does not take place, or if, on the contrary, it occurs without having been preceded by the precautions already indicated, we can draw no conclusions. God will often allow the operation of secondary causes, while He stands, as it were, apart. You have had the temerity to impose conditions upon Him without observing the requisite forms; you have limited Him to the summary alternative of a throw of the dice, which you consider as the equivalent of a revelation. He may refrain from intervening. St. Ignatius, at the beginning of his conversion, exposed himself in this way to making a deplorable choice in a serious matter. He was travelling with a Mussulman who blasphemed against the Blessed Virgin. The saint, who was still full of the maxims of Chivalry, asked himself if he ought not to avenge the honour of the Mother of God with the miscreant's blood. The Devil would naturally encourage St. Ignatius in an illusion which would have resulted in his conviction for homicide. Finally, he decided that, according as his horse should turn to the right or the left at the next crossways, he would attack his enemy or not. God was not obliged to fall in with this contrivance; but as He had designs with regard to St. Ignatius, He protected him. The horse turned to the left, although there were obstacles in the way. Later on, when he was better instructed in the spiritual life, he pointed out less expeditious but surer methods of discovering God's will. 70 bis.—The gift of tears. I have spoken elsewhere of tears shed during



ecstasy. Let us now treat a more general question. It is said that a person has the gift of tears when certain pious thoughts cause him to weep often and abundantly, and when this facility can only be attributed to the divine action. This has been the case with many saints. The restriction that concludes the definition is an important one. Tears may, in fact, come from other causes than the divine action. The Devil can produce them, either to enfeeble the health or to give rise to pride. Much more frequently they may be the result either of an over-sensitive nature, which often happens with women, or persons of a neurotic condition. In the present stage of knowledge it is difficult to define the exact part played by the temperament. 70 ter. — Line of conduct to be followed by the director. It would be too difficult for him to seek to distinguish clearly between God's action and that of the Devil. It is sufficient that he should inform himself on two practical points: 1° What is the immediate origin of these tears? Are they solely emotions produced by a religious thought: love, joy, sorrow for sins, gratitude, compassion for Our Lord's sufferings, etc.? It is this that gives the value to tears; without this circumstance they would be an unimportant physiological phenomenon. 2° Are the tears detrimental to the health? If the replies to these two questions are favourable, there is a greater or lesser probability that the action is divine; at any rate, there is nothing blameable. The soul, then, will be left in tranquillity, but she should be warned to be on her guard. In the contrary case, he will not go so far as to forbid the tears, for their suppression is not directly in the penitent's power. But he will employ indirect

means: (a) he will try to direct the thoughts to less moving subjects; (b) and develop the conviction that the phenomenon, being physical, has no value.

### **Chapter XXIII Revelations and Visions (continued) Rules of Conduct**

§ 1. Seven Rules for the Director 1.—First rule. To resign himself to a slow progress. We have seen that much time and labour are required before we can pronounce an opinion concerning the truth of revelations. Instead of pressing forward, the director must know how to rest content with provisional judgments. He will have to be on his guard against his own precipitation and that of his penitent. This latter will be questioning him incessantly, and saying: “Tell me whether these extraordinary things really come from God, or if you attribute a part, at any rate, to the imagination,” etc. In such cases we may reply: “These delays are inevitable. While the full light is not granted, to give a definite approval to your visions and projects would be an imprudence. It may be your own fault that the light continues insufficient. It is for you, by your prayers and sacrifices, to obtain that some more certain signs be given to us.” Often, too, the director will be urged on to a premature decision by people who are well-intentioned, but who have no idea of the precautions with which we have to surround ourselves. “What is the use,” they will say, “of suspending judgment in this fashion? Take the simplest, and usually the safest way, and declare that God is not the author of these extraordinary occurrences.” But we should thus be exposing

ourselves to illusions. For, as Scaramelli tells us, quite as many err in taking God's favours for diabolic works as by doing the reverse (Discern., No. 213). 2. — Second rule. Not to display admiration for these visions, even if they appear to him to be real. On the contrary, he will prove that they are less estimable than the mystic union, and particularly than the practice of the virtues. In this way he will be keeping to the truth, and, at the same time, will have the advantage of being protected from endless and insignificant details. 3. — Third rule. To be gentle in his treatment of the person. If the visions appear to him suspicious, not to show his distrust harshly. He will only intimidate penitents, which would lead to their hiding important details. While admitting his doubts, he can show a kindness that will set them at their ease. It may not be a person's own fault, if he is himself deceived. St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross both advise this gentleness. Let him strive with prudence, however, to enlighten them with regard to these illusions. This is the way to cure them. But they will be confirmed in them if the visions are rejected without any explanation. They will fancy themselves the victim of prejudice. Knowing that true revelations are accompanied by trials, they will falsely persuade themselves that the trials suffice to prove the truth of their revelations. To sum up, let the director's language be neither harsh nor ironical. 4. — Fourth rule. To bear in mind the end to which the visions, and especially the revelations, tend. He must exhibit a proportionately stronger mistrust if it is a question of a matter having consequences of greater magnitude. 5. — Three cases may present themselves: (a) This end

may be solely to augment the love of God, of Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and the saints in the seer of the vision. Such an end is good. Nothing then hinders our regarding these visions or even these revelations provisionally as divine, and accepting them after an earnest examination; but we must be on our guard, and satisfy ourselves from time to time that this continues to be the sole end. Thus we need not interfere with a person who, without being very far advanced in other ways, believes himself often to enjoy the intellectual presence of Our Lord; but without revelations. (b) The object may be to instruct the person who sees the vision. More precautions are needed here. Such an instruction should be watched (see 24). And it is the same if there are predictions. We must have very strong proof of their divine origin to allow of their being communicated to others than the director or Superiors. (c) Finally, the revelation may urge some enterprise. It is here especially that great caution is necessary. The mere affirmation, even of one who is closely united to God, is never sufficient. We have seen, on the contrary, how the matter must be examined by the sober light of reason and submitted to prudent and learned men. In this way, if the advice received by the revelation is followed, and if, later on, this revelation should be recognised as false, there will be no reason for regretting the work that has been undertaken. All that the revelation will have done will be to have suggested an idea; it will have been accepted, as would have been the case if it had come from a person endowed neither with authority nor any special guarantees. It is merely the occasion of any

decisions that are taken. 6.—As a matter of fact, the Church has not proceeded otherwise in instituting certain Feasts or devotions which have had their origin in a revelation. The revelation itself continues on the footing of a pious opinion, having nothing obligatory about it. But its results are of service to souls; this is what the Church looks to. 7.—This reserve on the Church's part appears in the institution of the Feast of Corpus Christi. Urban IV sets forth the reasons in a special Bull, and it is only at the end that he makes a vague and very brief allusion to the revelations that had asked for the institution of this Feast. They only occur as accessories. The public cultus rendered to the Sacred Heart was brought about by revelations to Blessed Margaret-Mary. But it contained in itself all that was necessary for approval; so that the revelations merely suggested the idea. They are not even mentioned in the Mass for the Feast. In 1832 the Miraculous Medal was circulated everywhere, following upon Sister Labouré's visions, but leaving the verdict regarding these visions on one side. It was merely stated that this devotion was good in itself. And it was the same in 1846 with the Scapular of the Passion, due to the revelations made to Sister Andriveau. Pius IX approved it at once, without insisting upon any official inquiry into its origin. When in June, 1899, Leo XIII publicly dedicated the whole world to the Sacred Heart, it was after requests had been addressed to him by Mother Mary of the Divine Heart, Superior of the Order of the Good Shepherd at Oporto. But he would not allow his decision to be based on Mother Mary's revelations. Cardinal Mazzella and the Sacred Congregation of

Rites relied solely upon the theological reasons. 8.— Sister Andriveau's life furnishes us with an interesting confirmation of the motives by which the Church acts. She had presented another proposition that had not been listened to, although she believed it to be founded upon a revelation like the other (Letter of April 25, 1849). But the idea did not appear to be a wise one. According to the Sister, Our Lord wished Pius IX to establish a Feast of the Passion during Easterweek. There were serious reasons for seeing an illusion here, for it is in the spirit of the Church to preserve the distinctive characters of penance or of joy to certain seasons of the year. At Easter time we rejoice in the Resurrection; it would have necessitated a sudden return to sentiments of penitence and compassion; and this when we have been devoting to them all Lent and Holy Week. This illusion, moreover, is explained by the special devotion to the Passion that dominated Sister Andriveau's life. 9.— This same way of acting on the Church's part shows itself also with regard to certain pilgrimages which have for their origin a fact that is regarded as historic; those, for instance, of Lourdes, la Salette, Pontmain, Loreto, or the apparition of St. Michael at Monte Gargano, etc. In these cases the Pope approves or encourages the pilgrimage, but without guaranteeing the historic fact by his infallibility. Also belief in it is not obligatory. The fact is regarded as resting upon a human testimony having as great a probability as a host of others. Criticism can be applied to it. What the Church gives as the object of the devotion of the pilgrimage is the saint himself, who is honoured there. This homage and these prayers are not exposed

to any illusion. 9 bis.—These invariable rules of the Church appear in the question of the pilgrimage to Notre-Dame de Pellevoisin, founded in 1876 after a revelation. By a decree of April 4, 1900, the Sacred Congregation of Rites had approved the pictures and statues, but with this noteworthy restriction, that they insisted on an alteration of certain details, which, however, were signified in the vision, and also of the title taken by Our Lady on the occasion. They had acted in the same way with regard to the Scapular and the corresponding Arch confraternity. Many persons concluded from these approbations that Rome recognised the truth of the apparitions whence these devotions proceeded. The diocese of Bourges became the theatre of violent discussions on this subject, and the Archbishop, who was considered overcautious, was attacked. Then, by a decree of September 8, 1904, the Holy Office informed this prelate that the above-named apparitions implied “no approbation, whether direct or indirect, of no matter what apparitions, revelations, graces of healing and other similar facts which might be related concerning the said Scapular or the said pious confraternity.”

10.—Many religious congregations have been founded after revelations. But these have been only an accessory, a spur to undertake a work that, considered on its own merits, was judged worthy of performance, and which responded to some fresh need.

11.—St. Teresa, under circumstances of grave importance, wished that her advisers should not be influenced in their decision by her revelations. It was a question of an important stroke of policy, of breaking with her old Convent at Avila and founding

a rival House in the same town, where the reform would be inaugurated. The saint wished to have the advice of a learned Dominican, Fr. Ybanez. He began by thinking this idea a piece of folly, but soon became its supporter. "She made known to him the motives that had decided her to engage in this enterprise; without speaking, however, of the order that she had received from Our Lord, or of her revelations or other supernatural favours" (*Histoire*, by a Carmelite of Caen, Vol. I, ch. xii). A modern hagiographer is astonished that in this conjuncture, and for a considerable time, Fr. Balthasar Alvarez, the saint's Confessor, should not have ventured to take any decision either on one side or the other. But besides the fact that his Superior prevented him at that time from compromising himself in a very critical enterprise, he had not made up his mind about all the graces of which his penitent spoke to him. Now that St. Teresa is canonised, it is easy to pronounce against those who thwarted her. But she was then only Sister Teresa. They felt misgivings concerning the extraordinary way in which she was led, and with the more reason that in Spain they were suffering, according to La Fuente's expression, "from an epidemic of pious fanatics, the victims of hallucinations" (facsimile of the manuscript of the *Life*, ch. xxiii). What should we do nowadays under similar circumstances? 12.—As a contrast with the prudence displayed by St. Teresa and her directors, let us recall the deplorable facility with which Mme Guyon believed in her own revelations and in her divine mission, as she claimed it to be; a facility imitated by Fr. La Combe and Fénelon, who became



her directors, or rather her associates and her disciples. The consequences that resulted were disastrous to them. Fr. La Combe, who had impregnated himself with Molinos' ideas in Rome, could not fail to be filled with Mme Guyon's quietist notions. They both believed themselves to be called to an extraordinary apostolate (1681). "I felt my soul sealed (she says) for a mission similar to that of the Apostles when they received the Holy Ghost" (Vie, by herself, Vol. II, p. 16). For seven years they set themselves to preach quietism on all sides, in Switzerland, at Turin, at Grenoble (where Mme Guyon tried in vain to win over the Carthusians, who, however, consented to hear her), at Verceil, Marseilles, and Paris. Their connection ceased in 1688 when, by the King's orders, Fr. La Combe was confined in the Bastille and underwent a series of trials that drove him out of his mind. About a year after this separation, Mme Guyon obtained a rapid ascendancy over 324 Fénelon's mind. She made his acquaintance at the house of Mme de Béthune, on the outskirts of Versailles. "I was suddenly, with extreme force and sweetness, interested [in] him. It seemed to me Our Lord united him to me very intimately, more so than anyone else. My consent was asked for. I gave it. Then it appeared to me that, as it were, a spiritual filiation took place between him and me" (Autobiography of Mme Guyon, Vol. II, Part III, p. 218, translated by T. T. Allen). 12 bis. — It is surprising to see such an intelligent man as Fénelon allow himself to be so quickly won over and directed by a woman of no culture. Thirty-seven years of age, and director of the fashionable world, he was in no wise

led by an earthly passion, for the lady had reached forty and was disfigured by the smallpox. But he felt a curiosity, a need to meet a saint who should reveal to him the secrets of Heaven, and he ignored the precautions that should be taken with prophetesses who wish to take possession of an influential person. "He saw her," said Saint-Simon; "their minds were pleasing one to the other and their sublimity mingled. I do not know whether they clearly understood one another, but they persuaded themselves that this was so." At the outset Fénelon's letters show that he is suspicious, and still regards himself as a spiritual master who is to command; but at the close he is a submissive disciple. He follows the counsels of the seer of visions, repeating after her: It is necessary to become a little child (that is to say, her obedient child), to be guided by the "not seeing" and the "not knowing." He accepts, for the future, the subordinate part that Mme Guyon had ordained for him after one of her revelations: "You shall be my tongue, you shall speak my very language, and together we shall accomplish all justice." The most absolute obedience is imposed upon him: "Your littleness must extend itself to the point of believing and practising what God causes to be said to you by me" (Letter 108). "Acquiesce by littleness in that which I say to you, even if you should not yet know that I speak the truth to you" (Letter 75). Fénelon submitted to this oracle who declares herself infallible: "I am persuaded that God admonishes me by you, and gives me by you my daily bread. It is a state of complete infancy" (Letter 93). He puts his resolutions into bad verse: "I have a taste for infancy: With my coral content, Weakness

and obedience Of me a little child have made. Oh! Doctors, let me live Far from you, from self afar; Leave me, for I will follow The blind law of infancy". The lady makes this clever man share her belief in her revelations the more easily because she brings the most seductive promises. She assures him that a great providential mission awaits him. Fénelon will be "the general" of a great army of mystics, soldiers of St. Michael, or "Michelins," who will renew the world and establish the reign of true prayer. God promised him, as He did Abraham, that he should be the father of a great people: "God's designs upon you are great; you are the bright and shining lamp that will give light to the Church." As for Mme Guyon, she is to content herself, as she says, with remaining in the shade, with being "the eternal victim, burning before God"! For some time success seemed to confirm these fine predictions. Mme de Maintenon and a number of great ladies, notably the three duchesses, Colbert's daughters, doted on the doctrine of the *Moyen Court*, and Fénelon, the fashionable director, was admitted to expound these subtle novelties to the ladies of Saint-Cyr. This élite founded "la Petite église." Twenty-two years later (1711) hope rose to the point of exaltation. The prophetess had already announced that a child would aid in the triumph, and then she further explained that the Duke of Burgundy was referred to; he would become the chief of the Michelins. And so, when the grand-dauphin died, believers were persuaded that the throne was assured to Fénelon's pupil and that he would become his Richelieu. But the prince died a year later, and fortune returned no more to the Archbishop of Cambrai.

Notwithstanding these successive deceptions, he never seems to have cured himself of his ingenuous hopes. This talented man, then, spent a great part of his activity in what was pure loss. From this saddening story of the power of a woman, "half saint, half lunatic," we may derive a lesson for those who think that they can yield themselves up blindly to a visionary, and allow themselves to be guided by his or her revelations. 13.—The pretensions of certain seers of visions. They often decline to admit the need of any proofs other than their own personal conviction or the tone of piety prevailing in their revelations. At times even, in despair of otherwise vanquishing our blindness, as they call it, they bring us some fresh revelation that threatens us with the divine anger. But this one is no more proven than those that went before. Finding myself exposed one day to this class of menace, I quietly replied: "Such words are a sign that your revelations are not from Heaven. The spirit who speaks to you does not know my interior dispositions. He is not aware that I sincerely wish to obey God, and that if I am exacting with regard to proofs it is from a sense of duty, in order to avoid illusions. God cannot threaten a man who acts from such motives; He ought to do so, on the contrary, if I committed the imprudence of believing you on your word alone. And, further, it is you that He should blame, for it I am without proofs, it is because you do not furnish me with that of sanctity." The spirit responsible for the revelation (if there was one) felt that he had been unskilful. For in the next communication he took my side, declared that I was more than right, and that I was indeed a

saint. He promised to supply, but at a later date, proofs that would be irresistible. I am still awaiting them; and yet the seer has left this world! When a seer wishes to be believed on his bare word, we can generally get rid of him by saying: "You assure me that God speaks by your mouth. I have no right to believe you unless you prove it. What sign do you bring?" In his ingenuousness he has not expected this question, and retires abashed. 14.—Another example. I have heard of three persons living in our own time who have seen visions and who, each in her own Convent, had succeeded in getting her so-called revelations accepted without attempting to bring any valid proofs. People were simple enough to consult them about everything; so that they had practically taken over the management of their respective Houses. And thence arose disorders and indiscretions. How ignorant one must be of true mysticism to be willing to consent to this form of government by oracles who tolerate no objections to their pronouncements! 15.—Fifth rule: to strive after supernatural aims. Let the director be occupied in working for his penitent's sanctification. Let him always come back to this question: What profit have you derived from the words that you think you have heard? Even when he has not made up his mind regarding the nature of the revelations, he will thus, at least, have attained a very practical and important end; and in this way he remains on solid ground. Seers of spurious visions are often not at all in sympathy with this kind of advice. They even end by going in search of another director, who shall be more credulous and less concerned about their sanctity. So

much the better! We shall be spared much waste of time. 16.—Sixth rule: to avoid certain dangers. The first is that of allowing oneself to be dominated by another person. Let the director be on his guard against certain prophetesses who, dreaming of some great enterprise and seeing their own powerlessness, form the idea of entering into partnership with their director. They tell him that Heaven has chosen him; which is very flattering. They skilfully reserve the divine communications to themselves, as more in keeping, so they say, with the obscurity in which a woman should remain enshrouded; the priest will have the publicity of the exterior work, all the heavier tasks. In reality, they leave the priest the inferior position; he has only to obey. The visionary herself prefers to command, while protesting how greatly it distresses her to do so, and explaining that it is not to her, but to God, that one is subject. And, further, she often ends by compromising the priest in this way. The suspicious thing here is not the fact that use is made of another person's prayers and actions; for many of the saints have felt the need of such a co-operation. It is the spirit of domination, the director being reduced to a state of servitude; his being asked to abdicate his reason in order to bow down before the authoritative revelations of another person, and this sometimes an ignorant one. 17.—Second danger. He must also beware lest the seer carry him away into sentimentality, into romance. There are persons who are tormented with the need of affection. Finding no outlet in the natural order, or not allowing themselves to seek for it there, they turn instinctively to the supernatural side. They dream of I know not what

“unions of souls,” declaring them to be inspired by God, while really they are merely ridiculous and lead to nothing. They claim to draw two souls mutually to the summits of divine love. But the end is often a human love; or, rather, from the beginning it was this earthly, violent, and blind tendency that sought so skilfully to satisfy itself. It concealed itself behind a mask; it was not recognisable. Let us mistrust all sentimentality, no matter what its pretext. St. Bonaventure describes in very forcible language the danger of familiarities that had their rise in “charity and devotion” (*De profectu religiosorum*, Book II, ch. v; quoted also by Scaramelli, *Discernment*, No. 248). 17 bis.—Seventh rule. To pray much and to make the person directed pray, in order to obtain the necessary illumination. God cannot fail to reveal the true way to those who ask it of Him humbly. If, on the contrary, we rely only on our natural prudence, we expose ourselves to being punished for our self-sufficiency. § 2. Seven Rules for those who Believe themselves to Receive Revelations and Visions 18.—In order to discern the source of these revelations, see the preceding chapter. Here are some other practical rules: 19.—First rule. Submit everything to a good director. St. Ignatius compares Satan to a seducer who wishes to keep his advances secret, and who loses courage if they are known (*Rules for the discernment of spirits*, 1, 13). (*Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book II, ch. xxii). St. Teresa, however, gives a direction allowing greater latitude in a case where it is a question of intellectual visions and not of revelations; and when, further, this way has been examined and approved, and nothing new occurs. “It would be as well at first

to tell your case, under the seal of confession, to an extremely learned priest ... or to some highly spiritual person.... When you have conferred with these persons, be at peace; trouble yourself no more about the matter, for sometimes ... the demon gives rise to such immoderate scruples, that the soul cannot be satisfied with consulting her confessor only once on the subject" (Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, ch. viii, 10, 11). Eleven years before, in the Book of her Life, the saint would seem to give a contrary direction. But the contradiction is merely an apparent one. For it was then a question of interior locutions, that is to say, of revelations; and it was the time when, far from approving her new way, the learned were nearly all in accord in condemning it. "One of my confessors," says St. Teresa, "to whom I went in the beginning, advised me once, now that my spiritual state was known to be the work of God, to keep silence, and not speak of these things to anyone, on the ground that it was safer to keep these graces secret." Our Lord told the saint that she "had been ill-advised by that confessor," and that by acting thus she "might at any time fall into delusions" (Life, ch. xxvi, 5). See ch. xxvi, on directors. 20.—Second rule. To mistrust revelations, in general, and to remember that this way is very subject to illusions of the imagination or of the Devil. Even if the vision appears to be divine, to mistrust the interpretation that is given; to fear lest personal ideas should have mingled with it (see St. John of the Cross, Ascent of Mount Carmel, Book II, the end of ch. xxix). 21.—An example of wise distrust. Blessed Margaret of Ravenna and her companion, Blessed Gentilis (sixteenth century), had numerous



revelations; but they protested that they attached no importance to them, and that credence must only be given to such things in them as were already known by means of the Church's teachings (for the first, see Bollandl., January 23, first Life, No. 9; for the second, January 28, 1st Life, No. 16). And yet the Holy Spirit's action showed itself in them by predictions that were fulfilled, and by miracles. 22.—Third rule. Not to ask or desire this kind of grace, and still for this reason, that it is very conducive to illusions. "No soul who does not deal with them [interior locutions] as with an enemy," says St. John of the Cross, "can possibly escape delusions in a greater or less degree in many of them" (Ascent of Mount Carmel, Book II, ch. xxx, p. 198). 23.—Some over-enthusiastic persons forget this rule when they are acquainted with an ecstatic or anyone who is by way of receiving extraordinary lights at times. They are not satisfied with asking the assistance of their prayers, or with appealing to their human wisdom and experience, so as to obtain their advice. What they ask for are real revelations: "When you are in an ecstasy, inquire as to what will occur in this circumstance, or what decision I ought to come to." These consultations are imprudent. They expose the asker to erroneous replies, due to the imagination of the ecstatic. Let us be content to express a desire to be enlightened from Heaven, and by the means that God selects. God alone can judge if a revelation is useful; if it is His good pleasure, He will make it. And, again, it must be accepted only at our own risk. The confidence placed in it may be greater if the seer has given many proofs that he is inspired by God. It was in this way that numerous persons were able to

make prudent inquiries of the Curé d'Ars. Long experience showed that his replies could be trusted. And then he was not asked bluntly for revelations, but for direction, which might be human to an extent that is hard to define. It was thus also that in the seventeenth century Blessed John Eudes, Fr. de Condren, M. Olier, and the founders of Saint-Sulpice, sought after interviews with Marie Rousseau, a very holy woman, the widow of a Paris wine-merchant. "Although this poor woman," says M. Olier, "is of lowly birth, she is nevertheless the light and the councillor of the most illustrious Parisians by birth, and the most exalted in graces and virtues" (*Vie de M. Olier*, by M. Faillon, Vol. I, 4th ed., Part I, Book VIII, No. 17, p. 340). "I shall not describe the effect of her words.... When she is consulted, she replies in the simplest manner without explaining things, or enlarging on the exterior reasons which might serve to persuade people. She says simply: God wills that one should act in such a way. She has, sometimes, given advice contrary to that of the most enlightened persons, without being able to furnish any other explanation of the reasons of her replies, and experience has always shown that, after considering the matter well at their leisure, these persons found themselves obliged to return to her way of thinking" (Book VIII, note 10, p. 369). This last sentence shows that they tested Marie Rousseau's sayings instead of believing in them blindly; and, consequently, that they placed confidence in her only by degrees. M. Olier's biographer proves this, moreover, by facts (Book X, No. 3, p. 438). Marie Rousseau herself was very reserved. Knowing prophetically that a group of

priests were destined to found the work of the Great Seminaries and to reform the parish of Saint-Sulpice, she refused to associate herself with this enterprise for the space of ten years, although God urged it on her. Her resistance persisted until her director, Fr. Armand, S.J., made her give her consent in writing (Book VII, No. 22, p. 302). 24.—Fourth rule. In the beginning, at any rate, gently to do our utmost to repel the revelations and to turn the thoughts away from them. I say “gently”; for we must not go the lengths of causing a loss of the soul’s peace and disturbing our prayer. If we cannot do more, we should keep this rule by inclining always in this direction. I also say: “in the beginning, at any rate” (St. Teresa, 36, 1°); that is to say, as long as a prudent and learned director has not decided that a certain reliance may be placed in them. And it has been explained above that he can show this confidence provisionally, without much delay, if these extraordinary facts aim solely at inciting the soul to the love of God, to mortification, and the other virtues. He will proceed more slowly if there are any instructions, predictions, and especially works that are difficult of achievement. If prophetic visions occur from time to time, he may cease to repel them when it has been proved that they come exactly true and are free from other disadvantages. He must continue to be on his guard, however. Illusions are easy. Even with these restrictions, the preceding rule may seem severe. It is, however, strongly enjoined by several saints, such as St. Ignatius (Bolland., July 31, Prelimin., No. 614), St. Philip Neri (Bolland., May 26, 2nd Life, No. 375), St. John of the Cross (Ascent of

Mount Carmel, Book II, chs. xi, xvi, xvii, xxiv), St. Teresa, and St. Alphonsus Liguori (*Homo. apost.*, Appendix I, No. 23). The principal reason is that which is predominant in the whole matter: the danger of illusion. "The devil," says St. John of the Cross, "greatly rejoices when a soul seeks after revelations and is ready to accept them; for such conduct furnishes him with many opportunities of insinuating delusions and derogating from faith as much as he possibly can; for such a soul becomes rough and rude, and falls frequently into many temptations and unseemly habits" (*Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book II, ch. xi, p. 95). The saint adds two other reasons: the first, which, in reality, derives its value from the one that went before, is that "we are thereby delivered from the risk and labour of discerning between good and bad visions," which "is rather waste of time, an occasion of many imperfections and delay on the spiritual road". The contrary method "is not the way to direct a soul in matters which are of real importance, nor to relieve it of the vexation of trifles which are involved in particular apprehensions and perceptions. . . ". The other reason applies to communications that are not purely intellectual, because "they are hindrances in the way of the spirit if they are not rejected; for the soul rests upon them, and does not regard the invisible". St. John of the Cross is doubly severe when it is a question of visions or locutions affecting the bodily senses. "We must fly from them," he says, "without examining whether they be good or evil". When we strive in this way to repel a revelation, all that is implied is that we are not certain of its truth; we do not declare it to be false, or

even partly so, and consequently there is no need to distress ourselves and to think that we have merited an illusion as a chastisement from Heaven. We must not take such a gloomy view of the situation. It merely resolves itself into a prudent precaution, without prejudging the rights and wrongs of the question. 25.—First objection. If the revelation comes from God, He will be angry if we repulse it. It is a want of respect. 26.—Reply. St. Philip Neri and St. John of the Cross affirm the contrary. This conduct is inspired, not by contempt, but by prudence (*ibid.*, ch. xi, regarding exterior visions). And, more than that, this refusal is a source of graces: “When the soul is resigned and not attached to such visions, the devil retires, seeing that he cannot injure us then; and, on the other hand, God multiplies His graces in the humble and detached soul, placing it over many things.... The soul that is faithful amid these visitations God will not leave, till He shall raise it up, step by step, to the Divine union and transformation” 27.—Second objection. If we reject a vision, we deprive ourselves of the interior fruit that it should have brought us; and, further, when it orders us to perform an exterior work, the good that ought to result does not take place. 28.—Reply. As to the interior fruit, St. John of the Cross assures us that it will never be lost, for “all corporeal visions, emotions of the senses—the same is true of all other interior communications—if from God, effect their chief object at the moment of their presence, before the soul has time to deliberate whether it shall entertain or reject them.” It is the same even with exterior visions, if they are from God. “Even if the soul wills it not, they

produce their effects, chiefly and specially in the soul rather than in the body". If the object of the revelation is to instruct us, God has many other means by which to make His thoughts known to us. 29.—With regard to external actions that we are advised to perform by a revelation, when we say that the revelation itself is to be rejected, it is not suggested that these projects must be given up. It is enough that there should be other good reasons for undertaking them. 30.—There are merely two precautions to be taken: (a) to let ourselves be decided, at any rate chiefly, by the value of these reasons, and entirely so, if the revelation does not seem very certain; (b) to imitate St. Teresa, in not bringing forward the revelation as a reason to other people. In this way we shall avoid the temptation to take a tone of command, as though we were speaking in God's name. And, further, we thus augment our chances of success. For our hearers would be afraid lest we should first ask for their belief in the vision; they would very wisely require us to begin by justifying this claim, which is almost always impossible. Finally, the person who has had the vision will avoid a great source of trouble, namely, bitter or violent discussions, with those who dispute his inspiration; and objectors will always be numerous. 31.—Let us also note that the rejection of visions should not apply to those that are deific (indéiques), those of the Divinity. For these are merely a kind of mystic union. It is a question of ex-deific visions, those of created things. St. John of the Cross, although so rigid with regard to visions, notes this exception expressly: "This knowledge relates directly unto God, in the deepest sense of some of His

Attributes ... this becomes pure contemplation.... It is only a soul in union with God that is capable of this profound, loving knowledge, for it is itself that union ... it is God Himself Who is then felt and tasted.... I do not say that the soul is to conduct itself negatively here, as in the case of the other apprehensions; because the Divine touches are a part of the Union to which I would direct the soul, and for attaining unto which I teach it to withdraw and detach itself from all besides" (*Ascent of Mount Carmel*, ch. xxvi, pp. 176-8). 32. —Fifth rule. If we believe a corporeal apparition of Our Lord or of the saints to be due to the Devil, not to go to the length of insulting it or treating it with contempt, any more than we should do towards a sacred picture that had been painted by a scoundrel (see Scaramelli, Tr. 4, Nos. 56, 68; and St. Teresa, *Book of Foundations*, ch. viii; *Interior Castle*, Sixth Mansion, ch. ix). St. Philip Neri, however, held and followed the contrary doctrine (*Bolland.*, May 26, 2nd Life, No. 374 and fol.). But on one of the two occasions when he ordered the person who saw the vision to spit in the apparition's face, he seems to have known by a revelation that it was a diabolic apparition. So the case is no longer the same as where there is a doubt. 33. —What is to be done if the director orders these contemptuous gestures? Here there are two opinions. According to the first, you must obey. For we should always do so where there is no sin; which is the case here, since in the intention of the seer of the vision the mark of contempt is not addressed to the saint or his likeness, but to the Devil, who is suspected of being present. St. Teresa submitted to her director in this way, and Our Lord said to her that

she "did well to obey" (Life, ch. xxix, 7). The Blessed Virgin used the same language to Blessed Francis Ferrari, a disciple of St. Philip Neri. In spite of the encouragement that she had received from Heaven, St. Teresa, at the end of her life, adopted the contrary opinion, namely, that it is permissible, and more seemly not to obey. "My advice is, if you are given such an order, that, humbly alleging the reasons I have set before you, you should not carry it out" (Interior Castle, Sixth Mansion, ch. ix, 11). 34.—Sixth rule. If, in spite of yourself, you have visions, to be chiefly concerned in making them serve your progress in virtue. For if they come from God you will thus have attained the sole end that He desired. In the contrary case they cannot harm you. St. Teresa says: "The good or the evil is not in the vision, but in him to whom it is given, and who does not profit by it in humility; for if he is humble, the vision, even if it came from Satan, can do him no harm, and if he is not humble it will do him no good, even if it comes from God" (Book of Foundations, ch. viii, p. 56). The Ven. Louis du Pont relates that when Fr. Jean del Campo was in the noviciate, he received visions. One day, in anguish, he asked himself if he was not the sport of his own imagination. He then heard Our Saviour address these words to him: "When thou art hungry, if thou art given a branch of a tree loaded with fruit, what dost thou do?" "I eat the fruit and cast the branch away," he replied. "Even so," Our Saviour continued, "act in the same way with regard to the visions. Eat the fruits thereof, humility, patience, and the other virtues; and whatever the vision may be, be not troubled any more" (Menology of Aug. 11). 35.—



Seventh rule. Display much calmness and patience if Superiors will not permit the execution of enterprises that you think have been inspired by Heaven or revealed. He who, in the face of opposition, is angry or discouraged, shows that he has small confidence in God's power and little conformity to His will; he will do well to attribute his want of success to these bad dispositions. If God wills the project to succeed, He will be able to make the obstacles vanish suddenly at the time that He has appointed. This time is perhaps far distant; your scheme may even be realised only by your successors. What matter, provided that the good is achieved? You will, at least, have contributed to it by your efforts and your prayers, and your intentions will receive an eternal reward."

*The Graces of Interior Prayer, Fr. Augustin Poulain, S.J., (1836 - 1919), Translated by Lenore L. Yorke Smith, (? - 1921), Abridged (with Additions of Scriptures and Prayers) by Marilyn Hughes, 2015, for 'The Shining Ocean'*

## Prayer

*From St. Thomas Aquinas*

"O ineffable Creator, Who, out of the treasure of Thy wisdom, hast ordained three hierarchies of Angels, and placed them in wonderful order above the

heavens, and hast most wisely distributed the parts of the world; Thou, Who are called the true fountain of light and wisdom, and the highest beginning, vouchsafe to pour upon the darkness of my understanding, in which I was born, the double beam of Thy brightness, removing from me all darkness of sin and ignorance. Thou, Who makest eloquent the tongue of the dumb, instruct my tongue, and pour on my lips the grace of Thy blessing. Give me quickness of understanding, capacity of retaining, subtlety of interpreting, facility in learning, and copious grace of speaking. *Guide my going in, direct my going forward, accomplish my going forth; through Christ our Lord. Amen.*"

*St. Thomas Aquinas*

*From the Book of Wisdom*

"The souls of the just are in the hand of God,  
 And no torment shall touch them.  
 He seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead;  
 And their passing away was thought an affliction  
 And their going forth from us, utter destruction.  
 But they are in peace.  
 For if before men, indeed, they be punished,  
 Yet is their hope full of immortality;  
 Chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed,  
 Because God tried them  
 And found them worthy of himself.  
 As gold in the furnace, he proved them,  
 And as sacrificial offerings he took them to himself."

*Old Testament, Book of Wisdom 3:1-10*

*From the Liturgy of the Octave of All Souls Day*

“O God, the life of the living, the hope of the dying, the salvation of all that trust in thee, mercifully grant that the souls of thy servants and handmaids, delivered from the darkness of our mortality, may rejoice with thy saints in perpetual light. Through the same Christ Our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God forever and ever. Amen.”

*The Liturgy of the Octave of All Souls Day*

*From William Blake*

“I rest not upon my great task  
 To open the Eternal Worlds,  
 To open the immortal Eyes of Man inwards  
 Into the Worlds of Thought:  
 Into Eternity  
 Ever expanding in the Bosom of God.”

*William Blake*

## SOURCES

### *The Holy Bible*

*Angels (and Demons): What do we Really Know About them, Peter Kreeft, Ignatius Press, 1995*

*The Liturgical Year, Fr. Dom Prosper Gueranger, O.S.B., Volume, XI, Twenty Second Sunday after Pentecost, Loreto Publications, 2013*

*The Secret Teachings of All Ages, Manly P. Hall, Readers Version, Philosophical Research Society, 2003*

*The Carmelite Directory of the Spiritual Life, Translated from the Latin, 1950*

*The Litany of St. Michael the Archangel*

*Roman Raccolta, July 23, 1898, supplement approved July 31, 1902, London: Burnes, Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1935, 12th edition.*

*St. Maximus the Confessor, Letter to Thalassius*

*The Eight Limbs*

*Sadhana, The Realization of Life, the Realization of the Infinite, Rabindranath Tagore, 1916*

*The Crest Jewel of Wisdom, Vivekachudamani, Sankaracharya, Translated by Charles Johnston, 1946*

*How to be a Yogi, Swami Abhedananda, 1902*

*The Journal of George Fox, Friends United Press, 1963*

*The Secret Doctrine, Helena Blavatsky*

*Egyptian Mythology and Egyptian Christianity,  
Samuel Sharpe & London J.R. Smith, 1863*

*Anaximander of Miletus*

*Clothed with the Sun, Anna Kingsford, London, 1889*

*The Candle of Vision, George William Russell, The  
Language of the Gods, 1918*

*Writings of the Early Church Fathers, Philip Schaff*

*History of the Christian Church, Volume IV:  
Mediaeval Christianity. A.D. 590-1073*

*Systematic Theology, Charles Hodge  
Doctrinal Theology, Heinrich Schmid*

*Inner Way, John Tauler*

*Latin Christianity, Its Founder, Tertullian, Philip  
Schaff*

*Hymns of the Eastern Church, John Mason Neale,  
1865*

*Theism: The Witness of Reason and Nature to an All  
Wise and Beneficent Creator, Doctrine of Final  
Causes, John Tulloch*

*Christian View of God and the World, James Orr*

*Hymnal (of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the  
USA), Arthur Messiter, 1883*

*William Blake*

*The School of Calvary, The Supper of the Lord, John  
Henry Jowett*

*From Spiritual Guide which Disentangles the Soul,  
Of Internal and Mystical Silence, Miguel de Molinos*

*St. Hilarion*

*Mother Teresa*

*St. Padre Pio*

*The Raccolta, or Collection of Indulgenced Prayers,  
Translated by Fr. Ambrose St. John, 1866*

*In Conversation with God, Seven Volumes, Scepter  
1989, Francis Fernandez*

*St. Margaret of Cortona*

*Thomas Merton*

*St. Clement*

*The Liturgy of the Hours*

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church*

*St. Thomas Aquinas*

*The Three Ages of the Interior Life, Part I, The Sources  
of the Interior Life and its End, Fr. Reginald  
Garrigou-Lagrange*

*St. Francis of Assisi*

*The Liturgy of the Octave of All Souls Day*

*Explanation of the Prayers and Ceremonies of Holy  
Mass, Taken from Notes Made at the Conferences of  
Dom Prosper Gueranger, Abbot of Solesmes.  
(1805 - 1875), Translated from the French by Rev.  
Dom Laurence Shephers, (1825 - 1885) Monk of the  
English Benedictine Congregation, Abridged (with  
Additions of Scriptures and Prayers) by Marilyn  
Hughes, 2015, for 'The Shining Ocean'*

*The Graces of Interior Prayer, Fr. Augustin Poulain,  
S.J., (1836 - 1919), Translated by Lenore L. Yorke  
Smith, (? - 1921), Abridged (with Additions of  
Scriptures and Prayers) by Marilyn Hughes, 2015,  
for 'The Shining Ocean'*

# THE SHINING OCEAN

A Treatise on the Primordial Substance of  
Out-of-Body Travel

By Marilyn Hughes

An Out-of-Body Travel Book

*The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation!*

<http://outofbodytravel.org>

THE SHINING OCEAN (An Out-of-Body Travel Book) A Treatise on the Primordial Substance of Out-of-Body Travel: (Sequel to 'Out-of-Body Travel and Mysticism,' 'The Hammer of Mysticism,' and 'The Fragrance of the Mystical Rose') Where have you been? To where do you go? Come with me, allow me to take you on an out-of-body travel journey into the deepest recesses of human consciousness and religious thought. This out-of-body travel journey is not meant to be simple, nor is it meant to be quick . . . it is meant to be savoured. It is a distant and remote journey to the deepest recesses of the heart of God which can only be known through the mightiest of mystical experience.

It is okay if you feel moved to flip through the pages and try to get a feel for the out-of-body adventure to come ahead of time, but I ask that after you have done this, that you make a resolved effort to bring your spirit forward and gather it unto itself. For this out-of-body travel journey requires much of you, and it will not relent its seeking. Come . . .

(For more info - <http://outofbodytravel.org>)