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ST. BONAVENTURE:

OPUSCULA

SECOND SERIES

THE WORKS OF BONAVENTURE

Bonaventura, Saint

CARDINAL
SERAPHIC DOCTOR
AND SAINT

Translated from the Latin by José de Vinck
Docteur en Droit of Louvain University

III

OPUSCULA
SECOND SERIES

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FOREWORD

This third volume of THE WORKS OF BONAVENTURE presents in English translation a collection of essays covering a wide range of both matter and audience. In all—from the dense and scholarly treatise "On Retracing the Arts to Theology" to the many counsels addressed to individuals; from the didactic, almost catechetical teachings of the "Soliloquy," intended for general instruction, to the sophisticated and spiritually profound advice formulated in "The Six Wings of the Seraph" as a guide for religious superiors—Bonaventure displays his concern for the human condition. The purpose of the present volume is precisely to show the wonderful breadth of his creative mind.

The first work is a poem in thirty-nine stanzas, "Praise of the Holy Cross." With sustained inspiration and in gripping rhythm, the Latin text intones a litany of love for the Crucified Christ, avoiding both sentimental excess and cold rationalization. It is found in the "Rhythmica," or "Opusculum VII," at the end of the Quaracchi Edition of the Opera Omnia. *A footnote indicates that because of the number of manuscripts still to be studied, and of the widespread confusion prevailing as to the authorship of medieval religious poetry, it is difficult to reach absolute certainty in the attribution of any one poem to an individual writer. Of all the poetical works ascribed to Bonaventure, however, the* Laudismus de sancta cruce *has the greatest chance of being authentic, and this for two cogent reasons: it is found in the most reliable manuscripts, and is worthy of the Master of Mystical Love.*

The treatise "On Retracing the Arts to Theology" is a concise summary of Bonaventure's whole philosophical and theological system. It is a vivid expression of his notion of "analogy," very different from that of Thomas Aquinas. For Bonaventure, analogy indicates precisely the reductio, *the retracing or leading back of all creatures to their Source. This analogy is seen to apply in three ways to the whole range of human activities, or "arts," as they point to Christ's eternal generation and his incarnation, to the norm of life, and to the union of the soul with God.*

The exact date of composition of this work is not known, but it seems to be the fruit of Bonaventure's later years when his doctrine was fully matured and systematized: it may be seen as a summary of his teachings.

In complete contrast with such condensed scholarship, there follows the "Soliloquy on the Four Spiritual Exercises," a work of moral and spiritual instruction written in much simpler language and addressed mostly to beginners on the way to perfection. The title "Soliloquy" may be misleading since the work is actually in the form of a dialogue, but this dialogue occurs within the one same subject, consisting in counsels addressed by the "inner man" or inspired conscience to the "soul" or rational person searching for moral truth. The major interest here is the profusion of quotations from the Scriptures, the Fathers and such predecessors of Bonaventure as St. Bernard and the theologians of the School of St. Victor, resulting in an anthology of medieval spiritual reading. Among these sources, Augustine is generally given the largest share. Bonaventure rises to marvelous heights of eloquence when he comes to describe the joys of heaven: his work ends on a note of triumph and happiness.

"The Six Wings of the Seraph" once again bring about an interesting contrast. The audience here is restricted to religious superiors, fully trained men responsible for the spiritual welfare of their subjects. The appreciation of this little treatise is not limited to the Franciscan Order: it has been a favorite in many religious institutions, particularly in the Society of Jesus. It shows deep psychological insight in its analysis of the conditions and pitfalls of superiorship, and proposes a wise and human attitude in the solution of difficulties inherent to the governing of souls. Both laxism and rigorism are condemned in favor of a realistic and tender concern for living men in spite of their frailties and failures. In an age when feminity was generally scorned, Bonaventure proposes to religious superiors an ideal that would make them both father and mother to their flock.

"The Five Feasts of the Child Jesus" is an essay in symbolical interpretation. The different phases of the life of Christ are applied to the growing soul that spiritually conceives the Son of God, gives Him spiritual birth in itself, names Him, adores Him together with the Magi, and presents Him in the temple. Each feast is analyzed and the soul is exhorted to reach the corresponding development.

The treatise "On How to Prepare for the Celebration of Mass" insists on the proper dispositions of faith, intention, love, and personal concern in approaching the altar.

The little treatise "On the Government of the Soul" is a summary of Bonaventure's doctrine of spiritual perfection, addressed to Blanche, daughter of St. Louis, King of France. The Christian soul must believe in God with certain faith, consider Him with an attentive mind, and perceive Him with the penetrating glance of reason.

The "Letter Containing Twenty-five Points to Remember" consists in spiritual counsels addressed to a friar. The opening paragraphs show the author's true humility: he would rather receive counsel than give it, yet he surrenders to a sincere plea. There is then a brief listing of things to remember, in general, followed by a detailed enumeration of the twenty-five points. If these counsels seem harsh at times, we should remember that they are addressed to a friar attempting to fulfill the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in a world that was very far from respecting any such perfection. In the final paragraph, Bonaventure apologizes again, explaining that he himself is as much in need of such counsels as his reader.

Thus does Bonaventure appear as his manifold self: Doctor, Theologian and Philosopher, gentle Counselor of souls, experienced Superior willing to share his wisdom with others, personal Friend of gifted souls. In each of these roles, he writes with the ease and natural qualities of a man in full possession of his talents, unafraid of speaking out and chastizing, but always ready to condone, sympathize, and raise the weak to the level of the ideal he proposes through the example of his personal sanctity.

J. de V.

SCRIPTURAL QUOTATIONS

In quoting the Scriptures, the general procedure has been to cite the sacred texts in the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine version, for all books which have reached translation at the time of publication of this volume. They are: the New Testament, the Pentateuch, the books of Josue, Judges and Ruth, the Sapiential books (Job to Sirach-Ecclesiasticus), and the Prophetic books (Isaia to Malachia). All other books are cited in the Challoner-Douay translation.

Note also that the Challoner text is used, instead of the Confraternity text, in special cases where it serves Bonaventure's meaning more completely. These special instances show an asterisk after the Scriptural references.

Wherever Bonaventure is quoting the Septuagint Version, the scriptural references indicate it with the abbreviation (Sept.).

NON-SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

The non-Scriptural references, indicated by small roman numerals, are given at the end of the book, pp. 265ff.

BASIC TEXT

The present translation is based on the Quaracchi Edition of the "Opera Omnia" of St. Bonaventure, by authorization of the Most Reverend Augustine Sépinski, Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor.

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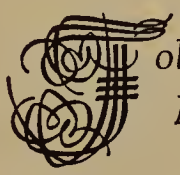
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PRAISE OF THE HOLY CROSS

Laudismus de sancta cruce



PRAISE OF THE HOLY CROSS

1)  *ollower of life's perfection,*
May your heart be ever joyful
As you see the Cross divine;
Let the Holy Cross be present
In your soul and meditation:
To its rule your life resign.

2) *Keep it close, with Christ for Leader,*
Till you live in light so brilliant
That all doubt is cast away;
Weary not and slacken never,
That your heart be set afire
With a flame as bright as day.

3) *Love the Cross, creation's beacon:*
Then will Christ become your Leader,
Reign as your eternal King;
Wrap the Cross around your body;
With it, bind all; with it, sign all:
Place its mark on everything.

4) *Heart and Cross in one another!*
This will keep the heart unblemished
By pervading it with peace.
Let your speech be Cross-inspired,
Praise the Cross and tell its glory,
And your song shall never cease.

5) *Let the Cross's inner flavor*
Through the heart and through the senses
Spread its sweetness utterly;
Let the Cross direct your body,
Know its presence all-enclosing
In your human entity.

6) *Let your heart be Cross-absorbèd,*
Let it meet the Cross in rapture
Through the flame of burning love;
Let your flesh be free of tempest,
Let your mind be Cross-conforming,
And your joy be from above.

7) *Love with warm and close affection,*
Sing with special praise and honor,
This salvation-bringing Tree;
With the fervor of your being,
With the sum of all your powers,
Cherish it most joyfully.

8) *Live within the Cross so noble*
And with utter exultation
Lock yourself in its embrace.
On the Cross with Christ be fastened;
Share it with Him, that in heaven
You may see Him face to face.

9) *Seek the Cross and seek the nailing,*
Seek in hands and feet the furrow,
Seek the hollow in the side;
There, be happy; there, be joyful,
Truly loving, greatly praising
This, the Cross whereon He died!

10) *May this pact be never broken:*
That the Cross shall go before you
So that blessed deeds be done.
In the Cross is potent healing,
In the Cross is safe protection
From the darts of Zabulon.

11) *On the Cross of Christ suspended,*
Prompted by a heart on fire,
Break forth into joyful song;
For the Cross defends God's servants,
Holding in itself and showing
Perfect life that knows no wrong.

12) *Be you tempted or afflicted,*
Be you faint and almost vanquished,
Be you overwhelmed in loss,
Linger not in sloth or slowness,
But with instant resolution
Mark your forehead with the Cross.

13) *In your laughter and your weeping,*
In your song and in your sadness,
When you work and when you rest,
Be you coming, be you going,
Be you healed or yet in sorrow,
Press the Cross upon your breast.

14) *In the midst of burdens crushing,*
Trials heavy, hardships bruising,
Hold the Cross that all consoles;
In the midst of pain and anguish,
Sweetest refuge is accorded
Unto Cross-abiding souls.

15) *Cross of Christ, O gate of heaven,*
Trust of all the saints and blessed
Who have won the victory;
Cross of Christ, the world's restoring,
By whose virtue God, All-goodness,
Made such wondrous things to be!

16) *Cross of Christ, the soul's salvation,*
True and excellent effulgence
Filling hearts with sweetness pure;
Living fountain of the blessed,
Perfect treasure of the perfect,
Joy and splendor ever sure!

17) *Cross, the mirror of all virtues,*
Glorious guide to life eternal,
Hope of those whose faith is clear;
Shining standard of the chosen,
Expectation, consolation,
Prize of those who persevere!

18) *Holy Cross, both ship and harbor,*
Garden of true delectation
Where the fairest blooms are found;
Powerful and mighty armor,
Safest shelter, sure protection
From the demon's every wound!

19) *Holy Cross, O tree bejeweled*
By the blood of the Redeemer,
Rich with fruits of savor rare:
Food that nourishes the spirit
With the sweetest Gift of heaven,
Sustenance without compare!

20) *Numberless the fruits you gather*
If you spend your earthly seasons
Searching for the Holy Cross;
Without end your delectation
If you strive for it unwearied,
Counting all earth's gain as loss.

21) *Seek the Cross and bear it always,*
Look to Christ extended on it,
Be consumed with love and woe;
See the Cross with faith unfathomed,
Trust the Cross with hope eternal,
All your time on earth below.

22) *Let the Cross be all your striving,*
Let your spirit yield before it,
Make it of yourself a part.
This is labor of salvation:
To recall the crucifixion
In your words, and deeds, and heart.

23) *Bear in mind, O loving brother,*
Seven times a day to ponder
On the Lord's most cruel plight;
For it brought us liberation,
And the gift of joy eternal,
Gift of all-transcending light.

24) *If this Cross you love and honor,*
Praise it at the times appointed,
Sing with careful piety
Matin, Prime, Terce, Sext, and Vesper,
Sing the hours of None and Complin,
Sing to the Divinity.

25) *Be you standing, sitting, lying,*
Be you silent, be you speaking,
Be you weary, be you well,
Look for Christ your Expectation,
Bear the Crucified within you
In whatever place you dwell.

26) *Strive to be attentive always*
To the fullness of His sorrow,
Try to share His bitter pain;
Christian soul, be sad and grieving,
Late and early mourn His dying,
Yet, in grief, let joy remain.

27) *Oh, what insult and contumely*
Has the King of Heaven suffered
To restore the world to grace!
How He thirsted, how He hungered,
How He walked in destitution
To the shameful gibbet's place!

28) *Bear in mind His utter poorness,*
See the depth of His debasement,
And the pain of it recall;
While you have the gift of thinking,
Think of His atrocious passion,
Bear in mind the myrrh and gall.

29) *See: They lead away the Boundless*
On a Cross to be suspended;
His disciples quake and flee.
Now His hands and feet are riven,
Now some bitter wine is given
To the King in mockery!

30) *Now, His blessed eyes are dimming,*
Now, His sacred face is paling,
As upon the Cross He bleeds;
In His body, stripped of honor,
There remains no trace of beauty:
All His comeliness recedes.

31) *Man has sinned, and for that reason*
Is the flesh of Christ now pinioned,
Torn by cruel stripes and blows;
Every limb is stretched in torture
By the racking He must suffer
And the wounds His body shows.

32) *At the summit of His torment,*
Now He loudly cries to heaven,
Breathes His last and bows His head. ✠
Let us groan with deepest sorrow,
Let us grieve in heart and spirit:
Now the Only Son is dead!

33) *Come you now, O you that listen,*
Come and mourn the Sole-begotten,
Let your heart lament and cry.
Strain your being, wrench your senses,
Force your mind, and place your fingers
On the wounds that made Him die.

34) *Man of Sorrows, least of mankind —*
Look upon His strength unflinching
In these pains beyond compare;
Know it good, and deem it fitting,
That you share His cruel dying
And the taunts He had to bear.

35) *When you find yourself afflicted,*
Overcome with desolation,
And your soul grows faint and weak,
Think of His surpassing anguish,
Of the pain and of the jeering,
Of the spittle on His cheek!

36) *Brother, constantly remember*
How the Crucified was wounded:
Let His pain become your pain;
Take it as a food from heaven,
Always present at your table;
Savor this life-giving bane.

37) *Jesus crucified, support me,*
That so long as life is in me
I with joy may mourn Your death;
That with You I may be wounded,
And may hunger to embrace You
On the Cross till end of breath!

38) *Give to me the dew of sorrow,*
Let me grieve for You, O Saviour,
Christ, Refresher of my soul!
Spurn me not, but ever open
Deep in me Your wounds so fruitful:
Open them, and make me whole!

39) *May these words which I have spoken*
Be for honor, praise, and glory
Unto Christ the Crucified!
May the glorious King of Heaven
Grant me generous forgiveness
Of the sins for which He died.
Amen.

On Retracing the Arts to Theology

De reductione artium ad theologiam

A Treatise on the Threefold Significance of Human Thought and Action

ON RETRACING THE ARTS TO THEOLOGY



VERY good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights, as James writes in the first chapter of his Epistle. This passage both indicates the origin of every illumination, and suggests that there are many lights generously flowing from this fontal brilliance. Although every illumination of knowledge is within, we may rationally distinguish, in a manner of speaking, an EXTERIOR LIGHT, that of the mechanical arts; an INFERIOR LIGHT, that of sense knowledge; an INTERIOR LIGHT, that of philosophical knowledge; and a SUPERIOR LIGHT, that of grace and of Sacred Scriptures. The first sheds its radiance upon shapes in artifacts, the second upon natural forms, the third upon intellectual truths, and the fourth upon salutary truths. *Jas. 1:17*

2. And so, the first light, which sheds its brilliance upon SHAPES IN ARTIFACTS — things, that is, EXTERIOR to the human body and intended to supplement its deficiencies — is called the light of mechanical art, and because this [art]† is, in a sense, servile and lower than philosophical

† The Latin has the feminine relative pronoun *quae*, referring to *ars mechanica*, not, as the reader might expect, the neuter *quod*, which would refer to *lumen*. In fact, of course, there is no such thing as a "servile" light. As so often happens with the writings of Bonaventure, whose thought runs faster than his pen, the sentence is elliptic, and needs to be expanded in order to reveal its logical structure.

The word "art" is used throughout in a very broad sense: it applies to any form of human activity from the making of things to philosophical speculation.

knowledge, [such light] may properly be called exterior. And this light is sevenfold, in parallel with the seven mechanical arts which Hugues lists in the "Didascalica":[1] that is, weaving, fabrication,† farming, hunting, navigation, medicine and the dramatic art.

That these are exhaustive may be explained as follows: every mechanical art is either a solace or a convenience; or it is directed either against a sorrow or a need; or again, it is either useful or entertaining, as Horace says:[2]

"Poets aim either to serve or to please"; and also:

"He draws all applause who joins the useful and the sweet."

If the purpose of an art is to afford SOLACE by entertainment, this will be the dramatic art, or plays, embracing every kind of performance, singing,‡ instrumental music, histrionics and choreography.

If a mechanical art aims at some CONVENIENCE or advantage for the outer man, it may be a matter of shelter, of food, or of assistance in acquiring either.

If a matter of SHELTER, it would concern either soft and smooth materials, and such is weaving; or hard and strong materials, and such are fabrication or the building arts, which embrace the manufacturing of every kind of sheltering device made of iron or any other material, for instance stone or wood.[3]

If a matter of FOOD, it may be of two kinds, for we obtain our sustenance from both vegetables and animals. If

†The Latin has *armatura* which means literally armor or equipment. In this category Bonaventure includes the making of any protective device, against the elements as well as against man, except those made of "soft" materials, which are the product of weaving. See below.

‡Poetry is "sung."

concerned with VEGETABLES, it is farming; if with ANIMALS, it is hunting. Or, in a different sense,† if it concerns food, it may do so in two different ways: either it contributes to its reproduction and multiplication, and such is farming, or to its method of preparation, and such is venation, which includes every recipe for food, drink and condiment, and is the art of bakers, cooks, and innkeepers. It is named, however, from one of its activities only, that which is, in a sense, the nobler and courtlier.[4]

If a mechanical art helps in the acquiring of EITHER SHELTER OR FOOD, it may be twofold: it either satisfies a need, and such is navigation, under which comes every form of commerce in goods intended for either shelter or food; or it removes obstacles and ills, and such is medicine, whether consisting in the preparation of electuaries, potions, and ointments, or in the healing of wounds, or the amputation of limbs in surgery.

Dramatic art, however, is in its own category.

Hence, the listing of the mechanical arts is clearly seen to be exhaustive.‡

3. The second light, which provides illumination for the perception of NATURAL†† FORMS is the light of sense knowledge, properly called INFERIOR because sense knowledge

† The omission of fowl- and cattle-raising in the first category was too much even for Bonaventure, whose sense of logic is not always at its best in his systematic divisions. He corrects himself here by offering an alternative.

In this same corrected division, he introduces cooking as part of hunting (venation). The logical link consists in the fact that the preparation of venison was, in early medieval times, by far the most common form of the culinary art.

‡ It is no longer so: Bonaventure could not have foreseen our time.

†† Cf. footnote p. 17.

begins from below and comes about by means of physical light. It is fivefold, in parallel with the five senses.

Augustine, in the third book of his work "On Genesis,"[5] draws the proof of the senses' adequacy thus, from the nature of light as found in the elements:

Luminosity, or light, acting as the principle of distinction of bodily objects, either exists in its own perfection and purity, and is then perceived by sight; or is mixed with air, and is then perceived by hearing; or with vapor, and is then perceived as odor; or with fluid, and then gives rise to taste; or with the solidity of earth, and then provides touch. But the sensitive soul possesses the nature of light, which thus remains alert in the nerves whose character it is to be clear and penetrable;† and this light is received with more or less intensity in the five senses proportionately as it is more or less pure. Therefore, since there are in the world five simple bodies, that is, the four elements and the quintessence,[6] man, in order that he may perceive all the forms of bodies, is endowed with five senses which correspond to these same forms. For there is no apprehending without a certain conformity[7] and congruity between the organ and its object, since each sense is of a determined kind.

There is yet another way to establish the adequacy of the senses, but the foregoing is the one Augustine favors and it seems reasonable, as proving sufficiency by the simultaneous correspondence of medium, organ, and object.

4. The third light, which provides illumination for the search of INTELLECTUAL TRUTHS, is that of philosophical knowledge. It is called INTERIOR because it searches inner

† Concerning Bonaventure's physics, see "The Breviloquium," vol. II of present series, p. 69.

and hidden causes, and this through the principles of discipline and of natural† truth implanted in the nature of man.[8] Intellectual truths are of three kinds: the discursive, the natural, and the moral.

The sufficiency of this division may be established as follows: there is truth of expression, truth of being, and truth of behavior. Discursive truth concerns expression, natural truth concerns being, and moral truth concerns behavior.

Again, in different words: as it is possible to consider the efficient, the formal (or exemplary), and the final causes in the supreme Godhead—since He is "the cause of being, the reason of intelligibility, and the norm of life"[9]—so also it is possible to consider them in philosophical illumination which sheds light on the causes of being and is then natural philosophy, on the reasons of intelligibility and is then discursive philosophy, and on the norms of life and is then moral or practical philosophy.

Once more, in a third way, the light of philosophical knowledge illumines intellective understanding, and this in three possible manners: as directing the motive, in which sense it is moral; as directing itself, in which sense it is natural; and as directing the interpretative faculty, in which

† Bonaventure has "natural" where we would have "essential." In Bonaventure's vocabulary, the word "natural" is used in two widely different meanings: in a general sense, it means "pertaining to things as they exist around us in nature"; but here, in a philosophical sense, it means "pertaining to things considered in their abstract nature, or essence." Wherefore the expression *philosophia naturalis* means, not the philosophy of nature, but the philosophy of essences considered in the abstract, things being seen only in their intrinsic principles. It is in this sense that *philosophia naturalis* is subdivided later into physics (philosophy of nature), mathematics (philosophy of quantity), and metaphysics (philosophy of being), in the order of increasing abstraction.

sense it is discursive. Man, then, is enlightened as to the truth of life, that of knowledge, and that of doctrine.[10]

And because there are three ways for man to express what is in him — by making known one of his mental concepts, by moving someone toward greater faith, or by impelling him toward love or hatred — therefore DISCURSIVE or RATIONAL PHILOSOPHY is subdivided into three parts — grammar, logic, and rhetoric: the first used to express, the second to teach, and the third to convince. The first concerns reason as apprehending, the second as judging, and the third as impelling. And because reason apprehends through fitting words, judges through truthful words, and impels through eloquent words, these three sciences study respectively these same three qualities in words.

Again: In matters of judgment, our intellect is naturally guided by formal reasons, and such reasons may be considered under three aspects: in relation to matter in which case they are called [properly] formal, in relation to the mind in which case they are called intellectual, and in relation to divine wisdom in which case they are called ideal. Therefore NATURAL PHILOSOPHY is subdivided into physics, mathematics, and metaphysics.[11] Thus, physics is the study of the generation and corruption of things in terms of natural properties and seminal principles; mathematics is the study of abstract forms in terms of intelligible principles; and metaphysics is the study of all beings in terms of ideal principles, retracing all things to one first cause from which they proceed, that is, to God as origin, end, and exemplar. Concerning these ideal principles, however, there has been much controversy among metaphysicians.[12]

Finally, there are three ways of considering how motivation applies: that is, to the individual, to the family, and

to the state. Therefore MORAL PHILOSOPHY is subdivided into three parts whose names correspond to this distinction: personal,† domestic, and political ethics.[13]

5. To conclude: The fourth light, which provides illumination for the search of SALUTARY TRUTHS, is the light of Sacred Scripture, which is called SUPERIOR because it leads to higher things by manifesting what is above the mind; and also because it derives, not from man's own findings, but from the Father of Lights, by inspiration. Although in a literal sense it is one, yet, considered symbolically and spiritually, it is triune; for in all the books of Sacred Scripture, beyond the literal meaning expressed externally by the words, there is a threefold spiritual sense: THE ALLEGORICAL, BY WHICH WE ARE TAUGHT WHAT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING THE DIVINITY AND HUMANITY OF CHRIST; THE TROPOLOGICAL, BY WHICH WE ARE TAUGHT HOW TO LIVE, AND THE ANAGOGICAL, BY WHICH WE ARE TAUGHT HOW TO CLEAVE TO GOD.‡[14]

Hence, the whole of Sacred Scripture teaches these three things: THE ETERNAL GENERATION AND THE INCARNATION

† The Latin has *monastica*, but the word is used here, not in reference to monks, but in the sense of the root of man considered as a single individual.

‡ The trilogy — allegorical, moral (or tropological), and anagogical — is found in most of Bonaventure's theological works. The terms designate, respectively, those senses of a word or passage directed at procuring the truth of faith (allegorical), the norm of action for temporal life (moral), or the union with God in eternal life (anagogical, from a Greek verb meaning "to go up").

Bonaventure often uses the term "mystical" interchangeably with allegorical (i. e., as figurative of some truth of faith rather than descriptive of supernatural union with God).

He uses the term "contemplation," to designate not the state of those we call "the mystics," but the highest *natural* state of union attainable. See, for instance "The Triple Way" in vol. I of present series, pp. 59-94, passim.

OF CHRIST, THE NORM OF LIFE, AND THE UNION OF THE SOUL WITH GOD.† The first concerns faith, the second morals, and the third the final outcome of both. The efforts of teachers should be aimed at the first, the effort of preachers at the second, and the efforts of contemplatives at the third. The first is expounded chiefly by Augustine, the second by Gregory, and the third by Dionysius. Anselm follows Augustine, Bernard follows Gregory, and Richard follows Dionysius; for Anselm excels in reasoning, Bernard in preaching, and Richard in contemplation. But Hugues excels in all three.

6. Although the light which comes down from above is primarily divided into four, we may gather from the preceding analysis that there are six different kinds: the light of Sacred Scripture, the light of sense-perception, the light of the mechanical arts, the light of discursive philosophy, the light of natural philosophy, and the light of moral philosophy. Hence, there are six lights in the present life, but they have their sunset, for *knowledge will be destroyed.* Therefore they are followed by a seventh illumination, a day of rest which has no setting, that is, the light of glory.

1 Cor. 13:8

7. Most fittingly, then, these six lights may be retraced to the six days of formation or illumination in which the world was made:[15] so that the light of Sacred Scriptures corresponds to the first act of creation, that is, to the making of light itself, and so forth in successive order. And as all these lights have their origin in a single one, so all forms of knowledge are ordained to the knowledge of Sacred Scripture, contained within it, perfected in it, and

† This is the key to the whole development that follows. See footnote page 21.

directed through it to perfect illumination. The whole body of our knowledge, therefore, must rest in the knowledge of Sacred Scripture, most of all in its anagogical sense by which any light is retraced to God from whom it had come forth. And so the circle is closed at this point, the six-fold series completed, and there is rest.

8. Let us see how the other lights of knowledge are, by their very nature, retraceable† to the light of Sacred Scripture. Let us consider this first in the LIGHT OF SENSE-PERCEPTION, which is directed exclusively toward

† This is the beginning of the actual *reductio*, or retracing, of the arts to theology, that is, the referring of every human activity to the three meanings of Scriptures, the allegorical, the tropological and the anagogical: to the Word begotten and incarnate, to the norm of life, and to the union with God. The lesser five lights are "retraced" in turn to the higher light of theology in the following manner:

I. The Light of Sense-perception:
The *medium* points to the Word begotten and incarnate.
The *exercise* points to the norm of life.
The *pleasure* points to the union with God.

II. The Light of Mechanical Arts:
The *method* points to the Word begotten and incarnate.
The *product* points to the norm of life.
The *fruit* points to the union with God.

III. The Light of Discursive Philosophy:
The *speaker* points to the Word begotten and incarnate.
The *spoken word* points to the norm of life.
The *purpose of speech* points to the union with God.

IV. The Light of Natural Philosophy:
The *proportion* points to the Word begotten and incarnate.
The *cause* points to the norm of life.
The *medium* points to the union with God.

V. The Light of Moral Philosophy:
Righteousness points to the Word begotten and incarnate.
Rectitude points to the norm of life.
Uprightness points to the union with God.

the knowledge of perceptible objects. There are three points to be covered here: the medium, the exercise, and the pleasure of perception.[16]

If we consider the MEDIUM of perception, we will see there THE WORD BEGOTTEN ETERNALLY AND INCARNATE IN TIME. For no perceptible object affects the cognitive power except by means of a similitude that proceeds from the object, as the offspring from the parent; and this procession by way of generation, either in fact or by exemplarity, is required by every sense. But the similitude brings about no full act of perception unless it is connected with the organ and the power. When connection occurs, there comes about a new perception, and by this perception a return is made to the object through the same similitude. And although the object itself is not always perceived, yet because of its essential constitution it always gives birth to a similitude, since such similitude is part of its fullness.

Understand also that out of the supreme Mind, known through the inner senses of our own mind, there comes forth eternally a Similitude, an Image, and an Offspring,
Gal. 4:4 who later—*when the fullness of time came*—was united as never before to a spirit and to flesh and endowed with human form. Through Him all our spirits are retraced to God when, through faith, they receive in their heart this Similitude of the Father.

9. If now we consider the EXERCISE of sense-perception, we will see there the NORM OF LIFE. For every sense acts in relation to its proper object, avoids what is harmful, and claims nothing that belongs to another.

In the same way, the life of an inner sense is well ordered when it does that for which it was intended and is not neglectful; when it avoids what is harmful and is not

lustful; when it abstains from claiming for itself what is due to another and is not prideful: for every disorder comes from negligence, concupiscence, or presumption.[17] For a man lives a well-ordered life by being prudent, temperant, and obedient, avoiding neglect in matters of obligation, concupiscence in matters of affection, and pride in matters of personal eminence. *cf. 1 Jn. 2:16*

10. If, finally, we consider the PLEASURE of perception, we see the UNION OF THE SOUL WITH GOD. Every sense, indeed, longs for the perception of its proper object, finds it with joy, and seeks it untiringly again and again, for *the eye is not satisfied with seeing nor is the ear filled with hearing.* *Eccli. 1:8*

Likewise, our inner senses must seek with longing, find with joy, and pursue again and again the beautiful, the harmonious, the fragrant, the sweet, or the smooth.

Behold, then, how divine knowledge is contained and concealed in sense-perception, and how wonderful is the perception of the five spiritual senses[18] in their conformity with the bodily senses.

11. Likewise, we may find it† in the LIGHT OF THE MECHANICAL ARTS whose sole purpose is the production of artifacts. In this illumination, we may see the same three things: the eternal generation and the incarnation of the Word, the norm of life, and the union of the soul with God. And this we may do in considering the method, object, and result of the mechanical arts, or the skill of the operator, the quality of the manufactured object, and the usefulness of the resulting fruit.

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† See footnote page 21. The full meaning is: Likewise we may find how the light of mechanical arts may be retraced to theology, i. e., to the three senses of Scriptures, the allegorical, the tropological and the anagogical.

12. If we consider the METHOD, we will see that the produced artifact comes forth from the maker by means of a similitude that exists in the mind. The maker plans before making an object, and then he makes the object as planned.[19] The maker produces an external work as close to the internal similitude as he possibly can; and were he able to produce an object that would both love and know him, he would do so by all means; and if this produced object were to know its maker, it would do so in terms of the similitude from which the artist had worked; and if the eyes of knowledge of the produced object were so clouded that it could not look up above itself in order to know its maker, the similitude from which it had been produced would have to come down to the level of a nature which the object could apprehend and know.

Understand, accordingly, that no creature proceeds from the supreme Maker except through the eternal Word "in whom He disposed all things,"[20] and through whom He produced not only the creatures endowed with the relationship of traces, but also those with the relationship of images, so that through knowledge and love they may become like Him. And because the contemplative eye[21] of the rational creature was clouded by sin, it was most fitting that the Eternal and Invisible become visible and assume flesh, in order to lead us back to the Father. And this is what is said in the fourteenth chapter of John: *No one comes to the Father but through Me;* and in the eleventh of Matthew: *No one knows . . . the Father except the Son, and him to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.* And hence it is said: *The Word was made flesh.*

Jn. 14:6

Mt. 11:27

Jn. 1:14

And so, considering the illumination of mechanical arts in terms of the method of production of the object, we see

there the WORD BEGOTTEN AND INCARNATE, that is, the Godhead and humanity, and the complete range of faith.[22]

13. If now we consider the PRODUCT, we will see the NORM OF LIFE. Every maker intends to produce a beautiful, useful, and enduring object; and only when it fulfills these three conditions can it be called good and acceptable.

There is a necessary parallel to these three conditions in the norm of life, that is, "to know, to will, and to act with constancy and perseverance."[23] Knowledge makes a work beautiful, the will makes it useful, and perseverance makes it enduring. The first is a matter of reason, the second of desire, and the third of secure possession.

14. If, finally, we consider the FRUIT, we will find the UNION OF THE SOUL WITH GOD. For every maker who produces a work does so either to be praised for it, or to obtain from it some performance or profit, or to delight in it, that is, for one of "the three forms of desirable good: the praiseworthy, the practical, and the delectable."[24]

It is for the sake of all three goods that God made the soul rational, so that it could praise Him, serve Him, and find in Him its delight and repose. And this comes about through love, *and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him,* so that there is here a kind of marvelous union, and, flowing from it, a wonderful delight. For as it is said in Proverbs: *I found delight in the sons of men.* *1 Jn. 4:16* *Prv. 8:31*

Behold, then, how the illumination of the mechanical arts returns to the light of Holy Scriptures, which often and rightly use images taken from them.

15. Likewise, we may find it† in the LIGHT OF DISCURSIVE PHILOSOPHY whose principal object is verbal

† Cf. footnotes pp. 21 and 23.

expression. Three things are to be considered here in accordance with the three aspects of speech as it is related to the speaker, to the spoken word, and to the hearer or end.

16. Considering speech as it is related to the SPEAKER, we will see that it is always the expression of a mental concept,[25] and that this concept is the word of the mind and its offspring—of which the conceiving subject is well aware. But for this concept to be made known to the listener, it puts on a form; and the intelligible word, made perceptible through this clothing, is heard externally and received in the listener's inner sense of hearing, and yet it does not leave the mind of the speaker.

Likewise, we see the ETERNAL WORD, WHOM THE FATHER HIMSELF BEGETS ETERNALLY BY MEANS OF GENERATION, as indicated in a passage from the eighth chapter of Proverbs: *The depths were not as yet, and I was already conceived.* But in order to become perceptible to the human senses, He put on the form of flesh, *and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,* and yet He remained *in the bosom of the Father.*

*Prv. 8:24**

Jn. 1:14

ibid. 18

17. Again, if we consider speech as it is related to the SPOKEN WORD, we will see in it the NORM OF LIFE. Three elements must concur in well-rounded speech: fittingness, truth, and style. In parallel with these three qualities, all our actions must have mode, species, and order, receiving their mode through temperance in external works, their species through purity of affection, and their order from rectitude of intention,† for then only does a man live

† As indicated in vol. I, page 14 and vol. II, page 71, mode of being refers in a general sense to the creature's dependence upon the Efficient Cause (*a Deo,* by the power of God); species refers to the creature's conformity with the Exemplary Cause (*secundum Deum,* according to God); and order, to the creature's ordination

rightly and ordinately when his intention is straight, his affection clean, and his action temperate.

18. Once more, if we consider speech as it is related to its END, we see that its purpose is to express, teach, and persuade. But no one expresses anything except through the medium of a species, no one teaches except through the medium of a convincing light, and no one persuades except through the medium of a compelling power. Now, it is a fact that all this cannot come about without some intrinsic species, light, and power internally united with the soul. That is why Augustine draws the conclusion that a man is a true teacher only if he can impress the species, infuse the light, and implant the power within the heart of the listener. Hence, "a man who teaches within the heart has his Chair in heaven."[26]

And so, as nothing is known perfectly except through species, light, and power united to the soul, so also THE SOUL, to be formed to the knowledge of God through His

to the Final Cause (*propter Deum*, for God considered as an end). The same threefold relationship may be applied to the creature's actions, and in particular to speech: its fittingness indicates relation to the origin; its truth, conformity to the exemplar; its perfection, adaptation to the end. All such triads are closely related to the Trinity and to the three rational faculties, so that we may establish the following table:

Divine Person	Father	Son	Holy Spirit
Divine Function	Creator	Word	Love
Divine Causality	Efficient	Exemplary	Final
Metaphysical Attribute	Oneness	Truth	Goodness
Relationship of Creature	A Deo	Secundum Deum	Propter Deum
Corresponding Faculty	Intellect	Will	Memory

inner conversation, MUST NECESSARILY BE UNITED TO HIM
Heb. 1:3 who is *the brightness of His glory and the image of His substance, . . . upholding all things by the word of His power.*

From all this we may see how wonderful is this contemplation through which Augustine, in many of his books, leads us by the hand to divine wisdom.[27]

19. We may also find it† in the same way in the LIGHT OF NATURAL PHILOSOPHY‡ whose main object consists in the formal principles as they exist in matter, in the soul, and in divine wisdom. These must be considered in three ways: in terms of their tendency to proportion, of their efficient causes, and of their uniting medium; and it is in these three that the three aforementioned consequences may be found.

20. If we consider formal principles in terms of their TENDENCY TO PROPORTION, we will see in them both THE ETERNAL WORD AND THE INCARNATE WORD. Intellectual and abstract principles are, in a sense, intermediate between the seminal and the ideal;[28] but the seminal principles cannot exist in matter without giving rise in it to the generation and production of form;[29] and likewise intellectual principles cannot exist in the soul without engendering the word in the mind. So also neither can ideal principles exist in God without the production of a Word proceeding from the Father according to due proportion. This is axiomatic, and if true of the creature, may be applied with all the more certainty to the Creator Himself. That is the reason why Augustine declares that the Son of God is "the Art of the Father."[30]

Again, the tendency that exists in matter is ordained toward rational principles, and there would be no perfect

† Cf. footnotes pp. 21 and 23.
‡ Cf. footnote p. 17.

generation without the union of the rational soul with the material body.[31] By the same token, we may reason that the supreme and most noble perfection in the universe cannot exist unless that nature in which seminal principles are found, and that also in which rational principles are found, and that finally in which ideal principles are found, concur in the oneness of a Person: as happened in the incarnation of the Son of God.

For in terms of its tendency to proportion, the whole philosophy of nature presupposes a Word of God, begotten and incarnate, the Alpha and the Omega,[32] begotten, that is, in the beginning before time, and incarnate at the end of the ages.

21. If, now, we consider formal principles in terms of their EFFICIENT CAUSES, we will discover the NORM OF LIFE. For generation cannot come about in generative and corruptible matter through the seminal principles except by the beneficial action of the light of the heavenly bodies most remote from generation and corruption, that is, the sun, the moon, and the stars.[33]

In the same manner, our soul is unable to perform works of life unless it receives from the sun, that is, from Christ, the benefit of the light of grace; unless it obtains from the moon, that is, the blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ, the necessary patronage; and unless it follows the example of the other saints. With the concurrence of these three influences, a work of life and perfection is assembled in the soul.

22. If, finally, we consider formal principles in terms of their UNITING MEDIUM, we will understand how the UNION OF THE SOUL WITH GOD is brought about. For the bodily nature cannot be united with the soul except by means of

moisture, breath, and warmth, which three things make the flesh capable of receiving life from the soul.[34]

Likewise, understand that God does not impart life to the soul nor is He united to it unless this soil be moist with the tears of sorrow and piety, spiritual through contempt of everything earthly, and warm through desire for the heavenly home and the Beloved Himself.

Behold, then, how the wisdom of God is hidden in the philosophy of nature.

23. In the manner indicated above, THE LIGHT OF SACRED SCRIPTURES† MAY BE FOUND in the LIGHT OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY. For moral philosophy is concerned mostly with matters of rectitude. It is concerned, indeed, with common justice which, as Anselm says, is "rectitude of the will."[35] Right has three meanings, hence the three meanings of rectitude. In the First, "right (straight) is that whose middle is not out of alignment with the ends."[36] And so, if God is supreme RIGHTEOUSNESS in Himself as the Beginning and as the End, it is necessary to posit within Him an intermediate Person of His own nature, so that one be only producing, another only produced, and THE INTERMEDIARY BOTH PRODUCING AND PRODUCED. It is necessary also to posit a medium between the origin and the return of things [to their origin];[37] but a medium to the origin must be close to the originating principle, while a medium to the return must be close to the returning object. And so, as things originated from God through His Word, so also complete returning requires that the *Mediator between God and men* be not only God but also man, so that He may return men to God.

1 Tm. 2:5

† Cf. footnotes pp. 21 and 23.

24. In a different sense, right is said of what CONFORMS TO ITS RULER.[38] When we consider rectitude in this way, we may see the NORM OF LIFE: for a man lives rightly when he is guided by the rules of divine law, which occurs when his will assents to the compelling commandments, to the salutary warnings, and to the counsels of perfection, so that he may then *discern what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.* And a life is well ordered when no deviation may be found in it. *Rom. 12:2*

25. In the third sense, right (upright) is applied to that which stands up, such as man in his erect posture. When we consider rectitude in this sense, we may see the UNION OF THE SOUL WITH GOD. Since God is above, it is necessary that the sharpest point of man's mind be lifted up.[39] And this comes about when the rational faculty assents to the first truth in itself and above all else, when the need for security rests upon the most lavish generosity, and desire relies upon the greatest bounty. *He who cleaves to the Lord* in this way *is one spirit with Him.*[40] *1 Cor. 6:17*

26. Thus it is clear how the manifold wisdom of God, which is luminously handed down in Sacred Scripture, is hidden in every act of knowledge and in every nature. It is also clear how all forms of knowledge are the servants of theology: wherefore this science assumes examples and makes use of expressions that belong to all kinds of knowledge. It is clear, finally, how broad the contemplative way can be, and how God Himself lies hidden within everything either perceived or known.

And such is the fruit of all science: in all, faith is built up, God glorified, life organized, and consolations are provided; and all this is achieved through the union of the Spouse with the bride, accomplished by love: a love in

which the whole intention of Sacred Scripture comes to rest, as also, therefore, every illumination from above without which all knowledge would be vain; for no one ever reaches the Son except through the Holy Spirit who teaches us *all the truth — who is blessed forever, amen.*[41]

Jn. 16:13
Rom. 1:25

HERE ENDS THE TREATISE
ON RETRACING THE ARTS TO THEOLOGY

Soliloquy
on the Four Spiritual Exercises

Soliloquium
de quatuor mentalibus exercitiis

A Conversation Between the Soul and the Inner Man
Based on the Teachings of the Fathers



SOLILOQUY ON THE FOUR SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

Prologue



OR this reason, I bend my knees to the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth receives its name, that He may grant you from His glorious riches to be strengthened with power through His Spirit unto the progress of the inner man;† and to have Christ dwelling through faith in your hearts: so that, being rooted and grounded in love, you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know Christ's love which surpasses knowledge, in order that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God. *Eph. 3:14-19*

† The theme of the Soliloquy is a conversation within the human person between the soul, considered as the independent and free-willed personality, and the inner man, considered as the voice of God or the voice of conscience. If St. Bonaventure's vocabulary were to be maintained in the present quotation, we would have "unto the progress of the soul," instead of "unto the progress of the inner man," since the term "inner man" refers throughout the *Soliloquy* to an interior sense of moral perfection that speaks in the words of God and of the Fathers, and therefore cannot progress. Cf. ¶ 4.

This same theme of an inner conversation had been developed earlier by Hugh of St. Victor in his *Soliloquy "De arrha animae"* and by Isidore in his *"Libri synonymorum."* It is often found in manuals of moral instruction.

cf. Acts 9:15 Paul the Apostle, vessel chosen from eternity, divinely sanctified temple, mirror and example of heavenly contemplation, reveals to us in these words the origin, purpose, and fruits of spiritual exercise.

In order to be good and salutary, a spiritual exercise must be endowed with supernaturally strengthening power, guiding wisdom, and comforting mercy. Let the soul, then, inflamed with desire to contemplate God, bow in spirit before the throne of the Trinity most blessed and beyond understanding; let it knock humbly; let it request wisely the strengthening power of God the Father to keep it from being crushed by labor, the guiding wisdom of God the Son to keep it from the guiles of error that would sway it from truth, and the comforting love and mercy of God the Holy Spirit to keep it from the danger of being overcome by weariness.

Jas. 1:17 *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights.* And, as Augustine writes, "every good we have is either God Himself or a gift from Him."[1] So it is fitting at the outset of any good work to call upon Him from whom all goods proceed as from their source, by whom they are produced as by their exemplar, and to whom they return as to their end. This is the ineffable Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to whom the Apostle refers in the text: *For this reason . . . ,* until the words: *so that. . . .*

Eph. 3:14-17

2. Secondly, Paul shows us the object of this salutary spiritual activity, in which the devout soul must consider things within and without, below and above itself.

First of all, the devout soul must direct the beam of contemplation upon what is WITHIN itself, and behold how it was formed in the state of nature, deformed in the state

of sin, and reformed in the state of grace. Next, the soul must turn the beam of contemplation upon what is WITHOUT itself, and recognize the transiency of worldly riches, the inconstancy of worldly honors, and the poverty of worldly glory. Then, the soul must turn the beam of contemplation upon what is BELOW itself and understand the inevitability of death for man, the awful severity of the final judgment, and the intolerable cruelty of the pains of hell. Finally, the soul must turn the beam of contemplation upon what is ABOVE itself, and know and taste the priceless worth of heavenly joys, their inexpressible delightfulness, and their everlasting duration.

This, indeed, is the blessed cross with its branches pointing in four directions. Upon this cross, through ceaseless meditation, you must hang, O devout soul, in the company of your most sweet Spouse Jesus Christ. This is the *fiery chariot* with its four wheels, in which, through constant contemplation, you must rise to the heavenly palace, following your most faithful Friend. This is the fourfold land, of East and West, of North and South where you should enter by daily pursuing your pilgrim's way, and in which, through reflection, you should seek your most delightful Lover and search after Him, so that you may say with the bride: *On my bed at night I sought Him whom my heart loves.* The Apostle speaks of these four directions when he continues: *So that . . . you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth.*

*4 Kgs. 2:11**

Ct. 3:1

Eph. 3:17f.

3. Thirdly, he shows us the fruit of such good work. If properly and worthily pursued, this work brings forth a fruit: eternal happiness, the best and most beautiful fruit which is utterly satisfying in itself and needs no condiment.

In this state, "we will see and love, we will rest, and sing praise"[2] for ever and ever to the One who is eternally blessed. This is the fruit the Apostle promises when he concludes with these words: *In order that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.* We shall discover this plenitude when "God shall be immense peace to the will, fullness of light to the intellect, and everlasting duration to the memory.[3] Then, indeed, will God be *all in all,* since "all error will pass away from our intellect, all sorrow from our will, and all fear from our memory.† Then will come the wonderful serenity, the divine joy, the eternal security for which we long."[4]

Eph. 3:19

1 Cor. 15:28

4. It seemed good to me, for the sake of the less-informed, to compile this work from the simpler sayings of the saints, making it into a dialogue wherein the devout soul mentally inquires, as a student of eternal truth, while the inner man mentally responds. In order that, through this spiritual exercise, we may be led to priceless contemplation, let us begin with the first step and humbly invoke the Father of Lights; let us kneel down in heart before the throne of the eternal Majesty. Weeping and clamoring incessantly before the seat of the undivided Trinity, let us implore God the



† In Bonaventure's writings, the memory is the container of consciousness: it both remembers and anticipates.

Father that, through His blessed Son and in the Holy Spirit, He may grant us the grace of performing this work of the spirit in a way that will make us comprehend *what is the breadth and length and height and depth,* and permit us to reach Him who is the End and Fulfillment of all desire. Amen.

Eph. 3:18

Chapter I — The Soul, by Spiritual Action, Must Turn the Beam of Contemplation on What Is Within Itself in Order to See How It Was Formed by Nature, Deformed by Sin, and Reformed by Grace

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(1) introduction

1. The Soul: Tell me, my conscience, now that I have sung the Lord's glory and humbly called upon eternal Wisdom; now that I have tearfully begged for kindness and mercy from above, tell me, shall I obtain the grace of applying my mind to this fourfold subject: length and breadth, height and depth? Where shall I begin so as not to lose the merit of this exercise by unknowingly following the wrong order? For, as blessed Ambrose writes, "ignorance of the fitting order mars the perfection of merit."[1] The same Ambrose also writes: "Nor can we claim perfect understanding of any work if we know merely what to do, but not how to proceed."[2]

2. The Inner Man: O soul, as blessed Bernard said to Pope Eugene: "Begin by considering yourself, lest you seek other things in vain for having neglected yourself."[3] Also, in his "Meditations": "Many people know a great deal but ignore their own selves; they scrutinize others but overlook their own soul; they search for God in the outside world, but forget their inner being where God abides. Let us turn from the external things to the internal; let us rise from the lower to the higher, so as to know whence we came and

where we go, how we were made and what we are. Then, in the full knowledge of ourselves, let us go up to the knowledge of God."[4]

John Chrysostom writes in his "Commentary on Matthew": "Self-knowledge is an important part of philosophy."[5] And Ambrose, in his work "On the Six Days": "Know how great you are; consider attentively what comes into your mind through reflection, and what goes out of it through speech."[6]

"Therefore, O soul, make a daily check of your way of life. Make a careful account of how far you have advanced and how much farther you have to go; of how well you behave and how wisely you love; of how like you are to God or how unlike Him, how close to God or how far removed from Him. Remember this always: it is much better and more praiseworthy to know yourself than to ignore yourself while knowing the course of the stars, the virtues of herbs, the structure of man, the nature of animals — in short, all other things of heaven and earth. Turn to your inner self, if not permanently, at least from time to time. Master your affections, guide your actions, straighten your ways."[7]

O soul, hold to the counsel of the saints: direct the beam of contemplation first upon the land of the East, that is, upon your own condition. Consider with care how generously you were formed in your nature by the supreme Maker; how viciously you were deformed through sin by your own ill will; how graciously you were again and again reformed through grace by divine goodness.

(2) HOW GENEROUSLY THE SOUL WAS FORMED IN ITS NATURE BY THE SUPREME MAKER

3. Consider first how generously you were formed in your nature. The bounty of your NATURAL ENDOWMENT appears to consist in this: that the image of the Most Blessed Trinity is impressed in this nature for your adornment. Anselm writes in his "Prologue": "I confess You, O Lord, and I give You thanks, for You have created me in Your image so that I should always remember You, think of You, and love You."[8] And Bernard, in his "Meditations": "I find three things in my inner self that make me think of God, look upon Him, and desire Him. These things are memory, intelligence, and will. Whenever I remember God, I rejoice in Him, for the thought of Him is *more delightful . . . than wine.* Whenever I look upon Him with my intellect, I consider how incomprehensible He is in Himself, for he is both the Beginning and the End; how desirable He is to His angels, for upon Him *angels desire to look;* how delectable He is to all His saints, for in Him is their eternal bliss; how wonderful He is in His creatures, for they are brought to being by His power, governed by His wisdom, and distributed by His munificence."[9] When I behold such things, I also desire Him. "When I love God with my will, I transform myself into Him,"[10] as Bernard also says.

Ct. 1:2

1 Pt. 1:12

Behold, O soul, what a wonderful and priceless honor it is to be not only a mere trace of the Creator, as all creatures are, but even His likeness, which is the privilege of rational beings. Therefore, praise God, O soul, *praise your God, O Sion!* "Awake and praise, exult and rejoice, for you are signed with God's image, and adorned with His

Ps. 147:12

likeness; you partake of His intellect, and are capable of enjoying eternal beatitude."[11]

4. If these gifts were to end with death, you would have reason to think that they are not so great. But rejoice and give praise, for God has also favored you with an immortal nature, an incorruptible substance, a duration without end, a perpetual life. "You could not be an image of the eternal Trinity if death were to be the end of you,"[12] says Augustine, writing "On the Trinity." — "Remember, O soul, that your Creator, after giving you existence, granted you the gift of existing in beauty, of existing forever; He gave you life, sensitivity, and the power of judgment; He adorned you with sense-faculties; He enlightened you with wisdom."[13] Behold your own beauty, and understand what Beauty you must love. If you are unable to see yourself in truth, you may at least trust the opinion of others as to what you should think of yourself. You have a Spouse: if you doubt this beauty of yours, you should remember that the beautiful, the comely, the only-begotten Son of God would never have been captivated by the sight of you if some exceptional beauty, surpassing that of other creatures on earth, had not attracted Him."[14]

5. Now, ungrateful soul, if such gifts still seem small to you, hear thirdly this marvelous favor: so simple is your spirit that nothing may inhabit the mansion of your mind, nothing may abide in it, except the eternal Trinity simple and pure. Listen to the words of the Spouse: *"We* (My Father and I) *will come to him and make our abode with him."* And elsewhere: *"Make haste and come down; for I must stay in thy house today."* No one can enter into the mind except God who created it. He is the One who is closer to you than you are to yourself, as Augustine says.[15]

Jn. 14:23

Lk. 19:5

Rejoice, O happy soul, in your ability to play host to such a wondrous Guest!

Bernard tells us: "Happy the man who every day cleanses his heart and takes God to dwell therein: such a host lacks nothing, for the Maker of all good lives in him."[16] — "Oh, happy the soul in which God finds His rest, for it can say: '*He that made me rested in my tabernacle;* God cannot deny me the repose of heaven.' "[17] That is, if the soul has given Him shelter in this life. *Ecclus. 24:12**

O soul, you are too covetous if the presence of such a Guest is not enough for you. Know that in His generosity He will lavish His gifts upon you; in His kindness, He will enrich you with His blessings. It would not befit such a King to let His host remain unsatisfied. "Adorn therefore your house, and receive Christ the King,"[18] in whose presence you and your household will find joy and delight.

O truly wonderful and most amiable words! O King whose beauty the sun and moon admire, whose greatness heaven and earth revere, from whose splendor the celestial spirits receive their light, and of whose mercy the whole assembly of the blessed is filled to overflowing! Such is the King, O soul, who desires your hospitality, who longs and wishes to dwell in your heart more ardently than He desires the heavenly mansions: the King who *found delight in the sons of men!* *Prv. 8:31*

6. Now, if even this does not move you to praise your Creator, turn the beam of contemplation upon the fourth favor, and recognize that such is your capacity that no creature below God is able to fill your desire. As Hugh of St. Victor writes: "Every delight, sweetness, or beauty of a creature may please the human heart, but none can fill it."[19] And Anselm: "All abundance which is not God is poverty

to me."[20] And Gregory, in his "Ethics": "The human soul is made to desire God. Anything below God that the soul may seek is less than its true goal. Naturally, therefore, anything other than God will leave it unsatisfied."[21]

7. O soul, I believe that now you have a clear vision of your own excellence, worthy of such high praise. Direct, then, the beam of contemplation upon the power you received over all other creatures, for it is truly remarkable.

Hugh of St. Victor writes in "The Soul's Dowry": "O my soul, what did your Spouse give you? Consider this world: all natural beings direct their course to one end, that they may be useful to you, that they may faithfully concur to your delight according to the pattern of seasons."[22]

Look again, my soul, and consider with care how your Creator and King, your Spouse and Friend, has set the whole fabric of the world to be of service to you.

Behold, the angels cleanse and inflame your love, enlighten and inform your intelligence, improve and guard your person. It is, indeed, a high honor to have such teachers, such comforters, such guardians. Bernard says: "O my soul, if only you could see with what joy, with what exaltation the angels assist those who pray, and take care of those who meditate; with what attention they safeguard our virtue; with what eagerness they look forward to our coming and to our eternal salvation!"[23]

The heavens serve you by their motions, and the celestial lights by their influence: the sun gives you daylight, and the moon brightens the night; fire tempers the cold of the air, and the air moderates the inner heat of fire; water washes you clean, quenches your thirst, and fosters earthly life; the earth supports you with its solidity, restores you with its fruitfulness, delights you with its charm.

Behold, O soul: a brief survey of all these things has brought you up from the lower to the higher regions. You have discovered that, "by God's command, all natural beings direct their course to one end: that they may be useful to you, that they may faithfully concur to your delight."[24]

"But beware, my soul, lest you be called adulteress instead of bride, for having valued the gifts of the Giver above the love of the Lover!"[25] As Augustine says in his "Confessions": "Woe to you if you wander about His traces, if you love His signs instead of Him and seek temporal gains, never understanding the message of that blessed light which is intelligence in the cleansed soul, and of which the splendor of all creatures is but a trace and symbol."[26]

If, then, you fail to know yourself, you will *go forth, and follow after the steps of the flock*—that is, of irrational creatures that show mere traces of your Creator, whereas you yourself are truly a mirror of the most blessed Trinity. Hence, you are proved to be more worthy and excellent than any of these. *Pasture the young ones near the shepherds' camp*—that is, turn your thoughts to the choirs of angels, for in some way you resemble them by your nature, and you will be their companion in glory. *Ct. 1:7** *ibid. 8*

8. THE SOUL: Enough have I remained silent; long have I held my tongue. Now, with shame and blushes, I must say and confess that I have given little love to this dignity of mine. Oh, what pity, what unhappiness! Unworthily and irreverently have I wasted myself; uselessly and neglectfully have I lived. I truly admit with Bernard "that the more I consider my own dignity, the more I am ashamed and blush for having led such a depraved life."[27] I am afraid that my sin is all the heavier as my nature is more noble and worthy; that my offense is all the graver as the

excellence of the Offended is higher. I tremble, for the injury is all the deeper as the favors received from the Offended are greater.

Alas, alas, O Lord my God, to the dignity of my substance I compare the vileness of my malice; from the beauty of my nature, I understand the deformity of sin; from the memory of the favors received, I know the ingratitude of my deeds. Woe to wretched me! I already see, I already know that "what I have received from the supreme Giver for the use of my temporal life, I have miserably squandered through wickedness and sin. I converted the quiet of a peaceful life into a false sense of security; I preferred my pilgrimage on earth to my eternal home; I turned the soundness and health of my body into slaves of my perverse delights; I spent plentiful treasures not for the needs of my body but for luxurious and wretched greed. I even made the clear delight of the air to serve my love of earthly pleasures. Alas, I fear and tremble exceedingly lest all these things together, wickedly turned into servants of my vices, rise against me and punish me."[28] Thus speaks Gregory in his "Homilies."

9. THE INNER MAN: O soul, I begin now to realize that you understand well. From your words I know that my warning has not been vain. It seems to me that you are enlightened to a certain degree by divine clarity, that you are somewhat moved by the light of truth since, as Gregory says in his "Ethics": "Any man enlightened with the touch of true light is made to know himself, so that where he learns what is justice, there also he learns what is sin that had made him blind. And so it is with holy men: the higher they rise through the loftiness of their virtues, the more clearly they see how unworthy they are, for when

they reach light, they discover within themselves all the defects of which they had been unaware."[29]

(3) HOW VICIOUSLY THE SOUL IS DEFORMED THROUGH WILLFUL SIN

10. O soul, now that in the light of truth you understand your own value which you had ignored so far; now that you know the sin by which you have offended your Creator; now that you know how generously you have been formed by nature: consider how viciously you are deformed by sin.

"Miserable and wretched soul, remember your enormous sin. Let your cries and your laments reach up to heaven. O soul unfaithful to God, adulteress toward Christ, think of what you have done: you have abandoned your chaste Lover in heaven, despised your own Maker, rejected your Spouse, offended your God, treated with irreverence the holy angel your guardian. You had been the temple of God, the bride of Christ, the altar of the Holy Spirit. What is this sudden reversal, this unexpected change? You have been changed from a virgin of God into a minion of Satan, from a bride of Christ into a detestable whore, from the dwelling of the Holy Spirit into the devil's den!"[30] This from Anselm, in his "Lament on Virginity Lost."

Remember, O soul, for what price you sold your beauty, for what advantage you shattered your honor, for what purpose you disfigured your countenance! Such great goods you exchanged against a vile reward.

THE SOUL: I admit, O my conscience, that you speak the truth, and that you rightfully blame me for so great a crime.

11. THE INNER MAN: O soul, why did you strip yourself of such a wealth of goods? Why is it that, without avail, you threw away such honors? Why did you so often fail in doing good? Why did you spend so many fruitless years and days and hours?

Bernard writes: "O Lord my God, how much fruitless time has drifted by, as I now realize! How do I dare to stand before Your face? How could I ever raise my eyes to You on that great and awesome judgment day when You shall order me to account for all my days and show their fruit? O Lord my God, how could I at any time have forgotten to love You with my heart, to keep You in my mind, and to discover in Your sweetness my delight? Where did my mind and feelings wander when they were not with You? For anything seemly, good, and sweet a creature may have, it has from You."[31]

12. THE SOUL: Alas, O Lord, now I understand, but it shames me to admit all this: my eyes were deceived by the figure and beauty of creatures, and I failed to see that You are more beautiful than all creation to which You imparted but a drop of Your priceless splendor. Who, indeed, adorned the skies with stars, the air with birds, the sea with fishes, the earth with plants and flowers? Was it not You, O kindest Father? The heavenly host of spirits You graced with many gifts: through You, the Seraphim are set aflame with love, the Cherubim are all aglow with knowledge; through Your gifts, the Thrones can sit in judgment; by Your appointment, the glorious Dominations rule; by Your dignity, the Principalities preside; by Your might, the Powers control evil spirits; by Your profound virtue, the Virtues perform marvels; by Your command, Archangels bring great tidings to the great, and Angels

lesser tidings to the lesser. And yet, what are all these wonders? A mere spark of Your eternal glory!

O good Jesus, fountainhead of all magnificence, forgive me in my misery for having come so late to knowing Your beauty, and so slowly to loving it![32] That is why I was wretched and lost.

13. The sweetness of creatures deceived my taste, and I failed to notice that You are sweeter than honey, for it is You who imparted to honey and to every creature their sweetness, or rather Your own. For every good taste or flavor in the creatures is but a token *of Thy sweetness . . . , which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee.* Thus, to one who properly sees, the charm of all creatures is but a sign that leads to Your eternal sweetness. *Ps. 30:20**

O Jesus from whom flows everything sweet and kind, forgive me for not having perceived in creatures Your taste beyond compare and the flowering honey of Your kindness, and for not having savored them with delight in my heart! I roamed wretchedly; I filled my soul with the food of swine. Alas, I am afraid I never ate of the bread of Your sons! That is why I was always starving and hungry in the midst of worldly pleasures. "Because we have refused to taste the inner sweetness prepared for us," says Gregory, "we are starving and hungry, and in our wretchedness we come to love our hunger!"[33]

O most sweet Jesus, I now admit that every pleasure that offended You was for me but pain and heavy sorrow. As Augustine writes in his "Confessions": "O most compassionate God, even when I was sinning You remained close to me, kindly chastising me, mixing my worst pleasures and most flagrant iniquities with stinging bitterness; teaching me with a whip that painless delight cannot be found

outside of You, O Lord!"[34] Alas, I failed to understand this teaching, and went astray. Yet, in all my sinful joys, I feared disclosure, accusation, and reproach. Oftentimes, I trembled before my own conscience; again and again, I was afraid of infamy; frequently, I shuddered at the thought of hell. And yet, oh, shame on me, in the midst of such torments, I would not bend my selfish will.

14. The perfume of creatures deceived my sense of smell,
*Ct. 4:10** and I forgot, O good Jesus, *the sweet smell of Thy ointments, above all aromatical spices.* O good Jesus, fountain
*ibid. 1:3** of fragrance, whose sweetness makes me always *run after Thee to the odor of Thy ointments!*

15. The fallacious voice of creatures, also, deceived my ears, and I forgot that Your words are sweet to the elect, Your counsels delightful to the ears of Your friends, and Your commands light to the hands of Your saints. O Jesus, Fountain of Justice, Author of Knowledge, Sower of
*ibid. 2:14** Chaste Counsel, make me listen at last to Your voice: *let Thy voice sound in my ears.*

With what bitter remorse I must admit that my wretched heart was lured by the call of those who were singing and
Wis. 2:6-9 saying: *"Come, therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are real, and use the freshness of creation avidly. Let us have our fill of costly wine and perfumes, and let no springtime blossom pass us by. Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds ere they wither; let no meadow be free from our wantonness. Everywhere let us leave tokens of our rejoicing."*
Eccl. 1:2 I heard this voice, but I did not mind nor heed that *all things are vanity* and deserve nothing but derision. For these things and all of their kind will pass away and vanish like shadows. What advantage did these trifles bring to those who loved them? What did these baubles give

to those who cherished them? *What fruit had you then from those things of which you are now ashamed?* Rom. 6:21

16. Yet, all the time that I was wandering, You remained with me, my loving God! Often have I heard your voice and failed to heed it; often have I sensed Your saving inspiration and failed to consent to it. Oh, how many times did you inspire me with this salutary advice: "You have sinned: now sin no more! Desist and blush!"—In my unworthiness, I tarried and replied as did Augustine in his "Confessions": "O Lord, presently, soon, in a very short while, I will renounce vanity. Forthwith I will blush over my wickedness and abandon all worthless and worldly pleasure!—But 'presently' never came about, the 'soon' never changed to 'now,' and the 'short while' was ever-extended."[35]

Augustine also writes: "Many suffer eternal damnation and are irrevocably held by sin, who did not amend their ways when the Lord spoke to them. They did hear the inner voice that prompted them, but failed to change their lives, merely saying: 'Tomorrow, tomorrow!' And suddenly the door is closed, and the sinner is left before it with the cawing ravens, outside the walls of the heavenly home, for having refused to mourn with the dove over his sins."[36]

And Gregory: "Alas, how many were further debased by finding pleasure in their sinful state; how many were dulled by their long-untroubled quiet! But the wicked enemy soon struck them all the harder as he found them becoming more careless."[37] And again: "Those whom God has longer tolerated in the hope of their return, He will more heavily condemn if they do not come back."[38]

17. O my conscience, to make my miserable story more clear to you, I must confess that this was not the limit of

my unhappiness. Alas, to consummate my doom, carnal softness has sadly beguiled my sense of touch, and I forgot, O bountiful Jesus, that Your embrace is so sweet, Your touch so pure, Your presence so highly delightful! "Loving You, I am pure; touching You, I am chaste; receiving You, I remain a virgin."[39] O most sweet Jesus, Your embrace sullies not, but purifies; Your touch defiles not, but sanctifies. O Jesus, fountain of all sweetness and delight, how delectable, how good, how joyful, to have
cf. Ct. 2:6 Your left hand, Your eternal wisdom and knowledge, under my head, that is, my reason; and to have Your right arm, Your divine mercy and love, embracing my will!

Alas, how unworthy I am! Who could ever experience anything as sweet, pleasing, and delightful as to rest between the arms of such a Spouse, and blissfully to repose in the embrace of such a King, of such a Friend? This is the sweetness the devout soul is longing for when she
Ct. 1:1 sighs: *"Let Him kiss me with kisses of His mouth!—*
ibid. 8:1 *Oh, that you were my brother, nursed at my mother's breasts! If I met you out of doors, I would kiss you and none would taunt me. I would lead you, bring you in to the home of my mother. There you would teach me* the Lord's commands."

18. But, O Lord God, if these things are so sweet by anticipation, how good they must be when actually tasted! If they are so pleasing to read about, how wonderful will be their actual possession! "O most sweet Jesus, let me taste inwardly through love that which I perceive outwardly through knowledge; make me feel in my heart what I know in my mind."[40]

O Jesus my delight, pierce with the most salutary wound of Your love the very center of my soul, so that it may

truly burn, languish, melt, and swoon with the sole desire of You; that it may long to be dissolved, and to abide with You. May it always hunger for You alone, bread of celestial life that came down from heaven; may it thirst for You, fountain of life, source of eternal brightness, torrent of true enjoyment; may it always desire You, search for You, and find You; and may it sweetly rest in You.

But what madness, what infernal frenzy held me so long away from so great and many spiritual consolations, from such divine joy, from such honeyed company? O my conscience, tell me: whence such evil, such danger, such damage?

19. THE INNER MAN: I see, O soul, that wearied as you are with many labors and tormented with remorse, you are in no condition to determine the origin of the evils you suffered. I beg you, listen carefully while I show you the cause of all this trouble, and explain to you how this damage came about.

O soul, you have within yourself an enemy, an intimate adversary, a kindred foe, who returns to you evil for good; an enemy all the more dangerous as he passes for a friend, while depriving you of the eternal good and of many others too. This, I venture to say, is your own poor and wretched flesh, so sweet and dear to you. Surrendering to it, you strengthened your worst enemy; exalting it, you armed against yourself your most cruel adversary; decking it with varied and costly ornaments, you stripped yourself of all interior jewels, forgetting what Gregory says in his "Homilies": "Because the flesh has feasted for a time, the spirit shall suffer and moan forever."[41] But on the contrary, "the more the flesh is tried, the more the spirit rejoices in the expectation of heaven."[42]

So great is the evil you inflicted upon us that I can no longer refrain from severely reproaching you for such iniquity, so long and dangerously concealed by silence.

"O soul," says Bernard, "I know someone who lived with you for many years, who sat at your table, received food from your hand, and slept on your bosom. He talked with you as often as he wished, although he was but your servant by birth. But because you went too far in feeding
Ps. 40:10 him rich food while sparing the rod, *he raised his heel against you* and made a slave of you."[43] And Bernard continues: "O wretched and unhappy soul, who will free you
cf. Tb. 3:11 from such a shameful yoke? Let God arise, and all weapons will fall. Crushed will be the enemy, the despiser of God, the lover of the world, the worshiper of the devil. And
Mt. 26:66 now, *what do you think*† of him? If you rightly think, you will say with
Mk. 15:13 me: *He is liable to death. Crucify him.*† Do not hide these things; do not wait and endure them. *Crucify, crucify him!*† But on what cross? On the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ in which is our salvation, our life, and our resurrection."[44] This from Bernard.



O soul, remember also what the same saint writes in his "Meditations" about your origin: Take heed for you are

† The practice of quoting scriptures entirely out of context presently unacceptable was current at the time.

"signed with God's image, adorned with His likeness, engaged by faith in Him, endowed with hope in Him, chosen by His love, redeemed by His blood, gifted with reason, and capable of eternal beatification. Why then such concern for this flesh that causes so much suffering? Consider its nature: what flows from the nostrils and other openings of the body? What is filthier than a dungpit? Count the miseries of this flesh: it is loaded with sin, itching with concupiscence, replete with passions, evil thoughts, disorder, and shame. How else will you think of it but as horrid and vile?"[45]† This is what Bernard has to say. And again: "O soul, image with a divine likeness, blush for having changed yourself into the likeness of a swine; blush for having dragged in the mire that which is from heaven."[46] And once more, commenting on the "Canticle": "O soul, as long as you are in the flesh, you will live among thorns, and you will have to bear in sorrow the trials of many temptations and the spears of many assaults. That is why you were told in the 'Canticle': *As a lily among thorns, so is my beloved among women.* O immaculate lily, O tender and delicate flower, you are surrounded with unbelievers and corruptors, you dwell with scorpions. Be sure to walk cautiously among the thorns: the world and the flesh are full of them, and it takes more than mere human virtue, it takes the power of God, to help us live in contact with them without being hurt."[47]

Ct. 2:2

20. Now, there is still another enemy, powerful and cruel, who with wondrous cunning "analyses the habits of

† Such exaggerations are characteristic of the early work of St. Bernard, overstressing the opposition between body and soul. We should remember, however, that all this was addressed to cloistered monks.

all, studies their concerns, explores their affections, with the intent to harm at that very point where he sees a man more deeply engaged. For this ancient enemy, this enemy from the beginning of mankind, knows when to pour the temptation of gluttony, inject the poison of envy, offer the attractions of lust, promise the empty charms of pride. He knows whom to crush under fear, whom to deceive with joy, whom to seduce through applause. He also has his minions whose minds and tongues he uses in order to deceive others."[48] These are the words of Pope Leo.

O soul, fighting so weakly, falling so easily, rising again with such reluctance, how could you escape from the snares of so cruel an enemy, well known for his profound astuteness?

21. THE SOUL: Now I see that "sin is not readily admitted by the man who is under its sway. But when he begins to renounce it, he realizes at last the filth in which he had been wallowing."[49] As I begin to free myself from sin, and come to know some more of my sin and of myself, I can no longer hold back my tears.

"O Father, my God, You impressed upon me Your loving image, and I superimposed the hateful likeness of the devil! Alas, alas, how wretched I am for having put the image of the devil on top of the likeness of God! Why did I not shrink from the image of one whose name I abhor? When he fell, it was spontaneously; but I willfully rushed to perdition. When he sinned, through pride, never had pride been punished before; but I, a witness to the penalty, sinned because I took it too lightly. He was established only once in the state of innocence, but I was restored to it again and again. He rose against the One who made him, but I against the One who re-made me.

He rejected God's promise, but I fled from God's pursuit. He was fixed in his malice as God reproved him, but I ran to Satan at the very time God in His mercy was calling me back. Both he and I battled with God, but he with a God who sought him not, and I with a God who died for me! Behold, I find myself worse in many ways than him whose image I abhor!"[50]

THE INNER MAN: "Begone, begone from me, O horrible creature: flee from yourself and be afraid of what you are. How can you stand your own dreadful self without groaning in your heart? For if you do not groan, you do not know yourself; you would then be blunt, not strong; obdurately malicious, not sound of mind."[51]

22. THE SOUL: "To see what I am means intolerable horror; not to see it means inevitable death! Oh, the horror of being loathsome to one's own eyes! But how much worse to be liable to eternal death!"[52] This from Anselm who also writes in his "Prayers": "O most patient Father, most merciful King, I cannot hide from You, nor can I find any excuse: yet, I am loath to confess what I am. But now, at least, I see the reason for my iniquity, I see the evil that I had not seen before."[53] And Bernard, in his "Meditations": "My wretched heart had no concern for future happiness. Failing to seek divine counsel, it turned away from its own good and engaged, instead, in the love of earthly things. Unconcerned with eternity and involved in the world, my heart was fooled by vanity, tarnished by lust, led astray by curiosity, tortured by envy, twisted by anger, rent by greed, vexed by disgust for spiritual things; in short, my heart was flooded with every kind of vice for having lost that single Good which alone could have sufficed to fill it completely."[54]

O God most gentle, may all my ill-spent hours pass into oblivion before Your eyes; grant that all that is left of my time, short perhaps and fleeting, may be used for Your honor, for my profit, and for the edification of my neighbor. O God most kind, because of the gravity of the condemnation which I, wretched and unhappy man, have unfortunately incurred, I now see and confess: never could I weep enough over myself and my sin, if the loathing I now feel for my sin is to match the pleasure I sought in my depraved will.

23. THE INNER MAN: Admitting as you do that you cannot sufficiently deplore your iniquity by yourself, you must turn to the saints for help. Know you not that, as Bernard says, "you have a safe access to God, for the Mother stands for you before the Son, and the Son before the Father? Interceding for you, the Mother shows the Son her bosom and breasts, and the Son offers the Father His side and wounds. Surely, no request will ever be denied when such tokens of love abound."[55] — "Therefore, in all dangers, troubles, and doubts, think of Mary, call to Mary, let her love dwell in your heart and her name upon your lips. Follow her and, you will not stray; pray to her and you will not grieve, and let her support you and you will not fall, let her help you and you will not fear, let her lead you and you will not tire, beg her favors and you will obtain your pardon."[56] These are the words of Bernard.

O soul, cry out, with great trust in her: "O Lady, if the Son born of you has become my Brother, through Him
Ps. 9A:3 are you not now my Mother? *I will be glad and exult in you,* for whatever my sentence is to be, it will be meted out by my Mother and my Brother."[57] This from Anselm.

24. THE SOUL: By sinning against the Son, I offended the Mother; how could I have offended the Mother without offending the Son? O my conscience, what shall I do? Who will reconcile me with the Son if the Mother is against me? Who will appease the Mother if the Son is full of wrath?

25. THE INNER MAN: O soul, have no fear. Although both have been offended, both are most merciful and kind. Let the sinner fly from God's just anger into the arms of the gentle Mother; guilty of having offended the Mother, let him find refuge in the kindness of the Son, and let him say: "O God, who, because of our wretchedness, did become the Son of a woman; O Woman who, for the sake of mercy, did become the Mother of God: have pity on me a wretched sinner: otherwise, show me someone more merciful to whom I could fly in my distress."[58] Thus writes Anselm.

26. THE SOUL: O my conscience, how wise your advice, what a boon your words in my misery! When I look upon my sin in the proper light, I see and realize that, in my iniquity, I perverted the elements, befouled the skies, darkened the heavenly bodies, tormented the reprobate in hell, offended the saints in heaven, spurned the angels in charge of my soul in such a way that I am afraid to ask them for help. And since the just are rightfully indignant against me, I feel unworthy of having recourse to them.

27. THE INNER MAN: O soul, your fear is excessive, but your humility is good. Know you not that many of the saints have sinned, and have also learned from their grievous misdeeds to have pity on us sinners? Remember Moses the great prophet despairing of God's power, David the holy king violating divine law by adultery and murder, Solomon the wise adoring vain and evil idols, and Manasses

cf. Ex. 4:1
cf. 2 Kgs. 11:2
cf. 3 Kgs. 11:4

the wicked king who committed more sins than all the kings of Israel and who said: "My sins are more numerous than the grains of sand in the sea; because of the number of my iniquities, I have no right to behold the heights of heaven."† Remember always that they obtained pardon through their prayers. But why continue with the saints of the Old Testament? Behold Matthew sitting at the counting table, a sinner and a tax collector, and yet chosen as a disciple; Paul stoning Stephen, and yet called to be an apostle; Peter denying Christ, and yet immediately pardoned; the soldier crucifying Christ, and yet daring to rely on divine mercy; the robber hanging on the cross, and yet obtaining pardon. Finally, O soul, consider that most notorious and wicked sinner Mary Magdalen becoming so specially devoted to Christ. Indeed, as many as are now reigning with God, either did sin in their own days as we do, or could have fallen into sin had it not been for the protection of divine mercy: for if it is given to anyone to be completely free from the danger of sin, this is a gift not of nature but of heavenly grace.

cf. Mt. 9:9

cf. Acts 7:57 and 9:1f.

cf. Lk. 22: 56, 62

cf. ibid. 23:47

cf. ibid. 40ff.

cf. ibid. 7:37ff.

28. THE SOUL: Now I implore with confidence the prophets and the kings, now I dare to call upon the apostles and the martyrs, now I appeal without ceasing to confessors, virgins, widows and all saints. But with special reverence, and before all others, I invoke the most holy Mother of God, the Virgin Mary. For I know that, as Bernard says: "Mary is so kind, sweet, and delightful, that she cannot be spoken of without the hearts of those who love her being set aflame, nor can she be thought of without their love being stirred. Indeed, it is she who brought

† From the "Prayer of Manasses," 9f., often quoted by the Fathers, but not part of the Tridentine Canon.

about salvation for all and obtained reparation for the whole world."[59] And Anselm writes: "O Woman, wonderfully unique and uniquely wonderful, by whom the elements are refreshed, the sick restored, mankind rescued, and angelic ranks replenished; O Woman full of grace: every creature revives when showered with the abundance of your riches!"[60] And Bernard again: "O blessed stem of grace, parent of life, mother of salvation, be our road to your Son, so that as through you He was given to us, so through you He may receive us. Let your purity make up with Him for the wickedness of our corruption. O most holy one, may your humility so pleasing to God obtain mercy for our vanity. Blessed Virgin, by virtue of the grace that stems from you, of the dignity you merited, and of the Mercy to whom you gave birth: obtain that Christ, who through your motherhood came to share our weakness and misery, deign through your intercession to make us partake of His glory and beatitude."[61]

(4) HOW WELL THE SOUL IS REFORMED IN GRACE BY THE DIVINE GOODNESS

29. THE INNER MAN: Now, O soul, I see that in some slight measure you have directed the beam of contemplation so as to reveal how you were formed by nature and deformed by sin. Turn it now toward the understanding of how you were reformed by grace.

Know that the more perfectly all spiritual darkness is washed away by the cleansing of contrition, the more perfectly shall the boon of divine reparation be perceived. For, as Augustine says, sin is "a darkness that obscures the intellect and leaves the inner soul entirely without light."[62]

Thus, the more there is of sinful opacity before the beam of contemplation, the more there is need for remorseful tears to wash it away from our mental eyes. Therefore, O soul, if your passions have been tempered, direct now the beam of contemplation on how you have been restored by grace through God's deep mercy, high wisdom, and wondrous power.

30. Consider first how He delivered you from original sin through the favor of redemption. Know you not that you had been shorn of both spiritual and natural goods by this original sin? That you were in the hands of the prince of darkness? That you had been expelled, estranged from your fatherland?

As Bernard writes: "This unique Majesty willed to die that we might live, to bow that we might reign, to be exiled that we might come home, to bear a most servile lot that we might be established over all His works."[63] *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.* He came, that is, to humble you in your pride. Gregory writes: "The only-begotten Son of God assumed the form of our weakness; the Invisible made Himself not only visible, but the object of scornful eyes. He bore the pain of insults, the shame of mockery, the torments of the passion: all this in order to teach man not to be proud when God is so humble."[64] And Augustine: "Christ despised worldly goods to show that they must be spurned and worldly pains to show that they must be borne, lest happiness be sought in the former or unhappiness dreaded in the latter."[65]

Lk. 19:10

31. Secondly, Christ came in order to reconcile you with the Eternal Father. Augustine writes: "You were an enemy of the Father, and I reconciled you; you were far astray, and I came to bring you back; you were roaming over hills

and forests, and I sought you and found you among the rocks and thickets: I carried you on my shoulders and brought you back to the Father; I labored and sweated, I exposed My head to the thorns, I offered My hands to the nails, I permitted My side to be opened with a spear, I shed My blood for you. I was wounded for your sake by all these acts, not only insulting but physically cruel. And as for you, alas, you sin and cut yourself away from Me!"[66]

32. Thirdly, Christ came to redeem you from slavery. Following Augustine, "let us be amazed, let us rejoice, love, praise, and adore: for through our Redeemer's death we have been called from death to life, from darkness to light, from exile to our fatherland, from decay to incorruptibility, from wretchedness to glory, from sorrow to joy."[67] And let us exclaim with Gregory Nazianzen: "Oh, wonderful and rare combination: the Creator becomes creature, the Immense is contained, the *Rich towards all* becomes poor, assuming the form of our flesh in order to repair the form He had made in the likeness of Himself, and to endow this mortal flesh with immortality."[68]

Rom. 10:12

33. And now, O soul, rouse yourself and look upon the face of your Christ; look, I mean, upon this face, once shining with unbearable splendor, but now because of you veiled and dark; once entrancingly beautiful, now swollen and ugly; once graciously sweet, now covered with spittle and graceless; once lovingly desirable, now abominable and repulsive. *Behold the deeds of the Lord, the astounding things He has wrought on earth!* God is mocked that you may be honored, scourged that you may be consoled, crucified that you may be freed; the Immaculate Lamb is killed that you may be fed; water and blood are drawn from His side that you may drink.

cf. Ps. 83:10

Ps. 45:9

Consider the price of redemption, the marvel of God assuming our form; consider, O soul, and behold how Christ, your Lord and Friend, is afflicted with every kind of pain, in every one of His senses, by men of all conditions: a king derides Him, a judge sentences Him, a disciple betrays Him, the apostles abandon Him, priests, scribes, and pharisees deliver Him up, pagans scourge Him, a mob condemns Him, and soldiers crucify Him!

As Bernard writes, "this head, before which angelic spirits tremble, is pierced by a mass of thorns; this countenance, *fairer in beauty . . . than the sons of men,* is disfigured by the spittle of the Jews; these eyes, *brighter than the sun,* are dimmed by death; these ears, accustomed to angelic praise, hear the insults of sinners; this mouth that teaches heavenly spirits is made to drink vinegar and gall: these feet, *whose footstool is adored, for it is holy,* are fixed by nails to the cross; these hands that formed the heavens are stretched out on the cross and attached with spikes; this body is beaten, this side opened with a spear! Could He have suffered more? All He has left is His voice to pray for sinners, and to recommend His Mother to the disciple."[69]

Ps. 44:3
Sir. 23:19
*Ps. 98:5**

O faithful soul, behold: none of our enemies' devices could deter our Saviour from His concern for our salvation. But the more wonderful are the works of His love for us, the heavier will be our condemnation if we fail to respond to them.

34. THE SOUL: O my conscience, I remained silent so far because I was listening attentively, with both joy and tears, to what you were telling me. *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,* for He loved me to such an extent that He spared not even His only-begotten Son.

Is. 61:10
cf. Rom. 8:32

Gregory writes: "O priceless love of charity: to redeem a servant—unworthy even to be called by that name—You have offered Your Son!"[70] O Lord Jesus who, for my sake, spared not even Your own Self, wound my heart with Your wounds, inebriate my soul with Your blood, so that wherever I turn I may see You crucified for me; that whatever I look upon may appear to me tinged with Your blood. Thus, tending to You with all my soul, may I find nothing but You, behold nothing but Your wounds. May I have no greater joy, my Lord, than to be crucified with You; no greater sorrow than to be concerned with anything but You.

And yet, alas, comparing my deep ingratitude with the many wonderful favors divine kindness bestows upon men, I am deeply ashamed, and I blush. The more I recognize how great are these gifts of redemption, the more hideous do my sins of ingratitude look to me.

35. THE INNER MAN: Beware of ingratitude, O soul to whom so many wondrous gifts have been granted. Grievous indeed is the sin of ingratitude. As Bernard puts it, "ingratitude is like a burning wind that dries up the streams of divine mercy, the fountain of kindness, and the flow of grace."[71] Be careful, O soul, to remember again and again the frightful condemnation of ingratitude that Bernard places on the Saviour's lips: "O soul, behold how much I bear for you! I call to you who die for you: behold the torments I endure, see the nails that pierce Me, hear the abuse that disgraces Me. And yet, great as the external pain may be, I suffer a greater internal torture at the sight of your ingratitude."[72] There is another passage condemning the ungrateful: O *My people, what have I done to thee, or in what have I molested thee? Answer thou Me!* Why would you serve My enemy instead of Me? *Mi. 6:3**

Beware, O soul, and give thanks always; never cease to bless and extol the only-begotten Son of God for such great gifts.

36. "You owe your life to Him who laid down His life for you and suffered harsh torments in order to save you from eternal torture" — "Thus, were you to give Him all your being and powers, would that gift of yourself be any more to Him than a star is to the sun, a drop of water to the river, or a grain of dust to the mountain?"[73] This from Bernard.

37. Now, O soul, that your spiritual vision is cleared and that you are aware of the grace of divine redemption by which your Spouse delivered you from original sin, I will show you how, through divine mercy, you were delivered from actual sin. Turn the beam of contemplation upon the favor of justification; behold the grace of your Lord and God; consider in what fatherly manner He inspired you secretly, drawing you away from actual sin; how sweetly and amiably He often called you back and said, as speaking within you: *"Return, return, O Sulamitess,"* referring to your soul afflicted with sin.

*Ct. 6:12**

38. Return to Me, for I am your Creator; return to Me, for I am your Redeemer; return to Me, for I am your Consoler. If this is not enough, return to Me, for I am your most generous Reward. Return to Me, for it was I who so splendidly created you; return to Me, for it was I who so mercifully delivered you through My cruel death from a death that would have lasted forever; return to Me, for it was I who enriched you with so many and so great gifts of the body and spirit. Lastly, O soul, return to Me for it is I who will reward you with an immense gift of happiness that is even now prepared.

cf. Isa. 44:22

Return, I mean, from every sinful thought and speech, every sinful deed and habit. Return to Me, O soul, for all the saints expect you with an eager hope; return, for the angels rejoice in your homecoming; return, for throughout heaven the hosts of paradise are awaiting you. O soul, return, for Jesus Christ is calling you with hands outstretched on the cross; return, for the whole abyss of the Trinity stands ready for your coming.



O soul, this is the voice of the Beloved inviting you.

39. See now how patiently He waited—oh, how long He waited for you! How long He bore with you while you strayed in sin! How many great souls He reproved in their iniquity while you were still unconverted: and all the time you were sinning, He was mercifully expecting your return! Return, O soul: Christ is waiting for you on the cross. His head is inclined for a kiss, His arms are spread out for an embrace, and His hands open in a gesture of giving. His body is stretched in a position of total offering; His feet are attached so that He will remain with you; His side is open to let you in!

"Therefore, O soul, be like a dove *in the clefts of the rock, in the secret recesses of the cliff;* fly to His hands and feet, for in Him there is safe repose and undisturbed peace."[74] This from Bernard. *Ct. 2:14*

"O soul, if you could only realize how many other souls — and so much greater than you — were reproved, not being favored with the grace that is yours! Indeed, your Spouse chose you and preferred you: He chose you among many, He took you up and out of the crowd, He loved you more than others."[75] These are the words of Hugh.

40. THE SOUL: This I confess and admit; this I know from experience and understand full well: I have indeed received from God much more than others, while failing to return to Him a single offering that might be worthy of His gifts.

41. THE INNER MAN: O soul, you have seen with what patience God waited for you: it is time now to turn the beam of contemplation upon His kindness in justifying you. Be careful to remember and to consider how priceless are the gifts your Spouse conferred upon you.

"He granted you through grace to share His table, His kingship, and His home."[76] — *"The favors of the Lord I will sing forever,* for I find in me seven gifts, evident proofs of His immeasurable kindness. First, He preserved me from many sins; second, when I fell He did not reprove me at once, but persevered in His love as I persisted in my sin; third, He changed my heart, so that things formerly bitter now became sweet; fourth, when I repented, He received me mercifully; fifth, He gave me the strength to abstain from sin and amend my ways; sixth, He bestowed upon me the grace of obtaining merit; seventh, He gave me the hope of reaching my reward."[77]

Ps. 88:2

42. THE SOUL: O my Lord and God, "miserable and wretched as I may be, how greatly must I love God! I existed not, and He created me; I was lost, and He redeemed me and freed me from all danger; I went astray,

and He led me home; I was ignorant, and He taught me; I lived in sin, and He chastised me; I sorrowed, and He consoled me; I almost despaired, and He comforted me; when I stood, He supported me, and He raised me when I fell; as long as I walked, He showed me the way, and when I arrived, He let me in."[78]

"He is the Master of all things, He fills all things and is everywhere present; He takes care of all things providing for each one and for the whole universe; and yet I see Him so concerned with my welfare that He seems to have no thought for anything else, and to look after none but me!"[79]

43. My conscience, since you say that I must love God in return for such great favors, tell me now how much and in what way to love Him, and how to change myself in order to return His kindness.

THE INNER MAN: O soul, as Bernard writes, "the reason why we should love God is God Himself, and the way to love Him is to love without measure."[80] From Sacred Scripture, we may gather some idea of this way. For the One who gave you the law of love showed you how to love when He said: *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."* Dt. 6:5

Hence, you should love with a personal affection God the Father who so wondrously created you out of nothingness, God the Son who so pricelessly restored you by dying for you, and God the Holy Spirit who so frequently rescued you from sin by His consoling mercy while strengthening you in virtue. Love God the Father with fortitude, avoiding the danger of bowing to some other love; love God the Son in wisdom, avoiding the danger of falling to some other love; love God the Holy Spirit with unction, avoiding the danger of dying from some other love.

Bernard writes: "O Christian soul, learn from Christ Himself how to love Christ. Love sweetly, prudently, and intensely. Love sweetly, so that, compared to His love, any other love may seem poor to you, and that Christ alone may be honey to your lips, music to your ears, and joy to your heart. Love prudently, so that your love may burn without cease for Him and for no one else. Love intensely, so that your weakness may joyfully endure for Him any hardship or pain and that you may say: 'My trials hardly lasted an hour, and were they to last very long, out of love I would feel them not.' This is how the Christian always strives toward Christ through love: in such a way that he willingly supports any adversity until he finally reaches Him."[81] These are the words of Bernard.

44. THE SOUL: Tell me, my conscience — if I may ask you — not for the sake of curiosity but humility, not of presumption but devotion: what is it that I love when I love God?

THE INNER MAN: O soul, if you had asked out of presumption your question would have been most wicked, but since it was born from devotion it deserves a faithful reply. Listen to what Augustine, this great lover of God, has to say in his "Confessions": "When I love God, it is not bodily beauty that I love, nor an attractive face, nor the brilliance of an eye-appealing light, nor sweet melodies, nor fragrant perfumes, nor manna, nor honey, nor limbs of flesh delightful to embrace: it is none of these things that I love when I love God. But what do I love? I love a light, a voice, a fragrance, a food, an embrace affecting my inner self. In my soul, there is light that space cannot contain; some sound is heard that time cannot still, some fragrance breathed that wind cannot dispel, some

flavor tasted that leaves the hunger raw, some food absorbed that is never exhausted."[82]

45. THE SOUL: My conscience, tell me something about the virtue of charity, so that knowing it I may love God more ardently.

THE INNER MAN: In truth, O soul, love is a choice fruit, but one unseen, for, as Augustine writes, "love is long-suffering in adversity, restrained in prosperity, powerful against passion, joyful in good works, secure in temptation, generously hospitable, happy among true brothers, patient among the false, undisturbed by abuse, doing good while bearing evil, remaining peaceful in the midst of anger and innocent among deceitful men, weeping over sin, and living by truth."[83]

"O faithful love, the source of strong character, pure affection, penetrating thought, holy desire, noble work, rich virtue, lofty merit, great reward and honor!"[84]—"O sweetness of love and love of sweetness, let my heart abide at your table, let the depth of my soul be filled with your nectar!"[85] This from Augustine. And from Jerome: "Without charitable love, even the soul that has true faith cannot attain beatitude; and because charity is so great that even prophecy and martyrdom are held for naught in its absence, no prize compares with love. Indeed, charity is the queen of all virtues."[86]

Oh, the misery of the man whose spirit fondly embraces mere temporal goods, "acquired through labor, possessed in fear, and lost with sorrow."[87]

46. But "blessed the man who loves You, O Lord, and loves his enemy because of You and his friend in You. He alone does not forfeit loving any soul who loves all souls in You. No man is deprived of Your love except one who

rejects You; and if he rejects You, where shall he go, except from Your kindness to Your anger?"[88] This from Augustine. And from the same: "He loves You less who loves something besides You, a thing loved not in Your name. O charity, always burning, never dying! O Love, my God, inflame me, protect me from *the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life!*"[89] Gregory says in "Ethics": "Fruitful and blessed is the man fastened by love to the sole desire of eternity, who is neither exalted by success nor crushed by failure: for since he is attached to nothing in the world, there is nothing in the world to make him fear."[90] And Paul, in one of his epistles: *"Charity is patient, is kind; charity does not envy, is not pretentious, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, is not self-seeking, is not provoked; thinks no evil, does not rejoice over wickedness, but rejoices with the truth.* This is developed by Gregory in his "Ethics": "Charity is patient for it bears adversity with an undisturbed spirit; it is kind, for it generously renders good for evil; it does not envy, for since it has no desire for the things of the world, it cannot be jealous of temporal success; it is not puffed up,† for since it is absorbed in the desire for the eternal reward, it seeks not the pomp of external goods; it deals not perversely,† for since it is filled with the love of God and neighbor, it avoids doing anything wrong; it is not ambitious, for since it is ardently concerned with its own inner goods, it desires no external benefit of any kind; it is not self-seeking, for it treats lightly as foreign things all its temporal possessions, knowing full well that nothing but what it holds forever truly belongs

*1 Jn. 2:16**

1 Cor. 13:4-6

† This inversion is found in Bonaventure's quotations of the epistle and of Gregory's commentary.

to it; it is not provoked to anger, for even when lashed with insults, it abstains from vengeful sentiments, expecting for heavy trials in the present a greater reward to come; it thinks no evil, for it strengthens the mind with the love of purity, destroying all hatred down to the roots, and expelling from the soul anything vile; it does not rejoice over wickedness, for since it is filled with love toward all it finds no joy in the misfortunes that befall its opponents; it rejoices with the truth, for loving the neighbor, it sees the good things that exist in others and rejoices in them as if they were its own."[91]

Chapter II — How the Soul Should Turn the Beam of Contemplation upon Exterior Things by the Spiritual Exercise so as to Recognize the Instability of Worldly Wealth, the Insecurity of Worldly Success, and the Futility of Worldly Fame

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1. The Inner Man: O soul, you should now direct the beam of contemplation upon the things that are around you, that is, upon the sensible world, in order that you may disdain it and everything in it, and thus burn with a more ardent love for the Spouse. For you love Him less if you love something besides Him, something you do not love because of Him and in Him. As Gregory writes, "the more a man seeks his delight in lesser love, the further removed he is from heavenly love."[1] For the man who knows no cause of delight in the present world will all the sooner turn toward God. "May all creatures appear worthless to you, so that the Creator alone may gladden your heart."[2] This from Augustine.

(1) on the threefold vanity of worldly things

2. Turn over and over in your mind the following thought — not only because you heard it mentioned, but because you actually experienced it; not only on the basis of words, but also of facts: how unstable is worldly wealth, how insecure worldly success, and how futile worldly fame. "Whatever stands out in this world is fraught with more sadness than joy."[3] And Bernard says: "Behold the men

who love this world: they roam about the market place, seeking wealth, success, and glory. What good is wealth? It is acquired through labor, possessed in fear, lost with sorrow. What good is success? If you are in a high position, will you not be criticized by all, torn apart by all? Can anyone have honors without grief, dignities without vexation, a lofty place without vanity? And what of fame? It is nothing but a senseless sound in the ears. And is not fame also open to criticism? Consider the less famous: to every one of them, you have offered the seed of envy."[4]

3. THE SOUL: O conscience, this being the case, what is it these unfortunate men are seeking when they desire the vanities of the world? Oh, how blind are those who crave this earthly glory!

THE INNER MAN: As Gregory writes, "some men, when they see the glory of others, believe it to be wonderful and wish to obtain it. But when they see these others die, they must sadly admit that all their glory was empty, and they say: 'Behold, the nothingness of man!' "[5]

O dearest soul, what are all the things of the world but
Wis. 5:8-10 empty dreams? *What did our pride avail us? What have wealth and its boastfulness afforded us? All of them passed like a shadow and like a fleeting rumor; like a ship traversing the heavy waters, of which, when it has passed, no trace can be found, no path of its keel in the waves.—*
ibid. 13 *Even so we . . . were consumed in our wickedness.* Alas, how many are those who left not a single trace of virtue!
*Bar. 3:16-18** *Where are the princes of the nations, and they that rule over the beasts that are upon the earth? . . . that hoard up silver and gold?*—they that built cities and fortresses, and
1 Cor. 1:20 destroyed kings and kingdoms in their wars? *Where is the 'wise man'? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputant*

of this world? Where are Solomon the wisest of all, and Alexander the most powerful? Where are Samson the strongest, and Absalom the most fair? Where are Assuerus the most exalted; where the mighty Caesars, the illustrious kings and princes?

"Of what profit were to them an empty glory, a passing pleasure, a worldly power, a large following, fleshly delights, wealth so deceitful, passion so alluring? Where are now the laughing and rejoicing, the boasting and the arrogant life?"[6] Where the noble blood, the handsome body, the elegant figure, the youthful charm? Where the immense estates and lofty palaces? Where the wisdom of the world? All these things are of the world, for *the world would love what is its own;* but these things, and the world itself, do not last long, for *the world with its lust is passing away.* *Jn. 15:19* *1 Jn. 2:17*

"As for you, if you are wise, if your eyes see the light, refrain from coveting that which it is a pain to pursue, a burden to possess, a defilement to love, and a torture to lose."[7] — "Abandon all such things for the sake of the One who is above all things."[8] This from Bernard, and again: "Flee, O soul, flee for safety toward the city of refuge, which is the religious life, where you will be able to atone for the past, obtain graces for the present, and fruitfully await future glory. Allow not the memory of past sins to slow you down, for *where the offense has abounded, grace has abounded yet more.* Allow not the hardships of atonement to frighten you, for *the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with* the past sins that are remitted, the present peace that is infused, and *the glory to come* that is promised."[9] *Rom. 5:20* *ibid. 8:18*

4. THE SOUL: I admit the fallacy and frailty of the world, but what is this bond that holds my mind to it?

THE INNER MAN: Beyond doubt, O soul, if you carefully and prudently consider the dangers that threaten you in the world, you will keep your mind away from worldly vanities. To mingle with the world is to take a very serious and dangerous risk, for, as Bernard puts it, "chastity is threatened by pleasure, humility by wealth, religion by material cares, veracity by loose speech, love by *the wickedness of this present world.*"[10]

Gal. 1:4

O weak and tottering soul, so easily deceived, so prone to fall, so slow to rise! As Chrysostom says, know you not that "as it is hard for a tree planted along the road to keep its fruits unspoiled until they ripen, so it is hard for a man who lives close to the world to safeguard his virtue until the end."[11] And Augustine, in one of his letters: "The world's embrace is true distress and false delight, definite pain and doubtful joy, harsh labor and timid rest, a real state of woe and a vain hope of bliss."[12] O soul, if only you could keep all this in mind, you would despise the world and all it contains.†

And what is it you love, dearest soul, what is it you desire, what is it you seek in the world? While you seek high position, what do you do but bedevil your life? Know you not that "it is a monstrous thing to have both a high position and a degraded soul, a place of honor and a life of sin, a boastful tongue and idle hands, an abundance of words and a dearth of fruits, a respectable appearance and a foolish conduct, an extensive power and a faltering will?"[13] These are the words of Bernard. And Gregory

† This whole passage seems incompatible with the notion of social responsibility now being stressed by the Church. We should remember, however, that the "world" in the sense it has here, is not the human community groping its way to the Pleroma, but the abstract symbol of wealth, lust, and pride.

writes in his "Pastoral Care": "May those in command realize that if they do wrong they deserve as many deaths as they have given examples of perdition to their subjects."[14]

Perhaps you will say: "I do want command, but I intend to live with it in a state of goodness and holiness." Praiseworthy intention! But the facts will seldom call for praise. I will always fear because, as Gregory explains in his "Register": "the conduct of rulers and subjects is so interdependent that oftentimes the rulers' sins bring about a worsening of the life of their subjects, and the subjects' failings a perversion of that of their rulers."[15]

5. If you seek worldly wisdom, what great danger will be yours! Bernard writes: "Oh, how many great men were tripped by the accursed wisdom of the world! For it extinguished in them the spark of the divine spirit which the Lord had intended to kindle into a blazing fire. Know you not that the wisdom of the world is *earthly, sensual, devilish*, the enemy of salvation, the bane of life, the mother of greed?"[16] And Augustine: "Whoever seeks salvation without the Saviour and believes he can act prudently without possessing true Wisdom, is not sane but sick, not prudent but foolish, and labors constantly in a state of illness."[17] And Algazel writes: "Whoever grows in knowledge but not in moral goodness is receding from God."[18] Therefore, if you desire to be truly wise, follow Jerome's advice, and "learn on earth such wisdom as will remain with you forever in heaven."[19] Learn here on earth the way to the One, a single vision of whom procures the knowledge of all. This is eternal truth, "besides which knowledge is ignorance, but the sight of which is perfect knowledge."[20]

Jas. 3:15

6. O my soul, if you seek earthly wealth, worldly glory, and the pleasures of the flesh, and if, because of them, you

are loath to renounce the world, take heed "how perishable and frail such things are. Tell me, where are the kings, where the princes, where the worshipers of all these things?"[21] Many of them, I fear, *are cut off and are gone down to hell.* What did their pride avail them? What have wealth and its boastfulness afforded them? Whoever prefers the creature to God, the world to the cloister, gluttony to abstinence, lust to continence, follows the devil and will go down with him to eternal torture.

Bar. 3:19 cf. Wis. 5:8*

Augustine writes: "Those who flourish in the world's delight shall perish through God's might: they flourish in false goods, and shall perish in true torments."[22] And again: "If earthly possessions appeal to us, why should we not rather try to possess God who owns all things: in Him we will obtain the object of every good and holy desire."[23]



7. O soul, you may disagree and say: "I do indeed despise the world, but I cannot leave my friends, my parents, my relatives. O soul, such a reasoning makes no sense, for as Bernard writes: *"This saying is true and worthy of entire acceptance:* abandoning father and mother is generally a sin against filial duty, but doing so for the sake of Christ is a great act of piety. How inhuman the father, how cruel the mother—not parents, indeed, but murderers—who

1 Tm. 1:15

would rather have you perish with them than reign without them?"[24] And Jerome: "Should your mother, disheveled and her robe torn open, display the breasts that fed you; should your father throw himself down across the threshold: ignore your mother, step over your father with tearless eyes, and hurry to the standard of the cross. In such a case, the only way to love is to be ruthless."[25]† And Chrysostom asks: Know you not, O soul, "that whoever possesses Jesus also has father, mother, and friends? Why follow the dead? Follow the living, and *leave the dead to bury their own dead.*"[26] *Mt. 8:22*

(2) ON THE REASON WHY MANY IN THE WORLD ARE BLINDED

8. THE SOUL: O conscience, I now understand from your words, and I confess out of my own experience, that "the world in itself is barren, and yet it flowers in many hearts that make of its bitterness something to love, pursue it in its flight, and embrace it in its fall."[27] Tell me, why such blindness?

THE INNER MAN: O soul, know you not that you were created by your Spouse, the Master of all, in such a state of refinement and nobility that you cannot exist without love? As Jerome writes, "it is hard for the human soul not to love: there must always be something that appeals to our desire."[28] And so, as Bernard explains, "we find pleasure either in the heights or in the depths."[29] It follows that, as Gregory demonstrates in his "Ethics": "many waste their life, craving for the temporal, and failing to understand the

† Two very doubtful statements. The way to Christ is through the neighbor, not over his dead body.

eternal, or spurning it deliberately; and although wounded, they feel no pain. And so, wretched as they are in fact, they deem themselves fortunate, they love their exile as if it were their homeland, and rejoice in their blindness as if it were brilliant light. On the other hand, the minds of those called to salvation, holding temporal goods for worthless, seek the goal for which they were created. And since nothing besides God is able to satisfy them, they find their repose in the sole contemplation of their Creator, they wish to dwell among the blessed, and while still living in the world they rise above it."[30] This from Gregory. The same author, commenting on Ezechiel, writes: "To live in the midst of merely human delights seems sweet to those who have never tasted the sweetness of heavenly things, for the less the human mind understands of the things of eternity, the more easily does it rejoice in the things of time. But when a man has tasted with his spiritual senses this sweetness of the eternal rewards, to him the external world will seem all the more bitter as his inner vision has become more sweet."[31]

9. THE SOUL: Please, O conscience, hasten to teach me more about worldly and heavenly joy, that, through a better knowledge of the nature of both, I may more completely despise the one, and more zealously strive to attain the other. Indeed, as good is not loved without being known, so also evil cannot be avoided without being understood.

THE INNER MAN: I believe, O soul, that worldly joy — if it may be called a joy rather than a hidden scourge — is perfectly known only when perfectly despised. As explained by those who perfectly held the world in contempt, there are five main reasons why this worldly joy is worthy of nothing but scorn.

First, worldly pleasure is VILE IN ITS OBJECT. What, indeed, is the joy of this world? Augustine answers: "Evil unpunished."[32] That is, indulgence in lust, drunkenness, and revelries, and the pursuit of vanities, all this remaining unpunished. The wicked believe they are safe in their pleasures, since they are not chastised on the spot for their sins. They do not realize that, as Augustine explains, "nothing is unhappier than the sinner's happiness, which does nothing but feed sinful weakness and stiffen evil will."[33]

Second, it is IMPURE IN ITS SUBJECT, for the subject of worldly joy is the sin-distorted soul that *delights in doing evil, rejoices in perversity.* And so, Jerome was right when he said: "To laugh and rejoice with the world is not for the rational man, but for the fool."[34] A pure heart, indeed, rejoices and is happy with God and in God, and not with the filth of the world. *Prv. 2:14*

Third, it is BRIEF IN ITSELF: *The joy of the impious is but for a moment.* Augustine writes in his commentary on John: "The joy of worldly things is vanity: it is expected with great longing, but when it comes, it cannot be held."[35] O soul, "how short, how fragile, how perishable is the joy of the world!"[36] *The days of man are short,* as Job observes. *Jb. 20:5* *ibid. 14:5**

Fourth, it is SAD IN ITS OUTCOME, for the unhappy souls *spend their days in wealth . . . but in a moment, they go down to hell.—The end of joy may be sorrow.* Indeed, O soul, if you care to look, you will find sorrow even within this joy, for *a troubled conscience always forecasteth grievous things.* *ibid. 21:13** *Prv. 14:13* *Wis. 17:10**

Fifth, it is most WRETCHED IN ITS EFFECTS, for it is an obstacle to spiritual joy. Be aware, O soul, of the world's misery and of the wretchedness of its devotees: for the joys of the world have always held men away from the life of

beatitude. Bernard writes: "Oh, how vile and useless is the consolation of the world. Even more: it is frightening, for it dispels true and holy consolation. . . . Renounce therefore, O soul, the pleasures of the world if you wish to be consoled by the thought of God."[37] And Augustine: "Let all creatures be of little worth to you, so that your Creator alone may be sweet to your heart."[38]

10. THE SOUL: Now I truly despise the world, now I see the fallacy of its joy and the actuality of its sadness; the fallacy of its sweetness and the actuality of its bitterness. Hence, I will follow your advice and rightfully spurn this worldly joy. But, O conscience, you say that I cannot live without love. Tell me, then, what shall I do? Where shall I turn? Where shall I find an all-satisfying love?

The INNER MAN: If only you could know yourself perfectly, O soul, you would have little esteem for the world and all it contains; if only you could realize your heavenly nature, you would certainly shun with horror any consolation of the world. "O soul who are from heaven, blush to wallow in the mire!"[39] Blush to seek your joy in the lowest things, you whose true delight is found but in the highest. Your nature is verily from heaven, and I am sure you would naturally crave heavenly consolations if only you were not held back by the madness of the flesh. "Oh, how sweet and delightful it would be to live in harmony with our nature, and to add the spice of divine love! Alas, the folly of the flesh rules it out. Allay that folly, and nature is reconciled with men."[40]

11. THE SOUL: And what does it mean "to live in harmony with our nature"?

THE INNER MAN: In the truest sense, "to live in harmony with our nature" means to live on earth a life of

heaven, "to turn from external things to the internal, to rise from the lower to the higher."[41] It means "to act in all things according to the most noble and outstanding power in man: that is, according to the intellect,"[42] as the Philosopher says in the tenth book of "Ethics."

12. THE SOUL: How shall a man be able to live a life of heaven on this earth, in this *vale of tears?* *Ps. 83:7**

THE INNER MAN: O soul, if my words seem doubtful to you because they are spoken by a sinner, and if you are not convinced, listen to Augustine, listen to Paul. This is what Augustine has to say: "When, through knowledge and love, we take hold of something eternal, we are in spirit no longer on this earth."[43] And the Apostle: *But our citizenship is in heaven.* *Phil. 3:20* O soul, I would say that you exist more truly where you love than where you live, since "you are transformed into the likeness of whatever you love, through the power of this love itself."[44] If you see and love the things of heaven, how could you fail to live there, for in your daily life you resemble the heavenly spirits.

(3) ON DIVINE CONSOLATION, AND ON THE DISPOSITIONS REQUIRED TO OBTAIN IT

13. THE SOUL: Alas, alas, how long have I been miserably blind, wretched, and unhappy! Up to the present time, I have strayed in the midst of temporal and earthly delights, tying myself with bonds of love to the lowliest things of the world; I have received from them little consolation but much bitter desolation, poor and slender joy but great and manifold sadness. O conscience, tell me, please, what is heavenly consolation, and how could I reach it in this valley of tears and misery?

THE INNER MAN: O soul, as Bernard writes, "this consolation is nothing but a certain grace of devotion that proceeds from the hope of forgiveness, a definite but subtle taste of goodness, a most sweet delight through which the bountiful God restores the afflicted soul, and by which the soul, invited to seek God, is inflamed with ardent love for Him."[45] — "O soul, what do you think is as sweet and delightful as that which touches holy minds when they think upon their Beloved — this thing which fills them with such delight that they are lifted out of their own selves? The senses rejoice, every pain is forgotten, the spirit exults, the mind is enlightened, the heart lifted up, and desire satisfied. Souls in that state no longer even know where they are: they intimately embrace something, but cannot tell what it is, and yet they desire to hold it with all their might and will. The spirit strives, but in a delightful way, to retain this good in which it has found the satisfaction of all desire."[46] These are the words of Hugh. O soul, this indeed is divine consolation.

14. THE SOUL: O conscience, who will grant me the favor of obtaining such a sweet and rare consolation in my heart, that I may forget my sorrow, despise worldly pleasure, and begin to rise above my lower self?

THE INNER MAN: O soul, great is the object of your desire, priceless the gift for which you sigh. Mere human effort cannot obtain it, nor can human merit earn it. The humble prayer of a well-disposed soul may suffice to bring it down from God, but only out of His divine and condescending kindness. For *all gold, in view of it, is a little sand, and before it, silver is to be accounted mire.*

Wis. 7:9

15. THE SOUL: O conscience, tell me: how should the soul pray for such things?

THE INNER MAN: Many explanations could be given here by men of experience. Knowing my own lack of it, I hesitate to say even a few words. I am afraid that people answer: "Why do you speak of things you have not lived? How could you, so unworthy, praise what you do not even know?"

THE SOUL: O conscience, be not afraid to expose with all reverence and humility what you have heard and read. Many are those who can fruitfully explain to others great and difficult things of which they have no personal experience, but only a borrowed knowledge.

THE INNER MAN: I will dare to speak, for love supplies the strength I lack because of my ignorance. I will speak as best I can. I propose, subject to better judgment, that if you wish to get ready to taste this heavenly sweetness, you should first be cleansed, then trained, then lifted up. At the first stage this heavenly sweetness is sensed, at the second tasted, and at the third absorbed, sometimes to the point of ebriety.

16. First, the soul must be CLEANSED of sin, inordinate affections, temporal consolations, and excessive love for creatures. As Bernard writes, "mistaken is the man who believes he can mix such heavenly sweetness with these cinders, such divine balm with this poisonous joy, such gifts of the Holy Spirit with the attractions of the world."[47] But when the soul has been purified and cleansed of such things—purified by tears, cleansed by sorrowful groans—it will be consoled and restored by the perfume of heavenly sweetness.

Secondly, the soul must be TRAINED in the habit of doing good and bearing pain. Those inflamed with the love of truth will never find virtuous acts and the suffering of pain

an excessive burden. Thus, blessed Benedict writes: "Al-
Mt. 7:14 though it is true that in the beginning *close is the way that leads to life,* as time flows on, this way becomes wider because of the sweetness of a joy beyond price."[48] Oh, what blissful consolations are poured down from heaven upon those who labor for the sake of Christ!

Thirdly — and at this point the soul is inebriated with sweetness — there is the LIFTING UP of the soul in which the mind, joyfully withdrawn from earthly concerns, is wonderfully raised in a mysterious way above itself, above the world, and far above any creature, so that it is able
*Ct. 2:4** to say: *He brought me into the cellar of wine.* This is the cellar where the soul is led to drink of the spiced wine —
*cf. ibid. 8:2; 5:1** the sweetness beyond compare of the Divinity — and of the whitest milk of humanity undefiled. Here, O soul, the friends drink, but the dearly beloved are inebriated. Oh, happy inebriation that follows upon such a chaste and holy sobriety of body and mind! Here, the soul is made to rejoice as in wine, and to be full of happiness even in the face of misfortune, to be strong and safe amidst danger, prudent and moderate in prosperity, kind and forgiving when offended, and yet peaceful and quiet, abandoned
ibid. 2:6 to the divine embrace, as the *left hand* of the Spouse lovingly supports the bride's head, and the *right hand* of the Lover holds the beloved closely.

17. THE SOUL: O conscience, I confess in all humility and deference that, at the beginning of my conversion, it was only very seldom and with the greatest effort that I managed to wrench my soul away from the world, and with much pain that I rose to the contemplation of heavenly things. I entered with fear, and looked around with embarrassment; I beheld the angelic choirs, the palaces of

the rejoicing patriarchs and prophets, the dwellings of the apostles, the banquets of the martyrs, the rewarding of the confessors and virgins. I begged from every one the alms of at least some comfort. I desired merely the crumbs that fell from the table of the masters, but I received them not. Worse still, I was soon rejected by all as a wanderer and an intruder. What, then, did I gain by such toilsome ascent of the spirit if no consolation came from it? *cf. Mt. 15:27*

THE INNER MAN: O soul, there was reason enough for such a disturbing rejection. You wanted to share the joy before the pain, to receive the reward before practicing virtue. Strive, then, before all else, through purity and innocence, to be the companion of angels; through humility and trusting faith, to join the patriarchs and prophets; through charity and patience, to be the offspring of the apostles; through piety and continence, to emulate the confessors and virgins. Then, with the boldness of the Prodigal Son, you may ask and obtain even in this exile a gift from the Father most merciful. *cf. Lk. 15:22*

18. THE SOUL: O conscience, I readily admit that all temporal goods are vain and tasteless, and for that reason I despise the world; I loathe all passing consolation; I flee all human joy as deadly poison;† I weep over my past as if it were but death; with groans and tears, I wash and cleanse my wretched spirit. And although, at times, amid my weeping and wailing, I do perceive, ever so faintly, the odor of divine sweetness, how unhappy I am to thirst and hunger, to remain without the bread of the sons and the wine of the beloved. As Bernard writes: "O Lord, my God, my heart has not yet entered the plenty of Your sweetness

† !!!

Ps. 30:20 *which You have in store for those who fear You.* Though still outside, I am fully sustained by its mere fragrance, which is sweeter to me than the odor of balm or any other scent."[49]

O Lord, if Your fragrance is so excellent, how delectable must be the taste of Your sweetness! And if a mere taste has such power, what must be the delight of full inebriation! Augustine writes: "Oh, who will grant me the favor of Your coming into my heart to inebriate it? Then shall I embrace my only good, Your own Self, O my God!"[50]

THE INNER MAN: O devout soul, permit me to speak: You are too greedy, perhaps even presumptuous. Carefully measure your powers, consider your merits, examine
Ct. 1:3* your virtues, and then, if you wish to, be content to *run to the odor* of the divine ointments, instead of presuming to ask for more than you deserve.

19. THE SOUL: O conscience, what harsh and painful consoler you are to me in my misery! What a parsimonious dispenser, if I may say so, of God's bounty! I will dare to speak, for I cannot remain silent. Fragrance alone is not enough for me; a slight taste gives me no satisfaction, but merely whets my appetite for more: my heart desires, nay, craves full inebriation. I know of someone who said:
ibid. 5:1* Drink, friends, *and be inebriated, my dearly beloved.*

If the beggar's unworthiness dashes hope, the kindness of the One who made the promise lifts it up. O conscience, how could I ever think that He who did not refuse to bear my penalty might not be ready to grant His gifts to me! O you who spoke of the kindness of God to so many, have you forgotten the teachings of blessed Augustine: "Shame on man for his indifference! God's will to give is greater than man's courage to ask."[51] And again, in his

book "On True Religion": "*God . . . hath given us the pledge of the Spirit;* in return, we are to seek His sweetness, and to drink of the Fountain of Life in whom we are to be refreshed with sober inebriation, *like a tree planted near running water.*"[52] And Chrysostom writes: "There is no more certain proof of God's omnipotence than this: that He makes all-powerful those who place their trust in Him. For no deceit or allurement can ever make a soul that hopes in God either fall when it stands or yield when it wills."[53]

2 Cor. 5:5*

Ps. 1:3

Shame on man's despair! Accursed be his faint-hearted fear! How could God, so generous and *rich towards all who call upon Him,* refuse His bounties to those who place their perfect hope in Him? Was it not a sign of immense generosity that the eternal Father, *with whom there is no change,* sent down His Son, in whom He gave us all He has and all He is? If His generosity could in any way deplete His infinite perfection, perhaps we might have a reason to tremble in our weakness. But since "He is good in His own Self, and not by any accidental gift,"[54] He is not diminished when He shares His own goodness, nor could He be increased by the addition of any external good.

Rom. 10:12

Jas. 1:17

20. THE INNER MAN: O soul, great is your faith! Your hope and confidence are strong, indeed! Yet, even though hope, founded both on our good deeds and on trust in divine mercy, is a meritorious, praiseworthy, and holy virtue, I advise you — before you ascend above yourself in search of this inebriation — to descend below yourself in salutary reflection. Look upon your Spouse with reverent fear before you enter His secret chamber, for you must respect Him both in His anger and in His sweet endearments.

Chapter III — On How the Soul Should Turn the Beam of Contemplation upon the Lower Things by the Spiritual Exercise so as to Recognize the Inevitable Necessity of Human Death, the Fearful Justice of the Final Judgment, and the Unbearable Agony of the Pains of Hell

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1. The Soul: O conscience, pray tell me briefly what are these lower things to which I should turn my attention? I am eager to rise aloft, I seek the wine of divine consolation, I do not wish to remain any longer in the lowlands. I long, instead, to ascend at once into the Lord's enchanting abode, I long with all my heart to live in the courts of the Lord. *cf. Ps. 83:2*

The Inner Man: O soul, these lower things consist in turning yourself and in seeing the inevitable necessity of death which shall make you moan, the unspeakable justice of God's judgment which shall make you tremble, and the unbearable agony of the pains of hell which shall fill you with horror.

(1) on the inevitable necessity of death

2. Consider frequently, turn over and over in your mind, these truths: death is inescapable, the hour of death is unpredictable, and the time preordained by God is unchangeable. Isidore writes: "Of all that happens to man, what is more certain than death, and what less certain than its hour? Death has no pity for the poor and no regard for

those in power; it has no concern for high culture or noble birth; it spares neither youth nor old age: for the old, it stands ready at the door, and it lies in ambush for the young."[1]

THE SOUL: You say that our life is nothing but a passage toward death. Why, then, are worldly goods so deeply loved if they are to be held so briefly? "Why do we wish to live so long when the longer we live the more we sin; when a longer life means nothing but a greater number of crimes? For evil increases with each day and good is less abundant. Who could count the sins we commit and the good deeds we fail to accomplish as time goes by? Our sin is great indeed, for we do no good. We even think no good, but allow our mind to wander along a vain and aimless path."[2]

3. THE INNER MAN: Gregory writes in his "Ethics": "O soul, carnal men love temporal things because they do not see how fleeting is the life of the flesh. If they realized the speed of its flight, they would waste very little love on such brief delights."[3] And again: "To me, life is like a sea-voyage: asleep or awake, I am ever hastening toward death."[4] — "O passing life, how many are those you deceive! As you run out, you are nothing. All there is to see in you is a mere shadow, all there is to praise, but a wisp of smoke. You are sweet to the fool and bitter to the wise. Those who love you know you not, and those who flee from you are the only ones who understand you. To some men, you promise length of years in order to deceive them; to others, very little time in order to make them lose hope."[5]

The author of the book "On the Spirit and the Soul" writes: "Let us exercise our mind through constant

meditation, and consider our miseries: we came to this world in pain, we live in it through labor, and shall depart from it with fear."[6] And Bernard: "If all of us who dwell *in the region of the shadow of death,* in the weakness of the body, in this place of strife and temptation, would only care to look, we would realize how wretchedly we labor under a triple woe: we are prone to fall, weak in resisting, and feeble in our good works."[7]

Is. 9:2*

4. THE SOUL: Now do I see how wasteful is life on earth if we do not hasten to acquire merits that assure us life eternal. A man may be given enough time to live well, but none certainly has the privilege of living indefinitely. Bernard writes: "Oh, how safe is life when the conscience is pure—when death is expected without terror, desired with joy, and accepted with a faithful heart!"[8]

THE INNER MAN: O soul, if you believe all this, listen to my advice: "As long as you live, prepare for yourself a life that is to last forever. While you live the life of the flesh, be dead to the world so as to live in God after the flesh has died."[9] This from Bernard. Understand that "no one greets approaching death with joy and gladness unless he has prepared himself for it by a life of virtue."[10] Understand also that, as Seneca explains it, when the fool dies—meaning when the sinner and criminal dies—he suffers death, whereas when the wise and virtuous man dies, he conquers it.

THE SOUL: O conscience, I see that the death of the just is a happy death, and that the death of the sinner is dreadful and wretched.

THE INNER MAN: O soul, as Bernard says, "the death of the just is good because of the repose, better because of the renewal, and best of all because of the security it brings

about. On the contrary, the death of the wicked is evil, and truly so: leaving the world makes it bad, losing the flesh makes it worse, suffering the double pain of worms and fire makes it dreadful,"[11] but what makes it the worst of all is losing the beatific vision.

(2) ON THE INEFFABLE JUSTICE OF THE FINAL JUDGMENT

5. THE SOUL: Enough about death! Tell me now about the final judgment.

THE INNER MAN: O soul, I will do as you ask, but please listen with patience. You should know that, frightening as meditation on death may be, the thought of final judgment is no less terrifying: no one, at that time, shall elude wisdom, sway justice, force mercy, deflect the sentence of wrath and just repayment. Tremble, O my soul, and imagine what shall happen on the last day when your conscience convicts you of sinful thoughts, when the elements accuse you of sinful deeds, when the cross is produced as a damaging witness, when the stripes cry out against you, the wounds point to you, the nails speak up, and the scars lament.

"Oh what distress! On the one side stand sins accusing us, and on the other, a frightful justice; within, conscience burning; below, the terrifying chaos of hell; above, a Judge irate but just in His sentence; outside, the world afire; inside, the dreadful justice of the judging God. And if at
1 Pt. 4:18 that time *the just man scarcely will be saved, where will the impious and the sinner appear?* In what corner will they huddle? To hide is impossible; to come forth, unbearable."[12] This from Bernard.

Anselm writes in his "Meditations": "O sinful soul, useless and barren tree cut down for the eternal fire, what shall you say when comes the time to account for every moment, even to the fluttering of an eyelid?"[13] Woe to you on that day, O soul! What, then, of your vain and idle thoughts, of your frivolous jokes and jestings, of your empty and useless deeds? Ambrose says in his "Commentary on Luke": Woe to me if I do not weep over my sins! Woe to me if I do not *rise at midnight to give You thanks,—for even now the axe is laid at the root of the trees.* And anyone who can, let him give forth fruits of grace, and anyone who must, give forth fruits of penance!"[14]

cf. Lk. 3:9
cf. ibid. 21:18



Ps. 118:62
Lk. 3:9

O soul, "awake or asleep, let the frightful trumpets sound in your ears: 'Arise ye dead, and come to the judgment!' "[15] O soul, never let these words slip from your memory: *"Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the everlasting fire!—Come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the Kingdom!* Could anything be said that would be more tragic and terrifying than this word "depart"? Could any sound be uttered that would be sweeter than "come"? You will hear but two words: one the most ravishing, the other the most dreadful.

Mt. 25:41
ibid. 25:34

O soul, detach yourself now from the world, so that then you may abide with Christ; flee the world now, so that

then you may follow God; avoid now any contact or association with the wicked, so that then you may join the host of the blessed.

(3) ON THE UNBEARABLE AGONY OF THE PAINS OF HELL

6. Next, turn the beam of contemplation upon the torments of the reprobate: see how varied, cruel, horrible and intolerable these torments are. Bernard writes to Eugene: "I hate the gnawing worm and the living death."[16] — "How we should flee from you, O infernal region with your burning fire and freezing cold, undying worms and unbearable stench, pounding hammers and massive darkness; with the rabble of sinners, the torture of chains, and the loathsome faces of the demons."[17] And Augustine: "Woe to those condemned to the pain of worms, the heat of flames, the thirst without quenching, *the weeping, and the gnashing of teeth*, and the tears flowing from the eyes: a place where death is desired but never granted,"[18] *the black, disordered land where darkness is the only light.*

Mt. 8:12 etc.

Jb. 10:22

"Think how deep will be the affliction, how mournful the sorrow and the cries, when the sinners are separated from the just and delivered into the hands of the demons with whom they will go to their eternal torment. There, they will remain, with eternal cries and groans, far from the joys of paradise, never to be refreshed, but tormented for countless thousands of years, and, alas for them, never to be released. Here the torturer and executioner never tires, here the tortured never dies, for this fire burns in such a way that it never destroys life, and that old torments

are suffered over and over as if they were ever new. So will the reprobate, without hope for pardon or pity, live forever and always die; and so will they die as to be never consumed."[19]

7. THE SOUL: O conscience, you say that in hell death is sought but never obtained. How can this be? And why is an evil committed in time punished throughout eternity?

THE INNER MAN: "Those who refused the life offered to them in time will seek death in hell, and yet never find it."[20]

Gregory writes: "The wicked had desired to live forever, so as to continue forever in their iniquity. Thus, it behooves the justice of a fitting judgment that those who chose never to be without sin in this life should never be without pain in the other."[21]

8. THE SOUL: "O death, how sweet you would now be to those who had thought you so bitter! You are the sole desire of those who detested you with such intensity!"[22]

"O merciful Jesus, be tender to me for Your name's sake! Forget that this prideful soul of mine insulted You, and look down upon it as it now humbly prays! In Your extreme goodness, accept whatever is Yours, and wash out what is not! Have mercy, O Lord, while there is time for mercy, lest You condemn me on judgment day. . . . Verily, I deserve damnation, and my repentance is not sufficient atonement: yet, verily also, Your mercy is greater than any offense."[23] This from Anselm, in his "Meditations."

"Oh, if God so acted with the prideful angel, what shall He do to me who am but dust and ashes? Lucifer boasted in a heavenly palace: I did so on a dunghill! Who will deny that the pride of the rich is more readily excusable than that of the poor? Woe to me! If pride in the rich and mighty was punished with such severity although it

seems to flow naturally from wealth and power, how heavily the same pride will be judged in me who am wretched and poor?"[24]

9. THE INNER MAN: O soul, if the punishment I have described so far seems dreadful to you, listen now to this which is much worse.

Chrysostom writes in his "Commentary on Matthew": "If you were to threaten me with the pains of a thousand hells, this I would deem less dreadful than losing the delight of that glorious company, and becoming loathsome to God."[25]

O soul, hell is terrible, but much more so the face of the irate Judge. Yet, losing the vision of the most blessed and delightful Trinity is the most dreadful thing of all. Chrysostom writes: "Loss of eternal happiness and es-
Jas. 1:12 trangement from the glories *which God has promised to those who love Him,* result in such torment that this alone would be a more than sufficient punishment, even without bodily torture. Sustaining a thousand times a thousand flames would still be better than beholding the kindly face of Christ turned to anger: better than losing Him forever."[26] And Gregory, in his "Homilies": "Oh, how man
Mt. 25:6 would be amazed if only he could understand this: *'Behold, the Bridegroom is coming!'* What sweetness in these words:
ibid. 10 *Those who were ready went in with Him to the marriage*
ibid. *feast.* And what bitterness in these: *The door was shut."*[27]

O soul, what more can I say? "Consider what a loss it is to be cast away from the face of Christ, to be excluded from the delight of the beatific vision, to be deprived of the blessed company of all the saints, to have died to eternal life and to live in eternal death, to drown in the depths of a stormy hell, to be torn eternally by voracious worms,

to be tortured endlessly, to suffer the roar of raging flames, to be blinded with the acrid fumes of smoking abysses, and not to sense light but only pain."[28] This from Prosper, in his "Contemplative Life."

10. THE SOUL: I tremble with fear, I faint with horror! O conscience, I beg of you: tell me what is the purpose of such distressing thoughts?

THE INNER MAN: O soul, I believe that long and pious meditation upon such horrors as I have described are the best cure for sin, and a salutary preparation for doing good and sustaining hardships. Bernard writes in one of his letters: "Sleeplessness and manual labor may be distasteful to you, yet such things seem easy to those who meditate on the eternal flames. Thinking of hell's darkness reconciles with solitude; remembering the penalty for idle words makes silence a pleasure; constant recalling of *the weeping, and the gnashing of teeth* makes a pallet feel like a couch."[29] *Mt. 8:12 etc.*

And Augustine says in one of his sermons: "The human mind, captured by the lures of worldly passion, avoids work and seeks pleasure, unwilling as it is to give up the vices of its earlier way of life. But as soon as this mind concentrates on the inevitability of the final judgment and the cruelty of the eternal pains, it declares war against all passions, using the full power of the will. Moved either by the hope of reward or by the fear of punishment, it strives against its former desires and vigorously attempts to conquer itself."[30]

11. THE SOUL: O conscience, enough have you terrified me as I stood in this valley of tears. Your lessons, however, did bear some fruit. Have pity on my misery, and keep now the promise you made a while ago. Tell me something of eternal happiness, for I may obtain some spiritual consolation from what you say. The contrast would be good,

for, as Augustine writes: "To blame or forgive, to deter or encourage are equally good acts if they serve to mend the ways of man."[31] And Seneca: "The human spirit is generous: a man who would rebel under violent handling will more easily be coaxed than compelled."[32] O conscience, see how generous the human spirit is: often, it is more easily persuaded by meekness and praise than by terror and compulsion; it is more effectively drawn by the promise of consolation than by threat or by fear. Thus the sister and bride responded to the fragrance of heavenly ointments, to the taste of divine favors: she was willing to go with the Spouse and to follow the way of His commands, not out of fear but out of delightful love.

cf. Ct. 4:12

cf. Ps. 118:32

12. The Inner Man: O soul, I know you speak the truth. Yet, alas, many refuse to conform to God in prosperity: hence, they must be frightened by adversities. Many are blind and fail to see God's gifts, while others lose them through their careless indulgence in vanities. As for me, I believe that God, in His immense and infinite goodness, is always ready to encourage with consolations rather than deter with trials, provided men were correspondingly ready to receive His divine unction, which is so precious and exquisite that it cannot fittingly and properly be granted to all in equal measure.

As for you, if thus enlightened you seek these consolations, see to it that your mind is cleansed and your heart well ordered. For, as Augustine says, "the supreme Good is not perceived except by the purest minds."[33] And I would add that it is tasted even less, except by well disposed hearts. Many in this life conceive it most clearly but taste it not at all. Augustine further says: "I pray You, Lord: let me taste with my heart what I perceive

with my mind; make me feel through love what I know through understanding."[34]

13. THE SOUL: O conscience, please let me know what are the dispositions that are first to be present in my heart and mind if I am to taste the joys of heaven through contemplation — be it only through a modest amount of spiritual inebriation. It is long since I have started training my spirit for this, but alas I have never until now received the slightest drop of heavenly sweetness. Much have I read on the lives of the saints; much on the nature, orders, and operations of the angels; much also on the unity of the ineffable Godhead and its Trinity without compare; and a great deal on the boundless happiness of the blessed. Yet, with my mind full of all such things, I still fasted, alas, and starved, and cried out with blessed Augustine: "O most merciful Father, let me taste with my heart what I perceive with my mind!" But it was all in vain.

Often, also, tired of my lengthy studies and angry with myself, I exclaimed with the prophet: *"How long, O Lord? Will You utterly forget me? How long will You hide Your face from me?"* I know that I am unworthy of the children's bread, but with great desire I expect at least some tiny crumbs falling from their table. Yet, so often alas, panting with open mouth, *I have labored in vain.*

Ps. 12:2

cf. Mt. 15:26f.

*Is. 49:4**

14. THE INNER MAN: O soul, these disappointments you so sadly bewail are due to either one of two reasons.

Sometimes it is a most kind and salutary purpose of providence, as Gregory explains in his "Ethics": "The Father most kind often leaves prayers unanswered for a while so as to intensify desire, and to give all the more now that these prayers are meritorious, after having ignored them while they were mere requests."[35] And again, in his

"Homilies": "Holy desires grow through waiting; and if waiting destroys them, they were not true desires."[36] God, though most merciful in His loving kindness, may at times be holding back what He is so willing to grant lavishly: thus, we may learn to desire great favors often and ardently, and to preserve them all the more carefully and gratefully once obtained.

At other times, God withholds a favor because of some disorder in the petitioner's heart. Bernard writes: "Completely mistaken is the man who believes he can mix such heavenly sweetness with these ashes, such divine balm with this poisonous joy, such gift of the Holy Spirit with the allurements of the world."[37]

Chapter IV — On How the Soul Should Turn the Beam of Contemplation upon Superior Things by the Spiritual Exercise so as to Behold the Twelve Joys of Heaven from the Consideration of Inferior, Exterior, Interior and Superior Things

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(1) on heavenly joy in general

1. The Inner Man: O soul, I will not hold you any longer in suspense; no more will I sadden you by making you wait. Free your mind of vain and useless thoughts, of natural reasoning born of curiosity, of concern for irrelevant knowledge; cleanse your heart of all sin, of the effects of sin, and of the occasions of sin; lift up your spirit, broaden and expand your love, and *enter into the joy of your Master* which is such as in this world *eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man.* *Mt. 25:21* *1 Cor. 2:9*

"O soul, burn with love and desire for the heavenly life of the saints, in which there is action without labor, repose without idleness, life without death, and praise without end."[1] This from Augustine. Rejoice, therefore, and exult. Consider the reward of your labor, which is truly so multiple that it is beyond count, so great that it is beyond measure, so precious that it is beyond price, and so abundant that it has no end.

2. The Soul: O conscience, you have spoken much in a general way. Please be more specific, for we understand details better than general terms.

THE INNER MAN: O soul, what could I say? When I look upon this joy to come, I almost faint with wonder, for "there will be joy within and without, below and above, and all around."[2] Indeed, you shall rejoice in all, you shall rejoice because of all. Your joy seems to have been prefigured in the Apocalypse by the blessed woman who was
Ap. 12:1 *clothed with the sun, and the moon was under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.* This woman is the holy soul: daughter, bride, and queen of the eternal King; daughter through the creation of nature, bride through the adoption of grace, queen through the bestowal of glory. This soul is properly said to be *clothed with the sun,* for she is adorned with the resplendence of divine light. She is crowned with the glory of eternal happiness in which, by reason of her particular beauty, twelve joys stand out, prefigured by the twelve stars that bejewel and adorn the crown.

3. O soul, every day you should devoutly recall these joys, seeking no consolation in your present wretched state, but, out of hope for these same joys, bearing peacefully and gladly every trial of the present life.

"O soul, be not disturbed if the wicked flourish in this world while you suffer, if they rejoice while you sorrow: for the wicked have no part of the heavenly joys. Be not concerned if you are destitute in this world: out of hope for that very joy you seek, let your heart sustain happily and peacefully whatever trouble you encounter on your way."[3] This from Bede. O soul, "if at times you find delight in temporal pleasure, in the false glory of this world, in fleeting and fragile power, think of heaven and you will consider all such things as mere dung."[4] Thus writes Jerome in a letter. And Bernard: "Hasten, then, O soul,

not with physical strides, but with your heart and desire: for you are expected, not only by the angels and the elect, but also by their very Lord and Master. God the Father awaits you as His dearest daughter, God the Son as His sweetest bride, God the Holy Spirit as His most pleasing beloved. God the Father awaits you to make you inherit all wealth; God the Son, to offer to God the Father your soul, the fruit of His nativity and the price of His precious blood; God the Holy Spirit, to make you partake of His eternal bounty and sweetness. The most blessed family of the heavenly King — the host of the heavenly spirits — looks forward to receiving you within its fold."[5]

4. Your greatest wish, therefore, should be to join them. Deep, indeed, would be your shame if you were to come to such a place without having loved it from the depth of the valley of tears.

"Whenever you find delight in the vain pursuits of this world, whenever its glory appears real to you, hasten to lift up your heart toward heaven, and begin to be what you are to become."[6] O soul, I am sure that if you constantly remembered these heavenly joys, you would find the present exile to be the outskirts of the kingdom of heaven — a place where every day you can have a foretaste of that eternal sweetness. For "when we think upon some eternal object, we are no longer living in this world,"[7] but actually in heaven. This from Augustine. And such is the power of your love, O soul, that, as Bernard writes, "you live more truly where you love than where you breathe."[8] This, dearest soul, is the kingdom of God within us, the kingdom which, alas, we wretchedly forsake when we cleave to the emptiness and vanity of the material world. "We waste ourselves in external pursuits, and have no concern for

cf. Lk. 17:21

God's inner kingdom; we seek the external consolation of frivolities and dangerous follies, to the point that we lose our former religious fervor, retaining not even its outer form."[9]

cf. Ps. 44:11 As for you, O soul, daughter of the eternal King, listen with a devout mind; turn your ear to saintly and salutary counsels; behold the truth by contemplating the consola-

Ps. 44:11 tions of the heavenly kingdom; *forget your people and your father's house,* despise them and abhor them — despise, that is, the world, the devil, and yourself.

(2) ON THE JOYS OF HEAVEN IN PARTICULAR, AND FIRST ON THE JOY ARISING FROM THE CONTEMPLATION OF THINGS BELOW

5. THE INNER MAN: Behold, therefore, and consider with a pious mind the divine and heavenly spirits who escaped the dangers of our present life and misery. Inseparable as they are from the splendor of the eternal Sun, they direct the beam of their contemplation in turn upon things below, above, within, or without.

6. When these spirits consider things below, they rejoice for a threefold reason. First, with the help of God's power, they have overcome their wicked, dreadful, and cruel enemies; second, with the help of God's wisdom, they have either absolutely avoided sin and imperfection, or atoned for the sins they did commit; third, with the help of God's mercy, they have escaped from the endless terror of eternal torment.

O soul, how great the relief they feel day after day as they see so many others overcome by the flesh, the world, and the devil; so many befouled by various sins that

remain without pardon; so many condemned forever! To have passed from death to life makes life twice as sweet. *cf. Jn. 5:24*

7. O Lord God, if so great are the dangers of the present struggle, how immense will be the joy of triumph "when, after the world will have been vanquished and conquered and the wicked Pharaoh drowned with his armies in the Red Sea, all the elect will take up their timbrels, singing psalms and canticles with Mary, praising and blessing the Lord, and repeating in unison: *I will sing to the Lord for He is gloriously triumphant.*"[10] *Ex. 15:1*

Then, two Seraphim will be appointed—the two choirs of the elect, the innocent and the repentant—and they will *cry one to another: Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord, God of hosts!* Holy is God the Father whose might saved us from the world, the flesh, and the devil; holy is God the Son whose wisdom led us toward justice and away from our sin and guilt; holy is God the Spirit whose mercy saved us from eternal punishment. *All the earth is full of His glory,* for God called us out of the miseries of this world to the joys of the heavenly kingdom. *Is. 6:3* *ibid.*

Oh, the wonder of this day when you, my soul, shall be taken up to join the happy choir; when all the pains you have patiently borne on earth shall be turned into eternal bliss! Then, with joy flowing from your lips, you will praise the Lord God for all His gifts and say: *"The favors of the Lord I will sing forever!"* *Ps. 88:1*

As Augustine writes in "The City of God": "Nothing will be more joyful in that city than this canticle, sung in praise of the glory of Christ by whose blood we were made free."[11] And nothing will be sweeter.

8. As for you, when you are tried by temptation, battered by persecution, or assailed by some misfortune of the

world, let your spirit soar sky-high, and remember that these pains are the materials of eternal joy. Then, as Gregory explains, the expectation of the reward will lessen the sting of the scourge. Furthermore, "if we consider what great rewards have been promised to us in heaven, all the goods we have on earth will seem worthless."[12] In fact, we will then give less attention not only to the worldly goods we now possess with so much pleasure, but also to the afflictions we must endure so often with so much pain. "Indeed, *the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with* the remission of past sins, the grace presently infused, or *the glory to come.*"[13]

Rom. 8:18

O soul, you shall come to the full possession of this glory if you understand perfectly that, amidst the great dangers in which so many perish, you survived; that, amidst the lies and deceits of the devil by which many were led astray, you won the victory. Indeed, you escaped the eternal torments to which countless souls are condemned.

THE SOUL: O conscience, how sound and good your consolation! When I consider your words, hope brings me great comfort. But how great shall be my delight, O Lord God, when I finally reach the goal of my desires!

(3) WHEN THE BLESSED TURN THE BEAM OF CONTEMPLATION TOWARD THINGS ON THEIR LEVEL, THEY REJOICE FOR A THREEFOLD REASON

9. THE INNER MAN: O soul, what you have heard so far is little; in fact, what you have perceived in your mind is almost nothing. Raise your mental vision for a while; often and with great devotion turn over in your thought the joys that shall come from what is on your own level.

Consider attentively that splendid dwelling God's wisdom built for you; think of the delicious food, the refined garments, the precious treasures prepared for you by the eternal Power; consider also the illustrious company in whose presence your spirit will eternally rejoice over God's loving-kindness.

10. O soul, behold how magnificent is "the heavenly city, the safe abode, the homeland containing every pleasure."[14] This from Bernard. See how brilliant and splendid is that heavenly city which *has no need of the sun or the moon to shine upon it,* since God Himself, *the Sun of Justice—the refulgence of eternal light,* is its illumination, *and the Lamb is the lamp thereof.* What *glorious things are said of you, O city of God!—O Israel, how great is the house of God, and how vast is the place of His possession!*

Ap. 21:23
*Mal. 4:2**
Wis. 7:26
Ap. 21:23
Ps. 86:3
*Bar. 3:24**

O soul, although your body lives on earth, let your mind dwell in heaven, "in which place are found repose without labor, life without death, youth without decay, light without dusk,"[15] and peace without end. *And my people shall sit in the beauty of peace, and in the tabernacles of confidence, and in wealthy rest.*

*Is. 32:18**

11. In this place, the most blessed Lamb Himself, the pure and spotless Jesus, Son of God the Father and of the Virgin Mary, shall be our food: the fully satisfying and noble fare of His purest humanity and supreme divinity will be served to the holy souls.

Oh, how *blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!* "Here, there will always be thirst and quenching, but, oh, marvel, the thirst will be painless and the quenching ever sweet."[16] For the blessed shall *have their fill of the prime gifts of Your house; from Your delightful stream You give them to drink.*

Ap. 19:9

Ps. 35:9

12. THE SOUL: And when is this to come about?

THE INNER MAN: No sooner, I believe, than when the
cf. Heb. 1:3 Cupbearer of the supreme King, the brightness of God's
Wis. 7:26 glory, *the refulgence of eternal light,* the image of God's
cf. Heb. 1:3 substance, the *spotless mirror* of His power, the One upon
Wis. 7:26
1 Pt. 1:12 whom *angels desire to look,* will appear in glory; when
Lk. 12:37 Christ so majestic *will gird Himself and will make them recline at table, and will come and serve them* in Person.

O soul, devoutly consider these marvels in your mind. How great a joy shall the blessed souls receive from being served by so lofty an Attendant, sharing in the utterly perfect charity of every guest, tasting the opulent courses, enjoying the multitude of servants, the sweet-sounding musical instruments, the psalms, canticles, and lauds honoring the King of Glory, God the Son of God! In this heavenly, immense, stupendous gathering, you shall hear the angels exult, the apostles sing, the martyrs celebrate their victory, the confessors and virgins offer praise, the patriarchs and prophets voice their happiness, all the saints and elect of God exalt in unison Father, Son, and Holy
*Is. 6:3** Spirit, proclaiming with one voice: *"Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord God of Hosts, all the earth is full of His glory!"* —
"Oh, how glorious the kingdom in which all the saints,
Ap. 7:9 *clothed in white robes,* reign with Christ, and *follow the*
ibid. 14:4 *Lamb wherever He goes."*[17]

O soul, how could any delight be missing in a place of such abundant joy?

13. Behold all around you the company of the saints, gathered by God's bounty as a crowning to your bliss. "There is no happiness in the possession of a good that is not shared,"[18] as Seneca writes. And Gregory: "What tongue could tell, what mind could grasp, how great are

the joys of this heavenly city? Oh, to dwell amidst the choirs of angels who together with the blessed souls, stand in reverence before the Creator's glory."[19] And this, with no fear of parting, but with the joy of sharing their joy forever!

Anselm writes: "Here, all are known by every one, and every one is known by all. To none is hidden the land, race, or tribe of any other."[20] Here, indeed, the love of the just shall be so blessed and perfect that "every one shall love his neighbor as much as he loves himself"; and from this shall derive the boundless good that "every one shall rejoice in the other's joy as much as in his own."[21] And since the number of the elect is beyond counting, who could encompass the blessed souls' delight?

14. "What a day that shall be for you when Mary the Mother of God will run to meet you, escorted by the choirs of virgins; when the Spouse Himself will come with all His saints and say: *'Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one, and come! For see, the winter is past, the rains are over and gone.'* Then the angels will marvel at your glory, asking: *'Who is this coming up from the desert, leaning upon her Lover?'* Then the daughters of Sion will see and praise you; then the one-hundred-and-forty-four thousand standing before the throne, and the elders, will take up their harps and sing a new canticle; then you will fly securely into the arms of your Spouse, and cry out with joy: *'I found Him whom my heart loves!'* "[22] Thus writes Jerome.

Ct. 2:10f.

ibid. 8:5

cf. Ap. 14:1

Ct. 3:4

Then the great Job's seven sons, who dwell in this blessed land of the Rising Sun, will take turns giving feasts, and will invite their sister, meaning you, to be their companion. And each one will say to you: *"Drink now, and sit down and be merry; for thou hast found favor before*

*cf. Jb. 1:2-4**

Jdt. 12:17

the supreme King. And you will joyfully answer and say:
ibid. 18 *"I will drink . . .* and make merry, *because my life is magnified this day above all my days."*

Oh, incredible glory, happy and delightful heights, the like of which was never seen on earth! Compared to it, all worldly glory would seem but a mere drop!

15. THE SOUL: O conscience, too long have I remained silent, too long have I held my peace while I listened in utter astonishment and delight to the marvels you described to me. Please, do not proceed before telling me more about this banquet of heavenly spirits, for what you have said of it is far too little.

THE INNER MAN: O soul, I would rather not comply with your request than permit any word from my impure lips to mar ever so slightly this heavenly mystery; hardly would I dare to think of it. Too often involved in worldliness and vanities, as I was to this day, or even worse, still
Lk. 15:16 eating *the pods of the swine* in the company of other worldly men, I blush, and hesitate to speak of the godly spirits' life. But how could I not yield to your holy desire? I will, then, briefly speak of what the Holy Spirit may propose to my mind, unworthy of such prompting.

In this heavenly court, the fullness of all good is given to all perfectly; and yet, because of differences in merit, it is given to some souls in a greater measure than to others. Yet, as Gregory explains, divine kindness is so boundlessly immense that nothing in heaven is possessed exclusively by any one."[23] All delights are common to all, because of Him
1 Cor. 15:28 who is *all in all.* There, the virgin shall find joy in the merit of blessed widows, and the widow, in the privilege of chaste virgins; the confessor shall exult in the martyrs' triumph, and the martyr, in the confessors' reward; the

prophet shall extol the patriarchs' wisdom, and the patriarch, rejoice in the prophets' faith and foreknowledge; apostles and angels will find delight in the merits of souls of lower rank, and the lower, in the glory and crown of the higher. Thus, through the holy and perfect bond of love, every one will possess in the other whatever happiness he may be lacking in himself.

16. THE SOUL: O conscience, even this is not enough to set my mind at peace. I beg you, tarry a while on this point: tell me more about that holy gathering; speak clearly and in full.

THE INNER MAN: O soul, you know well that "it is only with stammerings, as best we can, that we speak of God's marvels."[24] And no wonder! When we are so little able to understand, how could we properly speak? The things of heaven we look upon with blurred eyes contain more truth than our mind could hold; and it is more difficult still to express these truths than to hold them in our mind. But I will not let you wait: listen to what the mind conceives, although the heart may hardly feel a thing.

The seven sons we mentioned point to the saints and elect, heirs and sons of the Father most high. They *take turns giving feasts* by feeding one another through an exchange of their heavenly joys. Hence, in the measure of the joy each one has been given, they offer to each other a delicious fare out of their personal merits. *Jb. 1:4**

The first day sees the banquet of the spirits first born, that is, the heavenly host of angels rightly called first born, for they were created first, and were first to choose God, and never fell away from Him through sin, but always cleaved to the Father with steady love, and were the first to gain heaven's kingdom as a blessed inheritance. O my

soul, the angels in their banquet offer you many rare and tasty viands, as each choir presents a special delight out of the choice reward it has received.

17. Consider first what food you receive from the highest spirits, the Seraphim's choir, "so close to the eternal Father that none other stands in between,"[25] for they contemplate Him with greater immediacy and enjoy His eternal treasures with greater intensity than any other choir. Imagine the joy they pour forth from their essence so lofty; think of how clear their vision is, and how pure their love!

Speaking now of all the spirits: the Seraphim adorn heaven's banquet with the fire of divine love, the Cherubim with the light of eternal splendor, the Thrones with the justice of God's majesty, the Dominations with the authority of superior command, the Principalities with the glory of ruling over subjects, the Powers with the faculty of controlling malignant spirits, the Virtues with the gift of working wonders, the Archangels with the glory of announcing great things, the Angels with the swiftness to carry lesser secrets of God's wisdom. See how every choir sustains the hearts of the blessed with the food of heavenly joy according to its own function in the supercelestial court. Why wonder, then, at the sight of these same spirits offering for our delight the marvels we described so far, and many other more deeply hidden joys? For we do know that they faithfully watch over us in this valley of tears, and desire with all their might to guide us to the door of this homeland of everlasting happiness.

Bernard writes: "If only we could know how closely and attentively these blessed spirits stand with us as we sing, assist us as we pray, inspire us as we meditate, protect us as we sleep, and serve as our superior's guides!"[26]

O fasting and starving soul, if only you could receive with eagerness at this banquet but a single crumb *that falls from the table of the masters,* you would most certainly be able to bear with patience the present pilgrimage and all its trials; if only you could drink but a single drop of the wine of that table, you would most certainly weary of every worldly sweetness. Gregory writes in his "Ethics": "Were the heart to dwell but once amidst the things of heaven," through tasting them, that is, "it would discover soon how lowly are many of the things that had seemed so high!"[27] *Mt. 15:27*

18. O beloved soul, what shall I say of the banquets offered by the patriarchs and prophets, the apostles and martyrs, the confessors and virgins so aptly prefigured by the other six sons? Each one offers at his particular feast as many courses as he has accomplished works of virtue in his life.

Who could properly tell how great a joy the soul derives from the utter humility and simplicity of the holy patriarchs, the staunch faith and fidelity of the prophets, the burning love and zeal of the apostles, the unshaken patience of the martyrs, the gentle piety of the confessors, the chaste continence of the virgins? "Truly, our tongue and voice fail us, because our mind is unable to grasp what a great joy it is to dwell amidst the choir of angels, to stand with the blessed before the Creator's glory, to behold God face to face, to see Light uncontained, to have no fear of death, to enjoy the gift of eternal incorruptibility."[28] This from Gregory.

19. Oh, happy the day of your return to your Father's estate! Priceless the joy of your admission among the elect! Delightful your entrance into the supreme King's

cf. 3 Kgs. 10:1 chamber! Wake up, O soul, and with the famous queen go up to the heavenly Jerusalem, bearing the treasures of your good works, and the glittering jewels of your holy desires. Contemplate with care every happiness and see that reality is better than could be surmised, and glory greater than could be told. Then, in the joy of your heart, *Mt. 17:4* you will say with Peter: *"Lord, it is good for us to be here!"* Here is our father and mother, our brother and sister; here is our home! O Lord, let us stay here! Let us never leave this place!

Ambrose writes: "O soul, let us seek refuge in our home, for that is the abode for which we were created and where the Father who created us resides; that is the safe mansion, *Gal. 4:26* *Jerusalem which is above, . . . which is our mother."*[29] And Anselm: "O soul, while you live on earth, so burning should be your desire to reach this home for which you were made, and your sorrow for not having yet attained it, and your fear of never reaching it, that there should be for you no delight except in things that give you the hope and the means of winning the final prize."[30]

(4) THIRD, WHEN THE BLESSED TURN THE BEAM OF CONTEMPLATION UPON THINGS WITHIN THEM, THEY HAVE A THREEFOLD REASON TO REJOICE

20. THE INNER MAN: Our body, composed as it is of the four elements, must be rewarded with four gifts. Earth will be adorned with eternal immortality, water with complete impassibility, air with supreme agility, and fire with dazzling brilliance.[31] "In their eternal home, the hearts of the blessed will be to one another both brightly luminous and purely transparent. There, every one's face will be

seen, and his inner heart laid open; there, the screen of the body shall no longer hide the thoughts of a man from the eyes of another."[32] — "And there," as Augustine writes, "wherever the mind flies, the body shall be present instantly."[33] — "As the spirit shall then perfectly obey its Creator, so also shall the body promptly obey the orders of its own mover."[34]

There, the senses shall be active, each in its proper field: sight shall behold the most graceful visions, taste experience the sweetest flavors, odorate perceive the most suave perfumes, touch enfold the most delightful objects, and hearing enjoy the happiest sounds.

"O soul, let your love for the present life give place to love for the life to come: a life free of trouble and trial, of anguish and want, of vexations and hardships, but filled instead with overwhelming and eternal joy."[35]

Then, "our being shall be free of decay, our knowledge free of error, and our love free of chains." — "In this place there shall be no deformity, weakness, ignorance, or corruption. This shall be the *new heaven* and the *new earth;* there, we will be like the angels of God, if not in age, certainly in happiness."[36] — "There shall be found life without death, youth without aging, joy without sadness, peace without strife, desire without obstacle, light without darkness: an eternal reign perfectly undisturbed."[37] There, "whatever you wish shall come about, whatever you do not shall not."[38]

Ap. 21:1
cf. Mt. 22:30; Lk. 20:36

21. Consider also the joy it shall be for the soul to be reunited with a body such as we have described, unlike the one you have sustained in such deep pain and overcome in such fierce battles, and of which you have so often said with fear, impatience, and pitiful anger: *"Who will*

Rom. 7:24

deliver me from the body of this death?" — Not that body, indeed, but another, perfectly obedient and spiritual; a body of such quality that it shall be for you a help in contemplation and a cause of greater bliss. Certainly, the soul would never desire to be united to a new body, if this body, glorious as it may be, were to hinder divine contemplation.[39] But in fact, as Augustine holds and teaches, the blessed souls do seek reunion with the body and look forward to this reunion; otherwise, their happiness could not be full nor their joy complete. Verily, so strong is this desire that, in a certain sense, it hinders them, and retards their contemplation.

Bernard writes: "O wretched flesh, foul and rotten, whence such glory that the blessed souls, stamped with God's very image and saved with His blood, desire you and look forward to you, and without you are unable to attain complete happiness and perfect joy?"[40]† And Augustine: "Receiving this body — not animal any more, but spiritual — the soul will possess in perfection the mode of being proper to its nature, which consists in the powers of obeying and commanding, of receiving and giving life. Oh, ineffable happiness, the soul's former burden becomes its cause for joy!"[41]

22. O soul, imagine what glory to you this clothing in
*Ecclus. 50:10** a bright and new garment *adorned with every precious stone*, the glorified body in which as many costly gems will shine as there are now virtues in the soul. Beyond words is the joyful, stupendous glory, beyond understanding, the praise that shall be yours for having so manfully vanquished your body with the weapons of chastity and

† For the simple reason that man is by nature a body-and-soul complex, as St. Bernard has happily found out by now.

continence; for having so effectively overcome the world by avoiding and scorning it; for having so prudently set the devil to flight through defensive warfare; for having fought so bravely every inordinate notion or love. Picture, if you can, how greatly honored you shall be by those you prompted toward a better life through your word and example. What more could be said? You shall receive special eternal acclaim for every virtuous word, thought, or deed.

(5) FOURTHLY, WHEN THE BLESSED TURN THE BEAM OF CONTEMPLATION UPON THINGS ABOVE THEM, THEY REJOICE IN THE SUPREME GOOD IN A PERFECT MANNER, AND ACCORDING TO THEIR THREE RATIONAL POWERS

23. THE INNER MAN: O soul, now that you have been disposed, prompted, and invited by the counsels I have given you, turn to your Maker; behold what great joy the blessed receive from Him; understand "how delightful is that Good which contains the principle of the delightfulness of all other goods; a Good not such as we find in creatures, but differing from it as much as the Creator differs from the things He made. To enjoy such Good means that whatever you wish shall come about, and whatever you do not shall not."[42] This from Anselm. "Hard as the life of beatitude is to attain, it is even harder to describe: for its duration is forever, its pleasure without sating, and its sustenance without food. Its ancient and eternal joys always hold new delights, and its happiness lasts forever without fear of loss."[43] — "In this state of happiness there is no error in the mind, no pain in the will, no anguish in

the memory,† but a wonderful peace, a fullness of delight, and eternal possession of all goods without any weariness."[44] This from Bernard.

24. O soul, imagine the happiness and joy of souls forever gazing upon the mirror of eternity where all things past, present, and future that constitute perfect beatitude are seen together most clearly. Augustine writes: "When we shall have come to the eternal brightness of the Father of Lights, we shall understand everything that can possibly exist in creatures."[45] And Anselm: "Then the just shall know all that God made capable of being known."[46] And again: "What could they lack, seeing as they do the One who knows all?"[47] And Fulgentius: "As we see three things in a mirror, ourselves, the mirror, and the surrounding objects, so also in the mirror of divine radiance we shall see God, ourselves, and the other creatures."[48]

O soul who naturally strive to know, try now to see this mirror, desire to study and to read it, for to see it but once is to learn all things. Here, Plato's teachings, Aristotle's philosophy, Ptolemy's astronomy, all seem mere foolishness, for whatever truth we may find in these is but a fragment compared to the truths we know not. *Then shalt thou see and abound, and thy heart shall wonder and be enlarged.*

Is. 60:5

25. THE SOUL: And what shall I see?

THE INNER MAN: *The King* of Heaven *in His beauty.* As Bede writes, "the splendor of eternal glory has such magnificence and sweetness that the angels themselves, incomparably brighter than the sun, must always be outshone by it."[49] Then, you shall *abound* in delights because

*ibid. 33:17**

† Memory, as used here, includes anticipation of the future.

of the stupendous vision of God's radiance, your heart shall *wonder* at the pleasure of seeing yourself, and you shall be *enlarged* by your perfect grasp of all creatures.

Oh, the stunning and admirable contemplation! Oh, the delicious and delightful vision! Oh, the joyful and ineffable sight! Oh, how well has it been said of You, O Lord my God: *I had rather one day in Your courts than a thousand elsewhere—for a thousand years in Your sight are as yesterday, now that it is past.* And Augustine adds: "Such is the splendor of heavenly glory, so great the joy of eternal light, that if we could possess them but for a single hour, this alone would rightly make us scorn even countless days of an earthly life filled with pleasures and the plenty of every temporal good."[50] For this glory is so tremendous and so sweet that once it is tasted, nothing else is worth possessing, for this one pleasure surpasses all sweetness and exceeds every possible desire.

Ps. 83:11
ibid. 89:4

26. THE SOUL: Is there anything else that is a joy to behold and a delight to contemplate?

THE INNER MAN: O soul, although these wonders would be enough even in the absence of anything else, there is yet another marvel. Not to mention the delightful sight of yet other almost countless wonders, there is this one that brings joy to the mind of every blessed spirit, and fills every holy creature with a happiness beyond words: the vision of the heavenly Queen's divine radiance, and of the glorified humanity of her most blessed Son.

O soul, who could ever conceive the joy of beholding the Mother of mercy, the Queen of all kindness and pity? No longer does she repose alongside the manger where the Infant cries: all the choirs of angels now serve her as their Lady. No longer does she tearfully seek the beloved Child

cf. Lk. 2:7
cf. ibid. 43

lost for three days: she now gazes upon His face with eternal joy. No longer does she flee with Him into Egypt, fearing Herod's wrath: He has now gone up to heaven, and Herod down to hell.† No longer is she tortured by all the evil treatments inflicted by the Jews‡ upon her Son: now, *all things are subject to Him.* No longer is she wailing, weeping, and begging: *"Would to God that I might die for Thee, . . . my Son";* no longer does she stand by her only Son dying and hanging on the gibbet of the cross; no longer does she tearfully weep while "a disciple is given to her in place of the Master, a servant in place of the Lord,"[51] as if a stranger could replace her only and most sweet Son. This mother who once knew such deep misery and sorrow because of us, now stands exalted immeasurably higher than the choirs of angels and above every creature: she reigns with Christ her Son in the Trinity's mansion.

cf. Mt. 2:13ff.

1 Cor. 15:27
*2 Kgs. 18:33**

27. O soul, consider devoutly in your mind how fully satisfying it must be to see the Man, Creator of men, and the Woman, mother of the Creator; Jesus our Brother, once lost, abased, and despised, now found, restored, and reigning, the Master of all! *Oh, that you were my brother, nursed at my mother's breasts! If I met you out of doors, I would kiss you* with the lips of my devotion, I would embrace you with the arms of my love, *and none would taunt me* when I lead you into my chamber with the greatest, sweetest joy! This is what blessed Anselm wished to contemplate, as he wrote in his "Meditations": "O sweetest Child, when shall I behold You? When shall I appear before Your face? When shall I be sated with Your beauty?

Ct. 8:1

† Bonaventure has no right to judge the final destiny of any man.

‡ There may be a tinge of anti-semitism in omitting the ill treatments inflicted by Roman soldiers.

When shall I look upon Your desirable countenance upon which *angels desire to look?* Woe to the soul that fails to love and seek You! For if it loves the world and remains a slave of sin, it shall never find peace and shall never be safe. I pray that nothing outside of You may be pleasing to me; that nothing may seem sweet or beautiful; that no treasure may give me joy that is not Your joy. May all else seem little compared to You; may all that hurts You hurt me too; may the fulfillment of Your will be my constant aim; may I be loath to find contentment far from You, but with You let me both rejoice and weep! O good Jesus, if it is sweet to weep over You, how delightful it will be to rejoice for You!"[52] These are the words of Anselm.

1 Pt. 1:12

THE SOUL: O conscience, how I yearn to see the Lord my Creator and God! How I faint with a burning hope to see Jesus my Brother and Redeemer! Wounded now with the craving to see the Virgin Mother, I weep. "Oh, when shall I possess this joy for which I long? When shall I see this glory for which I thirst? When shall He come, the Consoler I am waiting for? When shall I be filled with the abundance of His house for which I yearn?"[53] Yes, it is a pain for me to look upon any creature, for immensely greater is God's beauty from which they all proceed.

cf. Ps. 35:9

THE INNER MAN: O soul, be patient, and let your longing grow, for it is written: *"A little while and you shall see Me no longer; and again a little while and you shall see Me."*

Jn. 16:16

THE SOUL: O little while that is too long, much too long indeed! My merits may be small, but great are my desires!

THE INNER MAN: If your burning desire to see the divine light does indeed seem great and deep what must

be your craving to love with perfect love the divine goodness, and to possess for evermore the divine majesty! If you do not love with all your might, how could you expect to behold God's delight? And if you do see and love Him without possessing Him with full security, how could you be happy? Thus, "in this place, we shall rest and see, see and love, love and possess."[54] — "He alone is the fulfillment of our desire who is forever seen, tirelessly loved, and eternally praised with joy ever-new and perfect."[55]

Listen to what blessed Anselm has to say in his "Prologue" about the heavenly joys we mentioned: "How delightful is this good that contains the joys of all goods! If created life is so pleasing, how much more so the Creating Essence! If our salvation contains so much happiness, how much more shall we find in Salvation Himself, the Maker of all! If it is so good to know creatures, how much better shall it be to know the Uncreated! . . . Why, then, do you wander afar in search of created good? Love this one Good in which all others are contained. Is it beauty you desire? Here, *the just will shine forth like the sun.* Is it freedom or strength? Here the elect *will be as angels of God in heaven.* Is it long life and sound health? Here is eternal soundness. Is it the joys of the table and the cup? Here, you shall be sated with the Lord's glory, and *inebriated with the plenty of* His *house.* Is it music? Here, the angels sing. Is it company and friendship? Here is the company of the blessed and the concerted will of all. Is it honors and wealth? Here, *wealth and riches shall be in His house.* Is it safety and certainty? Here is eternal duration.

Mt. 13:43
ibid. 22:30
*Ps. 35:9**
Ps. 111:3

"O human heart, starving heart, O heart experienced or even steeped in hardships, how greatly you should rejoice if all this were yours in plenty! Ask your deepest self

whether it could contain the joy that flows from such great blessedness. But if man is hardly able to contain the joy he plucks from his own happiness, how could he ever hold joys as great and many as the number of the elect? For in heaven everyone shall love his neighbor as much as himself, and rejoice in his neighbor's joy in the measure of his own love for him. Further still, everyone shall draw from God's happiness a joy immeasurably greater than his own and that of the elect. And while the blessed loves God *with his whole heart, and with his whole soul, and with his whole mind,* even this whole heart, this whole soul, and this whole mind shall not suffice to contain the fullness of that joy. For the elect shall rejoice as much as they love, and love as much as they know: and verily *the eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man* how well the saints of God shall love and know you.

Mt. 22:37

1 Cor. 2:9

"O God, I pray that I may know You and love You so as eternally to rejoice in You. And if, in the present life, I cannot do so fully, grant that my love and knowledge may at least grow on earth that my *joy may be full* in heaven: a joy expected here and there fulfilled.

Jn. 16:24

"O Lord our Father, You counseled, or rather commanded, through Your Son, that we ask for this fullness of joy; and You promised to grant it. I ask of You, O Lord, that which, through Your *Wonder-Counselor,* You encouraged us to ask and promised to grant: that our joy may be full! Meanwhile, let my mind meditate on this joy, my tongue speak of it, my heart desire it, my words extol it, my soul hunger for it, my flesh thirst for it, my whole substance yearn for it, until I *enter into the joy* of my God who is Trine and One, *blessed forever.* Amen."[56]

Isa. 9:5

cf. Jn. 16:24

Mt. 25:21

Rom. 1:25

The Six Wings of the Seraph

De sex alis seraphim

Counsels to Religious Superiors

THE SIX WINGS OF THE SERAPH

Prologue



IVE an occasion to a wise man, and wisdom shall be added to him.† Since the wise man often finds in small matters the seed of higher wisdom, and often becomes wiser through contact with another's folly, perhaps the present writing will give beginners yet untrained in the exercise of government some such occasion of deeper thought for the sake of perfecting their discernment of right and wrong. The analysis of certain mistakes may prompt them to pursue with increased fervor loftier and greater virtues, even over and above those we mention here, and which a religious superior must have. In fact, we read that wise men have found even in the activities displayed by wild animals an inspiration to use their own genius and develop certain practical skills.[1]

*Prv. 9:9**

† Throughout this work in the Latin version of the Quaracchi edition, the scriptural references appear immediately before or after most of the direct quotations. In order to conform with style of the present series, they have been placed in the margin.

Chapter I — Able Superiors Must Be Carefully Chosen. Beginners Need a Master. Those Who Do Not Need a Master Enjoy Four Qualities

1. *I write these things to thee . . . in order that thou mayest know . . . how to conduct thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God.* The Apostle Paul wrote two letters to his disciple Timothy, whom he had placed as bishop at the head of the church of Ephesus. In these letters, Paul teaches him how to act in the function of command entrusted to him. The disciple, who had learned from the Apostle how to lead a personal life of holiness, was now to learn the art of presiding over others in a useful and meritorious manner. Indeed, there is a great difference between knowing how to be a humble subject, a peaceful partner, or a proficient leader. *1 Tm. 3:13-15*

Bernard writes: "You see many who live quietly under the authority of a master; but as soon as the yoke is removed, you notice they are unable to keep their peace of mind and to stay out of trouble. Others, well able to live in peace with anyone and having very little need of a master, are yet unfit to possess any power, for they are content with a certain average goodness, proportioned to the measure of grace that God has given them: they are able to live among their brethren sociably and peaceably, but once established over them, not only do they become inefficient leaders, but they even act in a foolish and harmful way. Others again, better men than these, know how to command."[2] *cf. Rom. 12:3; Eph. 4:7*

Moses, therefore, is instructed not to take leaders at random from among the people, but to choose out of the
*Ex. 18:22** nation intelligent and able men *who may judge the people at all times.* A man who accepts the task of making others good must first have acquired within himself the discipline of this goodness through tireless practice, and have turned it into a habit through constant exercise. Thus we read that the Lord first practiced what He was later to teach.
Acts 1:1 *All that Jesus did and taught from the beginning.*

2. Beginners are in need of a master so that they may be TAUGHT what they do not know, that is, anything necessary or useful for their salvation and progress: what to avoid, seek, or do; what to hope or fear; how to discern
Heb. 5:12 the degrees of good and evil. *You need to be taught again the rudiments of the words of God.*

Also, beginners must be TRAINED in the practice of virtue, for it is not enough to have the knowledge of good: such knowledge must also be put into action. Likewise, a student first listens to a lecture on medical science, and then applies it, for in any discipline practical exercises impress upon the mind a more perfect ability than mere listening. Since the imperfect are usually slow in their efforts to acquire virtue, they need to be prompted from time to time. Masters, therefore, who wish to lead their disciples to perfection, see to it that they practice different virtues: now humility or fraternal love, now sobriety or devotion, now patience, chastity, silence, obedience, or some other virtue, so that these same virtues may be used and developed, while the opposite vices are eliminated; for the stronger a virtue grows, the weaker becomes the corre-
Eph. 6:4 sponding vice. *Rear them in the discipline and admonition of the Lord.*

Again, beginners must be GUIDED lest they fall into sin, or use poor judgment in their attempts toward virtue. For tender souls, as yet incompletely detached from the allurements of wickedness, are often held back from the abyss of sin rather by human respect than by fear of God. Such souls, therefore, should rightly be subject to the authority of a superior by whom they are safely extricated from danger, like children protected by their mothers from the risk of drowning or from the fangs of wolves. *Understanding will guard you, saving you from the way of evil men, from men of perverse speech.* *Prv. 2:11-12*

Finally, beginners must be CORRECTED, for sin always leads to greater sin, as a disease is often the occasion for another that is worse, or as a wound becomes infected when not properly tended. Thus a man who has fallen into sin will find it hard to rise again, unless he is supported and assisted by another stronger man. Hence, God desires the strong to guide the weak, so that if the latter fall into sin, or are ever careless or imprudent, their superior may set them aright through warning, reproach, coercion, or punishment. For if the weak were to be left to their own free will, perhaps they would not admit their guilt; or else, in their indifference to it, they would remain longer in their iniquity and sink deeper into it. *And some who are judged, reprove.* *Jude 22* And so, beginners must humbly submit to a master, for unless a man follows his physician's advice obediently, he cannot be cured of his diseases. These diseases in man are his vicious passions. *He gave them power and authority over all the devils, and to cure diseases.* *Lk. 9:1*

3. Those who have no need of a master are men so perfectly enlightened by knowledge as never to be wrong in what they must know, and never to be deceived by false

good by a man, by the devil, or by their own senses: which means that they must possess the divine gift of discern-
Phil. 4:12 ment of spirits. *I have been schooled to every place and every condition.*

They are also so completely inflamed with devotion that, without prompting, they can seek every occasion of virtue
ibid. 3:13 faithfully, that is, every occasion to do the best. *Forgetting what is behind, I strain forward to what is before.*

They are, again, so completely filled with love for good as to loathe all evil almost naturally, so as to avoid any scandal with great care and deal with other men in peace
1 Cor. 10:32 and without offense. *Do not be a stumbling-block to Jews and Greeks.*

They are, once more, so humble in all things as never to be puffed up by their own virtue, and never to presume of their innocence, but to discern minutely within themselves any excess in thought, word, or deed, and to correct it by chastising themselves ruthlessly.

They are, finally, so constant in these attitudes as not to be moved from their perfection by levity, distraction,
Rom. 8:35 difficulty, or fear. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*

Such men are hard to find. Few, therefore, are those who do well without the yoke of obedience. Hence, even those in command must be subject to others whose rule they obey for their own good and for the sake of prudence; and this, all the way up to the supreme and universal Pontiff who, as the Vicar of Christ, is the Head of the whole Church Militant.

4. Hence, the good superior must possess different virtues: personal virtues that make for blameless living; virtues in relation to his superiors that make for humble

obedience in all matters where obedience is required; virtues related to inferiors that make for effective superiorship



over subjects who are thus guided toward higher goals. Now, a man whose function it is to teach all virtues should possess them all to an eminent degree. Because the number six, being equal to the sum of its sub-multiples, is the first perfect number with the perfection proper to numbers, a good leader of souls, particularly a religious superior, must shine with some virtues more brightly than with others, and should resemble the Seraphim, the highest among the host of heavenly spirits, who, according to Isaias, were adorned with six wings. This, perhaps, is the reason why the Lord appeared in the likeness of a Seraph to our most holy father Francis in the glorious vision, when He also marked Francis with the stigmata of His passion. He thus demonstrated that those who were to bear with fruit the more important functions of His household should be spiritually winged in this way. Likewise, *the four living creatures have each of them six wings.*

cf. Is. 6:2

Ap. 4:8

Chapter II — On the First Wing of Superiors, Which Is Zeal for Justice

1. The first wing of leaders of souls is zeal for justice, by which their heart protests against anything unjust within themselves or in others. A man, indeed, should be considered all the more virtuous as he more deeply and thoroughly hates evil, since the more a thing is loved, the more grief there is over its destruction. Hence, we note that in a religious Order, or in the Church itself, there are four kinds of people generally called "good."

2. The first comprises those who do not actually commit evil, yet do not strive to do good, although living with others in peace and quiet, and never giving offense or scandal by any wickedness. *These men were very good to us, and gave us no trouble,* etc. . . . For we usually call "good" those who are mild-mannered and sociable with all, although lacking somewhat in positive virtue. We also call newly-baptized infants "good." *1 Kgs. 25:15*

3. Men of the second kind are better, for not only do they shun all evil, but they actually perform frequent deeds of virtue; that is, deeds of moderation, chastity, humility, brotherly love, assiduous prayer, and the like which they understand to be good. But their characteristic is that, without neglecting anything within their present reach and knowledge, they are content with the good they are doing and do not burn with the desire for greater and more perfect holiness: they are content with just so much vigil and prayer, so much almsgiving, fasting, charitable work, and so forth. Satisfied with this much, they stop, and leave

Eccli. 3:22 to others the pursuit of higher goals. *I saw that there is nothing better for a man than to rejoice in his work; for this is his lot.*

4. Men of the third kind are still better: they detest and flee all evil, and carefully strive to do as much good *Lk. 17:10* as they can. When they *have done everything* they could, they still feel that very little has been accomplished compared to what they would have liked to do. They know *1 Tm. 4:8* that *bodily training* is of little avail, as the Apostle teaches. Hence, they desire with deep longing to enjoy the life of the spirit, to taste inner devotion, intimate communion with God, and the sweetness of His love. As long as they do not enjoy in full the delight of this devotion and of these spiritual efforts, they consider themselves to be nothing, to have nothing, to derive no consolation at all from either matter or spirit. Yet, they are not inflamed with apostolic zeal when they see the vices of others or the dangers incurred by sinners. To be sure, they wish that all men be good and happy: but while they see that this is not so, they are not pierced with sorrow, concerned as they are with none but themselves and God. Hence, such men are found unfit when called upon to rule over others, since they care less for other souls than for their own *Jgs. 9:11** peace of mind. As it is written: *Can I leave my sweetness and my delicious fruits, and go to be promoted among the other trees?*

5. The best suited are those of the fourth group. In addition to being innocent and virtuous, they also burn with zeal for justice and for souls. They find no satisfaction in the progress of their own salvation unless they draw other souls to God. They follow the example of the Lord who possessed within Himself the fullness of joy, and

yet was not content to savor it alone, but came forth, and assumed the nature of a slave so that, through His works and teachings, He might draw many sons with Him to the sharing of His glory. Indeed, zeal for justice is like *scarlet twice dyed,* and shines with the colors of a twofold charity: love of God and of neighbor. *Ex. 26:1**

Love of God implies not only the desire to enjoy His sweetness and cleave to Him, but also the will to accomplish His good pleasure, to expand the worship due to Him, and to exalt His dignity. Such love wants Him to be known, loved and served by all, and honored above all else.

Love of neighbor wills not only the bodily welfare and temporal prosperity of the neighbor, but also, and primarily, his eternal salvation. The more perfect this love, the more fervent the desire, and the more intense the effort to promote these things; and the greater the joy when love finds them achieved. For love *seeketh not her own,* but the things of God. Indeed, the greater your love for God and the more perfect your desire for the things of God, the deeper your sorrow when He is offended, when you see Him ignored and therefore not honored, when you see Him neither loved nor obeyed, when you see His cult destroyed, His enemies teeming and exultant. The measure of your care for the neighbor's salvation is also the measure of your sorrow when the neighbor falls, or when any obstacle slows his progress. *1 Cor. 13:5**

6. Although such charity is expected of all God's friends, it is particularly required of His vicars who should be moved according to God's heart by love of justice and hatred of wickedness. *You love justice,* etc. . . . Justice may be defined here as the observance of all that is necessary for the salvation and progress of souls. *cf. 1 Kgs. 2:35; 13:14*
Ps. 44:8

7. Some such conditions proceed from the ETERNAL LAW in the form of pure virtues: humility, chastity, charity, mercy, and the like, in the absence of which no man may be saved at any time. Both in the Old and in the New Law, the commands of God are primarily aimed at these virtues, as the Lord Himself says: *"On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets."*

Mt. 22:40

Some other conditions related to God are established by HUMAN AUTHORITY acting in God's name, as are canonical precepts imposed by the Church for the common good, for instance the sacramental rituals and other such positive precepts. As stated in the Decretals "Extra": "The statutes of the canons are to be observed by all,"[3] so that each man must obey the statutes of his personal state, and all must obey the general statutes that cover both religious and laymen.

Yet other conditions proceed from a PERSONAL VOW. No one is compelled to take such a vow, but once it is freely taken, it has the binding force of divine law, as is the case with religious chastity, obedience, poverty, monastic life, and other such obligations imposed upon the professed by the Rule and Constitutions of their Order. *When you make a vow to the Lord, your God, you shall not delay in fulfilling it; otherwise you will be held guilty, for the Lord, your God, is strict in requiring it of you. Should you refrain from making a vow, you will not be held guilty. But you must keep your solemn word and fulfill the votive offering you have freely promised to the Lord.*

Dt. 23:22-24

Other conditions, finally, proceed from a certain DISCIPLINE of spiritual progress, not indispensable for salvation. Such are the rules concerning the recitation of the Divine Office, and the different functions of the religious

life; the rules and schedules applying to silence, meals, dress, and work, as well as vigils and other spiritual matters. Here, the practice may vary with the particular views of each distinct Order. Although these rules are not so important for salvation that no man could be saved without obeying them, yet their violation spoils the perfection of religious life, hampers spiritual progress, and is often a stumbling block for others. Love for justice, on the contrary, strongly promotes such rules, both in ourselves and in others; and this same love rejoices when it sees these rules observed, while it sorrows, burns, and bursts into flame when it sees them neglected. *Do I not hate, O Lord, those who hate You?* *Ps. 138:21*

8. By means of some interior sense, love of justice will be able to discern whether a transgression is serious and greatly deplorable, or only trifling and slightly regrettable. For the wise man faced with things good or evil weighs them objectively, while the fool would treat serious matters as trifles, and trifles as matters of importance. He would take the beam for a mere speck, and *strain out the gnat, but swallow the camel; pay tithes on mint and rue,— and have left undone the mightier matters of the law.* Such as these are guided by their own light, and not by God's spirit, at least in this regard. For instance, some superiors are more outraged and ready to punish when a single inclination is omitted in choir than when one of the brethren is persistently slandered; or they show more indignation when some minor versicle or rubric is overlooked than when some grave and scandalous disorder breaks out.

cf. Mt. 7:3
ibid. 23:24
Lk. 11:42
Mt. 23:23

9. The most important thing to fear and deplore is the violation of God's commandments; next in importance is the violation of the universal laws of the Church; then,

the spurning of those obligations to which a man has freely bound himself by vow, for instance, to observe the Rule, particularly those parts of it that have the binding force of law. Next in gravity is scandal, whatever its malice, whether born of greed or pride, hatred or gluttony, anger or suspicious friendship, disobedience or any such vice which so befouls the reputation of a religious that this reputation — which should have been a source of edification for the faithful, a norm of right and wrong — becomes a cause of death through scandal, instead of a means of sustainment through exemplary virtue. *The name of God is blasphemed through you among the Gentiles.* Indeed, it is easier to heal a hidden and even greater sin than such scandal: the former may be cured through secret penance, but the latter is almost impossible to eradicate from the hearts in which it grows.

Rom. 2:24

10. Next in importance is the avoidance of any damage to the fervor of devotion, for devotion is the basis of all true religious life, and the means by which all exercises of virtue come to prosper. Dry indeed is the religious life that is not abundantly anointed with this oil, unstable the structure of good works not bonded with frequent and devout prayer: it is destined to crumble like a stone wall built without cement. In every Order where the fervor of devotion has cooled off, the whole framework of the other virtues begins to fall apart and comes very close to ruin. The empty lamps of the foolish virgins will go out.

cf. Ez. 13:10

cf. Mt. 25:1

11. Next to be feared is neglect of the external discipline established for the adornment of religious life and as a help to spiritual growth. A deficiency in this respect is a sign of a careless conscience and of inner levity. This discipline is not imposed as the only legitimate way, but

as the best means to establish a certain decorum and conformity in the brethren's common life. Without it, any one could live and act as he pleases, thus perhaps disturbing the others. Since these disciplinary practices, as we have pointed out,† are indifferent in themselves and bind for extrinsic reasons only, it is more important to see to it that they are generally well observed than to worry about every possible surreptitious infraction, except when habitual transgressions have become a threat to order, and hoodwinking might lead to indifference. Should this be the case, zeal for discipline should not slumber: it must rise to forestall such evils.

12. The true supporter of justice should be careful first of all not to commit or teach evil in any way; second, not to tolerate or permit evil, no matter how much pressure or maneuvering he is subjected to; third, not to encourage evil, or rejoice in it when it is perpetrated without his authority or in his absence; fourth, not to conceal evil or be silent about it, pretending not to see, for a man of justice must speak up, show evil for what it is, and frighten the culprits so that they shall not dare to renew the same offense; fifth, he should not let evil go unpunished, for the punishment of sin gives birth to some good: it protects the sinner against further sin. *"Sin no more, lest something worse befall thee."* Also, punishment cleanses man of his sin so that he will not have to suffer later a heavier punishment from God. *Beat him with the rod, and you will save him from the nether world.* Again, others are warned by it against committing the same offense. *If you beat an arrogant man, the simple learn a lesson;* in other words,

Jn. 5:14

Prv. 23:14

ibid. 19:25

† Cf. § 7.

the young and sensitive learn to be more cautious. Furthermore, the superior himself, representing the Supreme Judge, saves his soul from the sin of carelessness by fulfilling his office in this forceful way. Because the priest
cf. 1 Kgs. 4:11 Heli had failed precisely in this, he and his sons suffered the pain of death.

13. The better religious orders and the decaying ones differ not by the absence of any sinner in the former, but in this, that no sinner escapes punishment, occasions of sin are carefully eliminated, all incorrigible and contagious elements are prudently cut off, while the good are favored and encouraged, so that they may persevere and always advance in virtue. Since wickedness was found even in the choirs of angels before the choice, and among the apostles taught by Christ, what earthly group of virtuous men would dare to claim the distinction of being without sin? For although, by the grace of God, most
Jn. 13:10 of them are immaculate, not all of them are so. *"You are clean, but not all."*

14. It might be an advantage for the just, as long as they live in the present state of acquiring merit, to abide with a few of the wicked who become for them an occasion of greater merit. For the just may pity the wretchedness of the wicked, burn with zeal because of their sin, strive to amend them, and dread to become like them. The just will be tempted by the wicked, and also persecuted; humbled by the sight of them, in whose place they might have been. The just are also moved to giving thanks to the One whose watchfulness saved them from sin. Finally, had they been deprived of such occasions to practice virtue, their merits would have been proportion-
Gal. 6:8 ately less. *What a man sows, that he will also reap.*

15. This does not mean that the wicked should be loved or supported as such, but only that they should be tolerated, particularly if their sin is hidden and does no harm to others, and provided there remains some hope of amendment. But in the absence of these conditions, the wicked cannot be tolerated without great damage: they must be cast out, lest it seem that their wickedness is pleasing to the just. Even when tolerated, the wicked should be chastised with the goads of warning, reproach, shame, and punishment. They should also be treated with the ointments of encouragement, comforting, prayers, and promises of future recovery and renewed strength. The approaches of sin should be closed to them, and the doors of temptation tightly locked. And the same should be done for the just, lest the occasion of evil be harmful to them.

The superior is God's minister whom the Master has set over His household, to whom those subjected to him owe therefore the same obedience as to God. If he fails to correct delinquents, and allows vice to flourish under his rule, and bad habits to rise and wax strong and spread out; if he permits regular discipline to fall apart and infractions to teem; if he fails to make every effort to counter all evil, both actual and foreseeable: he will have a threefold account to render to God. *cf. Lk. 12:42; Mt. 24:45*

16. First, he will be guilty of negligence in performing the duties of his state. *Because, though you were ministers of His kingdom, you judged not rightly, and did not keep the law, nor walk according to the will of God, terribly and swiftly shall He come against you because judgment is stern for the exalted,* etc. . . . *Wis. 6:4-5*

Second, the sins of his subjects which he should have corrected and prevented, will be imputed to him. *If thou* *Ez. 33:8**

dost not speak to warn the wicked man from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at thy hand.

Third, he is guilty of abusing the honor and power invested in him, for having used it to serve his own convenience and glory instead of the purpose for which it had been given. *"Take away, therefore, the talent from him. . . . As for the unprofitable servant, cast him forth into the darkness outside, where there will be the weeping, and the gnashing of teeth."*

Mt. 25:28, 30

17. Thus, the good and zealous superior should show how much he loves God by promoting in himself and in others nothing but what is pleasing to God. Let him see to it that his zeal be never weakened by sloth, exhausted by labor, distorted by ill advice, bypassed by ruse, influenced by friendship or flattery, frightened by threats. Let him never lose hope, not even before the hardening of bad habits through daily repetition, but let him accomplish in full the duties of his office.

Chapter III — On the Second Wing of Superiors, Which Is Kindness

1. The second wing of the ecclesiastic Seraph is kindness, or brotherly compassion. The superior must be moved to kindness out of love for his brethren in the same way as he is inflamed with zeal for justice out of love for God. He is to be the rod that strikes at evil, but also the staff that supports weakness. *Your rod and your staff,* etc. . . . — *Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and in the spirit of meekness?* In this same spirit, the Samaritan poured the wine of fervent zeal and the oil of kindness upon the wounds of the man who had been left for dead.

Ps. 22:4
1 Cor. 4:21
cf. Lk. 10:33

2. Weakness of body and of soul are two different things, but both need compassion.

There are three kinds of bodily weakness. — First, the weakness of the bedridden who suffer from some acute or severe illness. — Second, the weakness of those who are able to take a few steps in the house or outside, but suffer frequent and heavy pains, as are men affected by stones, ulcers, dropsy, and the like. — Third, the weakness of those not afflicted with any specific disease, but yet exhausted and without strength: for instance, the aged, the overworked, the physically depressed, whose ailments are only accidental and intermittent.

Each of these groups is to be assisted with one of three forms of kindness: medical care, if at all possible; relaxation of the rules concerning food, clothing, vigils, and the like; exemption from the labors of office-holding, preaching, and so forth, as necessity demands. Hence, those

suffering in the first, second, or third way shall be properly assisted by the first, second, or third method in the measure of their individual needs.

3. The sick and the weak are to be treated with the greatest kindness, for they are being scourged by the Lord. If they must suffer also at the hand of man, their added misery cries out to the Father of Mercies against those who afflict them, complaining with the psalmist: *They kept after him whom You smote, and added to the pain of him You wounded.* The sick man, weak to the point of being unable to take care of himself, is further afflicted for not being comforted, relieved of work, assisted in his needs, or given any sympathy by those whose duty it is to do all this. *Insult has broken my heart, and I am weak, I looked for sympathy, but there was none; for comforters, and I found none. Rather they put* the *gall* of reproach *in my food, and in my thirst they gave me* the *vinegar* of chiding *to drink.* May the curses that follow in the same psalm befall the superior who acts in this way!

Ps. 68:27

ibid. 68:21-23

4. The good superior should be a father to his subjects, not a master; he should act as their physician, not their tyrant; he should consider them, not as chattel or purchased slaves, but as sons and co-heirs to the heavenly kingdom. He should treat them as he would like to be treated if he were in their place. But the strong and the healthy do not feel like the sick: hence, they do not know how to sympathize with them. Later, when they themselves are ailing, they will know.

cf. Tb. 4:16

Some of the sick may pretend to be more heavily afflicted than they actually are. Is that a sufficient reason to take them all for impostors when God Himself was willing to spare many wicked for the sake of a few just?

cf. Gn. 18: 23-33

5. There are three reasons why the sick are more deeply in need of helpful kindness than are the healthy and strong. — First, their bodily sustenance must be assured. Being unable to provide for themselves, they are liable to starve and die if others fail to serve them. *He that is cast off should not altogether perish.* — Again, their health and strength, lost in their illness, must be built up again. The healthy and strong need food only in order to preserve what they possess, but the sick and weak need nourishment for the double purpose of remaining alive by not losing what they still have, and of regaining what they have lost. *From him who does not have, even that which he has shall be taken away.* — Finally, they need the relief of comforting. Afflicted as they are with all these pains, they are comforted by the sight of others sympathizing with them, and endeavoring faithfully to restore them to health. *Blessed be ye of the Lord; for you have pitied my case.*



2 Kgs. 14:14

Lk. 19:26

1 Kgs. 23:21

6. But someone could object: "It is good to take care of the sick who have a chance of recovering, but wasteful

to do anything for those not expected to live." Truly said if the reason to take care of the sick were but human advantage, and not meritorious charity. The man who would care for the sick in order to be rewarded by him after his recovery is depriving himself of the merit of charity: for it is in the depth of misery that mercy appears the more resplendent and charity the more perfect.

Thus, it may be good for a superior to be stricken in the same way as his subjects so that he may learn com-
Heb. 4:15 passion. *For we have not a high priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities, but one tried as we are in all things except sin.*

7. Likewise, there are three kinds of people suffering from diseases of the soul. — First, those who, through lack of devotion or the pressure of temptation, are prone to give scandal and to sin; who are swayed by the lightest provo-
1 Cor. 11:30 cation and who easily fall. *Many among you are infirm and weak*, etc. . . . — Second, those who, although devout and of good will, lose heart at the slightest reproach or expression of blame, and sink into a kind of hopeless discouragement, or fly into a rage. They are sorry, after-
Rom. 15:1 wards, but the others are frequently upset. *Now we, the strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.* — Third, the generally imperfect who often waver in the pursuit of the many virtues, and at times, although unwillingly, burn with the fever of different passions: pride or anger, sloth or envy, concupiscence or gluttony, or any other vice of
Ps. 6:3 body or soul. *Have pity on me, O Lord, for I am languishing*, etc. . . .

8. Remedies are to be applied against such weaknesses. In the first case, occasions of scandal and sin must be taken away from men such as these, so that they may see

or hear nothing that could weaken them. Also, they should seldom be permitted to leave the monastery, for it is when she left the house that Dina was defiled. — In the second case, the weak should be comforted with frequent exhortations and taught to be patient. As long as they are convalescing, they should be spared harsh reproach and any other painful treatment. *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, that they may not be discouraged.* For the man who further upsets another who has already worked himself into a passion is like one who so angers a barking dog that it bites him. — In the third case, unpleasant habits and imperfections must be patiently endured, for not all men are able to do everything.

cf. Gn. 34:1-2

Col. 3:21

*cf. Ecclus. 17:29**

9. As learned doctors are indulgent toward the uneducated and ignorant who lack proper understanding, so also the virtuous kindly tolerate the imperfections of others, knowing that all cannot be equally perfect. They consider these imperfect men as children, little ones in Christ; they do not charge them with excessive burdens, nor do they expect from them anything beyond their strength. *My Lord can see that the children are young, and the flocks and herds giving suck are a care to me; if overridden for a single day, the whole flock will die.* If the young and imperfect whose good will is present but still resembles an infant in the womb, are compelled to practice virtue beyond the measure of grace they have received, even the little virtue they possess may be extinguished in them by this pressure that is more than they can bear. *While in your midst, we were as children; as if a nurse were cherishing her own children.* And this means: I humbly and lovingly took care of you, reaching down to the level of your frailty and imperfection. On the contrary, the Lord complains of hard

Gn. 33:13

1 Thes. 2:7

*Ez. 34:4** and merciless pastors: *The weak you have not strengthened and that which was sick you have not healed: that which was broken you have not bound up . . . : neither have you sought that which was lost: but you ruled over them with rigour and with a high hand.* Bernard writes: "Know that you must be mothers to your subjects, not masters; try to be loved instead of feared; and if you must be severe at times, be so as a father, not as a tyrant. Show yourselves to be mothers when encouraging, and fathers when punishing; be mild, not harsh; restrain the rod, and offer your heart instead; let the breasts be rich with milk, and not swollen with pride. Why increase the weight of their yoke instead of sharing their burden as you should?"[4]

*Nm. 11:12** *Carry them in thy bosom, as the nurse is wont to carry the little infant: and bear them into the land, for which thou hast sworn to their fathers.*

Chapter IV — On the Third Wing of Superiors, Which Is Patience

1. The third wing of the ecclesiastical Seraph is patience, constant forbearance. For as the tent-covering over the Dwelling was exposed to dust and rain and to the buffeting of wind in order to keep the inside clean and spotless, so superiors who faithfully defend their subjects against the storms of sin must often bear the brunt of adversities, as the hen defending its brood will face a bird of prey. *cf. Ex. 26:7; 35:11*

2. There are three reasons among others that seem to make patience supremely necessary for a superior.

First, because of the NUMBER AND VARIETY OF LABORS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND CONCERNS he must assume, for he is pressed by the constant necessity of providing for both spiritual discipline and material needs. Likewise, the apostles themselves were not concerned with spiritual needs alone: they also had to take care of the material needs of the faithful, particularly of the poor. *James and Cephas and John . . . gave to me and to Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised*—meaning that they should spread the teaching of the Gospel—*provided only that we should be mindful of the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.* *Gal. 2:9, 10*

The Lord Himself, after feeding the crowd with the word of salvation, provided them with material bread in the wilderness where they had none of their own. *cf. Mk. 6:35-44; 8:1-10*

Again, the superior will have different matters of internal administration or external business that will take some of his time, and give him problems to worry about.

Finally, his labors include much traveling, many late hours of work, many negotiations and other tiring obligations, all of which take a great deal of patience.

Moses himself, a meek man and God's close friend, divided among a number of men the charge of governing the people, unable as he was to manage everything single-handed: *"How can I alone bear the crushing burden that you are, along with your bickering? Choose wise, intelligent and experienced men from each of your tribes, that I may appoint them as your leaders,"* etc. . . .

Dt. 1:12-13

3. Second, a superior is much in need of patience because of the SLOW PROGRESS OF THOSE FOR WHOM HE IS EVER LABORING. He sees, indeed, that few are advancing; he sees that his work is almost wasted, as a man who sows much and sees little grow. Despite his constant effort, general conditions which had begun to improve because of his hard work, so easily deteriorate, as many obstacles and difficulties stand in the way of spiritual progress. At times, also, he sees his personal orders and commands imperfectly obeyed and carried out. Often, he sees evil sneaking in under the guise of good: he is afraid to expose it, because it has the appearance of good. But if he fails to act, a greater good will be destroyed at the end, and the door will be opened to a more flagrant evil. For example, in the hope of saving a greater number of souls, we accept more applicants than we can readily handle. This increase in number becomes a threat to poverty, for more numerous will be those who seek greater comfort instead of seeking hardships. Hence, travels to procure material goods multiply, unusual methods of begging are sought, and there is greater danger of breaking the Rule in obtaining alms. Peaceful devotion is then compromised, religious customs

fall into disuse, while the friars indulge in frequent excursions, hunting as they do on the outside for many material comforts, engaging in friendships the Rule forbids, seeking favors from their penitents, selling spiritual goods for profit, flattering the rich, increasing their own holdings, building sumptuous mansions, all this without concern for scandal. God's honor, which should have been exalted by our holy way of life and by the consequent edification of others, is now trampled underfoot.

Another such instance is the premature appointment of the young and untried to Holy Orders and to the functions of confessor, preacher, or superior.

Still another consists in certain practices that have some merit in the eyes of men, but, in the eyes of God, compromise the purity of the religious life. Those untrained in the ways of religion, lacking the taste of interior delight, believe that the whole dynamic power of spiritual life is contained in its external rituals, and they defend such practices with great zeal while completely neglecting true virtue and essential spiritual matters.

The spiritually-minded superior who witnesses such things and many others, and judges them all in the light of truth, can only pine and burn. Ardently desiring to correct these abuses, but unable to do so, he will have an excellent opportunity to practice the virtue of patience. *My zeal hath made me pine away. For the zeal of thy house hath eaten me up.* *Ps. 118:139*; 68:10**

4. Third, a superior needs patience to cope with the INGRATITUDE OF THOSE FOR WHOM HE IS LABORING with such loving care. Hardly ever satisfied, they always complain that he could treat them differently and better if he only wanted to. Oftentimes, he wonders whether to yield

to their insistence and accede to their wishes, or to maintain firmly what he believes to be the best. *I do not know which to choose. Indeed I am hard pressed from both sides — desiring to depart and to be with Christ,* etc. . . .

Phil. 1:22-23

Again, they distort most of what he does and misinterpret it. Hence, they bother him; they complain, accuse, criticize; and they find cause for scandal in the very things by which he thought he was serving both God and them. Hardly is he able to take any remedial step without his command or action displeasing or upsetting someone.

Finally, some of his subjects may resist him to his face, argue by letter, scorn him, incite others against him, or astutely prevent him from doing his duty.

5. Let the superior defend himself against these assaults, and against any others of the same kind, by having recourse to the shield of a threefold patience.

First, let him answer every criticism HUMBLY, MATURELY, AND KINDLY, containing his ardor so as not to reveal any impatience in his voice, expression, or attitude. Being patient, he will better succeed, eventually overcoming those whom a sharp treatment would have antagonized. Thus, Gedeon, by replying peacefully to the men of Ephraim who were chiding him, calmed their spirit which they had swelled against him. *A mild answer calms wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.* Indeed, storm cannot be calmed by storm, nor vice healed by vice.

cf. Jgs. 8:1-3

Prv. 15:1

These are the ways an impatient superior destroys in the bud the good he could have brought about: — He gives scandal to others. *The quick-tempered man displays folly at its height* by revealing it to others. — His own subjects, and even outsiders, will despise him. *One with a warped mind is despised.* — He becomes hateful and detestable.

ibid. 14:29

ibid. 12:8

He that is rash in his words shall be hateful. — He provokes others to impatience. *An ill-tempered man stirs up strife, but a patient man allays discord.* — His subjects are afraid to speak to him of their needs. *If someone attempts a word with you, will you mind?* — The house is filled with murmurings and bitterness. *He that troubleth his own house, shall inherit the winds,* that is, the winds of conspiracy. — He scares the sensitive, making them faint-hearted. *A spirit who is easily angered, who can bear?* — Nobody dares to tell him of anything that needs correcting. *He is a son of Belial, so that no man can speak to him.*

*Ecclus. 9:25** *Prv. 15:18* *Jb. 4:2* *Prv. 11:29** *ibid. 18:14** *1 Kgs. 25:17*

6. Second, let him try to be PEACEFUL by not taking revenge of personal affronts, and by bearing in his heart no hatred against offenders. His concern for their welfare should not diminish, nor should he try to get rid of them. He must rather keep them, and love them all the more, thus edifying them together with the others by doing good to the ungrateful, and by finding in them, as did the supreme Shepherd, an occasion for practicing virtue. *You shall be children of the Most High, for He is kind towards the ungrateful and evil.* The proper duty of a pastor is the teaching of virtue; if he sends away the vicious, whom shall he teach? If the physician flees the sick, whom shall he cure? If the recruit runs away from the enemy, how shall he ever obtain the triumph of glory? If the merchant neglects the deals in which there could be great profit, how is he ever to become rich? The reason why so many bishops and superiors became saints is that they attained the highest summit of perfection through the very circumstances of their office, that is, by doing good, enduring evil, and edifying others. *If anyone is eager for the office of bishop, he desires a good work.*

Lk. 6:35 *1 Tm. 3:1*

7. Third, he should be LONG-SUFFERING so that the exhaustion of heavy work, the slowness of his subjects' progress, and the irritations and troubles they procure may have no detrimental effect on his will or effort to do all that is needed for the faithful accomplishment of his task. This, indeed, is a way for him to attain high merit. *Do you therefore take courage, and let not your hands be weakened: for there shall be a reward for your work.* These hands of the superior are persevering action and patient forbearance, and if they are not weakened by sloth and impatience, their heavenly reward will be growing constantly.

*2 Par. 15:7**

8. By such trials a superior is cleansed of the dust of sin he gathers through the surreptitious action of human weakness, *for in many things we all offend.* The very number of a superior's duties is the occasion of many failings of which he should cleanse himself in this world so as not to be more severely punished in the next. *If he commit any iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men.*

Jas. 3:2

2 Kgs. 7:14

9. Furthermore, while the superior is afflicted by these trials, he is saved from the swelling of pride, a danger more threatening to those in power. The loftiness of a superior's position, the extent of his freedom, and possible conceit over his good works, would easily make him proud, were it not for the yoke of adversity that bends the neck of his presumption, and thus saves him from the abyss of pride. *It is then He opens the ears of men and as a warning to them, terrifies them; by turning away from evil and keeping pride away from him, He withholds his soul from the pit and his life from passing to the grave. Or a man is chastened on his bed by pain, etc. . . .*

Jb. 33:16-19

The setback of adversity is a guardian of a good superior's progress and salvation; without it, he would be lifted up by success on the wind of presumption. Therefore David, whom God had pleased to choose, gave proof of the greatest devotion and humility when pressed by adversity; but as soon as prosperity lifted him up, he fell into the guilt of sin. He says in the psalm: *It is good for me that I have been afflicted,* etc. . . . *Ps. 118:71*

10. Again, as we have already said,† a superior's merit will increase not only with the glory he acquires by furthering good in himself and in others, but also through the magnificent crown he receives for bearing adversities. Likewise gold becomes more beautiful and precious after having been tested by fire. *As gold in the furnace, he proved them,* etc. . . . *Wis. 3:6*

But oftentimes spiritual life becomes more intense without revealing its growth, and is strengthened most when it seems to be weakening. *"Thus is the kingdom of God, as though a man should cast seed into the earth, then sleep and rise, night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow without his knowing it."* *Mk. 4:26-27*

No wonder every effort of a superior cannot succeed: the work of God Himself does not result in the salvation of every soul. *"Many are called, but few are chosen."* All that is sown does not always grow; and those who dig for treasure are willing to move great masses of earth to find only small quantities of gold or silver. A superior's success is measured by the damage that would have resulted, had he failed, just as the presence of light is as good as its absence would have been bad. *Mt. 22:14*

† Cf. § 7.

A superior should also be encouraged to bear his burden by the fact that there is no less merit in efforts that fail entirely or in part than in those that completely succeed. Indeed, the Apostle says: *Each will receive his own reward,* not according to his success, but *according to his labor;* and it is *God who gives the growth.* Thus, a teacher who works harder with a backward pupil than with one who is brilliant will be credited with greater merit by an objective observer. Again, a farmer has to work harder on a barren and rocky field: its fruits will be lesser in quantity but greater in price. Likewise, things harder to make often sell at higher prices.

1 Cor. 3:8

ibid. 7

Chapter V — On the Fourth Wing of Superiors, Which Is an Exemplary Life

1. The fourth wing of superiors is an exemplary life. A superior should be the norm by which others live, and his behavior should be an illustration of his teaching, as figures drawn in the sand by a geometry teacher facilitate the understanding of what he says. *Jesus began to do and teach.*—*"For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you also should do."*—*"What you shall see Me do, do you the same."* *Acts 1:1** *Jn. 13:15** *Jgs. 7:17*

A superior should lead his subjects by his example not only in the virtues we have spoken of, but in every virtue, and particularly in these three: observance of community customs, humble mildness, and becoming maturity. *Show thyself in all things an example of good works, in teaching, in integrity and dignity.* *Ti. 2:7*

2. A superior should LIVE THE COMMON LIFE with the others as regards food, clothing, and work. He is not to indulge in elaborate food or drink while the others live on simple fare; nor should his dress differ from that of his brethren who are bound to him by a common profession; nor, again, should he exempt himself from the work he imposes upon the others, for the shepherd who leaves his flock exposes the sheep to the wolves.

He should be strong with the healthy and weak with the sick. *To the weak I became weak,* that is, a model, *that I might gain the weak. I became all things to all men that I might save all.* If a healthy superior lives like an invalid, his very example makes the others concerned with the flesh; *1 Cor. 9:22*

and if an ailing superior refuses to take proper medicine, he makes the sick lose heart, for he implies that they also should abstain from medicine, or that he is not interested in their recovery. Eagerly will the soldier fight at the front if he sees his leader bearing the brunt of the battle together with him. *Wherefore of these men who have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, until the day wherein He was taken up,* etc. . . . That is, from the very time of His baptism when the first disciples followed Him, until His ascension to the Father, Jesus always taught us by His example, *coming in* and sharing the daily life of His disciples, and *going out* and mingling beneficially with the crowds at every fitting opportunity.

*Acts 1:21-22**

3. A superior should also BE HUMBLE. His way of life must prove that he does not think highly of himself, and that he is not elated by his superiorship. Rather, he should be afraid of it, and bear it with a sense of duty, while much preferring to obey. He should consider his subjects as better than him, and wish to appear, not as their master and lord, but as their servant. *"Let him who is greatest among you become as the youngest, and him who is the chief as the servant. . . . But I am in your midst as he who serves,* etc. . . . " — *If you are chosen to preside at dinner, be not puffed up, but with the guests be as one of themselves.*

Lk. 22:26-27

Sir. 32:1

4. A superior should be humbly accessible. His subjects should find him easy to approach, and should dare to speak to him with confidence about their needs. Let him listen to them with patience, kindly granting their requests, instructing them with care, and encouraging them readily. He should try to be loved rather than feared: for a beloved superior is more easily obeyed than another who inspires

terror. Obedience is free when it flows from love, forced when it is born of fear: the more it participates in the freedom of the will, the higher it is in the order of merit. For the proper end of superiorship is to direct the subjects toward eternal life, and to assist them faithfully in acquiring the necessary merits of virtue.

5. A superior should be humble in his use of temporal goods: he should never desire anything sumptuous. Everything he has, clothing, books, cell, bed, appliances, table, cape, and so forth, should be proof of his desire to be poor and humble. None of his possessions should be ostentatious or uncommon; he should apply the same rule to his subjects. For men rejoice in things that resemble them: lofty men care for sublime things, humble men for lowly things. To seek rare treasures, boast of precious goods, live in the midst of luxury, never indicates a humble heart. *He beholdeth every high thing. He is king over all the children of pride.* *Jb. 41:25**

6. There are three signs of a BECOMING MATURITY. The mature man never acts lightly. For instance, he never speaks or jokes in a silly or worldly manner, which may sometimes be appreciated as funny, but makes him less respected and revered. As Gregory writes: "It is hard to accept the preaching of a joker."[5] A superior should be generally loved, but he must fill the insolent with fear. This is evident of our love for the supreme Creator: the more we acknowledge His absolute majesty, the more we taste His sweet condescension. *The Lord is sweet and righteous: therefore He will give a law to sinners in the way.* *Ps. 24:8**

7. Again, a mature superior is not frivolous in his emotions, showing excessive affection for women or for any irresponsible person. Verily, the more virtuous subjects

should be loved more intensely than others; all, however, should be embraced in Christ for the sake of salvation to come. Hence, a superior's external action should be such that no one among his subjects has a feeling of being rejected out of preference for some other. All should know that they are loved by the superior, and all should be able to confide in him trustfully as in a close friend. Otherwise, indignation and envy will flare up in some hearts against a favorite, as happened to Joseph's brothers who hated him because their father loved him more.

cf. Gn. 37:3ff.

8. Finally, a mature superior is never foolish in his intent or unsettled in his will, loving today what he is soon to loathe, wanting without cause one thing one day and a different thing on the morrow. Who could trust his judgment or obey his will, knowing that both are fickle? There would be in him no prudence his subjects could respect. How could they even know how to obey him? Both imperfection, of judgment and will, necessarily lead to disaster. *Test all things; hold fast that which is good;* in any event, *do all things without murmuring and without questioning.*

1 Thes. 5:21
Phil. 2:14

Yet, when just necessity or a possible advantage suggests a change in policy, such change would not be a sign of levity, but of maturity. For while it is foolish to exchange the better for the worse, it is no less unwise obstinately to maintain a system and to refuse to change, even with an obvious advantage in sight. *Neither must you think, if we command different things, that it cometh of the levity of our mind; but that we give sentence according to the quality and necessity of times, as the profit of the commonwealth requireth.* The Apostle himself explains to the Corinthians that if he changed his mind

*Est. 16:9**

about his promised visit, it was not out of fickleness, but for their own good. *I meant . . . to visit you first,* etc. . . . — *As the people's judge, so are his ministers; as the head of a city, its inhabitants.*† *2 Cor. 1:15* *Sir. 10:2*

9. In most cases, good masters form good disciples. Many in the various religious Orders and in the Church itself become better if they find in their leader an uplifting example. Those superiors who fail to provide it will have to account in strict justice for such neglect. *Behold, I Myself come upon the shepherds. I will require My flock at their hand.* Verbal teaching, without the example of deeds, is like mortar without lime: thin and ineffective. *I will break down the wall that you have daubed with untempered mortar. . . . Say to them . . . that it will fall.* Correct originals are the source of correct copies, and faulty originals, of faulty copies. Furthermore, actions teach a more enduring lesson than words, for "if a man lives disgracefully, his words shall be despised."[6] The chief goal of a superior's efforts should be to make his subjects Christ-like, to impress upon them the ways and teachings of Christ, so that they not only attend to Him in their thoughts, but also follow Him in their deeds. *Be you, therefore, imitators of God, as very dear children.—My dear children, with whom I am in labor again, until Christ is formed in you.* But since words alone cannot convey the full teaching of Christ, superiors should reveal in their own person the visible form of Christ so as to impress it more deeply upon their subjects, saying with the Apostle: *"Be imitators of me* *Ez. 34:10** *ibid. 13:14** *Eph. 5:1* *Gal. 4:19* *1 Cor. 11:1*

† It seems that this quotation should come at the beginning of § 9 instead of at the end of 8. The first part is obscure in the present context and is probably quoted by Bonaventure only as a grammatical prerequisite to the second.

as I am of Christ," as if meaning: If you desire to know the form of Christ in order to imitate Him, behold it in my way of life. *It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me.*

Gal. 2:20

Indeed, a vicar of Christ should rule in the Lord's place by promoting whatever is pleasing to Him, wielding His authority, and offering a likeness of His virtues. In other words, a good superior should promote among his subjects whatever Christ wills, use Christ's authority to do for them whatever is good, and offer them the example of his own deeds and life, thus showing that they also can imitate Christ. *For we preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves merely as your servants in Jesus.* A superior preaches not Christ but himself if he speaks for the sake of his own glory, and if, through his bad example, he proposes not Christ but himself as a model his subjects should follow. *They court you from no good motive; but they would estrange you, that you may court them.* Which means: some superiors are not leading you well because of the bad example they are giving. They prevent you from imitating Christ, so that you are liable to learn their bad habits and follow their example.

2 Cor. 4:5

Gal. 4:17

Chapter VI — On the Fifth Wing of Superiors, Which Is Prudent Discernment

1. The fifth wing of the ecclesiastical Seraph is prudent discernment: a foresighted consideration of the things that need to be done. When God offered Solomon the choice of any gift he wanted, the king gave proof that a director of souls has much need of this virtue. He chose wisdom in preference to any other gift, since, as he explains, it is impossible to govern people without wisdom. *Give therefore to Thy servant an understanding heart, to judge Thy people and discern between good and evil.* — *To you, therefore, O princes, are my words addressed that you may learn wisdom and you may not sin.* — *And now, O Kings, give heed; take warning, you rulers of the earth.* *3 Kgs. 3:9** *Wis. 6:9* *Ps. 2:10*



Indeed, the superior is the leader of the flock entrusted to him. If he goes astray, the confused and scattered flock will perish. As the eye is a lamp to the whole body, so is the shepherd to his flock. *You are the light of the world,* etc. . . . According as the eye is clear or clouded, it leads the body on a straight or a crooked way. *cf. Mt. 6:22* *cf. Lk. 11:35* *Mt. 5:14*

2. A superior needs discernment in two things: he should know what to do, and how to do it. For good is not truly good unless it is executed well, that is, by the proper means. Bernard writes: "Take away discretion, and virtue becomes vice."[7] Without discretion zeal becomes
Rom. 10:2 rashness: *They have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.* Likewise, compassion, under the guise of kind-
Prv. 13:24 ness, will stoop to excessive depths: *He who spares the rod hates his son;* meaning that anyone who, under the pretext of kindness, fails to correct a sinner, is sending this man's soul to perdition. Again, patience, if inopportune, weakens the exercise of authority, as when a superior, out of false
*2 Par. 13:7** humility, fails to restrain the rebellious. *Roboam was unexperienced, and of a fearful heart, and could not resist them,* meaning those who had risen against God and against him. Also, in the absence of discernment, any good example loses its value as a means of edification, as
*Lv. 2:13** good food is tasteless when unseasoned with salt. *In all*
*Rom. 12:1** *thy oblations thou shalt offer salt—your reasonable serv-*
Gn. 4:7 (Septuag.) *ice.—If thou offerest rightly, but dividest not rightly, thou hast sinned.* It is not enough simply to do good: you should also wisely determine how, when, where, and why it should be done.

3. Many are the times when a superior should act with circumspection. They cannot be indicated here, even briefly. There are four instances, however, that seem to call for particular insight on his part.

Exodus provides that the priest who enters the sanctuary for the service of the Lord must wear, together with
Ex. 28:15 other ornaments, the *breastplate of decision* on which are
ibid. 17 *four rows of precious stones,* each row containing three gems set in gold, etc. . . . Whenever a superior receives the

charge of souls and makes a most agreeable sacrifice to God by contributing to their salvation, he is a priest entering the sanctuary for the service of the Lord: for there is no sacrifice more pleasing to God than zeal for souls. Hence, in addition to the emblems of the other virtues, a superior must always wear the breastplate of a fourfold prudent judgment related to his function. — He must know, first, how to govern his subjects in accordance with their state so that the virtuous may advance and persevere. — Second, how to correct or amend those who have fallen or gone astray. — Third, how to handle the administrative business of his charge. — Fourth, how to act in all this in a way that is safe for his soul.

The three gems in each row are the three points that pertain to each of these matters.

4. In order to MAINTAIN THE PROPER RELIGIOUS STATE, a superior should know clearly the pattern of his subjects' behavior and thought, and also the limit of their strength, so that he may place the burden of regular observance upon each one according to his capacity. For all are not equally able to do all things, but *each one has his own gift from God, one in this way, and another in that.* — *Aaron and his sons shall go in and assign to each of them his task, and what he must carry.* Aaron and his sons correspond to the prelates of higher and lower rank who shall *go in* — that is, understand the inner thoughts of each subject — and *assign to each of them* a fitting load of religious practices, taking into consideration three degrees of obligation which correspond to the three gems of the first of the four rows we mentioned.

1 Cor. 7:7

Nm. 4:19

5. The first degree of obligation applies to matters which the very form of profession in any given Order establishes

as necessary for salvation; that is, matters so much a part of the spirit of the Order or Rule that violating them openly would amount to committing a mortal sin: these are, for instance, regular obedience, voluntary poverty, chastity, and all other duties that are binding by law. There is no place here for dispensation by a superior, since he himself is bound by the same law. A superior must pay careful attention to these things: he should see to it that all observe them diligently, and that the unwilling are forced to comply; he should do everything in his power to prevent violations, for any reason whatsoever, even under threat of imminent hardship to the friars and to himself.

Rom. 8:35 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or the sword?* This means that nothing should.

This is the answer to those who say: "If we do such and such a thing, the friars will not be provided for, nor will they be able to survive." This reasoning is opposed to the Rule. It is a cause of scandal and distorts religious life. Wherever religious are unable or unwilling to live as religious, it would be better for them not to be religious at all: for then they themselves would not perish, nor would

Mt. 18:6 they scandalize others. *But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it were better,* etc. . . . What, then, will happen to those who scandalize many full-grown men?

Such a consideration should be the first jewel shining on the breastplate of the priest, and the first thing to watch.

6. The second level of obligation concerns the practice of higher perfection; that is, acts of outstanding patience, admirable humility, marvelous charity, trying moderation, strict poverty, deep devotion, and other such virtues. In

leading his subjects to this goal, a superior should encourage and advise them, giving also an effective example. He should rather inspire than compel: counsels of perfection should be suggested, not imposed, except in matters of vow, for instance, continence. The chief purpose of a monastery is to be as a palaestra of perfection. In the palaestra, we are told, wrestlers covered their naked bodies with oil, so that the adversary could not hold and throw them. This game aptly compares with the struggle of religious life. *Everyone in a contest abstains from all things.* *1 Cor. 9:25*

And so, may the superior wear this second jewel on his breastplate as a lesson to his disciples, an inducement to make them not only stay on the road of salvation, but also strive for perfection and for glory in heaven.

7. The third degree of obligation concerns matters that are not indispensable for salvation or for eminent perfection, but yet have been wisely recommended by the holy fathers as means for the acquiring and preserving of both. They lead to the habit of good works, to praiseworthy religious life, and to the edification of others. Such means are fasting, silence, the celebration of the divine office, and other external practices of virtue. As the Apostle explains *cf. 1 Tm. 4:8* to Timothy, the usefulness of these means compares with that of tools for a craftsman. A real expert could find other instruments to achieve his purpose, since craftsmanship is not limited to the use of any particular tool. Therefore, when dispensation from such practices proves necessary or advantageous, a wise superior will grant it readily to a number of his subjects, as he sees fit, considering the time and the place. When, however, dispensation is not justified by any necessity or possible advantage, he must carefully enforce these same practices.

A superior needs great discretion in this matter, for he must find the middle road between rigor and laxity. If he is too severe, he will be less appreciated by his subordinates, and they, in the future, will be less willing to do other things that may prove to be of greater necessity or of greater advantage. Yet, if he makes too many concessions, regular observance will rapidly collapse. *He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little.*

*Ecclus. 19:1**

8. A wise superior should, with constant watchfulness, AMEND THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN. This is the second row, containing three gems, for, to this end, there must be three different attitudes, as there are three kinds of sinners.

The first, when they have sinned, immediately flee to the refuge of penance, either innerly impelled by the spirit or outwardly compelled by man. The penitential remedy administered to them by the physician of souls must be so tempered with the balm of mercy that the sinners, while giving adequate satisfaction to God for the offense and to their neighbor for the scandal, thus deterring others from sin, also find the penance light enough not to make them regret their repentance. *Even if a person is caught doing something wrong, you who are spiritual,* that is, spiritual physicians, *instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself,* etc. . . . In other words, impose upon them a penance sufficient to make them feel the burden of their guilt: but do it with clemency, as you would like others to be compassionate toward you, had you been the sinner.

Gal. 6:1

This discernment is the first jewel of the second row.

9. Others, when they have sinned, try to conceal, explain, or defend their action, and thus the poison remains hidden. The superior may be aware of the inner decay

through positive symptoms; yet, since there is no evident proof or voluntary confession, he cannot properly operate with the knife of open correction. Let him chastise: no good comes from it. He will seem to be chasing vices instead of correcting the vicious. Let him surrender and look away: he will burn with anxiety, as much for his brother's soul as for his own, for having failed to straighten out a sinner. When he can do nothing else, he should keep the whole thing secret and bide his time. Where reasoning failed, he should try prayer, so that God may finally correct the sinner or uncover the hidden evil, and that some remedy may be applied. So did the Lord bear at length with Judas the betrayer: He did not reproach him openly until his iniquity swelled to the point where it broke out. As long as it had remained hidden, and although it was making Judas mortally sick, it was never harmful to others: thus, in all justice, it could be silently tolerated. *Let both* the cockle and the wheat *grow together until the harvest.— He who is filthy, let him be filthy still.*

cf. Jn. 12:4-8

Mt. 13:30

Ap. 22:11

Yet, such evildoers must be protected cautiously against the occasions of sin, and warned in a general manner that they should repent. *Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed!* The traitor, however, could not have committed so suddenly a crime so great, had he not been constantly and progressively slipping from bad to worse. The Lord must have long tolerated in silence the wicked state of Judas. *For I am silent and as one that seeketh not.* The superior needs great wisdom if he is to keep such knowledge buried in his heart without deviating in either direction from the proper course.

Mt. 26:24

*Is. 57:11**

This is the second jewel in the second row of the breastplate worn by the priest.

10. Sinners of the third kind commit serious and notorious offenses, and either refuse to accept the deserved reprimand, or accept it hypocritically with no thought of amendment. Their neighbors will be made worse by their example, and will be scandalized: seeing such misdeeds unpunished, they will begin to act in the same way and expect to be spared as were the sinners.

These four conditions may exist together: serious sin; notorious sin; absence of any hope for correction because the sinner is obdurate or his bad habit is incurable; damage to others caused by the bad example and scandal because such things are tolerated. What, then, remains to be done but to cast out the diseased sheep, or cut off the infected member, lest the others be harmed or corrupted?

*Gal. 5:12** *I would they were even cut off, who trouble you!* — *Ex-*
1 Cor. 5:13 *pel the wicked man from your midst!* — *If the unbeliever*
ibid. 7:15 *departs, let him depart!* — *"Cut it down, therefore,"* mean-
Lk. 13:7 ing the barren fig-tree; *"why does it still encumber the*
Mt. 3:10 *ground?"* — *"Every tree therefore that is not bringing forth*
Nm. 5:2-3 *good fruit is to be cut down."* — *"Order the Israelites to expel from camp every leper, and every one suffering from a discharge, and every one who has become unclean by contact with a corpse. . . . They are not to defile the camp in which I dwell."* Such steps, however, should not be taken rashly, but with the mature wisdom of prudent men, of those who possess the spirit of God and the gift of
Sir. 32:19 counsel. *Do nothing without counsel, and then you need*
Mt. 18:6 *have no regrets.* — *Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it were better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.* That is, when a man who wears the religious habit is living in a way that scandalizes the simple

instead of edifying them, it is better that he be expelled and perish alone than that he contaminate holy religion.

11. The third row of jewels represents the various PRACTICAL BUSINESSES A SUPERIOR IS CALLED UPON TO HANDLE. Some of these he should delegate; others he should manage personally; yet others he should eliminate or reduce to a minimum. Thus did Christ entrust some things to His disciples—for instance, the purse, to Judas—reserving for Himself the functions of preaching and healing. When asked to divide an inheritance between two brothers, He replied: *"Man, who has appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?"*

cf. Jn. 12:6

Lk. 12:14

12. The superior who attempts to deal personally with all the practical problems of daily life will be distracted from the care of spiritual needs of a higher order. While the eye of his mind is roaming abroad, it shall have a less clear vision of inner concerns that are more important for salvation. *"Be thou to the people in those things that pertain to God."—"Your burden will be lightened, since they will bear it with you,"* meaning that they will share the less important matters. *"It is not desirable that we should forsake the word of God and serve at tables,* etc. . . ." In the absence of any worthy person to whom the superior can entrust such external cares, he should risk being defrauded rather than concern himself with such matters. He would be following the example of Christ who knew that Judas was a thief, and yet permitted him to handle the purchase of provisions. *He was a thief, and holding the purse, used to take what was put in it.* This applies to superiors more eager to find delegates for the care of souls than deputies for material business, forgetting that it is much worse to endanger souls than to lose material goods.

*Ex. 18:19**

ibid. 22

Acts 6:2

Jn. 12:6

13. Spiritual things, on the other hand, and all things necessary for salvation and the growth of virtues, must retain the foremost attention of the guardian and director of souls. These matters are of the very essence of his pastoral function. They are the first things for which he shall have to account before the Lord on judgment day. His responsibilities are: to enforce the proper observance of the Rule, Constitutions, and discipline of the Order; to ensure peace and charity among the brethren; to know the hearts of all his subjects well and to help them out of their troubles; to foresee and eliminate the occasions of sin; to advise the brethren on how to advance; to amend what must be amended; to solve all doubts; to show each one how to fulfill his appointed task properly so as to serve the brethren well without offending his own conscience: but if to satisfy men would result in offending God, then God must be served with obedience, and men, with forbearance. *"We must obey God rather than men."*

Acts 5:29

A superior actually functions as the head in the body of the community. Thus, while the members are engaged in specialized tasks, the head acts as the director of all the parts, as if possessing every sense, guiding all the members, transmitting feeling and motion to them. This the superior does by giving orders and permissions under holy obedience, a function similar to the coordination of the nervous system. Thus, the head is not absorbed in any one activity, but is free to attend to the needs of all the members; it is useful to all, since it listens, tastes, smells, and speaks for all, as does a superior for his subjects. *They keep watch as having to render an account of your souls.*

Heb. 13:17

14. Now, activities that are superfluous or unnecessary for salvation or spiritual progress should be curtailed and

eliminated whenever possible; and this applies both to superiors and subjects. Since time is short and the day full of troubles, leaving us little opportunity to attend to essentials, whenever we choose to devote ourselves to vain external things, we neglect the more useful and the better. Distracted by such scattering, the mind has less strength for the perfect fulfillment of any duty. Hence, superiors and religious are sometimes so deeply concerned about buildings, books, litigations and other such external matters—all of which it is better to avoid—that they not only neglect more important business, but also befoul their own conscience. The eye of the mind, intent upon the external, is darkened to inner spiritual designs. The longing for the supernatural cools off. As poisonous humors accumulate in a wounded limb and cause ulcers or tumors unless removed in time, so also external cares multiply to the point of choking the spirit which took them in.

Hence, a superior should carefully consider in advance what will be the consequences of his acts, what to undertake, and how much attention he can afford to give to what he does. *My son, why increase your cares?* A man burdened with a sufficient load acts imprudently if he takes upon himself some additional charges that he could have avoided without difficulty. *Sir. 11:10*

15. A superior must be most careful NOT TO NEGLECT HIMSELF while taking care of others, for while he is saving others, he himself may be in danger of drowning. *"What does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his own soul?"* *cf. 1 Cor. 9:27* *Mt. 16:26*

This is the fourth row of gems, to be filled with a threefold prudence as with the adornment of three precious stones. *Look to yourselves, that you lose not the things* *2 Jn. 8**

which you have wrought — that is, for the benefit of others — *but that you may receive a full reward.*

16. In its first aspect, the superior's prudence concerns the peace of his own conscience, which should always be safe and clean. It should be safe, so that he never wish, do, order, or permit anything illicit, inappropriate, or contrary to his profession: anything sinful or scandalous. It should be clean, so that he never seek human glory for the good he does or promotes, nor be overly complacent about it: he should seek the good pleasure of God. Whatever a superior does for God, that is, as God's vicar, he should
Mt. 6:22 do also purely for His sake and out of love for Him. *"If thy eye be sound, thy whole body will be full of light."* This means: if the eye of your will is made pure by love, the whole body, that is, all of your good deeds, will be
ibid. worthy of the reward of eternal light. *"But if thy eye be evil,* etc. . . ." Let the superior, then, search his conscience, asking himself what he has done, what he has failed to do, and what has been his aim in doing good. As for his misdeeds, let him regret, confess, and correct them, carefully avoiding them in the future; as for his good
cf. 1 Cor. 1:31 deeds, let him glorify, not himself, but God. *If we judged*
ibid. 11:31 *ourselves, we should not thus be judged.* Brush off another's dust, and some will fall on you, and you, in turn,
Lk. 4:23 will have to brush it off. *"Physician, cure thyself!"*

Let a superior rejoice over the good he does, not being exalted, but understanding that if God granted him the favor of acting, speaking, or thinking well, it is not for his own sake but for that of his subjects.

17. Again, a superior must be prudent in his behavior and speech by which he must attempt to serve others rather than himself. For one who is expected to live as

an example to many, and to satisfy every one while pleasing all, needs great wisdom if he is to remain on the middle road, between being immoderately sad or merry, severe or lenient, friendly or distant, silent or garrulous, harsh or mild, rigid or pliant; if he is to find the proper balance between entertaining guests too often or too rarely; taking too much or too little food; scrutinizing the brethren's conduct or paying no attention to it; favoring some or slighting others, and so forth.

It is impossible to remain at all times on the middle path that pleases all. A superior will stray the least from it if he leans toward kindness, which induces his subjects to love him better, obey him more willingly, go to him more freely with their problems, and follow his lead with greater promptitude. His official power in itself is enough to make his subjects fear him. If he adds harshness and severity, timid subjects will find his authority very hard to bear. *You ruled over them with rigor and with a high hand, and My sheep were scattered.—Be not as a lion in thy house . . . oppressing them that are under thee.* *Ez. 34:4-5** *Ecclus. 4:35**

This is the reason why the highest *Prince of the Shepherds,* the Lord Jesus Himself, showed us so much love and kindness. He appeared to us as One we can love and follow, so that by loving Him as Man we may also know and love Him as God: "Seeing God in visible form, we are borne aloft by Him to the love of things unseen."[8] *1 Pt. 5:4*

Thus, the essential reason why a superior, Christ's vicar, should seek his subjects' love is to draw them more easily to the love of Christ. Whenever in doubt, he should choose that course which, in his truthful judgment, better conforms to the virtues of charity and humility and to the purity promised by vow: to the ideal of evangelical perfection.

18. Finally, this wisdom which passes judgment upon all things must also examine its own self, or else — as happens with the bodily eye that sees all things but not itself — the
Rom. 12:3 superior will *rate himself more than he ought,* being overconfident and conceited. Gregory writes: "As subjects are often tempted to accuse their superior of doing the wrong thing, so also superiors are tempted to deem themselves
Prv. 26:12 wiser than others."[9] *You see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.* The simple man, distrusting himself, seeks advice from the wise so as not to blunder; but one who overestimates himself often mistakenly thinks that he is right even when he is wrong.

Of all temptations, this one seems the most dangerous for any Christian: excessive reliance upon one's own judgment. Since no man is so intelligent as to be free of all mistake, any man who believes that he alone is absolutely right opens the door to the clever enemy who will se-
*Ps. 9B:8** duce him in many ways under the guise of good. *He sitteth in ambush with the rich in private places, that he may kill the innocent.* Satan prefers to maraud about a place where he knows that greater merits are being sought, there to track down and slay the unwary victim at the very spot where he expected to render the greatest service to God.

Thus a prudent superior always receives advice gladly, and seeks it humbly.

19. Here is found a threefold advantage: if the superior sees that others agree with him, he will be more certain of being right; again, if he acts after prudent consultation and something goes wrong, he will be less responsible than if he had acted on his own; finally, such humility is often rewarded by God, who makes the superior understand by himself or through others what at first had escaped him.

Hence, Moses, to whom the Lord Himself had spoken *face to face,* valued and followed the advice of Jethro, his father-in-law. Paul the Apostle, also, filled as he was with the Holy Spirit, went up to Jerusalem following the inspired command of Christ, and conferred with his condisciples, Peter, John, and James, concerning the gospel he had learned by the revelation of Christ. He did so in order to be safer in his teaching by agreeing with them in all things, and also to show that good superiors should always seek advice. *Do nothing without counsel, and then you need have no regret.*

Ex. 33:11
cf. ibid. 18:18
cf. Gal. 2:1
Sir. 32:19

Some men, however, when appointed to a position of authority, are so deeply convinced of being instantly filled with the spirit of knowledge that they deem foolish and wrong everything any of their predecessors ever did. Others, conversely, when released from such a position, condemn in the same way their successors' actions, never realizing that, as they disparage others, so others may disparage them. *Woe to thee that spoilest! Shalt not thou thyself also be spoiled?* No man's actions are more thoroughly scrutinized than those of one who judges others severely: his critics will try to find him guilty of the very faults he imputes to others.

*Is. 33:1**

20. There are two kinds of men from whom a prudent superior should not readily accept advice: flatterers and detractors. The former would tempt him to presume of his wisdom. *They that call thee blessed, the same deceive thee and destroy the way of thy steps*—preventing you from knowing the truth about yourself through humble self-analysis. The latter by injecting suspicion, try to make a superior's opinion of others deteriorate. In many cases, they induce him to condemn the innocent, or pass

ibid. 3:12

judgment before he really knows what happened. *With crafty fraud, they deceive the ears of princes that are well meaning, and judge of others by their own nature.—The good designs of kings are depraved by the evil suggestions of certain men*—who *endeavor to undermine by lies such as observe diligently the offices committed to them, and do all things in such manner as to be worthy of all men's praise.*

*Est. 16:6**

ibid. 7

ibid. 5

There are, in general, three reasons to seek advice: first, the correcting of others, in which case the superior seeks advice to solve his doubts; second, the strengthening of his own authority, for his decisions are more effective when supported by counselors; third, the preserving of peace, so that no one has any excuse for grumbling. Those to be consulted are, in the first case the prudent, in the second the learned, and in the third all those concerned with the particular problem.

The occasions calling for prudent judgment, however, are so numerous that there is no absolute and general rule to cover them all.

Chapter VII — On the Sixth Wing of Superiors, Which Is Devotion to God

1. The sixth and last wing, most necessary, and indispensable for the full development of the other five, consists in a superior's devotion to God. As a result of this devotion, zeal will be inflamed, the kindness of compassion infused, patience increased, virtuous example made attractively fragrant, and discernment enlightened. Such devotion is called the unction of the Spirit: it teaches all things concerning salvation. *Let the anointing which you have received from the Holy Spirit dwell in you, and you have no need that anyone teach you.—His anointing teaches you concerning all things.* *1 Jn. 2:27* *ibid.*

2. This devotion enligtens the mind, and makes it able to discern what is best: *"He will teach you all things, and bring to your mind whatever I have said to you."* It inflames the will with desire for good: *"He who eats of Me will hunger still, He who drinks of Me will thirst for more."* It gives strength for spiritual progress: *It is God who of His good pleasure works in you both the will and the performance.* It makes us detest sin: *I have hated and abhorred iniquity;* a scroll sweet to the mouth makes the stomach bitter. It conforms our deeds to the order of virtue: *He brought me into the cellar of wine: He set in order charity in me.* It perfects our external conduct and our words: *Never have I joined myself with them that play: neither have I made myself partaker with them that walk in lightness.* It makes sweet our knowledge in faith: *For the wisdom of doctrine is according to her name,* "sapience" *Jn. 14:26* *Sir. 24:20* *Phil. 2:13* *Ps. 118:163** *cf. Apoc. 10: 9-10* *Ct. 2:4** *Tb. 3:17** *Ecclus. 6:23**

meaning "tasteful knowledge." It fills hope with confi-
Rom. 8:16 dence: *The Spirit Himself gives testimony to our spirit that*
ibid. 5:5 *we are sons of God.* It enkindles love for God: *The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.* It brings man close to God:
Ex. 33:11 *The Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as one man speaks to another.* It makes man certain that his prayers
1 Jn. 3:22 will be answered: *We have confidence towards God; and whatever we ask we shall receive from Him.* It enriches
*Ps. 19:4** prayer: *May the whole burnt offering be made fat.—Make*
*Ecclus. 38:11** *Wis. 7:22, 23* *a fat offering.* It makes man kind and loving: *For in her* [Wisdom] *is a spirit . . . loving the good, beneficient, kind-*
Is. 66:2 *ly.* It humbles the heart: *But to whom shall I have respect, but to him that is poor and little,* etc. . . . It keeps the spirit effervescent like oil boiling in a pot. It procures endurance
Ps. 26:1 in trials: *The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom*
Rom. 8:35 *should I fear?—Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* It makes all good works delightful to perform:
Wis. 8:16 *For association with her* [Wisdom] *involves no bitterness and living with her no grief, but rather joy and gladness.* It
*Jb. 34:14** lifts up the mind toward heaven: *If he turn his heart to him, he shall draw his spirit and breath unto himself.* It makes
Eccle. 1:14 the world seem worthless: *I have seen all things that are done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity!* It prompts
Phil. 1:23 man to desire heaven: *I am hard pressed from both sides—desiring to depart and to be with Christ.* It washes away
Lk. 7:47 sin and cancels its punishment: *Her sins, many as they are, shall be forgiven her, because she has loved much.* It
Wis. 8:5 increases merit: *And if riches be a desirable possession in life, what is more rich than Wisdom, who produces all*
Sir. 45:16 *things?* It is most edifying for the neighbor: *To offer holocausts and choice offerings, to burn sacrifices of sweet*

odor.—For we are the fragrance of Christ. It drives evil spirits to flight: *The smoke thereof driveth away all kind of devils.* It appeals to the angels and the saints: *Princes went before joined with singers. — When thou didst pray with tears,* etc. . . .

2 Cor. 2:15
Tb. 6:8
Ps. 67:26*
Tb. 12:12



3. The grace of devotion confers these and many other gifts. Therefore, the guide of souls must be principally intent upon acquiring this grace which will always suggest to him the right course of action, help him to follow it, and keep him from straying. It is not enough for a superior to pray for himself alone: he must also pray for his flock, which he could not properly lead without God's help. *Unless the Lord guard the city,* etc. . . . A superior is the mediator between God and the men under his care. As he acts in God's behalf when teaching, correcting, and uplifting them, so also let him strive personally to promote their cause with God by appeasing Him, and begging for grace and protection against evil. *I stood between the Lord and you.*

Ps. 126:1
cf. 1 Tm. 2:5
Dt. 5:5

4. By devotion we mean public and private practices, and a permanent state of mind. The first concerns the

divine office; the second, personal worship; the third, all our life.

Concerning the DIVINE OFFICE, the superior's attention to devotion should be threefold. — First, all ceremonies must be carried out in an orderly manner, without confusion, and without faltering, everyone properly filling his
1 Cor. 14:40 part. *Let all things be done properly and in order.* —
1 Par. 25:1 *David and the chief officers of the army separated for the ministry* . . . of the Lord those who would *prophesy with harps, and with psalteries, and with cymbals according to their number serving in their appointed office.* — Second, this sacred work, the divine office, must be fulfilled with
*Jer. 48:10** alacrity instead of reluctance or sluggishness: *Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully.* — Third, the divine office must be performed devoutly and reverently, without noisy disturbance, in a distinct voice and with an attentive mind, for it is sung in the presence of the angels
Sir. 39:35 and of God Himself. *So now with full joy of heart proclaim and bless the name of the Holy One.*

5. There are five reasons why the Holy Spirit inspired the Church to establish the divine office.

First, as an imitation of the celestial choir wherein the angels and saints in heaven constantly sing God's praise
Ps. 83:5 before Him. *Happy they who dwell in Your house! Con-*
Mt. 28:20 *tinually they praise You!* According to His promise, *I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world,* Christ is truly with us on earth, both sacramentally and spiritually. Therefore, it is meet that, conforming to the heavenly example, we offer Him some measure of reverence, honor, and praise in our own humble way. We are unable to sing His glory constantly, as do the heavenly singers; but let us at least serve Him with zeal at the

times appointed to suit our frailty, imitating *that Jerusalem which is above, . . . which is our mother.* Gal. 4:26

6. Second, remembering God's favors, we must never relent from thanking Him, from praising and praying the Lord at regular hours. It was night when He was born of the blessed Virgin; dawn when, before His passion, He was made to stand in the presence of a judge; sunrise when He rose from the dead; the third hour when He was scourged, and when, later, He sent the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles; the sixth hour when He was crucified; the ninth when He died for us on the cross; evening when, at supper, He gave us the sacrament of His body and blood; and dusk when He was laid in the tomb.

The Mass not only reminds us of the mystery of His passion, but also ensures the grace of His presence, and procures a spiritual food under the sacramental species. Hence it is just never to forget these favors of God, and also to commemorate them at appointed hours. *I will remember the tender mercies of the Lord, the praise of the Lord for all the things that the Lord hath bestowed upon us.* Is. 63:7*

7. Third, we must constantly quicken our devotion, and rekindle again and again the flame of our love for God, lest it fade through sloth or worldly concern. *This is the perpetual fire* which shall never go out on the altar.— *And the priest shall feed it, putting wood on it every day in the morning.* This fire is the fervor of devotion that must burn at all times upon the altar of the heart, and that a devout priest must always feed by putting on it the wood of divine praise, lest it go out. *I will bless the Lord at all times,* etc. . . . Lv. 6:13* ibid. 12 Ps. 33:2

8. Fourth, in this way we must accustom to the practice of prayer the simple faithful who, left to themselves, would

not know how to choose the proper times for praying. They will, then, come to church to pray at least at the times when the divine office is being celebrated there, and they will be less reluctant to remain in church if they see
Lk. 1:10 the clerics performing the office in their presence. *And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense.* For many of the uneducated will hardly ever think of praying unless, as a matter of habit and at fixed hours, they are regularly called to participate in the divine services and in the recitation of the word of God.

9. Fifth, we must promote the honor of the Christian religion. If Jews and Gentiles and some Heretics hold occasional meetings where they celebrate their unholy ceremonies and practice their perfidious rites,† it is proper and suitable that those who possess the true and most holy mysteries of the sacraments often gather for the celebration and veneration of them, and sing due praise to their Creator, thus to earn a greater share of God's grace together with life eternal, and to attract the simple to rev-
Sir. 47:9 erence and love for holy religion. *He added beauty to the feasts and solemnized the season,* etc. . . .

Of all the external observances, the divine office deserves the greatest attention, for it must be performed, as we said, with order, alacrity, and devotion. At other times we act for the sake of God, but here, we stand before Him, attend to Him, and speak to Him while He speaks to us. We are also begging His assistance in all our needs.

10. PRIVATE DEVOTION consists in personal prayers: in the mental recitation of vocal prayers, such as psalms,

† Our author seems to lack the spirit of ecumenism. Such an attitude is characteristic of the defensive period of the Church.

litanies, and the like, which anyone may recite in private when praying outside of choir. *"When you pray, say 'Father, . . . '"* It consists also in holy meditations, as when a man recalls his sins and miseries, thinks of future pains, or of the general or particular graces he may receive from God; when he remembers the passion of Christ, the sweetness of His love, and the promised rewards. Thus he obtains the devout disposition of fear and love of God, of spiritual desire, of sadness or joy. *In the night I meditate in my heart,* etc. . . . Again, it consists in pious movements directed toward God: tears, yearnings, holy desires of love, and other interior and inexpressible motions of the heart, rejoicings and upliftings, raptures, and the absorption of the spirit in God. *He who cleaves to the Lord is one spirit with Him,* through the light of pure understanding and knowledge of Him, through the ardor of love for Him, and through the sweet touch of His delightfulness. *The Spirit Himself pleads for us with unutterable groanings.*

Lk. 11:2

Ps. 76:7

1 Cor. 6:17

*Rom. 8:26**

11. If a superior is prevented by his many duties from giving much time to personal devotion, he should at least endeavor to pray secretly and stealthily, whenever he possibly can, lest he become entirely cold, lose the habit of prayer, become a stranger to God, and be deprived of the grace of divine mercy almost without noticing it.

That is why Moses, overburdened by the material care of his people, often entered the tent of the covenant to obtain God's help, seeking God's friendly word that would refresh his soul. The Lord, also, after preaching to the crowd the whole day long, often spent the night in solitary prayer. Since, however, the superior is duty bound to pray for others, from time to time God gives him the grace of more abundant prayer, so that he may assist by his orations

cf. Ex. 33:9-11 etc.

cf. Lk. 6:12

those he is helping by his actions. Let him never fail to seek this grace, and never reject it when it is offered, lest it be lost to him because of his ingratitude.

12. CONSTANT DEVOTION is necessary for a superior, as it is for all those who wish to progress in the virtue of religion, and it takes three forms.

The first consists in always keeping God before the eyes of the heart. *I set the Lord ever before me.—My eyes are ever toward the Lord.* In every place and time a man should endeavor to keep God in his mind, seeing God mentally as if standing in His presence. That is why Elias and Eliseus were wont to say: *As the Lord of Hosts liveth, before whose face I stand,* etc. . . .

Ps. 15:8
ibid. 24:15
*3 Kgs. 18:15**
cf. ibid. 17:1; 4 Kgs. 3:14

Angels, wherever they are sent, never lose the vision of God. Let the man of virtue, also, do his best never to lose the memory of God. Should this ever happen, let him reprove himself in the words of Bernard: "Consider wasted any time you spent without thinking of God."[10] Although you may not be able to fix your thoughts upon Him in deep meditation constantly, you can at least always direct your heart's attention toward His memory. Take every occasion to make this memory turn into a meditation or a prayer, as a man would carry around with him his sculpting material so as to work on his carving every time he can.

13. The second form of constant devotion consists in the ceaseless effort to please God in every deed and word. The superior should always live as if in God's presence, avoiding anything that may displease Him, weeping whenever he has fallen, seeking what to do and how to do it in order to please Him more and more. *And therefore we strive, whether in the body or out of it, to be pleasing to Him. For all of us must be made manifest before the*

2 Cor. 5:9-10

tribunal of Christ. A religious should always behave as if he were soon to be brought before the seat of the supreme Judge. *"You also must be ready, because at an hour that you do not expect, the Son of Man is coming."* He beholds all our actions. And as He never forgets to reward all our good deeds, even those long past, so also He remembers to punish all our sins, unless they are washed away by penance. *The sinner says to himself: "Who can see me? . . . No one sees me. Why should I fear to sin?" Of the Most High he is not mindful. . . . He does not understand that the eyes of the Lord . . . observe every step a man takes.*

Lk. 12:40

Sir. 23:18, 19

14. The third form of constant devotion consists in praying, at least mentally, before undertaking anything; in strengthening ourselves by prayer in view of any future contingency; and in giving thanks to God and praising Him after every grace received. Let the superior pray the Lord to inspire him rightly in all his undertakings, to make every event serve spiritual progress, and to maintain and multiply His gifts. As the sailor hastens to a safe harbor at the approach of a storm, so the religious should always flee to the harbor of prayer so as to escape danger. Whatever he does, he should have greater trust in prayer than in his own skill or efforts. *As we know not what to do, we can only turn our eyes to Thee* in prayer. *As the eyes of the servants are on the hands of their masters,* etc. . . .

*2 Par. 20:12**
Ps. 122:2

15. Let the religious Seraph, the spiritual director, adorned with these and the other four wings, stand before *the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated.* Let him raise over his head the first two wings; with the two middle wings, let him cover his body and feet; with the last two wings, let him fly far and high. Then, he will not seek human praise that makes all ZEAL FOR JUSTICE wane; then,

*Is. 6:1**

worldly love shall not distort his sense of pity, but right intention, instead, shall hold him up, and the KINDNESS born of brotherly love shall lift him aloft for the heavenly reward. *I have inclined my heart to do Thy justifications for ever, for the reward.* *Ps. 118:112**

PATIENCE and an EXEMPLARY LIFE protect the superior against the darts of trouble and the nakedness of insufficient merit. They defend him as with an armor, and clothe him as with sacred vestments. *Arise, put on thy strength, O Sion, put on the garments of thy glory.* *Isa. 52:1** Because of a superior's PRUDENCE, the wing of discernment allows him to fly about everywhere, and to see what to do, and how. In his fervent DEVOTION, he will *seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God,* *Col. 3:1* and will reach up to Him in his lofty flight.

Not every one in charge of souls can possess all these virtues with equal perfection: all, however, must have them at least to some degree, in order both to edify their subjects and to promote their own salvation.

Now, even the religious responsible for his own soul and accountable for it alone before God in the final judgment, must, as much as his personal needs demand, be adorned and lifted up to heaven by these same wings and pinions. Then, he will be ardently just, compassionate to his brethren for God's sake, patient in adversities, edifying to others by his example, prudent in all things, and most of all, intimately bound to God through prayer. May God protect, direct, and impel him in all things, and make him finally soar up to heaven. And may Jesus Christ grant the same to us. Amen.

On the Five Feasts of the Child Jesus

De quinque festivitatibus pueri Jesu

A Pious Meditation

ON THE FIVE FEASTS OF THE CHILD JESUS

Prologue

THE venerable men in the Church of God who shine more brightly than others with divine light and burn more ardently with heavenly fire believe and teach that meditating on Jesus most sweet, and contemplating the Incarnate Word piously, procures a greater delight, a sweeter inebriation, a more perfect consolation and comfort for the mind than could the sweetness of honey or the perfume of any fragrant ointment. Hence, as I had occasion to withdraw for a while from the turmoil of distracting thoughts, and to enter my inner self in silent meditation, I came to wonder which aspect of the divine Incarnation I should consider, in order to obtain spiritual consolation. What in this valley of tears would reveal to me the sweetness of God as through a mirror? Which sweet aspect ever so lightly tasted would suffice to bring about distaste for passing and imaginary consolation?

In the secret of my mind, I saw that, with the grace of the Holy Spirit, a soul devoted to God could conceive the blessed Word, only-begotten Son of God the Father; that it could give birth to Him, name Him, seek and adore Him with the blessed Magi, and finally, in obedience to the Law of Moses, joyfully present Him to God the Father in the temple. The soul, then, as a true disciple of the Christian

religion, would celebrate with due reverence and a pious disposition the five feasts of the Child Jesus which the Church proposes. Hence, as I humbly planned, so did I humbly write, leaving out for the sake of brevity many corroborating quotations.

Anyone, therefore, who reads this brief and unpretentious work or meditates upon it and derives from it the slightest devotion toward Jesus most sweet, should praise, glorify, and bless no one but Him, the Author, Fountain, and Principle of all good. But if he conceives no such devotion, let him blame me for not having written well or worthily enough; or let him, perhaps, blame himself for having read with insufficient piety and humility.

FIRST FEAST
HOW THE DEVOUT SOUL SPIRITUALLY CONCEIVES JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD

1. First, our intellect must be cleansed by contrition, and our will set afire and lifted up by the little flame of love.† Then, we must engage in pious meditation and devout thought on how this blessed Son of God, Jesus Christ, is to be spiritually conceived by the devout soul.

When this devout soul, moved or stimulated by the hope of a heavenly reward, by the fear of eternal punishment, or by the weariness of having to remain in this valley of tears, receives the visit of new inspiration, becomes inflamed with holy desire, and feels the pressure of heavenly thought; when, finally — having rejected and scorned its former imperfections and longings — it is made

† See volume I: "The Triple Way," p. 71.

spiritually fruitful by the spirit of grace, receiving as it does a new reason to live by the action of the *Father of Lights* from whom proceeds *every good gift and every perfect gift:* what is all this if not the act of the Father making the soul pregnant, making it fruitful with a divine seed, while the power of the Most High overshadows it, covering it with a heavenly dew that appeases the desires of the flesh while strengthening and supporting spiritual sight?

Jas. 1:17
ibid.
cf. Lk. 1:35

After this most holy conception, the soul assumes a pale countenance because it is truly humbled in its ways. Food and drink cease to appeal to the mind because of complete contempt and rejection of worldly things. New and different goods desired and sought bring about new longings in the heart. Sometimes the soul even begins to weaken and languish because of the mortification of self-will. It goes about sad and upset at the thought of its former sins, of the time it wasted, of the company it kept with men who still live as worldlings in the world. All external, visible things of the world, begin to seem tedious and burdensome, as offending the One perceived and sensed within the soul.

2. O happy conception that brings about such contempt for the world, such desire for heavenly deeds and divine concerns! Now, little as the spirit may have been tasted so far, the flesh loses its flavor,[1] and the soul groans as it begins its journey with Mary into the hill country, for after so marvelous a conception, the things of the earth have lost their appeal, and all desires turn toward eternal and heavenly treasures. The soul flees the company of those *who mind the things of the earth,* and seeks the friendship of those who desire the things of heaven. It begins to serve Elizabeth, that is, those whom divine wisdom enlightens and divine grace inflames with love.

cf. Lk. 1:39

Phil. 3:19

The following principle is worthy of note because it implies a common necessity: the more completely men retire from the world, the closer and the more intimate will be their friendship with the virtuous, the more their hearts will be moved and inflamed by the worthy consorting with good and spiritual men, the more distaste will they feel for the company of the wicked. Gregory says: "He who associates with a holy person, seeing him often, hearing his words, and witnessing his exemplary conduct, will receive such inspiration that his soul shall burn with love for truth, flee the darkness of sin, and radiate with the charity of divine light."[2] And Isidore says: "Seek the company of the good, for if you share their life, you shall eventually share their virtue."[3] Let the faithful soul recall at this point how chaste, devout, and holy was the conversation of the saints, how divine and salutary were their counsels, how great the holiness and mutual benefit their works contained, as by word and example they prompted each other toward higher virtue.

3. You, also, should act like this, O devout soul, if you feel that you have conceived of the Holy Spirit a new desire for the life of heaven. Flee the company of the wicked, go into the hill country with Mary, seek the advice of spiritual men, try to follow the traces of the perfect, consider the sayings of the virtuous, and also their works and example. Flee the poisonous counsels of sinners who always attempt to pervert, obstruct, and crush any new desire conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Often, under the guise of piety, they instill the slime of unholy cowardice, saying: "Your undertaking is too ambitious, your project too arduous, and your labor unbearable. You lack the necessary strength, nor does your

natural power suffice. You will lose your mind, your eyesight will be destroyed, and many different diseases will thrive in you: consumption, paralysis, stones, dizziness, and blindness. Your senses will be blunted, your mind clouded, and your strength laid to waste. All these evils will befall you unless you give up what you have begun, and take better care of your health. Such things are not fitting for your state: they damage your honor and reputation."

Behold who would be a teacher of discipline and a physician of the body: a man who does not even know how to control himself, or how to rid his own mind of its disease! Alas, alas! How many times did the accursed counsels of the worldly topple even the great among men, killing the Son of God conceived in them of the Holy Spirit! This is the wretched and deadly bane of diabolical persuasion, which prevents spiritual conception in many souls, and in many others extinguishes and kills what had been conceived by good resolve or explicit vow.

4. Other men, good in appearance or in fact, are lacking in courage, if we may say so with all due respect. They forget that *the hand of the Lord is not shortened that it cannot save;* nor do they remember that the kindness of the Most High has in no way decreased, but that He desires to help them, and is able to do so. *They have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge,* for, out of compassion for physical sufferings, or out of fear that natural powers may fail, they discourage their fellow-men from the pursuit of perfection whenever they see them manfully doing precisely what they themselves had judged to be good and holy, but had not dared to undertake. They oppose anything that exceeds the average common life and destroy holy counsels of divine inspiration. And the more convincing the

*Isa. 59:1**

Rom. 10:2

counsels of such men appear in the light of their own life, the more dangerous they are.

5. At times, with the cunning of the Ancient Enemy, these men shrewdly object: "If you do this and that, you will be considered a holy, virtuous, and devout religious. But since you have none of the perfections others will think you have, you shall be found guilty in the sight of the supreme Judge who knows your great, damaging, and dreadful sins; you shall lose the merits of your good deeds; and you shall be convicted as a liar and a hypocrite." Such practices, they declare, befit only those who have never done wrong, but have always led a holy and innocent life; who have given up everything for God, and have always and perfectly cleaved to Him.

cf. Mt. 19:27

6. As for you, beloved soul devoted to God, avoid such men; go up into the hill country with Mary.

The Apostle Paul, who had not always lived without sin, had served God but a short time before being ravished to the third heaven where he saw God face to face. And Mary Magdalen, formerly replete with pride and ambition, entirely concentrated on worldly vanities and given to fleshly pleasures, is permitted very soon to sit at the feet of Jesus, among the holy apostles, intently listening to the sacred doctrine of perfection. She deserved to be the first to see the Lord immediately after the resurrection; from then on, she never ceased to impart to others the words of truth. For *God is not a respecter of persons.* He considers not high birth, long service, numerous works: what counts with Him is the intensity of fervor and the warmth of love in a pious soul. He considers not how bad you have been in the past, but how good you have begun to be in the present.

Acts 10:34

The advice of such counselors, therefore, would be worthy of much blame were they not excused by their simplicity—which, however, is no reason for approval.

7. If it is too late to save yourself through innocence, try at least to do so through penance; if you cannot be a Catherine or a Cecilia, do not disdain to be a Mary Magdalen or a Mary of Egypt. If you feel that, by holy resolve, you have conceived the most sweet Son of God, flee the deadly poison we described, and, as a woman in labor, hope and wish for a prompt and happy deliverance.

SECOND FEAST
HOW THE SON OF GOD IS SPIRITUALLY BORN IN THE DEVOUT SOUL



1. Now, let us behold and consider how this blessed Son of God, spiritually conceived, is spiritually born in the soul. He is born when, after proper thought, sufficient pondering, and due invocation of holy and divine patronage, the resolve is brought into effect: that is, when the soul sets out to do in fact what it had long entertained in mind, but had been reluctant to undertake for fear of eventual failure. The angels rejoice in this most blessed birth; they glorify

cf. Lk. 2:13 God and promise peace: for when the concept, long in the mind, is led to the perfection of the good work, peace is restored to the inner man. In that kingdom — the human soul — God's peace is not well preserved if the flesh wars against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; if the spirit loves solitude, and the flesh seeks the world; if the spirit pursues the repose of contemplation in God, and the flesh craves the honor of high temporal positions. On the contrary, if the flesh obeys the spirit, and if good work, long obstructed by the flesh, now finally comes to fruit, internal peace and joy are restored. Happy the birth that brings such gladness to angels and to men! "How sweet and delightful it would be to act in harmony with nature! Alas, our own folly rules it out. Allay that folly, and nature is reconciled with men."[4] Experience confirms *Mt. 11:29-30* the truth of the Gospel text: *"Take My yoke upon you,* etc. . . ." And of what follows: *"You will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden light."*

2. At this point, O devout soul, if you rejoice in the happy birth, remember that first you must be Mary. For the name Mary means "bitter sea," "giver of light," and "masterful."[5]

Be therefore a BITTER SEA through your tearful repentance, regretting bitterly your past sins, bemoaning profoundly the good you failed to do, deploring without cease the days you wasted and lost. Be also a GIVER OF LIGHT, through honest living, virtuous deeds, and zealous efforts to teach others the ways of good. Finally, be MASTER of your senses, of your fleshly desires, and of all your works, conforming your acts to right reason, ever seeking and desiring salvation for yourself, edification for your neighbor, praise and glory for God.

3. This, indeed, is being like Mary, the fruitful one, who pines and weeps over the sins of the world, who shines and sparkles with virtue, who dominates the passions of the flesh. From such a Mary, Jesus Christ does not disdain to be spiritually born in joy, without pain or labor. After such a happy birth, this Mary knows and tastes how good the Lord Jesus is. For He is truly sweet as we feed Him with holy meditation, bathe Him in a flow of warm and devout tears, swaddle Him in the cloth of chaste desire, carry Him in the arms of holy love, kiss Him over and over again with a heartfelt devotion, and keep Him warm in the folds of our inner mind. That is how the Child is spiritually born.

cf. Ps. 33:9; Wis. 12:1

THIRD FEAST
HOW THE INFANT JESUS IS SPIRITUALLY NAMED BY THE DEVOUT SOUL

1. Thirdly, we should consider what name to give to this blessed Infant now spiritually born. There is no better name for Him than Jesus, for it is written: *His name was called Jesus.* This is the sacred name foretold by the prophets, announced by the angel, proclaimed by the apostles, desired by all the saints.

Lk. 2:21

O name full of power, grace, and joy; full of delight and glory! Full of POWER, for it overcomes the enemies, restores strength, and refreshes the mind. Full of GRACE, for in it, faith is founded, hope confirmed, love increased, and justice brought to perfection. Full of JOY, for as Bernard writes, "it is exultation to the heart, music to the ears, honey to the tongue,"[6] and splendor to the mind. Full of DELIGHT, for according to the same Bernard, "it nourishes

when remembered, soothes when uttered, anoints when called upon,"[7] refreshes when written, and instructs when read. Full of GLORY, for it gives sight to the blind, agility to the lame, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, and life to the dead. Blessed is the name that brings forth such powerful effects!

O soul, whether you write, read, teach, or do anything else, may nothing have any taste for you, may nothing please you besides Jesus. Give, therefore, to the Infant spiritually born in you the name Jesus, that is, Saviour in the wretched state of this present life. May He save you from the world's vanity that threatens you, from the devil's deceit that assails you, from the fleshly weakness that tortures you.

2. O soul, amidst the scourges of this life, call out: "Jesus, Saviour of the world, save us, having redeemed us through Your Cross and Blood. Come to our assistance, O Lord our God! Most sweet Jesus Saviour, we beg of You, save us! Strengthen the weak, console the despondent, assist the frail, sustain those who waver!"

3. After this blessed name had been given, how often did a feeling of sweetness come upon the Virgin Mary, fruitful Mother by nature, true Mother in spirit, when she saw, in this very name, the demons cast out, miracles multiplied, the blind made to see, the sick returned to health, and the dead made to rise from the tomb.

You, therefore, O soul, you a spiritual mother should certainly and with good reason rejoice and exult as you see, within yourself and others, Jesus casting out demons through the remission of sins, enlightening the blind by infusing true knowledge into them, raising the dead through the gift of grace, curing the sick, healing the lame,

straightening the palsied and the twisted through spiritual consolations, so that those who had been weak and diseased in their sin might become strong and manful through grace. Oh, how fruitful and blessed is the name endowed with so great a power and efficiency!

FOURTH FEAST
HOW THE DEVOUT SOUL TOGETHER WITH THE MAGI, SPIRITUALLY SEEKS AND ADORES THE SON OF GOD

1. Now comes the fourth feast, the Adoration of the Magi. After the soul, through the power of grace, has spiritually conceived, brought to life, and named this most sweet Child, the three kings, that is, the three faculties of the soul—properly called kings since they are the principles of the body, the masters of the senses, and the fitting searchers of things divine—set out to seek the child revealed to them by many signs in the royal city, that is, in the whole complex of the universe. They seek through meditation, search through the desires of the heart, and ask questions through pious inquiry: "*Where is He that is born . . . ? For we have seen His star in the East,* we have seen His light shining forth in the pious mind, we have seen His resplendence radiating in the recesses of the soul. We have heard His voice and it is most tender, we have tasted His sweetness and it is delightful, we have perceived His fragrance and it is most suave, we have known His embrace and it is most pleasurable. And now, Herod, give us the answer: let us see the Beloved, show us the desired Infant. It is the One we long for and seek." *Mt. 2:2*

2. "O most sweet, most loving, timeless Child, Infant Immemorial, when shall I see You, when shall I appear

before Your face? Rejoicing without You is pain, rejoicing or even weeping with You is delight. For all that is against Your will repels us, and Your good pleasure is our constant desire. O Jesus, if it is so sweet to weep with You, how delightful it must be to share Your happiness!"[8]

Where are You whom we seek? Where are You whom we desire in all things and above all things? Where are
Mt. 2:2 You who are born *King of the Jews*, Rule of the faithful, Light of the blind, Guide of the wretched, Life of the dying, eternal Salvation of the eternally alive?

ibid. 5 3. The answer is: *"He lives in Bethlehem of Judea."* Bethlehem means "house of bread," and Juda, "one who confesses." Christ, indeed, is found when sins have been confessed, and the bread of heavenly life — the gospel-teaching — is heard, considered, and piously retained in the mind, to be fulfilled in good works and proposed to others for the same fulfillment. The Child Jesus is found with Mary when, after sorrowful contrition and fruitful confession, the sweetness of heaven is tasted, sometimes in the midst of abundant tears of relief. The soul that had almost despaired before it started praying, now is filled with joy and assured of pardon.[9]

Fruitful is this Mary within whom Jesus is conceived, from whom He is born, and in whose company He is so sweetly and joyfully found!

4. But you also, O kings — natural faculties of the pious soul — seek Him as did the kings of the earth in order to adore Him and offer Him your gifts. Adore Him with reverence, for He is the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Rewarder: Creator, as the Source of natural life; Redeemer, as the Restorer of spiritual life; Rewarder, as the Bestower of eternal life.

O kings, adore Him with reverence, for He is the most powerful King; adore Him with respect, for He is the most wise Teacher; adore Him with joy, for He is the most bountiful Lord. Be not content with adoring, without at the same time offering a gift: offer the gold of ardent love, the frankincense of pious contemplation, the myrrh of bitter repentance; offer the gold of love for the favors bestowed upon you, the frankincense of devotion for the joys that await you, the myrrh of penance for your sins; offer the Gold to Christ's eternal Godhead, the frankincense to the holiness of His soul, the myrrh to the passibility of His body.

O souls, seek Him, adore Him, and make offerings to Him in this way.

FIFTH FEAST

HOW THE SON OF GOD IS SPIRITUALLY PRESENTED IN THE TEMPLE BY THE DEVOUT SOUL

1. In the fifth and last place, the pious and faithful soul should consider how the little Child, born through the consummation of the divine act, named amidst the enjoyment of heavenly sweetness, sought and found, adored and worshipped through the offering of spiritual gifts, must now be presented in the temple and offered up to God. This should be done as a pious and humble expression of fitting gratitude. *cf. Lk. 2:22ff.*

And so, this fruitful Mary, the spiritual mother of Jesus, by conceiving the blessed Child, has been cleansed through penance; by giving Him birth, she has been comforted with grace; by conferring upon Him His holy name, she has been pervaded with consolation; by adoring Him with

the Magi, she has been enlightened concerning His divinity. All that remains to be done is to bring the Son of God and the Virgin to the heavenly Jerusalem, the holy temple, and present Him to God.

cf. ibid. 1:39 2. Go up, therefore, O spiritual Mary, no longer into the hill country, but into the dwelling place of the spiritual Jerusalem, into the palace of the heavenly city. And there, before the throne of the eternal Trinity and undivided Unity, humbly kneel in spirit; present your Son to God the Father, praising, blessing, and glorifying the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Offer joyful praise to God the Father whose inspiration made you conceive the good resolve; glorify and praise God the Son whose information made you carry out the conceived resolve; bless and worship God the Holy Spirit whose consolation made you persevere in this good work.

3. O soul, render glory to God the Father for all His gifts and for your own good deeds, for He is the One who,

Ct. 7:1 through His inner inspiration called you away from the world, saying: *"Turn, turn, O Sulamite!"* This is explained in the first meditation of another treatise.†

Magnify God the Son in all His saints, for He is the One who, through His inner prompting, delivered you

Mt. 11:29 from the devil's slavery, saying: *"Take My yoke upon you,* throw off the yoke of the devil. His yoke is most bitter, and Mine most sweet; his yoke leads to eternal pain and

*Isa. 32:18** torture, Mine to the most luscious fruits and to *wealthy rest.* Any delight you may find in his yoke is false and brief, while the joy that comes from Mine is true and leads to eternal salvation. The devil exalts his followers for a

† Cf. "Soliloquy," 1:37f., p. 68.

short while, only to confound them in eternity, but those who honor Me and are humiliated in time shall reign and be glorified in eternity." Such is the doctrine that the Son of God taught you, either personally, or through His doctors and friends. Thus did He free you from the devil's wicked proposals, and from the damaging lies of the flesh and the world.

O soul, always bless and worship God the Holy Spirit who, through His honeyed consolation, strengthened you in the ways of good, saying: *"Come to Me, all you who . . . are burdened, and I will give you rest."* O tender and delicate soul, so fragile and weak, so deeply bent upon worldly pleasure, so completely inebriated with temporal delight as are the swine with the grounds of wine-grapes: how could you have persevered in virtue among the countless potent snares of the ancient enemy, among the multitude of evil suggestions and the many different obstacles you encountered, despite all the attacks by friends, family, and relatives who tried to hamper you on the way of love and to wound you? How could you have advanced in virtue, shackled as you were with the chains of many sins, were it not for the grace of the Holy Spirit mercifully assisting you, sweetly comforting you, and restoring your strength? Refer to Him, therefore, all your works, and keep none for yourself.

Mt. 11:28

4. Say with a pure and pious intention in your mind: "Lord, You have wrought all my works for me. Lord, I am nothing in Your eyes, and I can do nothing: it is through Your gift that I survive; without You I am unable to act. To You, most merciful *Father of Mercies,* do I offer what is Yours; to You do I offer, commend, and commit my unworthy self, humbly recognizing my ingratitude for all the gifts You have bestowed upon me. Praise be to You,

cf. Isa. 26:12

2 Cor. 1:3

and glory, and thanksgiving, O most blessed Father, eternal Majesty who, by Your infinite power, created me out of nothingness. Praise be to You, and glory, and thanksgiving, O most blessed Son, Resplendence of the Father who, by Your eternal wisdom, delivered me from death. I bless You, I sanctify You, I adore You, O most blessed and nourishing Spirit who, through Your holy kindness and pity, made me pass from sin to grace, from the world to religious life, from exile to my fatherland, from labor to repose, from desolation to the sweet enjoyment of the most delightful happiness! And may this be granted to us by Jesus Christ, the Son of the Virgin Mary, who, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

cf. Heb. 1:3

Treatise on How to Prepare for the Celebration of Mass

Tractatus de praeparatione ad missam

TREATISE ON HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE CELEBRATION OF MASS

Prologue



N HONOR of the glorious and undivided Trinity, and of the most excellent Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, I will propose to you a way that shall lead you with ease to the contemplation of this great Mystery, and rightly prepare you for receiving it. These thoughts should not be read hurriedly as a rattling of words: their meaning must be fixed effectively within your heart. With deep inner feeling, every idea should be carefully weighed for what it signifies, in itself and in relation to the whole.

Chapter I — Remote Preparation: A Fourfold Examination of Self

Before you approach the table of the heavenly banquet, you must first prove yourself, as the Apostle warns, and carefully verify what are your faith, love, dispositions, and motives in coming forth to it. *cf. 1 Cor. 11:28*

First, ask yourself how strong is your faith as you approach the altar

1. Examine these four points one by one: first, ask yourself what must be your FAITH concerning the truth and the essence of this Sacrament. You must firmly believe, according to the tenets and the teachings of the Catholic Faith, and without any kind of doubt, that when Christ spoke, the material and visible bread lent its shape, that is, the accidental visible species, to the forthcoming heavenly Bread of Life, out of respect for the Creator, and as an act of ministry and sacramental service. At the very instant when the bread ceases to be, the following truly exists beneath the accidents, in a wondrous and ineffable way: — First, the most pure flesh of Christ and His sacred Body, formed of the Holy Spirit, born from the glorious Virgin, suspended upon the cross, laid in the tomb, and glorified in heaven. — Second, since flesh does not live without blood, there is present here by necessity that precious Blood which fruitfully flowed on the cross for the salvation of the world. — Third, since man must have a rational soul, there is present here that glorious Soul of Christ, exceeding in

grace and splendor all virtue, glory, and power, in which
Col. 2:3 *are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* — Fourth, since Christ is true Man and true God, it follows that God also is present here in all the glory of His majesty.

All these four, together and severally, are simultaneously and perfectly contained under the species of bread and wine, not any the less in the Chalice than in the Host, nor in the Host than in the Chalice; nor again is either one a complement of the other, but the whole is found in each
Heb. 5:11 one by that great mystery of which *we have much to say.* It is, however, sufficient to accept that under both species is contained the true God and Man whom the angels assist in great number, and the saints attend.

2. Consider how fitting it is that only these two species should hold Christ. — First, bread and wine are the best nourishment for the whole man: bread sustains the flesh, or body, and wine is absorbed in the blood, which is the seat of the soul. — Second, bread and wine are the principal, most common, cleanest, and simplest kinds of food and drink: hence, they best signify the purity of spiritual refection. — Third, bread and wine best signify the Body and Blood of Christ, for bread is a symbol of this Body, ground, kneaded, and pounded during the passion, baked and parched by the fire of divine love on the hearth and altar of the cross; and wine is a symbol of this Blood, extruded from the grapes, that is, Christ's body, by the Jews who trampled Him in the winepress of the cross. — Fourth, the species beautifully signify the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church, made of a number of faithful predestined for life, like so many grains and grapes.

3. Be sure not to approach the altar with a wavering and doubtful mind; do not, as a blind man in his groping, lean

upon *a staff of broken reed,* that is, upon natural arguments and human reasons, wondering how such things are possible, as did the Jews who *argued with one another,* and some of the disciples who were scandalized and *turned back.* Surrender to God instead, and submit your mind to the yoke of that faith which you see confirmed by so prominent witnesses. What doubt remains about a Sacrament visibly and explicitly given by Christ, preached by the apostles, performed for so many centuries by holy orthodox fathers, and confirmed as by tangible proofs by so many rites, miracles, prodigies, and praises?

*4 Kgs. 18:21**

Jn. 6:53

ibid. 67

Take away this Sacrament from the Church, and what is left in the world besides error and unbelief? The Christian people would be scattered like a herd of swine and given to idolatry, as so clearly happens with pagans. Instead, by the presence of this Sacrament, the Church stands firm, faith is strengthened, the Christian religion and divine worship are kept alive. That is why Christ said: *"Behold, I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world."*

Mt. 28:20

4. Remember, also, that it was fitting for Christ to be given to us under a veil. For what merit of faith would you have, were Christ to appear before you as He is? You would adore Him, certainly and necessarily. And how could the eyes of your body sustain such great glory? What insanity to say that we could eat and drink raw flesh and human blood in their natural form!

Let all doubt recede, for as the Godhead had once hidden itself within the virginal womb, and as the Son of God had once become visible to the world under a veil of human flesh, so also Christ's glorified humanity united to His divinity hides under the appearance of bread and wine, thus accommodating itself to us mortals.

SECOND, ASK YOURSELF WHAT ARE YOUR INTENTIONS AND DISPOSITIONS AS YOU APPROACH THE ALTAR

5. Second, ask yourself what are your INTENTIONS and dispositions as you approach the altar. Examine and search the house of your conscience, lest there remain in your soul some impurity, or in your flesh, some stain, offensive to the eyes of the One who is the Holy of Holies.

First, therefore, looking inward at the wickedness of your soul, consider how many sins you committed since your earliest years and how many good actions you failed to accomplish; consider how short is life, how uncertain the hour of death, how slippery and dangerous the ways of this world. Most of all, ask yourself whether, God forbid, you have committed or intended any mortal sin since your last confession and penance. Your wretched soul would then be dead, cut away as it would be from the root of Christ and of the Church. For the Bread of Life, the divine Food, procures no vital flow, provides no nourishment for members that are cut off and dead, as proven by the Scriptures: *Into a soul that plots evil wisdom enters not, nor dwells she in a body under debt of sin.* Such a man may receive the Sacrament, but not its content: the grace of Christ and the divinity of His love; he may take it in his mouth, but he is not spiritually fed; it may go down to the stomach, but it reaches not the soul. It would then be swallowed as by a brute animal: the Sacrament itself remains unimpaired, but it brings no life to the soul, nor is there any union between Sacrament and soul. Out of sheer disgust, Christ vomits such a man, and expels him as an evil-smelling corpse to be devoured by wild beasts and birds of prey. He abandons this unfruitful soul to the

Wis. 1:4

devil's tortures, as it is written of Judas: *After the morsel, Satan entered into him.* Therefore, if you are so ensnared, beware lest for some reason or necessity you dare to approach the altar without due contrition, a firm intention to amend, and a proper confession of your sins, *for it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* *Jn. 13:27* *Heb. 10:31*

6. Alas, how many today are those wretched priests who, unmindful of their salvation, partake of the Body of Christ at the altar as if they were eating the flesh of a mere animal; and who, entangled and contaminated by abominations—which it would be indecent to mention—are not afraid of touching and kissing with their criminal hands and their polluted lips the Son of God and of the Virgin Mary! Indeed, were God to accept their sacrifice, I dare to say that He would be a liar and an abettor of sinners!

Worse yet, in our days, some priests reach such utter perversion and irrationality as to imagine in their wretchedness that their crimes and impure sins, which they repeat every day and intend to repeat, will be expiated without penance or confession through the daily celebration of the Holy Eucharist. They are not priests, but sacrilegious men; not Christians, but heretics. Most certainly, if their faith were right, they would either desist from sinning or abstain from saying Mass.

7. Not only must cleanliness of mind be assured, but also cleanliness of body. Beware, therefore, not to come to the altar unclean. I have in mind not only willful impurity, which is a mortal sin, but also any nocturnal or accidental stain, which is an impediment to the celebration of Mass in the absence of any grave necessity or binding command imposing celebration. When such things occur, and you have not occasioned or caused these stains through

previous impure desires or excessive drinking, the soul is not seriously befouled by the memory and imagination of carnal dreams. Subject to better judgment, I believe that, then, you would be allowed to approach the altar, particularly if you are prompted by special devotion on a feast-day, or by some other good reason of the same kind.

You must also keep your hands and all other parts of your body as clean as possible. Therefore, at all times — but most particularly before celebrating Mass — avoid with greater care than other men not only those filthy and impure touches that are mortal sins, but also those contacts that imply the slightest indecency or pollution.

Recollect your whole self so as not to be distracted in your actions or thoughts by any external objects.

Furthermore, take good care of the cleanliness and neatness of the altar linens and of the holy vessels, so that He who is feared and honored by the angels and archangels may be treated with all due honor and attention.

THIRD, ASK YOURSELF HOW GREAT ARE YOUR LOVE AND FERVOR AS YOU APPROACH THE ALTAR

8. Third, ask yourself how great are your LOVE and fervor as you approach the altar. Mortal sins are not the only danger: for venial sins, multiplied by negligence, idleness, levity, the distractions of a dissolute life, and vicious habits, if they do not kill the soul, often make a man lukewarm and sluggish, unwilling and unfit to celebrate Mass. All this dust should be blown away by the breath of the Holy Spirit; this chaff of venial sin should be consumed by the flame of love that issues from the burning fire of the heart and from the consideration of

one's own unworthiness. Beware not to be lukewarm, disordered, and careless as you go to the altar: for if you approach it without reverence, attention, and care, you receive unworthily. That is why the Apostle writes: He *eats and drinks judgment to himself.* The same Apostle is even more explicit when he adds: *This is why many among you are infirm,* in other words, severely wounded by sin, *and weak,* by their wavering faith, *and many sleep,* being idle and slothful.

1 Cor. 11:29
ibid. 30

9. "Oh, how many grievous torments afflict me from all sides! Going to the altar unworthily entails a dreadful judgment; not going, out of negligence or despite, is a damnable sin!"[1] This from Bede. For when a priest in the state of grace, having the right intention and no legal impediment, abstains from celebrating Mass, not out of reverence but out of sheer negligence, he denies due praise and glory to the holy Trinity, as much as is in him; he denies joy to the angels, pardon to the sinners, assistance and grace to the just, relief to the souls in purgatory, and spiritual advantages to the Church of Christ. And he also denies himself the specific medicine and remedy to his own weakness and daily sins. Ambrose says: "As often as the Blood of Christ is made to run, it is shed for the remission of sins; hence, I must always receive it so that my sins may always be remitted: for as I constantly sin, I constantly need the remedy."[2]

Likewise, a priest who fails to celebrate Mass deprives himself of all the effects of Holy Communion: remission of sin, reduction of pain, enlightenment of the mind, inner refection, incorporation with Christ and His Mystical Body, strengthening of the virtues, arming against the devil, assuring of faith, elevating of hope, enlivening of charity,

increasing of devotion, and association with the angels. Also, he fails to satisfy the obligation imposed upon him to perform a service of great dignity, and to fulfill the office of a dutiful servant of God. Yet, it is clearly written:

*Jer. 48:10** *Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully.*

Again, he despises Christ's command concerning the re-

Jn. 6:54 ception of this Sacrament. For Christ warns us: *"Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man,"* etc. . . . Furthermore, he throws away the food that would sustain him on his pilgrimage, and he exposes himself to death, for unless he receives the food of the Body of Christ and the Sap of Life, he becomes like a withered limb that no longer receives bodily nourishment. Finally, as much as is in him, he fails in the divine worship and in the adoration he owes to his Creator, showing instead ingratitude for the favors he re-

Nm. 9:13 ceived from God. That is why it is said: *Anyone who is clean,* meaning free of mortal sin, *and not away on a journey,* meaning not hindered in any way, *who yet fails to keep the Passover, shall be cut off from his people, because he did not present the Lord's offering at the prescribed time.*

Try, then, with all your might, to expel from your soul all sluggishness and sloth, through good works, tearful repentance, and flaming devotion, so that you may not be found guilty of scorning the favor of such gifts.

10. If you wish to be set aflame with love, let your mind concentrate upon these two things: first, the fire of that supreme Love which, in its utter goodness, withstood the awful sufferings and shame of the cross for the sake of you, a wretched worm; second, the sweet partaking of that sacred Body and Blood.

First, concentrate your attention upon CHRIST'S BLESSED DEATH and examine its only cause: it was necessary for

your redemption. In every law, high treason is punishable by death. Hence, we were liable to death because of our sins. Yet, God had pitied human misery and desired to spare us from this death. He provided and conceded that our forefathers redeem their enormous debt by sacrificing animals instead of paying with their own lives: He accepted animal-victims and sacrifices of appeasement. As often as man had sinned, he was to offer one such victim. All these things were figures or shadows, until Christ, the Head of the human race, was finally sent, to be offered up as a living and reasonable Victim, a stainless Victim who surrenders Himself to death out of love, for the sake of redeeming us from death. But Christ did not have to die several times: His death was sufficient to cover all sins, both past and future. Hence, it was enough that at His death, He leave with us the one Victim, His own Body once immolated for us, now to be mystically offered by us to the Father every day for the remainder of our sins, in commutation of the sentence of death our daily transgressions entail. That is why Augustine writes: "This offering is renewed every day, even though Christ suffered only once, because every day we fall into sins from which our present mortal weakness cannot escape. As we fall every day, so every day Christ is immolated for us."[3] Everything done in the Mass, therefore, and all the ornaments and ceremonies represent nothing but Christ's passion; and the most important point in the Mass is the remembrance of Christ, as He Himself explains: *"Do this in remembrance of Me";* and as the Apostle writes: *For as often as you shall eat this Bread and drink the Cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord, until He comes,* meaning for the judgment. So whenever you go to the altar, say with all your heart:

Lk. 22:19

1 Cor. 11:26

11. PRAYER: O heavenly Father, remembering the death of Your only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ, behold: I offer You this Victim whom He Himself in olden days did offer You, for my salvation and that of the whole world. I send up to the altar of Your majesty this living Gift whom You, in Your compassion, had sent down to be sacrificed for us on the altar of the cross. Remember, therefore, His most sacred sweat that fell upon the ground as drops of blood; behold this virginal flesh cruelly whipped with lashes, covered with blows, swollen and bruised, stained with spittle, purpled with blood, pierced with thorns, fastened with spikes, wounded with a spear! May this very same kindness that moved and overwhelmed Your Son so strongly that He outweighed on the cross all the sins of the world, move You also, O Father, in order that You may have pity upon our misery. I pray You not to look upon our sins, but *upon the face of Your Anointed: — For it is not for our justifications that we present our prayers before Thy face, but for the multitude of Your tender mercies.*



Ps. 83:10
*Dan. 9:18**

12. Second, if you wish to be set aflame and ignited with love, consider the MOST SWEET FOOD: Christ's Body; behold how good and delightful is His spirit within us; how suitable, useful, and life-giving the nourishment our heavenly Father provides. The rational creature, indeed, is destined to receive and share the goodness of God. Through this sharing, it shall live, and shall attain the beatific vision. Deprived of this vivifying Food, it tends to nothingness and to eternal death; constantly sustained by this Food, it partakes of divine power and grace. Such partaking is called a consuming, for as the animal body receives its strength and its well-being, its heat and its light, from the food it takes in, so also the rational soul is strengthened and nourished, inflamed and vivified, in the fullness of love and understanding, by the spirit of Christ of which it must partake. *cf. Wis. 12:1*

As angels in heaven drink their fill from eternal and living fonts of life and are sated with the prime gifts of God's house, so also eternal Wisdom provides that the rational souls of men, redeemed with such solicitude, magnified through grace, and conformed to the angels of God, be nourished with this Bread—this angelic Food without which neither angels nor men could live—in a manner fitting for us little ones. We could not, with our mortal body, eat of this Bread of Life in the full density of its proper form, the Godhead. That is why, in order to provide under a more convenient aspect a food that we could eat, Wisdom made use of material bread and wine because of the fitting relation between Bread and bread, and between spiritual and physical sustainment. As Wisdom nourishes the angels, living spirits, with the uncreated Word, so also He deigns to feed mortal men with the incarnate Word received in the Sacrament. Therefore, it is *cf. Ps. 35:9*

Ps. 77:25 said: *The Bread of the mighty was eaten by men;* and also:
Jn. 6:51 *"I am the living Bread that has come down from heaven."*

13. Note also that as God takes care of the bodies of animals by supplying them with suitable food, so also He feeds His most noble Mystical Body the Church, whose Head is Christ the Son of God. This Mystical Body must not be sustained and kept alive by anything but its Head, so that all its members, meaning all the just united and adhering to one another in Christ the Head, may be sustained by His spirit and love through this Sacrament of union and peace. As the body cannot live without suitable food, so also there can be no spiritual life for the rational soul unless it consume and absorb a suitable spir-
Jn. 6:58 itual aliment. Hence, Christ says: *"He who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me."*

This is the difference between natural and spiritual refreshment: natural food, when consumed, changes into the substance and life of the consumer; whereas when Christ is consumed, the consumer is incorporated with Him and passes into the union and love of Christ's spirit. That is why blessed Augustine heard these words: "I will not be transformed into you, but you will be transformed into Me";[4] that is, into My likeness, or in other words, into My goodness, holiness, etc., as iron is transformed into the likeness of fire.

FOURTH, ASK YOURSELF WHAT IS YOUR MOTIVE AS YOU APPROACH THE ALTAR

14. Fourth, and finally, ask yourself what is your MOTIVE or what are your reasons as you approach the altar. Here, focus your attention upon two particular points:

first, did you have a pure love and holy desire; second, did you have a worthy disposition and the necessary intention?

Consider first your motive, lest it be greed, fear, vainglory, mere habit, some worldly satisfaction or temporal favor, as happens in the present time with many who abuse for their loss what had been given for their salvation. Alas, alas, O Lord God! How many unfortunate souls come to Holy Orders and to the divine Mysteries seeking bread not of heaven but of earth! Seeking not the spirit, but the profit; not God's honor, but the satisfaction of their own ambition; not the salvation of souls, but the accumulation of riches. Their effort is not directed toward serving Christ with a clean heart and body in the sacred Mysteries, but toward their own pleasure, wealth, and glory; toward the satisfaction of their own lustful passions, at the expense of Christ's heritage and of the people's charity! In their ambition, they grab rather than obtain ecclesiastical dignities, by means, even, of much litigation and simony, following not the call of God but the devil's prompting.

15. As for you, O man of God, let God be the goal of your wishes and desires; consider with what love and expectation you must accede to the sacred Mysteries.

One, let your conscience lead you, and remorse for the sins you committed: have hope that your sins will be cleansed through Christ, the Victim offered for appeasement.

Two, follow the vision and the consideration of your own weakness: call Christ to your side as the Healer who will cure all your ills.

Three, bear the pressure of trials: through Christ all-powerful, let yourself be saved and protected all the sooner in the face of danger.

Four, desire some grace or spiritual favor: you shall obtain them from Christ to whom the Father refuses nothing.

Five, be grateful for all the temporal and spiritual bene-
cf. Ps. 115:12 fits you and others have received: we have nothing to return to the Lord for all the good He has done to us,
Ps. 115:13, 17 except that we can take up *the cup of salvation,* and offer Him the *sacrifice of thanksgiving:* Jesus Christ.

Six, be filled with love and compassion for your neighbor, for no supplication is more effective for the salvation of the living and the repose of the dead than the Blood of
cf. Mt. 26:28 Jesus Christ which is shed for the remission of sins.

Seven, praise God and the saints, for we cannot exalt God and the saints fittingly except by offering and immolating Christ to God the Father in the Sacrament.

Eight, be filled with love and affection for God, attracting Him to you and embracing Him delightfully within your soul by absorbing the spiritual Food.

Nine, be filled with thirst and hope for an increase in grace: this Sacrament contains the Fountain of all grace and sanctification, the Author of Salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ, whence it is called the Eucharist, which means the Good Grace. The other Sacraments are streams and rivers of grace by which we are sanctified.

Ten, be filled with ardor and yearning so that you may desire with your innermost self to be cleansed of every
cf. 2 Cor. 7:1 bodily and spiritual stain by the power of this great love and sweet refreshment, to be delivered from all dangers and temptations, and to be inseparably united with Christ the Saviour and preserved within His love. That is why Christ
Jn. 17:24 said: *"Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou*
ibid. 22, 23 *hast given Me may be with Me — that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them and Thou in Me."*

16. Next, you must be sure to have the right purpose and intention in all you do. Keep these three intentions in mind as you are about to celebrate: to worship God, to remember Christ's death, and to assist the whole Church.

First, you should intend to WORSHIP GOD. Worship of LATRIA is due to God alone, and it consists in giving honor to the supreme Creator as a tribute of utter dependency, by which we are bound to consecrate to His honor not only our goods but our own persons, and to die for Him continually as a means of acknowledgment of His favors and immense goodness. All this we should do with a contrite heart and a humbled body, prostrating ourselves with all our affections, deeds, and dispositions, by means of our gestures and symbolic actions, before the eyes of His majesty, venerating Him with sacrifices and offerings. We should place all our hope and desire upon Him unto whom are all things. We should expect from Him what we deserve: due repayment for our good and evil deeds, according to the retribution of His justice and good pleasure. *cf. Rom. 11:36*

To the saints, honor and devotion must be offered in the form of worship of DULIA: it is not full worship, or adoration, but a deputizing and an invocation in order that they may be our advocates before God. All the reverence we offer them is due to the fact that they are united with God.

17. God must be immensely feared, honored, and loved by us. — First, He must be immensely feared, for in His omnipotence and justice, He may condemn us or save us with perfect right. Out of this fear come forth sorrow for our sins, modesty, sighs, tears, breast-beatings, supplications, fastings, penances, pilgrimages, and the like. — Second, God must be supremely honored for His wisdom and majesty. Out of this honor come forth veneration and

reverence, genuflections and bows, prostrations, prayers, purifications, consecrations, cleanliness of the sacred vessels, vestments, and altar appointments; also feasts, celebrations, and solemnities when all the lights are lit, the chanting of psalms and hymns, the reading of lessons, and so forth. — Third, God must be immensely loved for His goodness and mercy. Out of this love come forth thanksgivings, praises, hymns, benedictions, votive offerings, incensings, and the like.

18. We should see to it that the name of God is sanctified within us through our participation in divine worship, that it is glorified abroad through the holiness of our lives, and that the worship and honor of God increase on earth so that the whole world may know we are the true worshipers of the one and true God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

19. Second, you should intend to REMEMBER CHRIST'S DEATH. Of this, we have spoken above.†

Third, you should intend to ASSIST THE WHOLE CHURCH by proposing to call upon God in behalf of the Pope, the Cardinals, Patriarchs, Archbishops, Bishops, and Doctors, superiors, priests, clerics, monks, religious, monastic communities, and all servants of Christ; of kings, chiefs, princes, and other noblemen; of virgins, widows, orphans, travelers, and captives; of the sufferers, the weak and infirm, and all the people of God; also, of pagans, heretics, and schismatics, so that they may be converted to the true God and to the Holy Church. In particular, you must pray for some special intentions, for your beloved parents, relatives, friends, dependents, and for those who were recommended to you and who are hoping for your prayers. You should

† Cf. § 10.

also pray most particularly for yourself. And if, especially through hatred or bitterness, you exclude some of the said faithful from the profit of so great favors, you commit a mortal sin, for you are performing the sacred Mysteries with hatred in your heart.

Chapter II — On Contrition and Confession, on Immediate Preparation, and on the Celebration Itself

1. Now that this has been said, and that your meditation on such thoughts has set your heart ablaze, vomit and expel the filth of your transgressions, remembering with *a heart contrite and humbled* how grievously you have sinned in thought, word, or deed; how often you have left undone the good deeds you could and should have accomplished. Going to your spiritual healer and father, you must now tell him your sins, not in an ordinary and general confession as would do the hard of heart who disguise their enormous iniquities beneath the fronds of common words, and who, without remorse or pangs of conscience, expose such iniquities in terms they could have used on the market place without having to blush. Such is not a confession, but a fraud and a mockery. As for you, if you wish to be healed, open your wound and from the depth of your heart give a clear and frank account of what you have committed since your last confession, indicating not only your deeds, but also the perverse thoughts that stain the soul when they are relished; not only your mortal sins, but also those more serious venial sins that bite and wound the conscience. All else you may explain briefly and clearly in a general way.

cf. Ps. 38:4
Ps. 50:19

2. After fulfilling your penance, recite devotedly the five following psalms: *How lovely . . . ; You have favored . . . ; Incline Your ear . . . ; I believed . . . ; Out of the depths . . . ,* with their versicles and orations. If time allows, say also the prayer "O Highest Priest . . . ,"[5] that is most effective

Ps. 83: 84, 85, 115, 129

and devout. Then, as you approach the altar, remember Christ on His way to the cross, and fix your thought upon the events of the passion. Read clearly and distinctly what must be read; avoid excessively drawn-out collects and other texts your personal devotion might suggest: make use of no other devotions than those established by the holy Fathers.

3. When you reach the holy Canon, recollect your mind and let it not wander; perform the signs and gestures with great care; recite the words with still greater care; apply the uttermost care in having the right intention because of what the Canon contains: Christ's precious Body, His glorious Soul, and the immensity of the Godhead.

In the Memento of the living and the dead, your recommendations should not be expressed vocally: enumerate mentally your beloved ones, and mention the others in a general way, including in your intention all those for whom you have prayed before or for whom you intended to pray.

When you reach the *Qui pridie* . . . , set your mind and will to do what Christ meant in the Last Supper, and what Holy Mother Church intends to accomplish.

After Communion, pause for a moment, and say, not with your lips but with your heart:

4. PRAYER: "O my Lord, who are You, and who am I who presume to send You down into the evil-smelling pit of my body and soul? Why did You make me if I was to inflict upon You this detestable insult? Indeed, a thousand years of tears and penance would not suffice to make me receive this noble Sacrament worthily even once. How much more unworthy and wretched am I who sin every single day, persevere in my iniquity, and come to the Sacrament unprepared? But Your mercy is infinitely greater

than my wretchedness: that is why, trusting in Your kindness, I dare to consume You."†

These two sentiments, indeed, are those most needed for the Sacrament to be worthily received: deep self-effacing humility, and compassion for the death of Christ.

5. If, after Communion, you feel no spiritual consolation, that is a sure sign of spiritual weakness or even death: you have placed a fire on your breast and feel no heat, honey in your mouth and taste no sweetness! But if you do feel some consolation, credit not yourself but God's immense bounty extended even unto the wicked, consoling even the unworthy. Say, then, within your heart: "Through His favor, He makes me loathe my wretchedness. If He does so much for me in my sinful state, what great things He would do for me were I to reform! With all my strength I want to change myself and cleave to Him." Do not think you could do this alone: you need the help of divine grace. May this grace be granted both to you and to me. Amen.

† A very poor and negative prayer influenced by the spiritual teachings of the day.

On the Government of the Soul

De regimine animae

Counsels of Perfection, Addressed to Blanche
Daughter of St. Louis, King of France

FIRST of all, O my soul, you should have of God a concept of the highest, most pious, and holiest order — that is, you should believe in Him with certain faith, consider Him with an attentive mind, and look upon Him admiringly with the penetrating glance of reason

2. Your concept of the most excellent God shall be of the HIGHEST order if you offer your faith, admiration, and praise to the boundless power of the One who created all things out of nothingness and sustains their existence; to the infinite wisdom of the One who governs all things and ordains them; to the timeless justice of the One who judges all things and retributes them. High is your concept of God if, going beyond yourself, entering within yourself, and rising above yourself, you truthfully sing with the prophet: *The cities of Juda rejoice because of Your judgment, O Lord. Because You, O Lord, are the Most High over all the earth, exalted far above all gods.* *Ps. 96:8-9*

Your concept of the most excellent God shall be of the MOST PIOUS order if you admire, embrace, and bless His boundless mercy as supremely kind in assuming our humanity and mortality, as supremely compassionate in enduring crucifixion and death, and as supremely generous in giving us the Holy Spirit and instituting the Sacrament, for it is in the Sacrament of the altar that He most generously communicates Himself. From the depth of your soul, you will then sing with the psalmist: *The Lord is good to all and compassionate toward all His works.* *ibid. 144:9*

Your concept of the most excellent God shall be of the HOLIEST order if you behold, admire, and praise His ineffable sanctity, and, together with the Seraphim, proclaim
Isa. 6:4 Him *Holy, Holy, Holy.* He is holy, first, because He possesses within Himself a sanctity that is utterly the greatest and the most pure, so that He cannot possibly think or love anything but what is holy. He is holy, secondly, because He loves holiness in others so perfectly that He could not possibly either withdraw grace from the servants of true holiness, or refuse the glory and reward due to them. He is holy, thirdly, because He detests unholiness so thoroughly that He could not possibly condone sin or let it go unpunished. If this is the way you think of God, you will
Dt. 32:4 sing with the lawgiver: *A faithful God without deceit, how just and upright He is!*

3. Next, turn the eyes of your mind to the laws of that God who orders you to offer a humble heart to the Most High, a devoted heart to the Most Kind, and an immaculate heart to the Most Holy. Offer a HUMBLE HEART to the Most High by adoring Him in thought, obeying Him in deed, and praising Him by word and sign, so that, as
1 Cor. 10:31 the Apostle commands and teaches, *you do all for the glory of God.* Offer a DEVOTED HEART to the Most Kind by appealing to Him through fervent prayer, tasting Him through spiritual delights, and perceiving His many graces, so that your soul may constantly come up toward Him
Ct. 3:6 *from the desert, like a column of smoke laden with myrrh, with frankincense.* Offer an IMMACULATE HEART to the Most Holy Spouse, so that no approval of bodily pleasures, no craving for earthly possessions, no attachment to inner malice, may reign in your soul through your consent. Cleanse yourself of every stain of sin, and sing with

the psalmist: *Let my heart be perfect in Your statutes, that I be not put to shame.* *Ps. 118:80*

4. Carefully check whether you have done all this since early age. If your conscience tells you that you have, place the credit not upon yourself, but upon a gift of God, and render thanks to Him. If you find that you have failed once or more in one, or many, or even all of these affections, either lightly or grievously, out of levity and ignorance or with certain knowledge, take up the spirit of virtue *with unutterable groanings,* and try to reconcile yourself *Rom. 8:26* with God, making amends to Him, so that, with the penitent, you may chant and sing: *I am very near to falling, Ps. 37:18 and my grief is within me always.*

5. A sorrowing spirit will cleanse the soul and please God only if it comes with two companions: the fear of divine judgment, and the flame of inner desire. You may regain a humble heart through fear, a devout heart through desire, and an immaculate heart through remorse.

FEAR, therefore, the judgments of God, for they are *like ibid. 35:7 the mighty deep.* Have a great fear, lest, by repenting not enough, you still be displeasing to God; have a greater fear, lest you repeat your offense; have the greatest fear, lest you finally lose God, eternally lacking light, eternally burning in fire, eternally gnawed by worms, if you do not feel sincerely penitent and do not die in the state of final grace. Sing with the prophet: *My flesh shudders with dread of ibid. 118:120 You, and I fear Your ordinances.*

6. LAMENT, also, and grieve over the sins you committed. Have great sorrow for having wasted all the good that you had divinely received; have a greater sorrow for having offended Christ who was born and crucified for you; have the greatest sorrow for having insulted God. By

transgressing His laws, you have dishonored His majesty, refused His truth, offended His goodness, and plunged the whole universe into dishonesty, deformity, and disorder. By opposing the divine statutes, commands, and judgments, you have abused all that was to serve you for the sake of God: nature, Scripture, justice, mercy, gratuitous gifts, and promised rewards. After carefully considering all this, *make thee mourning as for an only son, a bitter lamentation;* let tears run down *like a torrent day and night; give thyself no rest, and let not the apple of thy eye cease.*

*Jer. 6:26**

Lam. 2:18

7. DESIRE, finally the godly gifts, and with the flame of divine longing, rise up to God who so patiently sustained you a sinner, waited so long for you, and led you so mercifully to repentance, granting pardon, infusing grace, and promising a crown. But offer Him also a payment, or rather, accept from Him as a means of repayment the sacrifice of *a contrite spirit, a heart contrite and humbled* through bitter remorse, sincere confession, and adequate satisfaction. Desire intensely that God be well-pleased through a generous imparting of the Holy Spirit; desire more intensely to conform to God through an exact imitation of Christ crucified; desire most intensely to know God by seeing the eternal Father face to face, so that you may truly sing with the prophet: *Athirst is my soul for God, the living God. When shall I go and behold the face of God?*

Ps. 50:19

ibid. 41:3

8. For this inner spirit of fear, sorrow, and desire to be safely preserved within you, you must train yourself externally in all manner of moderation, justice, and godliness. You must do as the Apostle recommends: *Rejecting ungodliness and worldly lusts, . . . live temperately and justly and piously in this world.*

Ti. 2:12

Train yourself, therefore, in every kind of MODERATION until, as the Apostle writes, *your moderation be known to all men.* Moderation consists in sparingness as applied to food and clothing, wake and sleep, work and rest; in the avoidance of excess in any of these. Again, moderation consists in discipline, meaning the measured use of silence and speech, sadness and joy, mercy and severity, as the circumstances demand and right reason dictates. Finally, moderation consists in propriety in the ruling, ordering, and restraining of acts, movements, gestures, dress and clothing, and bodily members and senses, as required by moral decency and regular observance. You must act as one of those to whom the Apostle writes: *Only let all things be done properly and in order.*

Phil. 4:5

1 Cor. 14:40

9. Train yourself also in the practice of JUSTICE, so that these prophetical words may truly apply to you: *In the cause of truth and for the sake of justice,* etc. . . . I mean complete justice, through zeal for the honor of God, observance of the divine laws, and desire for the neighbor's salvation; well-ordered justice, through obedience to superiors, fraternity with equals, and emendation of inferiors; perfect justice, through assent to all truth, support of all goodness, and opposition to all evil by thought and word and deed—by never doing to another what you would not wish to have done to you, and never denying another what you yourself would like to obtain. Be you a perfect follower of those to whom it is said: *"Unless your justice exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."*

Ps. 44:5

Mt. 5:20

10. Finally, train yourself in the practice of GODLINESS, for as the Apostle writes, *godliness is profitable in all respects, since it has the promise of the present life as well*

1 Tm. 4:8

as of that which is to come. I mean godliness as applied to divine worship, expressed through the attentive, devout, and reverent reciting of the canonical hours, through confession and bewailing of daily sins, through reception of the most holy Sacrament at the appropriate times, and through daily attendance at Mass. — Godliness as applied to the salvation of souls through helping them, now by frequent prayer, now by edifying conversation, now by chal-
Ap. 22:17 lenging example, *so that he who hears* may *say: "Come!"* But this should be done with wise restraint so as not to endanger your own salvation. — Godliness as applied to meeting corporal needs, through patient assistance, through friendly consolation, through humble, gay, and merciful service, so that you may fulfill the divine law as set forth
Gal. 6:2 by the Apostle: *Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ.* The best way to attain these perfections is, I believe, by keeping in mind the Crucified,
cf. Ct. 1:13 so that your Lover may be for you a sachet of myrrh, resting upon the bosom of your mind; and may the One blessed for ever and ever grant this to you. Amen.

Letter
Containing Twenty-five Points to Remember

Epistola
Continens viginti quinque memorialia

Spiritual Counsels Addressed to a Friar

LETTER CONTAINING TWENTY-FIVE POINTS TO REMEMBER

Prologue

Friar Bonaventure, to his beloved in Christ, Friar N., his true brother in the Lord, who has put off the old man, *and who desires to live for Christ and die to the world:* *Eph. 4:22*



ELOVED brother in the Lord:

Before we parted, you most insistently begged me to send you an occasional letter of spiritual counseling. I know, brother, that what you ask heaps live coals upon my head. The kindness of *cf. Prv. 25:22* your insistence, however, and the humility of your request, melted my hardened pride, so that I promised to do as you wished, although, dear and beloved brother, it would be far better for me to receive such advice from you than to give it to you. But as the pressure of your devotion forces me to become foolish in this *cf. 2 Cor. 12:11* matter, I will attempt, as much as is in my power, to do what you expect of me. I will not set down for you any topic other than those I intended to write about for my own good, plain and simple as they may be. Many of these you are well acquainted with: that is why, my dearest friend, I call upon your charity.

Experience proves beyond doubt that it is impossible for a man to serve God perfectly unless he endeavors to divorce

himself completely from the world. If we wish, therefore, to follow our Lord and Saviour, we must obey the prophet's
*Isa. 58:6** voice and *loose the bands of wickedness, undo the bundles that oppress.* Our steps, then, disengaged from any worldly pursuit, are made free to follow the Redeemer: for, as the
2 Tim. 2:4 Apostle says, *no one serving as God's soldier entangles himself in worldly affairs.*

2. Let us not permit our hearts to be concerned with any created good, except as long as such goods move us with feelings of love and charity. When the manifold charm of temporal goods is given too much attention, not only does it distract the spirit and disturb the mind's happy peace: as it arouses the imagination, it actually destroys this peace by sadly vexing it with violent commotions. Let us, instead, drop the load of earthly love; let us run to the One who invites us, who refreshes the soul and pro-
Phil. 4:7 vides *peace . . . which surpasses all understanding.*

Mt. 11:28 3. *"Come to Me,"* He said, *"all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest."* O Lord, what need have You? Why do You call? What do You have in common with us? Oh, true voice of kindness! *"Come to Me,"* He says, *"and I will give you rest."* Oh, admirable condescension of our God! Oh, love beyond words! Who
*Isa. 66:8** else has ever done so much? *Who hath ever heard* or seen anything like this? Behold: He invites His enemies, He
Mt. 11:28 exhorts the guilty, He attracts the ungrateful! *"Come to Me, all you,"* He says, "and *learn from Me: take My yoke upon you, . . . and you will find rest for your souls."* Oh, most sweet and pleasing words! Oh, divinizing words,
Heb. 4:12 *keener than any two-edged sword;* heart-wringing words
ibid. filled with extreme delight, *extending even to the division of soul and spirit!*

Wake up, now, O Christian soul, to a love so kind, to a flavor so sweet, to a fragrance so delightful! Anyone unable to perceive all this is most certainly ill, bereft of reason, at the threshold of death.

O my soul, please, be set afire, be fattened, be sweetened by the mercy of your God, by the kindness of your God, by the love of your Spouse! Be set afire by the fervor of your Beloved; be fattened with His love; be sweetened with His savor. Let none prevent you from entering, holding, and tasting!

4. What more could we seek, expect, or desire? In this one Good we possess all Good. And yet, alas, what incredible folly, what wretched weakness, what hateful madness: we are called to rest and choose hard labor, we are offered relief and prefer pain, we are promised joy and desire sorrow! Oh, most pitiful weakness, most wretched perversity! We have become almost like brute matter, almost worse than idols which have eyes and do not see, ears and do not hear, reason and do not understand, taking *bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.* *cf. Ps. 113:5* *Isa. 5:20**

5. O God, where shall we turn to make up for such perversity? Where shall we turn to atone for so great an offense? We have not the means within us, O God, we need Your gift. You alone can correct us, you alone can atone for our sins: for You alone do know *how we are formed,* You, our Salvation and Redemption! This You bring about but in those who, seeing themselves cast down in their wretchedness, turn to You as to their only chance of rising. *Ps. 102:14*

6. Let us, then, lift up the eyes of our mind directly to God and see where we now lie: for a man unaware that he has fallen is not much interested in getting up. Knowing

cf. Ps. 129:1 our fall, let us cry out loudly from the abyss to the Lord, that He may extend to us the helping hand of His mercy, *Isa. 59:1** which is never *shortened that it cannot save.* — *Let us not* *Heb. 10:35* *lose our confidence which has a great reward.* — *Let us . . .* *ibid. 4:16* *draw near with confidence to the throne of* His *grace* — *re-* *1 Pt. 1:9* *ceiving as the final issue of* our *faith, the salvation of* our *souls.* Let us not delay: life is calling us, salvation await-*cf. Lk. 14:23* ing us, trials compelling us to enter. What are we doing? *Heb. 4:11* Why such sloth? What is detaining us? *Let us therefore hasten to enter into that rest* of eternal delight in which *Jb. 5:9* are *great things and inscrutable, marvelous things without* *Gal. 4:26* *number.* Let our hearts ascend to *that Jerusalem which is* *cf. Jer. 51:50* *above;* let us sigh for our fatherland, rise up toward *our* *Gal. 4:26* *mother,* — *enter into the powers of the Lord,* and behold *Ps. 70:16** our merciful King reigning over this mother: let our hearts melt in His mercies!

7. Let us give thanks wholeheartedly to the One who *cf. Gn. 24:27* deigned to overlook our ingratitude, not withholding from us the kindness of His mercy, but granting us the desire *cf. Ps. 118:32* to run on the way of His commands, where no man may run if he has not the desire. Let us not underestimate this gift, but deem it great, since the greatest prophet said that *Ps. 118:20* he longed for it: *My soul is consumed with longing for Your ordinances at all times.* But this very longing may slacken because of the tepidity that results from our unconcern and carelessness. That is why I thought it good to write down in this letter of exhortation a few things worth remembering: they will indicate what to avoid and what to do. Let us regain strength and consider these points every day, fruitfully and wholeheartedly; let us grow tirelessly in virtue and grace within God's love, until we attain *Gn. 49:26** the perfect *desire of the everlasting hills.*

We shall first cover eight points of a general nature, then some others on particular topics.

THINGS TO REMEMBER, IN GENERAL

These things are certain abilities that must be proved in the young, as so many ladders of virtue by which they may certainly attain the perfection of goodness and the summit of glory, provided they use them faithfully. To wit: holy modesty in word and action, reserve in speech, prompt obedience, assiduous prayer, avoidance of idleness and laxity, pure and frequent confession, eagerness to serve, and flight from worthless company. These virtues are like glowing pearls that make their owner gracious in the eyes of God, of the angels, and of men. When it pleased Him who from your mother's womb set you apart and called you by His grace, to reveal His Son in you, leading you out of the wretched servitude of Egypt *into the freedom . . . of the sons of God*, you already started to walk upon the way of the new man, upon a path of humility traced between those of fear and of love. Now, reaching higher levels by this path of humility, you shall be able to train yourself in loftier matters, some of which are listed below, as being specially worthy of remembrance.

cf. Wis. 1:3

cf. Gal. 1:15, 16

Rom. 8:21

THINGS TO REMEMBER, IN PARTICULAR

1. First of all, if you wish to walk in the footprints of the Saviour, PLACE ALL YOUR HOPE IN THE LORD, and none whatsoever in the consolations of the world.

2. Try to rid yourself thoroughly of every vice and evil concupiscence—as much as is humanly possible. Thus,

cf. 1 Cor. 5:7

cf. Rom. 6:4 having purged out the old leaven of every sin and evil, you will walk after Christ in newness of life. If you do not first BREAK THE CHAINS OF SIN, your soul, weighted down in darkness, shall be unable to ascend to heaven.

3. Cast off every external bond, and with all your soul BIND YOURSELF TO GOD.

4. Out of love for the Most High, support with patience every worldly persecution; better yet, accepting them with gladness if you can, REJOICE IN NOTHING BUT THE PAINS OF CHRIST. Renounce all temporal pleasures, and find happiness in these pains, seeing them as intended for the cleansing of your sins and the profit of your soul.

5. Knowing that you have offended the Creator of your own being and of all other things, CALL NO CREATURE TO ACCOUNT.

6. Despise yourself, and wish to be despised; LOVE HOLY POVERTY, and let your personal belongings be as simple, cheap, and few as possible. But do not demand the same of others: rejoice and be happy, instead, over any satisfaction your brethren may receive. Assist and serve them; think that they deserve every consolation, except when, God forbid, you see any one offending the Divinity so obviously that there is no possible excuse: in which case, let your heart be filled with as much compassion and anguish as it can contain.

7. LIVE AT ALL TIMES IN THE FEAR OF GOD. With all your might, absolutely reject as deadly poison every blandishment of the world, every honor, glory, and favor, every glitter of vanity. Remain alert and watchful: do not trust yourself for a minute. When, at last, you have obtained a complete victory over yourself, no enemy, within or without, shall harm you.

8. Out of love for the Lord of all things—in heaven, on earth, and in hell—who assumed for our sake the nature of the lowliest slave, and in that nature willingly submitted to the power of men, HUMILIATE YOURSELF and consider every man your master; consider yourself truly the servant of all; and in all human matters see yourself as a slave. Thus, you shall live in lasting peace and tranquility with all, and you shall be completely free of scandal.

9. AVOID ANYTHING SPIRITUALLY USELESS: that is, be not concerned or entangled in any way with things external or internal in which you find no profit for your soul; and let no one involve you in such things. There is here a wonderful mystery that will always remain closed to the inexperienced.

10. CURB YOUR EYES, YOUR MOUTH, ALL YOUR SENSES, in every way you can, so that never again you may desire to see, hear, or touch anything but what is good for your soul. Apply also to your tongue such complete restraint that you never speak except to give answer, or when compelled by necessity or by an evident advantage. Even then, speak in a low voice if possible; speak with reverence, fear, and sweetness of mind, always avoiding prolixity, and doing your best to curtail the occasions of speech. *cf. Ps. 38:2*

11. Out of desire for blessed and holy solitude, ESTEEM HIGHLY THE PRACTICE OF VIGILS, using them as a means of offering your prayers to God with fervent devotion, deep humility, and careful attention to what you are saying.

12. When you are called upon to participate in the divine office, ESTABLISH WITHIN YOURSELF SO GREAT A PEACE that, forgetting all worldly disturbance and fixing your mind intently upon the heavenly mysteries, you may recite it with devotion, reverence, and joy. As if you were part

of the host of angels, and together with them, you may then offer praise to God in His presence.

13. At all times, KEEP IN HIGH AND LOVING REVERENCE THE GLORIOUS QUEEN, THE MOTHER OF OUR LORD. Turn to her as to the safest harbor in all your needs and troubles, begging for her protection. Take her as your advocate, devotedly and confidently putting your case into her hands, for she is the Mother of Mercies. Give her every day some special and particular proof of your reverence: and, in order that your devotion may be accepted and your reverence well received, with every power of your body and soul, preserve immaculate within you the whiteness of her purity, trying with every effort of your will to follow her example of humility and meekness.

14. Everywhere, avoid all women and young boys, outside the case of necessity or obvious utility. Wherever you live, CHOOSE UNTO YOURSELF A FATHER, a holy man, discreet, kind, and pious, expert rather in the art of life than in that of speech, able to instruct and inflame you with the love of God through effective and burning words and examples; one to whom you may turn for spiritual support in every need.

15. Making the greatest effort to cast out all coldness of spiritual sloth and dejection, which open the way of confusion that "leads to death,"[1] LIVE AT ALL TIMES IN A STATE OF INNER AS WELL AS OUTER PEACE and tranquility. Never oppose or contradict anyone in any way; agree, instead, with everyone in everything, as long as no damage is done to God's glory or to the salvation of your soul.

16. CONFORM ALL YOUR AFFECTIONS AND INTENTIONS TO THE WILL OF GOD. Endowed as you are by God with the grace of purity and innocence, let all things edify you,

and let nothing in this world be harmful to your soul. Be not infected with the filth of others, adding iniquity to iniquity by being unduly perturbed over their defects, lest, in your desire to rescue them from the deep, your own soul sink in even deeper waters. Covering, instead, with kindness and charity all those things in regard to which you can do nothing without damage to yourself, abandon them to that supreme Wisdom who knows how to draw good out of evil. Thus, by the Lord's grace, you will be able to find an occasion of spiritual progress in everything, good and evil alike.

17. GUARD YOUR HEART with all possible care, and devote it to spiritual exercises alone, so that, devoid of the images of visible things and detached from every creature, it may freely concern itself with the Creator of all.

18. Considering in all men the image and likeness of the divine Majesty, LOVE ALL MEN with the affection of your inner heart—particularly the weak and those who need your support—as long as this does not distract you harmfully from your own spiritual good. Act as a good mother who loves and fosters her beloved and only son. *cf. 2 Kgs. 1:26*

19. KEEP YOUR MIND CONTINUALLY TURNED TOWARD GOD so that your every work, and all your activities, physical and mental, may be prayers. Render every service, most of all the more humble, with as much burning love as if you were serving Christ in person. And this, indeed, you can and should believe to be the truth, for He Himself said in the Gospel: *"As long as you did it for one of these, the least of My brethren, you did it for Me."* *Mt. 25:40*

20. SHOW HONOR AND REVERENCE TO ALL MEN, out of both duty and devotion. Endeavor always to keep intact the rule of holy obedience, as you would the apple of your

eye, not only in matters of certain or possible importance, but even in the slightest details. Obey not only prelates and all those above you, but also all those below you, submitting yourself to everyone in a spirit of self-denial for the sake of Christ. In all things good and indifferent, always try to follow the wish of others. Never be a burden to anyone, but, loving all in the charity of Christ, make yourself agreeable to all men in general. Avoid particular kindness, friendship, and familiarity. Try your very best never in any way or for any reason, through word, deed, or gesture, directly or indirectly to be the cause or occasion of bitterness, hatred, complaining, injustice, disturbance, grumbling, slander, scandal, flattery, or any such thing.

21. Try, as much as possible, to HIDE YOUR VIRTUES FROM EVERYONE, and the spiritual graces which divine mercy deigned to bring about in you or through you; hide also your tribulations and battles, your virtuous intentions and the like. This, however, does not apply to those matters which properly must be revealed to the priest when you go to confession, or which, for the sake of spiritual gain, you may wish to disclose to a special and proven friend whose advice and counsel would be valuable to you. Be careful always and everywhere to steal some time for your regular prayer and holy meditation so that you may *sit solitary* and rise up to heaven.

Lam. 3:28*

22. Detached from everything, free of all earthly desire, and setting no store by any creature, STRIVE TOWARD YOUR CREATOR with so great an effort of your spirit and so burning an ardor of your heart that, as if forgetful of all lesser things, whatever you do, wherever you are, and whatever the business you pursue, you may think of God always, day and night, at every instant and every hour, believing

and realizing that you are most verily in His presence, and knowing that He looks upon you from everywhere. Think of it with great reverence, with fear and trembling, with supreme attention and the most ardent love. With bitter tears, beg forgiveness for your sins as you lie prostrate at the feet of His immense majesty. Wounded with Him, weeping and covered with tears, pierced with the sword of compassion for the most sacred sufferings of the Son of God, appear before His cross. Place before your own crookedness the standard of rectitude of His whole life. Give thanks to Him as you recall His countless and immense favors. Prompted by the goad of ardent love for Him, behold Him in every creature. Considering His power, wisdom, goodness, and mercy, praise Him lavishly in all His works. Attracted by longing for your heavenly home, sigh for Him with pitiful groanings. Seeing the depth of His boundless love for us, swoon in Him through the excessive joy and wonder of your heart and soul. Once the unfathomable depth of divine mercy has been revealed to you, throw yourself upon Him in an excess of love, and dissolve entirely in tears as you see God holding, lifting, attracting you, and as you see yourself ungrateful in all things. Carefully considering the most hidden, profound, admirable, secret, and stupendous sentences of His justice, worship Him in all things with the greatest love, with immense fear and trembling. Remain faithful and constant, discreet, pliable, and humble. Before all else, bear within your soul and body the permanent and living memory of His most sacred passion.

23. Be careful to guard yourself at all times against the deceits of the ancient enemy who often *disguises himself as an angel of light,* and sets up snares, and places nets in all

cf. Isa. 21:18
2 Cor. 11:14

the fairways of men, in the hope of capturing their souls. Take the greatest precautions against him; like the sparrow, flee the hunter's trap; be so pure and so little in your own eyes that even his finest mesh would fail to hold you. You shall escape without damage only if you have become Israel, and if you constantly behold God with the eyes of your mind, *for indeed He neither slumbers nor sleeps, the guardian of Israel.*

Ps. 120:4

24. Faithful to your holy resolve, burning with the sacred fire of heavenly wishes, keeping the mind and body clean, innocence unstained, and the conscience tender, be most careful never to be so foolish as to fail in any of these. Indeed, if you wish to observe such things with greater care and perfection, EXAMINE YOUR WAYS SEVEN TIMES EVERY DAY, either before or after each canonical hour, considering and weighing most attentively whether from hour to hour you have *walked worthily of God* and *without stain* along the paths of justice. Since no man ever observes discipline and justice so perfectly as to be free of all negligence and omission, have recourse to the laver of penance, and accuse yourself frequently with sorrow and groaning. In this self-accusation or confession, which must be complete, truthful, and pure, unveiled by any excuse, dissimulation, or defense, explain in an orderly fashion all your defects before your regular confessor as you would before God, telling him first your sins of omission as regards your duties toward God, particularly concerning the two kinds of prayer, the mental and the vocal; next, your failures in the observance of justice toward your neighbor; finally, the sins you committed through insufficient custody of your senses, and of your affections and thoughts related to them.

Col. 1:10
1 Tm. 6:14

Contrition and satisfaction should always accompany such a confession. You should regret your offenses, not only the great, but also the small, and through this regret, avoid repeating the same sin, always seeking to eliminate causes and occasions of sin, much as you may be attached to them. For as the Saviour says, the eye that causes scandal—that is, the occasions of sin—must be plucked out, although such occasions may appear delightful to us in spite of their painful consequences. There is here, therefore, a battle hard to fight: in all matters in which a servant of God finds no advantage to his soul, he must be blind, deaf, mute, and insensitive.

If you wish to care more attentively still and to burn more fervently in obedience to the divine precepts and in conformance with the divine discipline they require, in such matters as we have spoken of and in any other, endeavor with a sincere mind lengthily and lovingly to meditate at least once between morning and night upon the five points that follow: life so short, the road so treacherous, death so uncertain as to its time of coming, the reward of the virtuous so great, the punishment of the wicked so dreadful. Your service, then, shall not be without fear, nor your joy without trembling.

25. Lastly, after having done all things well by the grace of God, DEEM YOURSELF AN UNPROFITABLE SERVANT and *Lk. 17:10* a sinner, unworthy of any favor of God. Keep your faith strong, however; be filled with divine charity, and with the most confident hope that the merciful heart of the all-forgiving Father shall be opened to you.

When in the depth of your humility you shall have laid a solid foundation of faith; when you shall have erected the dazzling walls of constant and burning love adorned

with the depiction of every virtue; when you shall have raised the glorious roof of hope for beatitude fervently desired: then, all things being now in order, the loftiest Inhabitant of heaven, the Host of faithful souls, whose
Prv. 8:31 *delight* is to be with *the sons of men,* shall deign to live with you in your present exile until you are clothed in the land of heavenly bliss with the glorious mantle of immortality, and, together with all the saints, you deserve to behold with joy the light of His countenance. In this you shall find supreme happiness and unending delight, the end and consummation of your every desire.

CONCLUSION

Beloved brother, be sure of this: if you fail to renounce yourself perfectly, you shall be unable to follow in the Saviour's steps; in order to obtain His grace, you must strive and labor without cease; if you do not continuously knock at His door, you shall be unable to go in to the place where the mind is at peace; and if you do not stand constantly in the fear of God, your house shall soon fall to ruin.

But if you do practice these things faithfully and constantly, I hope that the Saviour, in His mercy, shall make you worthy of His grace at the present time, and that, in times to come, you shall obtain glory in His company. Amen.

Beloved, if I wrote all this, it is not that I thought you might need it: rather, I gathered these ideas for my own sake, seeing how unstable I am, and thought of sharing them with you, my faithful helper, whose great fervor and solicitude would supplement what might be missing by

reason of my tepidity and neglectful unconcern — all the more so as I know that you agree with most of my opinions, and find pleasure in these simple developments. I beg you, therefore, beloved in Christ, to accept these thoughts with the same love as that with which I am sending them to you. By training yourself in heavenly concerns, make the most of all I have said, of this *discipline* that *seems for the present to be a matter not for joy but for grief,* so that *afterwards it* may *yield the most peaceful fruit of justice.* Through the sweet flavor of devotion, may you possess even now in your soul the awareness of this delightful expectation. May your soul be nourished with fat and rich foods in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom, in your pious prayers, please commend me who am dry and many-worded instead of devout. And to Him, honor and glory, worship and power, for ever and ever. Amen.

Heb. 12:11

cf. Rom. 16:27
cf. 1 Pt. 4:11

HERE ENDS THE LETTER
CONTAINING TWENTY-FIVE POINTS TO REMEMBER

Non-Scriptural References

Non-Scriptural References

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1.	"Eruditio didascalica," II, 21.	14
2.	"De arte poetica," vv. 333, 343.	14
3.	Cf. Hugh of St. Victor, "Eruditio didascalica," II, 23.	14
4.	Cf. ibid.	15
5.	Cf. 4; 5:6, 7; VII, 15:21; XII, 16:32.	16
6.	Cf. Bonaventure, "Breviloquium," II, 3f.	16
7.	Cf. Bonaventure, "Quaestiones de scientia Christi," q. 4, ad 11; I "Sent.," d. 3, p. I, q. 1, ad 2.	16
8.	Cf. Bonaventure, "Itinerarium," 3:2; Augustine, "De civitate Dei," VIII, 4, et alia.	17
9.	Augustine, loc. cit.; cf. Bonaventure, "Itinerarium," 5:7.	17
10.	Augustine, op. cit., XI, 25.	18
11.	Cf. Aristotle, "Metaphysica," VI, text. 2; XI, c. 6 (V, c. 1; X, c. 7); Boethius, "Dialog. I, in Porphyr." (in principio); "Comment. in Porphyrio," I, (in principio).	18
12.	Cf. Aristotle, "Metaphysica," I, text. 6; text. 25ff. (c. 6, c. 9); Augustine, "LXXXIII Quaestiones," q. 46; Bonaventure, I "Sent.," d. 1, p. I, a. 1, q. 1, ad 3; ibid., ad 4; ibid., dub. 2.	18
13.	Cf. Hugh of St. Victor, op. cit., II, 20; Isidore, "Etymologiarum," II, 24 (in fine).	19
14.	Cf. Bonaventure, "Breviloquium," Prologue, 4.	19
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17.	Cf. Bonaventure, "Breviloquium," 3:9.	23
18.	Cf. ibid., 5:6.	23
19.	Cf. Seneca, "Epistola 65 ad Lucilium."	24
20.	"Glossa ordinaria" on psalm 61:12, taken from Augustine.	24
21.	Cf. Bonaventure, "Breviloquium," II, 12 in fine.	24
22.	Cf. ibid., V, 7.	25
23.	Aristotle, "Ethica," II, 4.	25
24.	Ibid., "Rhetorica," I, 16ff., (6ff.); "Ethica," II, 3.	25
25.	Ibid., "Perihermeneias," I, 1.	26
26.	Augustine, "In epistolam Joannis." tr. 3, n. 13.	27
27.	Developed by Bonaventure in "Quaestiones de scientia Christi," q. 4.	28
28.	Cf. Bonaventure, II "Sent.," d. 18, a. a., q. 1f.	28

29. Cf. Aristotle, "Physica," V, text. 7 (c. 1); "De generatione et corruptione," text. 11ff (c. 3); "Metaphysica," VII, text. 22ff. (VI, c. 7). - - - - - 28
30. Augustine, "De Trinitate," VI, 10:11. - - - 28
31. Cf. Bonaventure, II "Sent.," d. 17, a. 1, q. 2, ad 6; d. 19, a. 1, q. 1. - - - - - - - 29
32. Cf. ibid., "Breviloquium," IV, 1, 4. - - - - 29
33. Cf. ibid., II, 3, 4. - - - - - - - 29
34. Cf. Alfredus Anglicus, "De motu cordis"; Costa-Ben-Luca, "De differentia animae et spiritus"; Hugh of St. Victor, "De unione corporis et animae." - - - 30
35. Anselm, "De conceptu virginali et originali peccato," 3; "Dialogus de veritate," 12. - - - - - 30
36. Plato, "Parmenides." - - - - - - 30
37. Cf. Bonaventure, "Breviloquium," I, 8. - - - 30
38. Cf. Augustine, passim. - - - - - 31
39. Cf. ibid., "Enarrationes in psalmos," Ps. 50, n. 15; Bernard, "Sermones in Cantica," sermon 24, n. 5ff.; Bonaventure, "Breviloquium." - - - - - 31
40. Cf. Bonaventure, "Breviloquium," V, 4. - - - 31
41. The theme of this work seems to be based on Hugh of St. Victor's "Expositio in hierarchiam caelestiam Dyonisii," II, 1. - - - - - - - 32

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For a complete study on this work, see:
"St. Bonaventure's DE REDUCTIONE ARTIUM AD THEOLOGIAM, A Commentary with an Introduction and Translation" by Sister Emma Therese Healy — Franciscan Institute, Saint Bonaventure University, Saint Bonaventure, N. Y., 1955.

There are a few inaccuracies in the translation, but the commentaries are interesting and illuminating.

SOLILOQUY

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2. Augustine, "De civitate Dei," XXII, 30:5. - - 38
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6.	Ambrose, "Hexaemeron," VI, 8:50.	42
7.	Cf. note 4, 5:14.	42
8.	Anselm, "Proslogion," 1.	43
9.	Cf. note 4.	43
10.	Cf. "Tractatus de caritate," 18:41; found among the works of Bernard. Also, Hugh of St. Victor, "De arrha animae," Migne, P. L., t. 176.	43
11.	Cf. note 4.	44
12.	Cf. Augustine, "De Trinitate," 2:4 and 4:6 for this thesis. More particularly, "De spiritu et anima," 18; found among the works of Augustine. Also, Marcus Aurelius Cassiodorus, "De anima," 2.	44
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18.	Roman Missal, procession of the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary.	45
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20.	Cf. Anselm, "Meditationes," 14:2. Also, Gregory, "Moralium," XX, 38:73, and XXII, 3:5.	46
21.	Gregory, "Moralium," XXVI, 44:70.	46
22.	Cf. Hugh of St. Victor, "De arrha animae," Migne, P. L., t. 176, col. 955.	46
23.	Cf. "Meditationes piissimae," 6:16; cf. note 4.	46
24.	Cf. note 22.	47
25.	Ibid.	47
26.	This is actually a paraphrase of Augustine, "De libero arbitrio," 16:43.	47
27.	Cf. Bernard, sermon 81 "In cantica," 1.	47
28.	Gregory, "Homiliae in evangelia," II, homily 35:1.	48
29.	Cf. Gregory, "Moralium," XXXII, 1:1, and 35:1.	49
30.	Cf. Anselm, "Meditationes," 3.	49

31. This is actually from Anselm, "Meditationes," 13, which was used also as a source for part of sections 12 to 15. 50
32. This, and the whole of the following paragraph, is a paraphrase of Augustine, "Confessionum," 27:38. - 51
33. Gregory, "Homiliae in evangelia," homily 36:1. - 51
34. Augustine, "Confessionum," II, 2:4. - - - 52
35. Cf. ibid., VII, 5:11. - - - - - - 53
36. Augustine, sermon 82 "De verbis Domini," 11:14. - 53
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39. Ambrose, "Epistolae," 1:3; "Roman Breviary," Feast of St. Agnes, Jan. 21. - - - - - - 54
40. "De contritione cordis," 2; found among the works of Augustine. - - - - - - - - 54
41. Cf. Gregory, "Moralium," X, 24:42. - - - 55
42. Cf. ibid., XXXI, 38:77. - - - - - 55
43. "Meditationes piissimae," 15:38; cf. note 4. - - 56
44. Ibid., 40. - - - - - - - - 56
45. Cf. ibid., 3:7. - - - - - - - 57
46. Cf. Bernard, sermon 24 "in cantica," 6. - - - 57
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48. Cf. Pope Leo the Great, sermon 26:3. - - - 58
49. Eadmer, "De sancti Anselmi similitudinibus," 99; found among the works of Anselm. - - - - - 58
50. Anselm, "Orationes," 63. - - - - - 59
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52. Ibid. - - - - - - - - - 59
53. This was not found by the Quaracchi editors in the works of Anselm. - - - - - - 59
54. "Meditationes piissimae," 9:23; cf. note 4. - - 59
55. Cf. Bernard, sermon "In nativitate beatae Mariae virginis," 7. This passage seems actually to be taken from Arnaldus, or Ernaldus Bonnaevallis. Cf. Migne, P. L., t. 189, col. 1726. - - - - - - 60
56. Bernard, homily 2 "Super: Missus est," 17. - - 60
57. Anselm, "Orationes," 52. - - - - - 60
58. Ibid., 51. - - - - - - - - 61
59. First sentence is from "Panegyrico ad beatam Virginem deiparam," a sermon found among the works of Bernard; the second, from Bernard, sermon 4 "In assumptione beatae Mariae virginis," 8. - - - - 63
60. Anselm, "Orationes," 52. - - - - - 63
61. Bernard, sermon 2 "De adventu Domini," 5. - - 63
62. Augustine, "Epistolae," 55, 5:8. - - - - 63

63. Bernard, sermon 3 "In ascensione Domini," 2. - - 64
64. Gregory, "Moralium," XXXIV, 23:54. - - - 64
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69. According to the Quaracchi editors, Thomas of Hibernia, in his "Manipulo florum," attributes this passage to Bernard, "in a certain sermon," not found. - - 66
70. Roman Missal, paschal prayer "Exultet," by Gregory. - 67
71. Bernard, sermon 51 "In Cantica," 6. - - - 67
72. Bonaventure, III, "Sententiarum," d. 16, a. 2, q. 3, attributes this to chancellor Philip, but it is attributed elsewhere to Bernard. - - - - - - 67
73. Bernard, sermon 22 "De diversis," 5 and 6. - - 68
74. Cf. Bernard, sermon 61 "In Cantica," 3. - - - 69
75. Cf. Hugh of St. Victor, "De arrha animae," P. L., t. 176, col. 963. - - - - - - - 70
76. Bernard, sermon 2 "In dominica I post octavam Epiphaniae," 3. - - - - - - - - 70
77. Cf. Bernard, sermon "In dominica VI post Pentecosten," 3-5. - - - - - - - - - 70
78. "De spiritu et anima," 17; cf. "De diligendo Deo," 9f., and "Soliloquium animae ad Deum," 13f., all three found among the works of Augustine. Cf. also Anselm, "Meditationes," 7:2, where the first sentence occurs. - 71
79. Ibid. - - - - - - - - - 71
80. Bernard, "De diligendo Deo," 1:1. - - - - 71
81. Bernard, sermon 20 "In Cantica," 4, with excerpts from sermons 15:6 and 14:4. - - - - - - 72
82. Augustine, "Confessionum," X, 6:8. - - - 73
83. Cf. Augustine, "Sermones," 350:3. - - - - 73
84. "In manuali," 12; found among the works of Augustine. 73
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1. Cf. Isidore, "Synonymorum," I, 48f. This is actually found word for word in Bernard, sermon "De conversione ad clericos." - - - - - - 96
2. "Meditationes piissimae," 2:5, 6. Cf. ch. I, note 4. - 96
3. Gregory, "Moralium," VIII, 10:25. - - - - 96
4. Cf. Gregory, "Epistolae," VII, 29 "Ad Andream." - 96
5. "Sermones ad fratres in eremo," 49; found among the works of Augustine. - - - - - - 96
6. "De spiritu et anima," 49; found among the works of Augustine. - - - - - - - - 97
7. Cf. Bernard, sermon 7 "De adventu Domini," 1. - 97
8. Bernard, "De laude novae militiae," 1:2. - - - 97

9. Bernard, "Epistolae," 105. - - - - - 97
10. This was not found in Seneca by the Quaracchi editors. 97
11. Bernard, loc. cit. - - - - - - - 98
12. "Tractatus de interiori domo," 22:46; found among the works of Bernard. Also, Anselm, "Meditationes," 2. - 98
13. Anselm, "Meditationes," 2. - - - - - 99
14. Ambrose, "In Lucam," II, 3, 9:76. - - - - 99
15. Cf. Jerome, "Epistolae," 66:10. - - - - 99
16. Bernard, "De consideratione," V, 12:25. - - - 100
17. Bernard, sermon 42 "De diversis," 6. - - - 100
18. "De salutaribus documentis," 49; found among the works of Augustine. - - - - - - 100
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20. Augustine, sermon 229 (in appendix):4. - - - 101
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31. Augustine, "Epistolae," 153, 6:19. - - - - 104
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33. Augustine, "De Trinitate," I, 2:4. - - - - 104
34. "De contritione cordis," 2; found among the works of Augustine. Also, Anselm, "Meditationes," 11, in fine. 105
35. Gregory, "Moralium," XX, 31:61. - - - - 105
36. Gregory, "Homiliae in evangelia," II, homily 25:2. - 106
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5. Cf. "Meditationes piissimae," 6:17. Cf. ch. I, note 4. 109
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14. "Meditationes piissimae," 4:11; cf. ch. I, note 4. - 113
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18. Seneca, "Epistolae," 6:4. - - - - - 114
19. Gregory, "Homiliae in evangelia," II, homily 37:1. - 115
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21. Both sentences are from "De spiritu et anima," 57; cf. also Anselm, "Proslogion," 25. - - - - 115
22. Cf. Jerome, "Epistolae," 22:41. - - - - 115
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44. Bernard, sermon 11 "In Cantica," 6. - - - 124

45. Cf. "De mirabilibus sacrae Scripturae," 7; found among the works of Augustine. - - - - - - 124
46. Cf. note 2. Present quotation is from ch. 49. - - 124
47. Gregory, "Dialogorum," IV, 33. - - - - 124
48. Actually, from "De triplici habitaculo," 6; found among the works of Augustine. - - - - - - 124
49. Cf. Bede, "Homiliae," I, homily 70. The same idea is more clearly expressed in "De cognitione verae vitae," 8; found among the works of Augustine. - - - 124
50. Augustine, "De libero arbitrio," III, 25:77. - - 125
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55. Ibid., 1. - - - - - - - - - 128
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3. Cf. Isidore, "Synonymorum," II, 44. - - - 202
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6. Bernard, sermon 15 "In Cantica," 6. - - - 207
7. Ibid., 5. - - - - - - - - - 208
8. This is scattered throughout Anselm's prayer 19, meditation 14:3, and prayer 2; it is complete in "Lamentatio in passionem Christi," found among the works of Bernard. - - - - - - - - - 210
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4. Augustine, "Confessiones," VII, 10:16. - - - 230
5. Anselm, prayer 29; cf. Roman Breviary under "Preparation for Mass." This prayer has been attributed by mistake to Ambrose. - - - - - - - - 236

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