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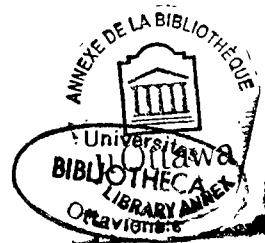
THE NUMINOUS AND THE ETHICAL
DIMENSIONS WITHIN HOLINESS

by Rev. Kenneth Micklethwaite

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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

The Rev. Kenneth Micklethwaite was born in Barnsley, Yorkshire, England 7th November 1918. He was ordained by the Methodist Church in England in 1949, and is at present an ordained minister of the United Church of Canada. He received the Bachelor of Arts degree from Bristol University, England in 1949, and his Master of Arts degree from the same University in 1958. The title of his thesis was Totality in the Old Testament - A Study of the root קטו in the Hebrew Text and in the Septuagint. In 1961 he received the Bachelor of Divinity degree from St. Andrew's College, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

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INTRODUCTION

The main contention of this thesis is that neither the numinous (to use the term of Rudolf Otto) without the ethical, nor the purely ethical without the numinous, bears any relation to Christian holiness or perfection.

In popular thought holiness is generally associated with "goodness", and there is no doubt that the word is charged with ethical import, and may be a large part, perhaps the chief part, of the meaning is moral. This, as will be shown in Chapter II on "Holiness in Scripture" is necessarily the case, inasmuch as the better the character of deity and the divine becomes known, the more intimately it absorbs within itself all the highest moral and rational attributes. Everything depends on the character of that mysterious reality before which man is called to bow in adoration. If that secret reality were to prove to be purely cruel and destructive it would still be "holy" in the merely numinous sense of the term, but the ethical for man might prove to lie precisely in opposition to that power and to all its demands.

For example, if were to be shown that God is really Moloch, the cruel and vengeful idol, man's highest duty would be to defy and to disobey him.

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There have also been situations in history when "religion" and "ethics" have been completely divorced from one another. It is possible for an earnest Hindu to seek contact with the "holy", to attain to a very deep sense of the numinous, to feel that he has been in touch with the "mysterium tremendum", and yet not to be convinced that such an experience need in any way be related to a demand for ethical righteousness, or that the experience if attained need necessarily have any direct effect on his moral conduct in the future.

Why is there this sharp distinction between our ideas and those of one great section of the Eastern world? The answer is found in the biblical understanding of "holiness." Nevertheless, after granting that the Christian concept of "holiness" is largely ethical, it is not primarily an ethical idea. Holiness in Scripture is always religious. The awareness of the unknowable, the mysterious, the totally transcendent, is always an essential part of any truly religious experience and therefore of holy living. (Chapter II)

Having established the meaning of holiness in Scripture, the thesis traces the development of the doctrine of holiness under the term "Christian Perfection" within the Holy Catholic Church. Chapter III provides the historical background of writers on the subject, first

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in the Continental Catholic tradition, and then in the English Catholic and Protestant tradition, up to the beginning of the eighteenth century. The purpose here is to place the writings of St. Francis de Sales, William Law, and Jeremy Taylor in their historical setting and to review the various schools of spirituality.

In Chapter IV, under the title of "Pre-Reformation and Counter Reformation Thought on Holiness", the theology of Christian Perfection as taught by the Catholic Church is studied. The Council of Trent set out in concrete terms the Catholic understanding of grace, confirming that grace "inheres" in the soul, as well as being the undeserved favour of God, which was the Reformer's definition. Grace is a gift of God, a gift of interior sanctity, that really sanctifies man in his inmost being and changes him inwardly. The basis of Christian Perfection is seen as sanctifying and actual grace.

The question "What is Christian Perfection?" is then asked. It consists primarily in charity toward God and secondarily in charity toward our neighbour.

Many seekers after Christian Perfection become mystics, therefore the relation of holiness to mysticism is considered, followed by an examination of the three classical ways or three ages of the spiritual life, which lead to the summit of Christian Perfection, union with God.

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Chapter V sets out to discover the teaching of the Reformers and the development of Protestant thought¹ on holiness. This chapter entitled "Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought on Holiness" shows how Catholic and Protestant conceptions of grace, and of justification and sanctification differ. There is no classic approach such as the "three ways", but rather Protestant thought is divided into several schools. There are three distinct groupings and the emphases they make can be studied under the headings: holiness by imputation; holiness imparted suddenly; and holiness seen as improvement. It should also be noted that elements in the High Anglican Church follow the Catholic classical approach.

Chapters VI, VII, and VIII, give examples of Catholic and Protestant writings on Christian Perfection. They are the works of a French Catholic and two English Protestants of the seventeenth century. They are:

St. Francis de Sales, Introduction to the Devout Life
On the Love of God

William Law, Christian Perfection
Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life

¹ The Anglican or Episcopal tradition is included under the term "Protestant". Many of these describe themselves as Protestant, but the Anglo-Catholic wing disavows the Protestant label. Because of the great diversity of belief within Anglicanism, many of its communicants think it can serve as the "bridge church", or the via media between other groups.

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Jeremy Taylor, The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living
The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying.

These three writers have been chosen for several reasons. First, St. Francis de Sales was widely read in England by devout Catholics and Protestants alike. Law and Taylor's books were also exceedingly popular and highly influential. Secondly, all three writers had a profound influence on John and Charles Wesley and the subsequent Evangelical Revival, which historians claim saved England from a bloody revolution such as occurred in France. Thirdly, all three writers, share this in common, they made their appeal to men and women in the ordinary workaday world and did not write for the religious in the cloister. Fourthly, St. Francis de Sales writes on the level of the purgative and illuminative ways in "The Introduction", but in the "Treatise" he expounds the unitive way, and is therefore a good example of Catholic teaching.

After analysing these works of spirituality, the question is asked: Are these writers fully aware that Christian holiness must comprise both the numinous and the ethical?

CHAPTER I

THE NUMINOUS AND THE ETHICAL

1. The Numinous.

The basic meaning of the holy is purely religious rather than moral. It refers to the sacred as against the secular or profane. It testifies to the inscrutable mystery and otherness of God, to the separation between the Creator and the creaturely.

The most illuminating study of this question of the "holy" in primitive man is the work of Rudolf Otto. He asserted that "Holiness — the holy — is a category of interpretation and valuation peculiar to the sphere of religion."¹ God alone is holy. It is only as man becomes aware of God that he becomes aware also of the dimension of holiness. Otto affirmed that awareness of the unknowable, the mysterious, the totally transcendent, is always an essential part of any truly religious experience. He quotes most appropriately from the Greek Father Chrysostom "On the Incomprehensible".

¹ Rudolf Otto, The Idea of the Holy, Translated John W. Harvey, London, Oxford Univ., 1926, p. 5.

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He whom we call God is the unutterable, the inconceivable, the inapprehensible; the One who surpasses the power of the human utterance and transcends the grasp of human intellect; the One whom the angels cannot trace out, whom the Seraphim cannot see, whom the Cherubim cannot conceive, the One whom authorities and principalities and powers, in a word every created existence, cannot behold.²

There is here an expression of what many people have felt. Obviously no form can be attributed to that which is faintly apprehended in such experiences. There is a sense of something remote, majestic and mighty. For this primitive element Otto felt the need of a new name and adopted a word coined from the Latin numen. Omen had given ominous; numen could give numinous. This element lives in all religion. It is in the Hebrew qadosh, in the Greek agios, and in the Latin sacer.

Otto spoke of this type of experience of the numinous as "non-rational". This must not be interpreted in the sense of the "irrational". He attaches full value to reason, and the need for understanding in the theological sphere as in any other. His aim is to draw attention to the fact that there is another method of apprehension than that of reason, and that this other method has its own sphere of validity. Reason seeks to analyse, to define, and in a sense to master. In this method, which is

² Ibid., p. 184.

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not that of reason and may suitably be called that of intuition, a man seeks to submit the whole of himself to a totality of an experience outside himself.

Again, Otto states that this "Holy" is the "wholly other". This too can be open to unfortunate misunderstanding. He does not mean that the Holy is totally alien from us, so wholly other that we cannot enter into any kind of relation with it. He does mean that it is a reality to the existence of which we have made no contribution; it is in no way a product of our imagination, and no means are available to us by which we can to any degree master it or bring it under control. When by process of reason we have "understood" something, we have in a sense made it our own; we are masters of the situation. This can never be true in relation to the Holy. Here our only possible attitude is one of submission — the recognition that this reality goes far beyond us, supreme in its independence and in its sovereign majesty. "It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?" (Job 11.8)

From this Otto draws the conclusion that the Holy is mysterium tremendum. First he examines tremendum and distinguishes three elements in it. The elements of Awe-fulness, of Overpoweringness, and of Energy.

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There is common agreement that primitive man knew of an unearthly dread. It was no ordinary dread. It was not fear of other men; not even of hosts of other men; nor of wild beasts who disputed a cave with him. It was different in kind. It was shuddering and eerie and awe-ful. It was the realm of mana and tabu.

To the element of the Awe-ful is added "overpoweringness" (majestas). A hint of the numinous still lies in the word "majesty". Who cannot feel the unutterable majesty and overpoweringness of the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and only Ruler of Princes? Here in the numinous is the seed of holy adoration.

To the Awe-ful and the Overpowering is added Energy. At the heart of the sense of the holy, early man discerned a pulsating activity. The wholly other did things. Power resided at the heart of the Mysterious. It was with a living God that early man felt himself in contact.

Otto next examines mysterium quoting Tersteegen: "A God comprehended is no God." God is not comprehended. He is the "wholly other". Mysteriousness and awefulness are not to be equated. A piece of machinery which I understand is not mysterious to me. It is at present beyond me. But some understand it. The numinous is mysterium — absolutely and for ever beyond comprehension.

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Fascination is another element in the holy. In the combination of daunting and fascination Otto finds "the strangest and most noteworthy phenomenon in the whole history of religion."³ For primitive man the daemonic-divine object allured and repelled. To master the mysterious, primitive man employed magic. He wanted to use the power of God for his own ends. But not for long, for in the development of the human race, to have God and "to be had" by Him, became an end in itself. The cry of the saint was "It is not thy gifts that I desire: it is Thyself." The possibility of response to this fascination is in all men.

In its climacteric moments the response to fascination brims over. This is the "overboundingness" of which the mystics speak.

In the presence of the mysterium tremendum man can only fear. But this fear is ambivalent. On the one hand it may degenerate into panic; that strange, inexplicable, infantile terror that sometimes falls upon men in the face of natural forces that they can neither understand nor control. Panic can be the mother of superstition and of countless evils. On the other hand, this fear may be cleansed and transformed into awe, adoration and worship.

3 Ibid., p. 31.

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Then it is one of the sources and origins of true religion.

2. The Ethical.

The other category of holiness is the ethical. This is plain, down-to-earth goodness in the simplest sense of the term. In popular usage today the holy man, the saint, is a good man. The Ritschlian wing of liberal theology limited holiness almost exclusively to its significance for ethics and values. Ritschl himself rejected the Old Testament conception of holiness and absorbed the meaning of holiness in goodness. Many of the Ritschlians, in their conception of the evolution of religion, relegated to primitive stages all conceptions of the holy except the moral. As we have seen it was left to Otto to recover some of the meanings which rationalism and moralism had purged from the holy.

All students of Church history are aware of the sharp contrast between the New Testament and the writings in the apostolic age. Within a brief period of thirty years Christianity becomes an ethical religion and holiness consists in observing moral commandments. Of the Christian community which can be dimly discerned through the lines of the first Epistle of Clement, H. Lietzmann has written:

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For these men Christianity is the ethical religion, governed by the commandments of God as set forth in the Old Testament and definitely revealed and interpreted by the last and greatest of the prophets, Jesus, whose person is the organ of the Holy Spirit. To be a Christian is to observe these moral commandments; and if men, in spite of praiseworthy efforts, are unable to observe them in their fulness, they may win pardon from a merciful God by the sincere confession of their sins, joined to a firm resolution to do better.⁵

The basis of Christian ethics is in the supreme duty of love to God and neighbour, rooted in faith, obedience, and humble acceptance of divine grace.

3. The Relation between the Numinous and the Ethical.

In seeking to isolate the non-rational element in the idea of the holy, the strictly ethical was set aside. But Otto recognizes that the ethical appeared in the numinous. He dislikes the phrase "gradually evolved", and also contests the idea. The appearance of the moral "ought" in man is said by many to have its origins in the constraint of the herd; that the custom of the clan "gradually evolved" into the moral imperative. For Otto the appearance of the moral "ought" in man is only evolvable out of the spirit of man, and then only in the

5 H. Lietzmann, History of the Early Church, trans. Bertram Lee Wolf, London, Lutterworth Press, 1949-1955, 4 Vols., Vol. I, p. 199-200.

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sense of "being arousable" because it is already potentially implanted in him. Were it not so, no "evolution" could effect an introduction for it.⁶

Furthermore, everything depends on the character of that mysterious reality before which man is called to bow in adoration. The reaction of the mortal to the numinous was "creature-consciousness" with its attendant feelings of human littleness and abasement. Another sort of valuation awakes with this: uncleanness, pollution, profanity. Here the holiness of God is less His majesty than His perfection. The meaning of the holy becomes the pure against the corrupt and unclean. When man is seen as unclean, the awe of the tremendum when united with the ethical means man needs cleansing, atonement and sanctification.

Either of these meanings, the numinous and the ethical in isolation from the other loses the theological significance of holiness. The numinous with no ethical significance can degenerate into crude superstition, magic ritualism, and irrational fear. The ethical by itself has often become trivial moralism, lacking the reverence which marks its original conception.

6 R. Otto, The Idea of the Holy, p. 45.

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The next step is to examine the numinous and the ethical in the Scriptures.

CHAPTER II

HOLINESS IN THE BIBLE

1. In the Old Testament.

The term godesh and its cognates appears no less than 605 times in the Old Testament. Norman Snaith states:

The chief and proper word for "holiness" is godesh. This is the most intimately divine word of all. It has to do, as we shall see, with the very Nature of Deity; no word more so, nor indeed any other as much.¹

The word godesh, then, comes in the first place among the Hebrews to refer to God alone. God is the "wholly other" but he is always active, always dynamically here, in this world. Transcendence does not mean remoteness. It means otherness. So God is known by what He does in the world. Here is the element of energy.

The element of Awe is also present. Norman Snaith writes:

¹ Norman Snaith, Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament, London, Epworth, 1944. See chapter II on "The Holiness of God" and Chapter III on "The Righteousness of God" for a careful examination of Holiness in the Old Testament, p. 51-78.

The actual connection between Holiness and Awefulness in the Old Testament is seen in the association of "holy" and "reverend", e.g. Psalms cxi. 9: "Holy and dreaded (R.V., "reverend", but the word is the ordinary Hebrew verb for "fear") is Thy Name." See also Psalm xcix. 3, where it is probable that the original psalm read, "Dreaded and holy is thy Name", but that it was altered to make "dreaded" (R.V., "terrible") to go with the first part of the line, in order that there might be a triple refrain, "Holy is He". The New Testament refers to the Awefulness of the Presence of God, when, in describing the experiences of Moses in Exodus xix, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "And so fearful was the appearance that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake" [. . .] Similarly Jacob, awaking at Bethel after having seen visions of God, says, "How dreadful is this place. This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven", Genesis xxviii. 17.²

Both the daunting and fascination is evident in Hebrew religion, but in addition men are not only impelled towards God in dread, but the Holy God Himself comes to favoured and selected men. In the Old Testament the Lord only is holy. Yet there is a derivable holiness which attaches (by contact with Him) to things, persons, places and seasons growing less numinous and less potent as they get farther away.

Places may be "holy", in the sense that they are the scene of experiences in which man becomes overpoweringly conscious of the presence of the mysterious and the divine. In this connection "holy" may also be interpreted

2 Ibid., p. 49-50.

as "unapproachable". Profane persons must not draw nigh at all; even the privileged may draw nigh only after certain precautions have been taken. Moses at the Bush sees the manifestation of the presence of God; he is bidden to draw near, but first to take off his shoes from his feet, for the place where he stands is holy ground. Beneath Sinai, under Divine instruction, Moses erected a Tent of Meeting. It may be that the simple Tent of Meeting which Moses pitched outside the camp and which had its single non-Levitical servitor in Joshua (Ex. 33.7-11) has been idealized in the description of a later historian into the elaborate Tabernacle set down in the centre of the camp with its host of attendant priests and Levites. (Ex. 25. 7, 30, 31) But God chose to dwell there. It was the place of meeting and it contained the ark. It blazed with the true Shekinah. From that burning centre, the numinous streamed out on things and persons. When the Tabernacle turned into the solid stone of the Temple, and the ark found its last resting place there (I Kings 8. 1ff.) this became the holy place of all holy places (Dt. 12. 5). In its innermost shrine — its Holy of Holies — without image and ultimately without the ark, God dwelt. From that centre into which only the High Priest entered, in theory there spread a nimbus throughout all Israel. (Isaiah 48. 2, Zech. 2. 12)

Objects may be holy, set apart from profane use and reserved to certain sacred purposes. The derivable holiness which attached to things because of their contact with God impregnated the vessels of the cultus (Nu. 3. 31) the oil for the anointing (a curse is pronounced on any man who presumes to make a similar oil for any other than the appointed purpose) (Ex. 30.25.33) the incense, (Ex. 30. 35-7) the shewbread, (I Sam. 21. 5) and the priest's clothing. (Ex 28. 2.4, Ez 42. 14) Such objects acquire by transference something of the mysterious power of the unseen and transcendent Holy — that power conveniently described by the Melanesian term Mana, which makes them dangerous to the uninitiated and the profane. Uzziah, in the story in 2 Samuel 6, presumes to touch the ark of God; at once power comes forth from the holy object, "and he died there by the ark of God".

A similar mana may attach to persons. When certain worshippers say to others "Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou", (Is. 65. 5) this is not a pharisaic claim to superior virtue. It is a warning to the uninitiated that he is in possession of mana, this power is dangerous to those who do not possess it. Normally priests came highest in the scale of holiness because, by the nature of their office, they came closest in their contact with God. Their sanctity derived less from their

quality of life (though they were warned against heavy drinking before they performed their holy offices (Lev. 10. 9) and adultery (Lev. 21. 7)) than from their service of the cultus. It was a ceremonial holiness which was most in mind. They were nearest the Holy of Holies, they handled the hallowed vessels and they wore the sacred robes.

Nothing more stresses the non-ethical character of holiness among early peoples nor yet its derivative nature from association with the deity, than the use of this term for the sodomite servant of the holy place and the priestess-Prostitutes (Gen. 38. 21f., cf. I Kings 14. 12, Amos 2. 7, Hos. 4. 11) Whenever this practice is named in the Old Testament it is denounced. This probably means that it did occur at some Hebrew shrines. Only as the prophets discerned the burning ethical heart of holiness was the practice finally exterminated, only to be remembered with horror.

The Nazirites (Num. 6. 5-8) and the prophets (II Kings 4. 9; Jer. 1. 5) shared with the priests the holiness which belonged to those who served God in special ways.

Yet this holiness did not attach only to those whose service was obviously religious. Kings were holy and warriors going on service were hallowed, as the phrase

"sanctify war" shows (Jer. 6. 4). The King was anointed with oil like the priest. He also was a servant of God and separated to service. His office in Israel, like the office of the priest, became hereditary. Yet in neither case was birth alone enough. The one born must be ceremonially hallowed too (Lev. 8).

From persons we turn to seasons.

Certain portions of time were set aside as sacred because they belonged in a special way to God. Their sanctity was marked by a limitation in action on the part of His devotees, and some of them by feasting and some by fasting. The different phases of the moon usually marked these solemn seasons: the new moon especially (Amos 8. 5; Hos. 2. 11; Is. 1. 14). But of all the dedicated portions of time none exceeded in frequency or firmness in Israel the observance of the Sabbath (Gen. 2. 2f.; Ex. 20. 8-11). The day was indeed an holy day, rigidly secured from all secular toil and hedged about with a hundred regulations to preserve its sanctity. God had "blessed the seventh day and hallowed it".

When Israel is called to be the people of God and spoken of as the holy people, the underlying idea is that of separation. Israel is the people which is set apart from all others, not for its own merits but because the Lord has been pleased to choose it, to separate it and to

constitute it as holy. The Lord, the God of Israel is a God unlike other gods, a God of mystery, known by a mysterious name, "I am that I am". His people therefore must be separate in customs and ordinances from other peoples. So it comes about that again and again in the books of the law the affirmation that Israel is a holy people is followed by a set of injunctions bearing no relation to ethical virtue. For instance as late as the Book of Deuteronomy (Deut. 14. 1-20) the statement that "thou are an holy people unto the Lord thy God" is preceded by the injunction not to observe the customs of the neighbouring peoples in time of mourning; it is followed by lengthy regulations as to the beasts and birds that may and may not be eaten; and the prohibition regarding eating that which dieth of itself is followed once again by the assertion, "thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God" (Deut. 14. 21). As worshippers of this mysterious God, the Israelites must maintain themselves in a state of ritual purity. Even at their apparently most trivial, these regulations are not to be understood simply as convenient sanitary regulations; they have a religious significance as signs of dedication to one particular God, who makes certain demands upon those who are His people and His worshippers.

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The big question now faces us. What of the growth of the ethical within the ceremonial? How did the moral awake in the ritual? Did it awake to subordinate and then destroy the ritual, or did the ritual rise with it to conserve and express the ethical? Is the numinous element still present, or is there "awe-ful" loss in the moral victory? Was the mysterium tremendum eliminated and the moral "ought" rationalized into social obligation? or do the numinous and ethical elements in the idea of the holy, when blended in the Old Testament, mount to a higher concept than which has yet to be revealed?

In the growth of the ethical in the idea of the holy in the Old Testament, the word "righteousness" plays a major part. The growth of the idea of the holy is not adequately seen with the widening use of the word holy. Indeed, the word "holy" does not widen very much. It is within the word "righteousness" that the growth is seen. "Holiness" remains largely a word of the cultus but it makes a marriage with righteousness which has a noble ethical development in the Old Testament. Jeremiah can look on the time when Zion shall be both "a habitation of justice" and "a mountain of holiness" (Jer. 31. 23).

There is no reason to doubt that there were those in Israel from its earliest beginnings to whom ethical values were dear. The fine prophetic flowering, say, of

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the eighteen century B.C., had its roots in previous ages and the soil of the ethical was the soil of their religious faith.

Both Jeremiah and Isaiah look back to the years in the desert as though the people had a purity then that they lost when they settled in Canaan and felt the pressure of other nations (Is. 63. 17). Naturally there was a tendency to idealize the past. But that is not the whole story. The transition from the nomadic to the settled life brings religious as well as economic problems, and the cult of the baalim must have been very attractive to the newly settled Israelites, incapable at the first of competing with the Canaanites in husbandry. How could the Israelites help wondering if they were worshipping the wrong God? Was Yahweh a God of War? If he was kept in the chief place should not some place be found also for the lesser gods of fertility? Steadily the appeal of the baalim grew. No wonder the prophets looked back to the day when the nomadic people had none of these problems to face, and came to regard the years in the desert as years of spiritual health and moral purity.

What is of special interest is the way ritual and the moral injunction jostle each other in the early law-code as though both were equally important. The laws of Israel provide numerous examples. The clearest, noblest

ethical demand sits beside a trifling ceremonial requirement sharing the same divine sanction. The ritual and ceremonial requirements witness in their own way to the unity in the idea of the holy, for in the mind of those who set them down these laws belonged together; they belonged with equal authority to the will of the deity who imposes them both. The rational and the non-rational in the idea of the holy appears again at this later level of development. Abased mortals approaching God must learn how to come and how to survive. Communion with the "Wholly Other" is so truly awe-ful that the laws which regulate it can hardly be regarded as less important than the laws which regulate one's dealing with one another. So both appear in the codes and only the ethical preoccupations of a modern age regard the combination as unusual.

The first part of Leviticus 19 is a good instance. It begins with the solemn injunction "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am Holy", and goes on to include ethical teaching unsurpassed and perhaps, unparalleled in the codes of early peoples. The corners of the field are to be left unreaped at harvest time for the poor. For the sake of the poor also the vineyards must not be gleaned. Yet not only for the poor, but also for the stranger, that is the resident foreigner, the man outside the covenant and therefore with "rights". The mercy of God is over him.

Stealing, lying, and crafty trade are condemned. A man hired for a day must be paid the same evening. The deaf and blind are to receive tender treatment, and justice is lifted above favouritism. Libel and vengefulness are condemned, even to the nursing of hatred in the heart.

Yet interspersed with and following these ethical regulations are rules for offering a sacrifice which is to be eaten on the day it is offered and, if any survives to the third day and is eaten then, the man who eats it has profaned "the holy thing of the Lord" and "his soul shall be cut off from his people". Laws are given also on the kind of haircut a man must have and how his beard should be trimmed! Elsewhere, and in great detail, precise rules are laid down regarding the beasts which must be offered in sacrifice and how prepared and how to be disposed of (Lev. 22. 17f.).

It would seem that within the idea of the holy in the Old Testament, a war was waged between the ritual and the ethical. Ezekiel, the third great prophet of holiness, is a great defender and expositor of ritual, though it is an exalted ritual; a ritual expressing and conserving the ethical holiness for which he stood.

The numinous and the ethical stand out clearly in the Vision of Isaiah. In him we see the sovereign assertion of the supremacy of righteousness within the concept

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of the holy. He asserts that only the righteous can be holy.

It is important to look at Isaiah's vision closely, for here there is a profound understanding of holiness in the Old Testament.

Isaiah in the year King Uzziah died, finds himself in one of the inner courts of the Temple, meditating on the world. He looks into the holy place and sees the seraphim, those mythical heavenly beings of fire and light, symbolized as partly animal and partly human, the burning ones, the incandescence of the whole creation — the heavens, the earth, man and beast. These seraphim brood over the deposit of history — the ark with the tables of the Law, i.e. the reminder of God's dealings with the people, Israel, when he plucked them out of the hands of a powerful nation, Egypt, and gave them a new life as a people, and a new way of life through the Covenant, which concerns the whole of their existence and not only their worship. Isaiah has a burning realization of the encounter of God and man in the history of his people in the past and in that of today. What he learns here will become his life everywhere.

First, in the words of the seraphim as they cry out to one another, Isaiah learns the truth about God. "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts." The intensely

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personal nature of this Holy God, his otherness and his power, is emphasized. Almost all the elements are present in this interpretation of the numinous and the moral: creature-consciousness, awe, overpoweringness, urgency and fascination.

Isaiah exclaims: "Woe is me, for I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" He sees himself "unclean" leprous, like Uzziah, the King. The leper was to dwell outside the camp and to go around crying "unclean, unclean" (Lev. 13. 45-46). Thus the leper was cut off from society and from worshipping in the temple. It was Jewish practice to read the burial service over a leper. Now Isaiah who no doubt felt important in society, who in the temple found refuge from God, feels like a leper.

"Unclean lips" is further defined in verse 7 as "guilt" and "sin". Guilt, means a turning away, going astray which manifests itself not only in act, but in attitude and thinking. Sin means abandonment of the right course. Isaiah in the course of his prophecy sums them up with the word PRIDE. This he saw all around him, among the various responsible people in Israel, among the nations, but principally in himself. As in creation, it is God who takes the initiative. A red hot stone is taken

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from the altar of incense. What has been offered up to God on the altar, God now offers to Isaiah. His guilt is taken away and his lips are cleansed. He overhears God asking "Whom shall I send?" and Isaiah knows the challenge is to him. He says "Here am I, send me." And God says "Go." Isaiah responds immediately because of the overwhelming sense of the truth, the power and urgency of what he has seen, heard and become. So he gathers a remnant around him (Is. 6. 9-13), enters deeply into the life of his people, and looks forward to the coming of the king, the representative man, the Messiah (Is. 9. 2-7; Is. 11. 1-9), and to the day when all the nations will worship the Holy God in righteousness, humility and joy (Is. 2. 2-4).

It is because God is holy that man must be holy. That basic conviction runs through all the higher teaching of the Old Testament. It does not strictly belong to the rational part of the idea of the holy. But it belongs to man's nature. If a man sees for a moment the holiness of God, as Isaiah did, it seems impossible for him to deny the obligation. Or if he denies it, he has parted with peace forever.

Hence the end of all wise religious nurture is that mortals may be helped to see God. Here is anticipated the mental processes of the devout who seek through adoring and worshipful contemplation the holy life.

The second and third great exponents of holiness in Israel are the Second Isaiah and Ezekiel. They do not enlarge the concept though they expound it with their own emphasis. Thirteen times the Second Isaiah uses the term "The Holy One of Israel". In Ezekiel, holiness includes both ritual and righteousness, but although he has more to say than others about ritual, he never surrenders the primacy of righteousness in his concept of the holy.

To sum up: In the Old Testament the word "holy", although still numinous, is widened and deepened and heightened by the startling growth within it of all that is meant by righteousness. "Be ye holy, for I am holy" said the Lord, and none could deny that only the righteous could be holy, for the Holy One abhorred sin. The numinous and the ethical dimensions are clearly evident in the Old Testament conception of the holy. Can the same be said of the New Testament?

2. The New Testament.

To enter the New Testament is to enter a different world of holiness. So far as being used only of those who are infected with God's holiness, that is those who hold certain religious office, it is a word that is used for all Christians. What had happened to create so great a change?

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The answer of the New Testament is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The way of holiness was by the gift of the Holy Spirit. The immensity of that gift may be measured in part by the change in the Apostles. The coming of the Holy Spirit is described in Acts 2. 2-4:

And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

It was both numinous and ethical. Who can doubt the numinosity of it? A rushing mighty wind filling the house. Tongues as of fire on their heads. But it was ethical too. The message of Peter on that memorable day culminated in the word "Repent". In the power of the Holy Spirit, he preached for conviction of sin in every heart. All who received the Holy Spirit are called "saints" in the New Testament. The distinctive use of the word is post-pentecostal.

The word agios, as meaning "saint", or "holy one" is a common word, but it is different. There are little companies of "saints" all over the place. There are saints in Philippi, in Corinth, in Colossae. It will not be inferred from this connotation of the word "saint" in the New Testament, that it is the same as the connotation of the word commonly used today. It has come to mean

"heroic virtue", a rare quality of life even in the Church of God.

In New Testament usage the way of holiness is "from the Father, by the Son through the Spirit to the Christian".³ In other words, in the New Testament as in the Old Testament, God only is holy. In both the Old and New Testaments, man's holiness is derived from God's, but in the New Testament, man's holiness is a by-product of the reception of the Holy Spirit.

What then is the New Testament doctrine of the Holy Spirit? To this question there can be only one answer. In the New Testament the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. More than that, He is the Spirit of the risen Christ, the gift sent down to men by the risen and glorified Christ as the sign and seal of His continuing presence among them. He is the Holy Spirit, as the one who makes men continually aware of that transcendent dimension, which is an essential part of the experience of holiness.

In the Synoptic Gospels there is comparatively little teaching about the Spirit. Yet every crucial moment of the life of Christ is associated with the Spirit, in such a way that even here it is possible to speak of the

³ Ryder Smith, Bible Doctrine of Man, London, Epworth Press, 1951, p. 193.

Spirit as the Spirit of Christ. The situation is different in the writings of John and Paul. Here the connection of the Spirit with Jesus is clearly and explicitly set forth, and in particular in relation to the risen Christ and to the Church which is His body. In Paul the relationship between the Spirit and the risen Christ is so close that it is sometimes hard to know what theological distinction is to be drawn between them. In two consecutive verses of Romans 8 he speaks of "Christ in you" and of "the Spirit dwelling in you". Not that Paul ever identifies the Spirit directly with Christ. Within the New Testament, "Spirit" is not a vague term implying some general operation of God in the world that He has made. It means the living Christ at work within the Church which is His body.

Holiness then stands in the closest relation to the New Testament teaching concerning the Life in the Spirit. In almost all its aspects the Christian experience is directly related to the work of the Holy Spirit. All growth and discovery, every aspiration and achievement both in its beginning and its end, are due to His inspiration. The flowering of Christian growth and development, by the aid of the Holy Spirit should end in a holy life. One point is of special importance: there is no support in New Testament teaching for the view that sanctification is a sudden and miraculous gift of the Spirit in response

to importunate prayer. Pentecost, to which, in this connexion, reference is often made (compare Acts 2. 1-13; 4. 31), was the endowment of the primitive Church with power; there is no indication that it entailed complete victory over sin and the attainment of ethical and spiritual perfection. Similarly in New Testament usage, the phrase "filled with the Spirit" does not connote the fulfilment of the Christian ideal, but the bestowal of new energy, and of charismatic gifts such as prophecy, teaching, exhorting. In Corinth it meant the glossolalia, the gift of ecstatic speech.

Growth in holiness which the New Testament calls Sanctification is undoubtedly through the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit (cp Romans 5. 5) and there is no short cut to the attainment of the ideal by a special endowment of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit indwells men and women In Order to make them holy. "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy", writes Peter, and he goes on to affirm "As He which hath called you is holy, be ye yourselves holy in all manner of living (I Peter 1. 15f).

This leads to the place of the ethical in the New Testament concept of Holiness. It is within the element of righteousness in the idea of the holy that the most impressive change occurs in the New Testament. Two kinds are mentioned: the righteousness of the law, and the

"righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phill. 3. 9). The righteousness of the law was righteousness as the Pharisee understood it. It was keeping the Mosaic Law, which regulated every detail of life. The claim of the New Testament in regard to holiness is that while man is helpless and alone, by the power of the indwelling Spirit he can do more than keep the ancient code, he can reach the heights of holiness revealed by Jesus. Paul, a Pharisee before his conversion, affirmed that there were two natures warring within him, he had no success in keeping the law. He sensing the principles they expressed he knew he failed to keep them. And it is in sensing those principles that man reaches out for the higher quality of righteousness with which the New Testament invests its exalted idea of the holy. The righteous element within the idea of the holy becomes the dominant one.

The ethical teaching of the New Testament is made very plain. Jesus had no ethical system. In His teaching there is no discussion of "the good", no definition of the moral ideal, no theory of evil. What He offers are religious principles of life and action. The qualities he commands are sincerity, purity, humility, compassion, obedience, meekness, the forgiving spirit, love for enemies, and self sacrifice. On the other hand the evils He repudiates are insincerity, hypocrisy, over anxious care,

retaliation, and the judging of others; and among the things which defile a man are "evil thoughts, fornication, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness" (Mark 7. 21f). As a practical principle of conduct nothing surpasses the Golden Rule, "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them; for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7. 12; Luke 6. 31). The inwardness of the teaching of Jesus is illustrated in the recognition of the great commandments to love God and to love one's neighbour. The ethical teaching of Jesus is rooted deeply in his religious convictions, and is in fact, the expression of these convictions in relation to conduct and action.

Paul also attaches the same importance to conduct in personal and social relationships, in spite of his absorbing interest in justification. It is also distinctive in other New Testament writings. John describes Christ's friends as those who do the things He commands them (John 15. 14), in the Epistle to the Hebrews, love to the brethren, hospitality to strangers, the care of prisoners, the honour of marriage, freedom from the love of money, and contentment with the possessions are enjoined (Heb. 13. 1-6).

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This teaching illustrates the strong ethical elements in the New Testament, which teach the need for holiness and the attainment of the Christian ideal. Holiness then has a strong ethical foundation.

The background of ethical and religious teaching which is found in the New Testament concept of holiness has been noted. In the light of it, it will be seen that the Christian life is not simply meant to be one of high moral tone, nor on the other hand to be a supernatural life in which the Power of the Holy Spirit is manifestly operative. The New Testament plainly teaches that it is these, but it is more. The life to which man is called is a life moving towards ethical and spiritual perfection.

Holiness in the New Testament, is set forth then as the Christian ideal. Sometimes this experience has been called Christian Perfection, sinless perfection, beatitude, mystic union, the vision of God, or perfect love, and each describes a particular aspect of the goal. The word Sanctification is also freely used, and it has the advantage of being scriptural, and closely tied in with the greek "sanctify". Three terms are important for this study. They are sanctification, perfect love and vision of God.

An important feature of New Testament teaching is that the Christian ideal is already implicit in the sayings

of Jesus. "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect", and the parallel saying in Luke "Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (Matt. 5. 48; Luke 6. 36). St. Matthew's addition to the saying addressed to the young man who went away sorrowful was "if thou wouldest be perfect go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor" (Matt. 19. 21). The teaching regarding the Christian ideal is also clearly set forth in other sayings of Jesus, particularly "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God" (Matt. 12. 29-31), and in the saying on the Great Commandment "The first is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one; and thou shalt love thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this: thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." There can be no doubt therefore that Jesus set forth a lofty ideal of ethical and spiritual attainment.

In the teaching of Paul there is a similar emphasis. The end that he has in mind for the Thessalonians is that God may establish their hearts "Unblameable in Holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" (I Thess. 3. 13). "This is the will of God", he writes, "even your Sanctification" (I Thess. 4. 3) and his prayer for them is "The God of peace sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul

and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thess. 5. 23). To the Corinthians he writes "Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting Holiness in the fear of the Lord" (II Cor. 7. 1). There are other references in the same spirit (Rom. 6. 19; Col. 1. 28; Eph. 4. 12f.).

The Johannine writings, the Epistle of St. James and the Epistle to the Hebrews have also much to say concerning the attainment of the Christian ideal (John 17. 19; 15. 2; I John 3. 2-3; James 1. 4; Heb. 12. 2; 5. 9).

Beyond doubt the New Testament teaches that the goal of the individual is Holiness, and the concept of holiness is one that includes the absolute necessity of ethical and spiritual perfection. This is Sanctification.

The second term that is used to describe the Christian ideal is Perfect love. The claim of the ideal of love to be included is grounded in the words of Jesus in His reply to the question of the scribe concerning the first commandment "The first", said Jesus, "is Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God, the Lord is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Mark 12. 29-31). "There is none other commandment",

he added, "greater than these." The same ideal is also implicit in "the new commandment", in which John interprets the mind of Christ, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you have love one to another" (John 13. 34f.).

Paul presses home the same claim in writing to the Colossians, "Above all things, put on love, which is the bond of perfectness" (Coll. 3. 14). The commandments relating to man are summed up in the words "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself", and love "is the fulfilment of the law" (Coll. 13. 9 f. See also I Thess. 4. 9; I Thess. 3. 12; Gal. 5. 22; 5. 6).

What moves Paul most deeply is the knowledge that God loves men. Love marks the activities of God. Therefore a spirit of overflowing and disinterested love is the inevitable relationship which must exist between men who are conscious of the amazing grace of God in Salvation and inward renewal. The maturing of Christian character in its loveliest and most perfect form is described in the love "which is very patient, very kind", which "knows no jealousy", "which makes no parade, gives itself no airs", is "never rude, never selfish, never irritated, never resentful", the love which "is gladdened by goodness,

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always slow to expose, always patient" (I Cor. 13. Moffatts translation). St. Paul climaxes the whole hymn with the words "but the greatest of these is love".

In John's Gospel and in I John this teaching finds its fullest expression. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John 3. 35). The love of the Father is described as "existing before the foundation of the world" (John 17. 24), and is directly related to the death and exaltation of Christ "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again" (John 10. 17). This love of God for men is set forth in "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3. 16) and again in "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins" (I John 4. 10). His love is directly connected with His death "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us" (I John 3. 16).

Both the Gospel and the Epistle often speak of love within the Christian community. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God" (I John 4. 7). "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (I John 4. 11). "There is no fear in love: for

perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath punishment; and he that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us" (I John 4. 18f.).

The New Testament teaching, summarized above, can leave no doubt that love is an essential element in the Christian ideal.

An outstanding merit of the ideal of Perfect Love is its non-dimensional character [. . .] One stage of growth in love may be fuller than another, but, as love, each is perfect in its own order, just as the perfection of the bud shares in the glory of the perfect flower, and just as the opening theme in a symphony participates in the beauty of the final movement. Nor, in love, is a perfection ever reached beyond which a richer manifestation is not possible. God is love and love has the infinitude of His Being. From this it follows that the ideal of Perfect Love is always attained and always attainable; it belongs both to this life and to that which is to come; it is here and yonder, at this moment and always.⁴

The Christian ideal has also been described under the ideal of the Vision of God. It is strongly based on New Testament teaching. It rests upon the words of Jesus "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matth. 5. 8). It is implicit in the Pauline affirmation that God "shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Cor. 4. 6). St. John writes "We know that, if he

4 Vincent Taylor, Forgiveness and Reconciliation, London, Macmillan, 1941, p. 214.

shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is" (I John 3. 2).

The hope of attaining this vision is expressed continually in the writings of Christian saints and teachers. The story of monasticism is the story of this unceasing pursuit, and the great saints of Catholic Christianity including St. Augustine, St. Benedict, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Dominic, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. Ignatious of Loyola are the great exponents. The idea of the Vision of God meant to look towards God and from that look to acquire insight into one's own sins, and the needs of one's neighbours with power to correct the one and power to serve the other. The content of the Vision of God has been described in the widest terms and has included different levels of mystical experience. But essentially it includes perfect love both to man and God.

Holiness in the New Testament is never a purely individual and an inward thing. Christians need the fellowship of the brethren, and they need each other. Holiness is thought of in terms of relationships. The two great commandments, to love God and to love our neighbour, are in fact simply two parts of one commandment, therefore the relationship of the soul with God cannot be thought of in separation from its relationships with other men.

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In the Old Testament much of this was expressed in ritual holiness, in the right cultus and ceremonial purity. The emphasis changes in the New Testament, the sacrificial cultus which was precious to the Jews becomes spiritualized. The Temple sacrifices have passed and a new cultus has appeared. The sacrifice of the Lamb of God, without blemish and without spot, is re-enacted in the Community of Christ; the bread is broken and the wine is poured. Much in the ancient Levitical system may seem crude today, but it came to have much meaning in the Cross of Christ. The "holiness" of the ancient cultus is spiritualized in that event.

The New Testament passages previously examined are personal and direct; but they are addressed, not to isolated individuals, but to men living in fellowship with others in Christian communities. Most of these passages are in the plural. When Jesus said "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God," he was not thinking of solitary seekers but of his disciples and followers already associated with Himself. This fact is borne out by St. Luke in the Beatitudes, which are stated in the second person plural. What on the surface appears to be an exhortation to the individual is seen to be a call to the community and to the individual member within it. The personal element is greatly enriched because it is seen

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within the life of a corporate fellowship, "the body of Christ".

The use of the term "saints" is a good example. This expression found frequently in St. Paul, and occasionally in Acts, Hebrews and the Apocalypse, as already noted, does not necessarily describe men of marked "saintly" achievements. Rather, it denotes those who have been separated and called to share in the life of the holy community, and who therefore are pledged to embody its holiness.

In the three aspects of the Christian Ideal just considered, sanctification, Vision of God, and Perfect Love, social holiness is implicit. A man may pursue after personal holiness, and may give the impression of being pre-occupied with himself, with his own actions and special temptations, but a social relationship is involved. Not only because his sins affect others, but also because there is a heritage of good and evil into which all enter, and there are social sins the responsibility for which all have a share.

In the ideal of Perfect Love the social obligations are self evident. The love of God for man, that ceaseless and undeserved self-giving which finds its climax in the Cross of Christ, give the inspiration. It sets the standard of disinterested love for others which means hope

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for the hopeless, opportunity for the unprivileged, care for the weak, and every positive good for mankind.

Likewise the quest for the Vision of God is a corporate undertaking. This end has been sought by the solitary hermit, but he found it impossible to deny compassion to the stranger. The social aspect is manifest in the story of monasticism, in the recognition of the dignity of labour by the Benedictines, the love of learning among the Dominicans, and in the blessings of peace and ordered life preserved by the monks in a troubled and disordered world.

In conclusion, holiness in the New Testament has a strong ethical foundation, but it is not a tame observance of rules. Holiness aims at renewal in man of that likeness to God which he has lost by sin. It is a process of being renewed after the image of God. The one who works within for the renewal of man is the Holy Spirit. The most important principle in the New Testament understanding of Holiness is here: it is not the result of man's unaided effort. The attainment depends on the work of Christ. The Holy Spirit does not work for some undefined "ethical ideal", in some vague way for the renewal of "human nature"; He works according to a pattern already unchangeably laid down, for the transformation of man according to the likeness of Christ, in order, in Paul's remarkable

phrase, that "Christ may be formed in us" (Gal. 4. 19). To be holy is to walk in the Spirit, and that means to be conformed to Jesus Christ.

The Trinitarian character of New Testament thought concerning holiness is seen clearly. By the operation of the Holy Spirit man is led through the Son to the everlasting Father. Here is the theological foundation of the doctrine of Christian holiness.

CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL SURVEY OF SPIRITUALITY

1. Continental Catholic Tradition.

The development of Christian thought on holiness, as Christian Perfection, perfect love, sanctification or Vision of God is inseparably bound up with teaching about conduct taking its impetus from the saying of our Lord "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. 5. 8). Christianity advanced to its assault upon the civilized world equipped with a vocabulary of extraordinary wealth and possibilities, gathered from different sources, such as Plato, Aristotle, the Jews and the teaching of the New Testament. The vocabulary increased in complexity as time went on. One of the key phrases to come to the fore was the vision of God as the goal of human life, and the determinant, therefore, of Christian conduct. To "see God" implies something which is constantly and yet vaguely spoken of as "religious experience". This "religious experience" is bound up with the fundamental problem of ethics — "What is man's true end?"

A study of the history of spirituality shows how various writers and schools sought to understand the true end of man, the quest for a "vision of God" and the several

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duties and virtues which must form part of the life of the true Christian.

In the Patristic age the principal consideration of Christian spirituality in the beginning was the problem of eschatology, the expectation of Christians of the second coming of Christ. By the end of the second century it was realized more clearly than before that the Christian life is situated in a paradoxical intermediate state.

Martyrdom was for the first Christian generations the ideal instance of union with Christ in trial, leading to perfect union with Him in the life of charity. After the persecutions the question arose whether there was not some substitute for martyrdom as a way of being united to Christ, and Origen (b. 185?) claimed that a fervent preparation for death, being a life of self-sacrifice, could be a true, though non-bloody martyrdom. Clement of Alexandria (b. 150?) pointed out that anyone could make his death a martyrdom if he prepared for it with the fitting dispositions.

The Alexandrian school, particularly as represented by Clement and Origen came to have great importance in the field of spirituality. For Clement the supreme state is that in which one knows the God of Love by loving as He loves. The attainment of the summit of gnostic life, that is, assimilation to God, was made possible by apatheia,

a term he introduced into Christian language. By this term, he meant a domination, acquired through grace, over everything that is opposed to charity. The resulting stable condition is, as it were, a foretaste of eternity.

Origen taught that the soul must struggle to uproot itself from the world in which it is buried by its egoistic desires. This struggle is carried out by an invitation of and participation in the life of Christ. Like Clement, Origen wrote about vocal prayer saying as it is interiorized, it goes beyond itself into the prayer of silence, which characterizes the state of union with God and liberation from the body.

As the State made its peace with the Church, a world that had become friendly, without changing its ways, led many Christians to the desert to find once more detachment, austerity and fervour which they had known but could no longer know in a life suddenly become too easy. Gradually hermits were joined by others to whom they communicated what they had received. Solitaries were grouped about a spiritual father and finally to cenobitism. Monasticism eventually provided itself with a theological teaching in which it rectified and broadened the thought of Origen and furnished itself with a well-wrought theory. Most influential in the development were the Cappadocians, and particularly St. Gregory of Nyssa (b. 330?).

St. Augustine (354-430) had been dependent on the whole spiritual heritage of the Christian East. But his manner of rethinking and synthesizing was often so personal and creative that his work became the starting point of a renewed tradition. His works contain the elements of a complete theology of asceticism and mysticism.

It was John Cassian (360-435?) who transmitted to the West the monastic practices and types of organization first developed in the East as well as the best distillation of its teaching. Cassian's "Conferences" sum up the spiritual doctrine of the first four centuries, and they became a storehouse from which all subsequent writers on the spiritual life have drawn. The summits of Cassian's mysticism are described by him as a constant prayer, a prayer of fire wholly inspired by the Gospel.

The rule of St. Benedict of Nursia (480-543), brought from sixty six to seventy three chapters in the second edition, had become that of almost all the monks in the West from the 8th to the 13th century. It can easily be adapted to the conditions of any country and time, and this is the key to its success.

From the time of the invasions in the 6th century, a new world began in the West. The life and action of St. Gregory I (540-604) pertain to the patristic period, but the doctrine he elaborated in contact with this tradition

became the spiritual source from which the Middle Ages drew its spiritual programme. By its simplicity, its lack of speculation, Gregory's doctrine was suited to the needs of the new people of the barbaric world after the invasions.

In the early Church the careful study of Christ's humanity was almost unknown, for the great leaders emphasized the idea that the human nature of Christ was principally the instrument of the divine Word (Logos). Christ was worshipped almost exclusively as the Son of God, on the divine plane, and when Christ was studied and revered on the human level it was largely in his capacity as the triumphant hero after the crucifixion, not the fellow sufferer.

Between the sixth and the eleventh centuries lies the great gulf of the dark ages. This period is one in which pseudo-Dionysius and his Latin translator, John the Scot, were laying the foundations of a new outburst of "negative" life and doctrine in the middle ages. The date and nationality of Dionysius are still matters of dispute. The author was a monk, perhaps a Syrian monk. He probably perpetrated a deliberate fraud, in his opinion a pious fraud, by suppressing his own name, and using the name of St. Paul's convert at Athens. His main object is to present Christianity in the guise of a Platonic

mysteriosophy, and he uses the technical terms of the mysteries. He is a very important figure for the Middle Ages, especially his view of the "negative road", a doctrine which at bottom means that God can only be described by negatives; he can only be discovered by stripping off all the qualities and attributes which veil Him, and He only can be imitated by aiming at an abstract spirituality and reached by divesting ourselves of all distinctions of personality and sinking or rising into our "uncreated nothingness". He is also important for his pantheistic tendencies and his introduction of the "Three Ways" to union with God.

The spirituality of the early Middle Ages was necessarily that of the cloisters. In the 10th and 11th centuries, to prevent abuse and obtain the spiritual freedom necessary to carry on the tasks of the Church, the abbeys began to join together in groups, but were bound by very loose juridical bonds. These federations were made around key monasteries, and gave rise to congregations of monasteries and to the first religious order, the Order of Cluny. The life of the medieval monk consisted in keeping present before the world the value of Pentecost: the holiness of God communicated to men. All his asceticism and the entire system of observances that constrained him had their goal his liberation.

Spiritual writers following the Rule of St. Benedict are found principally among the Benedictines, descending directly from St. Benedict; the Cluniacs, founders of a reform in the Benedictine Order during the tenth century; and the Cistercians, or "White Monks" in contradistinction to the "Black Monks" or simple Benedictines and Cluniacs.

Benedictine spirituality is practical. In general it does not come under the influence of scholastic theology nor that of pseudo-Dionysius. There are however exceptions: to a certain degree St. Anselm may be called "the father of scholasticism" and in the fifteenth century many Benedictines set great store by and utilized scholastic theology and pseudo-Dionysius.

The Rule of St. Benedict spread over Italy, France, Spain, England and Germany. The Cluniac movement, a product of the tenth century (910) had a wonderful growth. In the course of time it made many additions to the original Benedictine Office, and as a result manual labour ceased. The Cistercian Order founded by St. Robert of Molesme in 1098 removed most of these additions and returned to the primitive manual labour of the fields.

The greatest of the Cistercians, that is the greatest of those who strove to recapture the spirit of the Benedictine Rule in all its arduous simplicity was Bernard of Clairvaux. He appears to be almost untouched

by the pseudo-Dionysius influence and hedges about the mystical experience of western Christendom with moral safeguards, so as to set the experience in the frame of active service. He kept the negative and ecstatic implications of the Areopagite tradition within their true bounds. He departed from the worship of the idea of the superhuman Logos, and made much of the devout meditation upon the actual events in the life of Christ, whenever His humanity was seen at work. But it is in his chapter-house meditations upon the Song of Songs that his deepest aspirations are revealed.

In shunning the Neo-Platonism of his day, he urged his followers to lead a practical life of devotion. In his famous treatise on loving God he described the various degrees of love. He devoted much time to the cultivation of humility, and he surpassed all his predecessors in making the humanity of Christ a reality to devout believers. From Christ's humanity he led his readers to Christ's divinity. Gradually human sense perception fades away, as the sinner is purged of fleshly desires, rising higher and higher in the realm of Christian mysticism. When the senses have been silenced spiritual ecstasy begins to function. Love becomes spiritualized, the individual soul or spirit is united with the divine soul or spirit, as iron is united with fire, without losing its identity. In this

mystical condition the earlier aim of imitating Christ's humanity is left behind, for now the purpose has become to reach the highest level. Christ, the Word, is looked upon as the bridegroom of the human soul.

The history of piety in the Middle Ages is still the history of monasticism. A Christian with a sincere quest for perfection became a monk. Holiness was not merely monastic in character, it was the prerogative of the monks. It is no small testimony to the genius of Christianity that the Middle Ages witnessed a persistent and not entirely unsuccessful demand upon the part of the laity to the full privileges of their religion. One of the great lay movements in history was that of the Cathari, who appeared in Northern Italy in the middle of the twelfth century. Almost contemporary were the Waldenses in southern France; the Humiliati of Lombardy, and the Béghards and Béguines in the Netherlands. Evangelical poverty, ecclesiastical reform, a strict adherence to the letter of the Sermon of the Mount, study of the Scripture and mission preaching, were the principal ideals held in common by these and similar associations.

The Church met the need of the age with a new zeal for service. The two keynotes of the age were restless activity and uncontrolled sentiment. The Orders of St. Francis and St. Dominic, the one a great missionary and

the other an equally great educational machine, are illustrations. The Franciscan way of life was that of following Christ through the evangelical counsels, especially poverty; labouring for the salvation of souls by preaching and hearing confessions; and contemplation. The Franciscan school was marked by the inspiration of a deep and truly Christian emotionalism. The chief source of inspiration must find its source in the life and passion of our Lord. St. Dominic (1170-1221) sought to remedy the ills of the existing social conditions by the practice of poverty and the ascetic service of the Church. The Dominican school unites liturgical prayer and contemplation with the ministry of preaching.

In this twelfth century when emotionalism had outstripped reason the name of Thomas Aquinas stands out. Face to face with a riot of religious extravagance of every kind — pantheism, dualism, mysticism, asceticism, heresy, subjectivity and individualism in all their forms — the chosen task of the great Dominican, was to reduce it all to order, and to find principles that would lead the world back to sanity and saintliness again. He taught that honest intellectual endeavour is no less a service of God than any other, and that ordered discipline is the condition of success in all things, even in the search for Christian perfection.

Also in this twelfth century at St. Victor outside Paris, a well known theological and spiritual centre arose. It became the centre of mysticism along orthodox lines. Here laboured Hugo of St. Victor who was more speculative and less practical than St. Bernard. He was also more interested in the Church as an institution than in personal union with Christ. His pupil, Richard of St. Victor, continued in a similar vein. They shared with Thomas Aquinas in bridging the gap between the wild chaos of eleventh century speculation and the ordered wisdom of scholasticism. Their thought is based upon the Platonic tradition as handed down from Augustine, but seen, in part at least, through the eyes of pseudo-Dionysius. Contemplation — the vision of God — is always the goal of life. It is an ecstatic experience, or direct intuition, of the divine essence, in which consciousness is raised to such a height that it forgets itself and all around it. But in the life of prayer contemplation comes last of all; it must be preceded by a discipline which the Victorines call "meditation". And "meditation" is a serious wrestling of the mind with the ideas presented to it in consciousness, in the determination to extract from them matters of real profit. Richard is the first writer to systematize Christian mysticism. He in a certain sense combined the thought of St. Bernard with that of pseudo-Dionysius. He

deserted the path taken by St. Bernard as to prefer meditation upon the harmony of the universe to meditation upon the person of Christ.

The consequences of the work of St. Anselm, St. Bernard, the Victorines, and Thomas Aquinas, was to ally to a great extent scholasticism and mysticism in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and it was not until the fourteenth century when mysticism reached its heights. At this time a new current of spirituality began in the Rhineland, the Low Countries and in England, involving a new attitude towards contemplation and an attempt to analyze it. The greatest influence in the new school was again that of pseudo-Dionysius. Because of his identification, as already noted, with the Areopagite mentioned in the Acts of the Apostle 17. 34, his works had a quasi-apostolic authority through the Middle Ages. Those mainly influenced by his theories were the Dominicans, John Eckhart (1327), John Tauler (1361), and Henry Suso (1366). John Ruysbroeck, a Flemish mystic (1293-1381) and a Canon Regular of St. Augustine was another. The chief concern of these men was the soul's union with God, which was at its fullest in contemplation.

It seems to have been in Holland that this ordered, disciplined and wholly comprehensible system struck its deepest roots. Towards the end of the fourteenth century,

Gerard Groot, a noted professor of Cologne, gathered together into a methodist community a group of young students. The community became known as the Brothers of the Common Life. The general movement was called "devotio moderna". It produced in addition to writings by Groot, Petersen and Thomas à Kempis, a work called the Imitation of Christ sometimes attributed to à Kempis. The central spiritual duty inculcated by this "modern devotion" was meditation. It took the form of colloquies as between the soul and God, ending with a short ejaculatory prayer.

In the last years of the fifteenth century a friend of Thomas à Kempis, John Wessel Gansfort, drew up a "Rule" or "Ladder of Meditation" which was used as a basis of spiritual exercises by the abbot of Montserrat in Catalonia, and in 1500 was imposed upon all monks of the abbey. Twenty two years later, one of these monks was chosen as his confessor by a young Spanish pilgrim, Ignatius of Loyola. This book has left its mark on every page of his "Spiritual Exercises". The importance of Ignatius for the history of Christian perfection, is that devoted as he was to the active life of service, he saw that all its resolutions, as all its achievements, must be the fruit of an inner communion with God.

The best known mystical writers in Spain of the sixteenth century are those of the Carmelite School,

St. Theresa (1515-82) and St. John of the Cross (1542-91). St. Theresa has left a fine analysis of the stages of prayer, which had exceptional influence upon subsequent theologians. However, since for Theresa, prayer consists essentially of exchange of love with God, she insisted upon the concrete proof of this love, upon the soul's effort to practise the virtues, leaving to God the communication of His extraordinary graces, when and how He wishes.

St. John of the Cross, a companion of Theresa in her work of reform within the Carmelite Order, is held by many to be the greatest of the mystical writers. The importance of his contribution lies in his analyses of the soul's active and passive purifications, and his explanations of the life of union with God.

By the time the sixteenth century came to a close, the "Exercises" of Ignatius dominated the private devotions even of the laity of Catholic Europe. Therefore Catholic "piety" took another step in the direction of becoming non monastic; just as it also became, as the result of Ignatius' sense of discipline, more ordered than ever. The leading part in this whole movement, whereby full devotional life was brought within the purview of the laity, is to be played by St. Francis de Sales.

The next step is to look at the historical background of the spiritual writers in England leading up to the writings of William Law and Jeremy Taylor.

2. English Catholic and Protestant Tradition.

Anglican spirituality, no less than its liturgy and theology, can be directly traceable to apostolic origins. In common with all Catholic schools it draws on the teaching of Augustine and St. Benedict.

The Augustine line is traced through St. Anselm. He is the father-founder who first brought all the essential elements together, and gave the school its clear character and stamp. In Anselm, English spiritual theology is embodied and potentially formed. It continues through the Austin Canons regular and especially the school of St. Victor. This school developed among the Austin or Augustine canons of the Abbey of St. Victor near Paris. By this time England which once was called in 1066 "the land of the Benedictines" had almost become the land of the Cistercians. Through the agricultural activities of the latter, fitting into the manorial system, England became more and more parochial. This made a suitable setting for the canons regular, who remained diocesan clergy living under common but elastic rule. From now on English spirituality is to be saturated not with

Augustinian but Victorine spirituality. The Victorines achieved an almost miraculous synthesis: an expansive liberty of spirit, yet disciplined by method and doctrine. As secular devotion was in danger of being formalized, the Victorine school saved English spirituality from formalism.

Richard of St. Victor was more mystical as a theologian than Hugh. He offered six degrees of contemplation. It was the ascetical theology of Hugh that made the most impression on England. This more speculative side leads on to St. Thomas and the Dominicans; St. Thomas himself providing the prime source of Caroline theology and the preaching friars exerting their influence in English parishes. All these sources are clearly apparent in the fourteenth century consummation of English religion.

The Benedictine line follows into the Cistercian reform. English monastic history bears evidence to this. The threefold Rule of prayer; the common office, supporting prayer, both of which are allied to, and consummated, by the Mass is fundamental to English spirituality. The English Church developed the Prayer Book, of which two-thirds is directly concerned with the Mass and Office. This is the affective side, but English spirituality follows the Cistercianism of the more thoughtful William of St. Thierry and the less austere Aelred of Rievaulx,

rather than that of St. Bernard.

The Benedictines brought in the affective element in English spirituality. As Louis Bouyer writes: "St. Bernard brought emotion in Christian spirituality."¹ The English Cistercian was William of St. Thierry. He gives England an affective-speculative spirituality. St. Aelred of Rievaulx became known as the "Bernard of the North". The speculative strain in his writings is more pronounced than in St. Bernard, but less pronounced than in William.

While English spirituality followed St. Augustine, St. Benedict, the Cistercians, and the School of Victor, it merely borrowed one or two Franciscan characteristics. England followed St. Francis in putting the affective emphasis on the Passion rather than the Incarnation, but the influence of the Franciscans was short lived. St. Bonaventure, although a Franciscan brought back the speculative mind. English spirituality gained inspiration from the Franciscans, but it is to be regarded as a "subsidiary influence" to the main stream of development.

Another subsidiary influence is St. Thomas Aquinas. His particular place in the English tradition is that he is at the peak of the development which starts with St.

¹ Louis Bouyer, The Cistercian Heritage, London, Newman Press, 1958, p. 65.

Anselm, and of a considerable source of post-reformation thought, especially in the case of Richard Hooker.

The father-founder of English spirituality is St. Anselm, 1033-1109, Archbishop of Canterbury. The English school, fully formed, according to Martin Thornton,² comes in the fourteenth century. This is the first golden age. The second is in the seventeenth century. Loosely called the Caroline age it begins around 1594 with the publishing of Richard Hooker's On the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity and ends with William Law's Serious Call to a Devout Life, in 1729.³

Thornton sums up:

The two speculative saints, Augustine and Aquinas, need to be complemented by Hugh of St. Victor and Catherine of Siena before their ascetical doctrine lives. The two affective saints, Bernard and Francis, give us little more than edification until they are reduced to order by William St. Thierry and Bonaventure. All the while, to some extent, each of these eight lives his life in association with the practical doctrine of St. Benedict, itself nurtured on the theology of St. Augustine.⁴

The schools of the Counter Reformation, the monumental systems of St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Theresa of

2 Martin Thornton, English Spirituality, London, S.P.C.K., 1963, p. 47.

3. Strictly speaking "Caroline" refers only to the reigns of Charles I and Charles II (1625-1685).

4 M. Thornton, ibid., p. 144.

Avila, and St. John of the Cross, the writings of St. Francis de Sales and the German Dominicans were widely read by Caroline scholars. The spirit and outlook of the Carmelites is radically different to the characteristic English spirituality.

The influence of Protestant spirituality is considerable. Calvin and Luther leave their stamp on the Book of Common Prayer. Puritanism is a strong subsidiary characteristic. It is the puritanism of Bernard rather than that of Calvin. The full Calvinistic system survived in England for only eight years. A certain austerity is to be found in St. Anselm, Hilton, Rolle, and the Caroline divines.

In writing of the English temperament, Thornton says that there must be a deep seated reason why Benedictines, Cistercians, Franciscans and Austin canons flourished in England, while Cluniacs, Carmelites and Carthusians did not. It seems that the practical Englishman was not attracted to these orders.⁵

There are six common characteristics of the English school. First, an extraordinary consistency in maintaining the speculative-affective synthesis; the theological and the emotional, doctrine and devotion, fact

5 Ibid., p. 56.

and feeling. Secondly, a strong pastoral insistence on the unity of the Church Militant, wherein a deep family relationship exists between priest and layman, monk and secular. English spiritual direction is empirical and not dogmatic. Thirdly, flowing from these characteristics, there comes a unique humanism and unique optimism. The harsher elements of St. Augustine or the Carmelite or Carthusian religion find little place in English spiritual writing. Fourthly, the Benedictine influence is apparent in the threefold rule. The foundation of Christian life is the liturgy, seen as both Mass and Office, from which flows personal devotion based on the Bible. The Carolines returned to the principle of liturgy directly inspiring devotion, and strongly insisted on the private use of the Bible. C. J. Stranks writes: "Thus the idea of God in the worshipper's mind, when he addressed himself to prayer, was that which he had learnt from the Bible. The rare use of a crucifix or sacred pictures, compelled him to make his own mental image."⁵ Fifthly, formal private prayer at set period according to some plan, remains subservient to habitual recollection. It is the constant recollection of Christ's presence, rather than formal meditation, that

5 C.J. Stranks, Anglican Devotion, London, S.C.M., 1961, p. 274.

links up the Offices and liturgy. The Caroline emphasis is also on a total Christian life in the world supported by the liturgy, especially the morning and evening offices, but here the moral element, the practical doing of God's will, is much more pronounced than the affective.

Lastly, spiritual direction is itself central to English spirituality, not only as pastoral practice, but also as a source and inspiration of ascetical theology. The English system has developed through many centuries, not out of monastic order but from empirical guidance of individual people. The Celtic penitential discipline was intensely personal and private; St. Anselm was a renowned spiritual guide; all the fourteenth century writings were addressed to, or compiled by, anchorites or anchoresses; they are personal instructions, not monastic rules. Caroline ascetical and moral theology largely arose through the guidance of individuals, or through the private discussion of sermons by small groups.

1. The First Golden Age of English Spirituality.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries England was divided into parishes with secular clergy; the monasteries were predominantly Benedictine and Cistercian; the Franciscan and Dominican friars exerted their particular influence on the Church at large; the Austin Canons Regular

made their contribution; and the solitaries, less in number than any other group, upon whom pastoral spirituality seems to have converged. Whatever the work, influence, and value of all other sides of the Church, it was the solitaries who produced the doctrine and writings.

There were two main types of English solitary during this time. The "hermit", usually male, was one living the solitary life unattached to any particular place or cell, who went about preaching and giving counsel. An example of this type is Richard Rolle of Hampole. The other type is the "anchorite" or more frequently anchoress, who lived permanently in a cell, often attached to a religious order, or to a parish church.

The "cell" was a little cottage and garden adjacent to the church. The Ancrene Riwe speaks of the "church-anchoress", and gives sensible instructions about clothes, furniture, food, work (copying manuscripts, needlework, making and repairing vestments), and the entertainment of friends and relations. Special prayers and psalms are provided for "the anniversaries of your dearest friends."

The church-anchoress is to spend most of her time in prayer and in giving spiritual counsel to any who consult her, which all are free to do. She is not to "turn herself into schoolmistress", nor to "look like a housewife". Domestic servants are to care for her, and they

too are subject to the Rule and discipline like lay sisters. There are no restrictions on private possessions. These Rules are intensely English and combine orthodoxy with individualism. It is not a monastic order but secular guidance of a very personal and empirical kind. R.M. Clay writes: "The Recluse's Rule of Life consisted of friendly counsel rather than rigid regulations."⁷

The Ancrene Riwe sets the fundamental pattern of English spiritual writing. Here is the traditional vehicle, personal, pastoral, empirical, domestic and non-monastic, which is to create and carry English ascetical doctrine.

It is impossible to study early English Literature without absorbing a good deal of early English religion. The two developed together. Middle English became the proper and necessary vehicle for the promulgation of specifically English spirituality.

In the fourteenth century treatises and prayer books written in Latin and French were translated into English, and the vernacular was increasingly used for original work. Richard Rolle, the author of the Cloud of Unknowing, Walter Hilton, and Juliana of Norwich "speak a

⁷ R.M. Clay, The Hermits and Anchorites of England, London, Methuen, 1914, p. 96.

language and show personalities that we can feel to be English, and the counsel that they give can be, and is, as valid for us as for those for whom it was first intended."⁸

The five great writers on English spirituality of the fourteenth century are the author of the Cloud of Unknowing, Walter Hilton, Juliana of Norwich, Richard Rolle, and Margery Kempe.

The identity of the author and date and place of composition of the Cloud of Unknowing is unknown. He addresses a specified individual who is seeking advice as to his conduct on entering upon and pursuing a life of solitude and contemplative prayer.

Three points may be noted in his teaching. The first, is that it is addressed only to those in whom the requisite vocation and ascetical preparation are found; the second, that it is primarily an exercise of the will, of the love of God; and thirdly, that it rests upon the theological (or metaphysical) assumption that between the soul and God there is always a "cloud of unknowing", the Dionysian caligo ignorantiae.⁹

A remarkable feature of this book is the author's clear and consistent scheme of the workings of grace. He separates contemplatives from the "common" and "special" degrees among Christians, but he is clear that the grace

⁸ David Knowles, The English Mystical Tradition, London, Burns Oates, 1961, p. 46f.

⁹ Ibid., p. 78.

of contemplation is a development of sanctifying grace, though its mode of action is different.

The real significance of The Cloud is that it is the earliest instance in any vernacular literature of a direct, practical, non-schematic instruction in the entrance and progress of the contemplative life understood as the life of mystical, infused prayer. Written for an English anchoress, it brings together all the elements of English spirituality and synthesizes the fundamental teaching of those who have made it up. The theological basis is from St. Augustine, its ascetical emphases and religious psychology are Victorine, it has Benedictine warmth, prudence, and optimism, and the devotional-speculative balance of St. Anselm. It is written in the unique idiom of Middle English language, and its teaching remains orthodox within the framework of the Three Ways. It does not have the systematic analyses of Ignatius Loyola or of St. John of the Cross, nevertheless a clear pattern of pastoral guidance emerges from the book. He considers the practical business of co-operative with grace. The principal division is that between souls "reforming in faith" and "reforming in feeling". These are equivalent to the purgative and illuminative ways of the classical scheme. The first is purgative, discursive, disciplined and dutiful; the second is affective,

illuminative, following the Christological progression of St. Bernard from love for the Sacred Humanity to the worship of the Incarnate Godhead. This eventually leads to contemplative union.

Juliana of Norwich wrote The Revelations of Divine Love, which grew out of a supernatural experience granted to her on 8 May 1373, when she was thirty years old. It is the fruit of a lifelong reflection upon the Passion as a central point of Christian theology.

The experiences underlying the Revelations are divided into three main types. These are, first, "in bodily sight", which is ordinary, imaginative meditation. Secondly, "in bodily likeness: ghostly", which is an intermediate stage wherein imagination and intellectual understanding become fused. Thirdly, "in ghostly sight", which is an intuitive or mystical perception of divine truth.

Hilton and Juliana teach the same thing, but whereas the former is guiding an anchoress, the latter is living the anchorite life. Here is the same Augustinian-Victorine basis, the affective Christology of St. Bernard, and the supreme English source of Benedictine optimism flowing from a rather more pronounced Thomist element. The beginning of Christian life is still prevenient grace, and the basis of all prayer is found in the Creeds. She offers no support to the Protestant idea, which seeped

into Caroline thought, that the Sacrament would be more honoured by infrequent celebrations. Redemption is to be found in the daily Mass.

Richard Rolle of Hampole 1295-1349 is one of the best known and honoured writers of the fourteenth century. Like St. Francis, Rolle distrusted learning. Like St. Francis he was a wandering hermit. He preached, or sang, about the love of God, and gave spiritual direction to the underprivileged. His better known treatises are The Fire of Love, and The Mending of Life. He denounces worldliness, he champions the eremitical ideal, and rants against ecclesiastical evils. His writing is strongly affective. He offers varying degrees of mystical doctrine and purely affective prayer.

He describes his spiritual experience in words which are taken directly from sense perception. The love of Christ, he says, is in three things, heat, song, and sweetness. He defines these three:

Soothly, Heat I call it when the mind is truly kindled in love everlasting; and the heart in the same manner, not hopefully but verily, is felt to burn. For the heart turned into fire gives the feeling of burning love.

Song I call it when in a soul the sweetness of everlasting praise is received with plenteous burning, and thought is turned into Song; and the mind is changed into full sweet sound.

These two are not gotten in idleness, but in high devotion; to which the third is near, that is to say sweetness untrowed. For heat and song truly cause a marvellous sweetness in the soul; and also they may be caused by full great sweetness.¹⁰

Unlike most of the great mystics, he describes his spiritual experience in words which are taken directly from sense perception. In this he seems to stand out from the great tradition of mystical writers, who teach that sensible devotion of any kind is to be resisted, and that the permanent grace of contemplation is almost imperceptible. Rolle writes as though throughout his whole life "heat" and "song" were at his call. It is because of his stress on these sense perceptions that Rolle lies somewhat outside the normal course of mystics. His influence is considered dangerous as it would tend to encourage would-be contemplatives to strive for some sensible realization in prayer.

There is no doubt Rolle was surprised by his first experience of the heat, but it was in no sense an enlightenment of the intellect. The heat of love is, of course, a common simile with many mystical writers, especially with St. Bernard; and sweetness is also employed as

¹⁰ Richard Rolle, The Fire of Love, Edited and done in Modern English by Frances M.M. Comper, With Introduction by Evelyn Underhill, London, Methuen, 1914, p. 67.

descriptive of mystical states, but in his use of song and music to express his union with God, Rolle is unique. Sweetness always seems to be the concomitant of heat and song, at once the cause and effect and cannot be thought of as existing apart. We thus find the note of song and melody in the joy of love in all that he says and sings.

Margery Kempe is known for her Book of Margery Kempe.¹¹ She adds no new facet to the School. But the book is important because it clothes the teaching of habitual recollection after the Victorine pattern, taught by Hilton and Juliana, with living flesh and blood. It gives not just a plan, but a living, talking, singing, moving picture of the system in action. She sees Hilton's ascetical theology from the receiving rather than the teaching end, as a spiritual child rather than as a spiritual director. Her affective devotion to the Sacred Humanity, her insight into the redemptive Passion, her domestic optimism, comes from the market-place and the family kitchen instead of from the anchoress's cell. Her active works of mercy and charity, her joy in adversity, are examples in practical Christian living. Her prayer is orthodox, grounded on the tradition of St. Augustine and

¹¹ See Martin Thornton, Margery Kempe: An Example in the English Pastoral Tradition, London, S.P.C.K., 1960.

St. Benedict, yet it is of a far wider range than that of Hilton or Juliana. She is boldly experimental, like Rolle, and it is impossible to tie her down to any single technique or method. She had a variety of spiritual guides: an anchorite of Dominican connection, several secular clergy, an Austin Canon Regular, a German priest, and various accomplished women including Juliana of Norwich.

2. The Second Golden Age of English Spirituality.

The second golden age of English spirituality is the Caroline period. Compared with the fourteenth century this presents the student of spirituality with difficult problems of selection and classification. The former period was overshadowed by five writers, whereas the Caroline symposium compiled by Elmer More and F.L. Cross, Anglicanism, gives extracts from ninety-five writers. At the centre of Caroline devotion is the Book of Common Prayer, which has a vast bibliography of its own. The Book of Common Prayer had its final revision in 1661.

The Caroline divines went directly to primitive and patristic sources, but at the same time absorbed ideas from the newer spiritualities of Spain and France. The later Middle Ages, including the fourteen century tended to be by-passed. They were also influenced and inspired

by the better elements of the Continental Reformers. Hooker in On the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, softened both the subjectively affective elements in Lutherism and the rationalism of the Puritans, and sought an ally in St. Thomas Aquinas. Following Aquinas Hooker bases his doctrine on natural and divine law, conceived as the all pervading reason of God. He is important to Anglican spirituality as the foundation of Caroline ascetic and also as something of a link with medieval thought. His teaching on angelology, on penance and fasting, and divine punishment is almost more medieval than Caroline, which is to be expected as his book was published in 1594.

Popular Catholic books of devotion like The Imitation of Christ and Introduction to the Devout Life were as widely read in England as anywhere, but their inspiration was incorporated into the system. Caroline writers say the same things as Thomas à Kempis and Francois de Sales, but their spirit and approach is different. For instance, C.J. Stranks writes:

Taylor had read à Kempis's Imitation of Christ and obviously admired it, for there are glances toward it in most of his devotional works, and here and there some definite borrowings, but a Kempis's mood of withdrawal and abnegation was not one which Taylor wished to instill.¹²

¹² C.J. Stranks, Anglican Devotion, London, S.C.M., 1961, p. 85.

Again:

It is sometime said that Holy Living borrows largely from the Devout Life of St. Francis de Sales, but only in one passage is there evidence of direct quotation, and for the rest only such resemblances as are bound to arise when two men of the same temperament write on the same subject for similar readers.¹³

It is also said that Taylor was influenced by the new spiritualities of St. Ignatius and St. John of the Cross. This is true only so long as the operative word is "influence", in no case is there a crude lifting of the doctrines out of their context. Taylor himself writes:

...but yet our seed remains, and we cannot be well supplied out of the Roman storehouse; for though there the staple is, and very many excellent things exposed to view; yet we have found the merchants to be deceivers, and the wares to often falsified.¹⁴

Again in the Preface to his book Holy Dying he says of the book:

...my endeavours will be better entertained, because they are the first entire Body of directions for sick and Dying people that I remember to have been published in the Church of England. In the Church of Rome there have been many; but they are dressed with such doctrines which are sometimes useless, sometimes hurtful, and their whole design of assistance which they commonly yield is at the best imperfect, and the representation is too careless and loose for so severe an employment.¹⁵

¹³ Ibid., p. 85.

¹⁴ Jeremy Taylor, Ductor Dubitantium, Preface, in The Whole Works of J. Taylor, London, Reginald Heber, 1822, p. viii.

¹⁵ Id., Rules and Exercises of Holy Dying, London, Appleton. In the Dedicatory, p. xxxii.

Spiritual direction is inherent in the English pastoral tradition. In the Caroline age the sermon was central, but it was also a part of the general pastoral practice of catechetical instruction and spiritual guidance. Against the exaggeration of preaching Hooker defends catechism as an integral part of the ministry of the Word. Sermons were at once instruction and entertainment and into them was poured some of the best thought of some of the finest minds of the day. The Puritan Richard Baxter kept open house on Thursday evenings to discuss the previous Sunday's sermon. Under the Puritan Commonwealth Anglicans were unable to get personal guidance, and it was to meet this need that Taylor's Rules and Exercises of Holy Living, published in 1650, followed by Holy Dying in 1651, were written.

There is then in this age a clear-cut pastoral pattern consisting of three inter-related forms of instruction: catechism, preaching, and personal guidance. Concerning the last, Caroline writers rarely use the phrase "spiritual direction". Seventeenth century Catholic practice, more or less equates confession with direction. The Caroline Church on the other hand limited both the use and purpose of the confessional, and in doing so enlarged rather than diminished the concept of personal guidance. A great deal of Caroline casuistical divinity was worked

out in the pulpit by preacher and hearer; sometimes by question and answer at sermon time, but more often by discussion between priest and layman or by empirical guidance.

There were of course spiritual friendships between priest and layman. Jeremy Taylor and Lord and Lacy Carbery, Bishop Ken and the Misses Kemeyse, William Law and Hester Gibbon, were productive of ascetical doctrine. Jeremy Taylor, and William Law, both wrote treatises for women.

Finally the ethical and the moral elements are very much to the fore in Caroline spirituality. There is a strong emphasis on the authority of conscience, and this is based on a return to primitive and scholastic sources. In Anglicanism, authority means what it meant to Augustine and Aquinas: natural law guided by reason and grace, with right action depending on reason and will. Moralists like Taylor, though opposing contemporary Catholic views, nevertheless returned to scholastic categories. They describe conscience in terms closely akin to those used by St. Thomas, as contrasted with those associated with the later Franciscans, who located conscience in the "emotional" side of man's nature. Conscience is cognitive. The conscience needs training and the underlying aim remains not just human goodness but holy perfection dependent on grace.

The old legalistic medieval manuals were for confessors, while the Caroline works were directed towards the training of the individual conscience by both personal study and spiritual direction.

According to T. Wood,

Casuistical Divinity meant the practical application or interpretation of Christian moral principles to all the conditions of men's lives, in order that they might be led on to the Christian ideal of holiness: it included not only the resolution of hard cases of doubt and perplexity and all the juristic side of moral theology, but also the entire range of ascetic theology, the whole being regarded as one comprehensive science.¹⁶

This differs from the Catholic position of this time for according to McAdoo,

After Trent, the Roman Church made the great mistake of separating moral and ascetical theology, so that instead of one comprehensive science of preparing souls for heaven, two distinct sciences emerged, the one occupied with the question of the legality or illegality of human acts, and the other concerned with spiritual progress and holiness.¹⁷

It is thus easy for moral teaching to be mere worldly morality if the underlying moral-ascetical synthesis is forgotten. There is a danger of this in Caroline spirituality, especially as there is a scarcity of anything

¹⁶ T. Wood, English Casuistical Divinity, London, S.P.C.K., 1952, p. 65.

¹⁷ H.R. McAdoo, The Structure of Caroline Moral Theology, London, Longmans, 1949, p. 9f.

that can be properly called mysticism. Therefore following the Benedictine and English emphasis, the purpose of Caroline casuistry is the training of conscience to be used mainly in habitual recollection. It is concerned with the practical art of making moral decisions during daily life rather than with formal "self examination" prior to sacramental confession. The Caroline trained conscience, dealing with moral problems as they arise, diminished the need for very frequent confession for ascetical reasons. Self examination was to be an extended continuous process, an aspect of recollection, as well as a formal exercise.

The Caroline writers objected to the mathematical exactness with which scholastic moral theology tried to classify sin. They opposed the distinction between "mortal" and "venial" sin. Yet they did not uphold the parity of sins; there is still the distinction between those of malice and infirmity, neither within these categories, are all sins equal.

Martin Thornton sums up English spirituality as empirical guidance, not dogmatic direction; affectiveness curbed by doctrine; recollection, continuous and gentle, taking priority over set periods of stiff devotion; domesticity, not militarism; all leading naturally into a

balance, a sanity, into what Juliana called "full homely" and what Taylor meant by "an amiable captivity of the spirit".¹⁸

¹⁸ Martin Thornton, English Spirituality, p. 290-293.

CHAPTER IV

PRE-REFORMATION AND COUNTER REFORMATION THOUGHT ON HOLINESS

The Catholic approach to holiness has been clearly set forth by the Church. The experience of the saints, and the direction of great "doctors of perfection", have produced a mass of deep counsel on holiness often under the title of Christian Perfection, which has been systematized and codified, and bears now an easily recognizable and classic shape.

The theology of Christian Perfection has been called by various names throughout the history of theology. Some have called it simply "Spirituality", others "Spiritual Theology", "Spiritual Life", "Supernatural Life", "Interior Life", and as we shall later discover Francis de Sales called it "Devout Life". The terms most commonly used have been "Ascetical" and "Mystical", although they do not have always the same connotation for all theologians.

1. Theology of Christian Perfection.

Theology is the science which treats of God. Supernatural Theology is when it is founded on revelation. The first treats of the revealed mysteries, of the sacraments and the future life; the second of human acts, of

the precepts, of the counsels, of grace, Christian virtues, and of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Within Moral Theology is Ascetical and Mystical Theology which is the application of moral theology to the direction of souls toward closer union with God. The object of Ascetical and Mystical Theology is Christian perfection, union with God, the contemplation which this supposes, the ordinary means which lead to it, and the extraordinary helps which accompany it. It is in fact, the science which has for its aim the leading of the soul in the way of perfection unto union with God enjoyed by the perfect.¹

Christian Perfection is defined by Antonio Royo and Jordan Aumann as "that part of sacred theology which, based on the principles of divine revelation, and the experience of the saints, studies the organism of the supernatural life, explains the laws of progress and development, and describes the process which souls are wont to follow from the beginning of the Christian life to the heights of perfection."² The theology of Christian Perfection is concerned with the sanctification of man and

1 R. Garrigou-Lagrange, Christian Perfection and Contemplation, St. Louis & London, Herder, 1937, p. 6.

2 Antonio Royo and Jordan Aumann, The Theology of Christian Perfection, Dubuque, Iowa, Priory Press, 1962, p. 10.

studies the supernatural organism of the spiritual life in order to discover the laws of growth in perfection.

In general, sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit of God, in delivering men from the guilt and power of sin, in consecrating them to the service and love of God; and in imparting to them initially and progressively the fruits of Christ's redemption, and the graces of an Holy life. It is the Trinity dwelling in the soul that first transforms its essence by Sanctifying Grace, which is the supernatural vital principle of this life.

"Grace is the formal principle of our supernatural organism"³ and this study of the Roman Catholic approach to holiness must begin with a statement of the Roman Catholic doctrine of grace. This doctrine of grace is based on the traditional Catholic conception of the supernatural order. There are two orders, the natural and the supernatural. When man is born he is part of the natural order. He exists by grace and is indwelt by God. Since God is present in man, maintaining him in existence, what further indwelling can there be? What is the difference between God's presence in man by nature and His indwelling of man by grace? The primary reason, says the Roman Catholic Church is that man has no choice. He cannot escape this

3 Ibid., p. 30.

existence-giving presence of God. He is part of the natural order. But in order "to be" supernaturally, he must do something. God's presence is not by invitation but his indwelling is. When a child is baptized the sponsor makes the invitation on his behalf, but when he reaches the age of reason, he can confirm the decision. If he withdraws the invitation he loses the indwelling and is left only with the Presence. Thus the indwelling of God by grace is not simply God's action upon the soul, but as a result of the soul's re-action to God's action. The invitation to God to make himself at home in man produces a vast, energizing of God in the soul, or if you will, a vast development of the soul as a result of its willing response to God's energizing. Sanctifying grace is a real transformation of the soul. The very substance of the soul is renewed, the soul is affected in its very being so that it can be called a new creation. It has a new life, a life with its own vital "organs" and operations, so that it can now perform actions at the level of its new being; actions which because they are supernatural can merit a supernatural reward.

Yet it remains the same soul with the same faculties. They are elevated to a new level of life and the operations that go with it. Grace does not destroy nature, but is built into it, and from within elevates it.

Sanctifying grace then can be defined:

a supernatural quality, inhering in the soul, which gives us a physical and formal participation although analogous and accidental, in the very nature of God precisely as God.⁴

Jean Daujat puts it in this way:

To say that God gives us grace is to say that the author of our existence realises in us a quality or property grafted upon our natural being, and transforming it to the point of communicating to us, in and by that super added supernatural being, the divine nature itself... Grace thus defines is "a permanent and lasting principle of supernatural life."⁵

It is essential to note concerning the Catholic doctrine of grace that it is not something which man, whatever his merits or efforts, is capable of obtaining by his own efforts. The absolutely gratuitous nature of supernatural life is fundamental. Catholics see grace as a favour which God grants to man, but also as a quality whereby man is pleasing to God. As a favour it is to be received as a free gift, and sanctity is imparted to man by God by His grace. The reality of sanctifying grace is a mystery, the existence of which is only known by faith.

It is important to notice here the difference between Catholic and Protestant understanding of grace.

4 Ibid., p. 31.

5 Jean Daujat, The Theology of Grace, New York, Hawthorn Books, 1959, p. 63.

Protestants deny that grace "inheres in the soul". Grace is the undeserved favour of God and not an infusion of grace.

In Catholic thought justification and sanctification at the time of the Council of Trent were not distinguished as in Protestant theology. Grace is a gift of God, a gift of interior sanctity, that really sanctifies man in his inmost being, and not the gift of accomplishing an exterior work, which would not change man inwardly.

The Council of Trent declared:

Justification is not only the remission of sins but also the sanctification and interior renovation of the man, who willingly accepts grace and the gifts of God, in such wise that an unjust or evil man becomes just, and passes from the enmity to the friendship of God to become an heir of eternal hope [...]. The instrumental cause is the sacrament of baptism which is the sacrament of faith without which no man can be justified.⁶

The effects of grace are to give man participation in the divine nature; to make him an adopted son of God; to make him a true heir of God, brothers and co-heirs with Christ; to give supernatural life; to make man pleasing and just to God; to give man the capacity for supernatural

⁶ Canon and Decrees of the Council of Trent, Original text with English translation by H.J. Schroeder, London, Herder, 1941, Session 6, p. 33.

merit; to unite intimately with God; and make living temples of the Trinity.⁷

Grace does not destroy nature but elevates it. The intellect has a new power of faith, the will new powers of hope and charity. Complementary faculties of the soul also come with sanctifying grace, the theological virtues: Faith, Hope and Charity, and the moral virtues (or cardinal virtues): Prudence, Justice, Temperance, Fortitude. Also the gifts of the Holy Spirit: Knowledge, Understanding, Wisdom, Counsel, Fortitude, Piety and the Fear of the Lord. These gifts are not to be confused with the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Another aspect of the Catholic doctrine of grace must be mentioned. Besides the supernatural superadded "organism" of sanctifying grace, which is also called "habitual" grace, the human soul, in order to produce supernatural actions meritorious of everlasting life requires each time the help of actual grace. The use of the word "grace" for two things so different is confusing. The confusion is further confounded by actual grace being divided into Operating and Co-operating grace; gratia excitans and gratia adjuvans; prevenient grace, concomitant

⁷ Royo and Aumann, Theology of Christian Perfection p. 36-41.

grace and consequent grace; internal grace and external grace; sufficient grace and efficacious grace. These divisions can easily be reduced to operating and co-operating grace.

One method to simplify the understanding of sanctifying and actual grace, is to think of sanctifying grace as supernatural life, and actual grace as supernatural impulsions. Actual grace is an internal transient supernatural impulse from God which enables man to perform a supernatural action. It is best understood by examining how a person receives the supernatural life. There are two ways: the easy way of the baptized infant and the harder way of the man who comes to it in adult life: but either way man can receive it only as a whole, theological virtues, moral virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The life can grow but only as a whole. If we look at the adult we observe he cannot receive supernatural life unless God gives it. By his own strength he could not merit that God should give it, because no natural action could merit a supernatural reward. Prior to the reception of sanctifying grace he must receive that special help from God which is called actual grace. By actual grace God assists him, thereby making him capable of an action which without that special assistance would be beyond his powers. Actual grace is a sort of thrust or impetus in the power

of which man can act above his powers. Now if man co-operates with this impulsions from God then he will receive supernatural life either a beginning of it if he lacks it, or an increase of it if he already has it. Thus there could be no beginning of supernatural life without supernatural impulsions. There is no seed of supernatural life in man's nature, it is wholly a gift.

Actual grace then is the transitory action of the Holy Spirit of God on the soul, to prepare the soul to receive it, or to develop the new life there created. It differs from sanctifying grace in that it is a help given by God to the soul only in view of some particular act while sanctifying grace is an habitual disposition of the soul, created and preserved by the Spirit of God. The act, being essentially a transitory thing, actual grace is also something that passes. Sanctifying grace is essentially a permanent thing. Actual grace is necessary for every supernatural act. It is required to perform good works preceding justification, and to perform good works which follow justification. Special actual grace is needed to persevere in grace already received.

The root of the supernatural life when God gives it to man is Faith. With Faith there enters the whole of man's supernatural equipment which consists of the theological virtues, moral virtues and the gifts of the Holy

Spirit, by the aid of which the divine life is developed in man and produces supernatural, that is divine acts. The supernaturally alive soul is made new in its essence and its operations. Grace and the virtues are not something external of which the soul is given use, as an eye might be enabled to see by a microscope things which otherwise would be too small for it. Grace and the virtues are in the soul itself. They are called habits. Habit is the modification of a nature whereby it is made more apt to act in one way or another. The whole point of it is that it enables man to do something without which he could not do, or not do so well.

The virtues have three elements of habit: they are a modification of man's nature, something actual in his nature, not merely external to it; they are real and objective, not a matter of feeling; and they enable man to do specific things without which he could not do them, such as to believe supernaturally, to hope supernaturally, and to love supernaturally.

They differ from natural habits in the way man acquires them. The supernatural habits are received in one act from God. A natural habit is acquired by the continual repetition of certain acts. Though the mode of acquiring them is different, the supernatural virtues are habits as truly as those acquired by natural means.

Actual grace actuates these infused habits.

In addition to the theological and moral virtues, man's supernatural equipment also includes the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts are drawn from the passage in Isaiah 11, v. 2-3.

The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness (piety) and he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.

Four of the gifts are for the perfection of the intellect. Understanding, Wisdom, Knowledge and Counsel, and three of the gifts, Fortitude, Piety and Fear of the Lord are those by which the will responds to the wind of the Spirit of God.

Here it is claimed we have the entire and infallible means for the attainment of holiness and salvation. The sacramental system is the means whereby the Catholic Church effectively produces in its members the holiness which she preaches. The soul is cleansed from original guilt by Baptism, strengthened by Confirmation, absolved by Penance, and crowns these instruments of grace with the Holy Eucharist, the supreme sacrament and sacrifice of the Mystical Body containing the living presence of Christ Himself.

2. What is Christian Perfection?

Having now established that the basis of the Catholic conception of Christian perfection is sanctifying and actual grace, whose steady development in this life, from the seed to the flower, leads to perfection, we must now examine what perfection really is.

Christian perfection consists especially in charity: primarily in charity toward God, and secondarily in charity toward our neighbour. Charity or love is its principal, most essential and characteristic element.⁸ Charity has none of the imperfection of faith and hope and it will therefore subsist eternally. This teaching is borne out by our study of perfect love in the New Testament. Garrigou-Lagrange sets out incomplete doctrines of perfection, doctrines based on the other virtues, or an aggregate of the virtues. Perfection is not wisdom; not a consciousness of our divine identity; does not consist principally in contemplation; or a study of theology; not especially in austerity, fasting and penitential practices; not in interior and exterior worship due to God, acts of virtue of religion, in faithful accomplishment of exercises

⁸ Royo and Aumann, Theology of Christian Perfection, p. 121-136.

Garrigou-Lagrange, Christian Perfection and Contemplation, p. 129-135.

of piety; and last of all not to be found only in the solitary life.⁹

St. Francis de Sales wrote:

As for me, I know of no other perfection than that of loving God with one's whole heart and one's neighbour as one's self. All other perfection is false; charity is the sole bond of perfection among Christians, and the only virtue which perfectly unites us to God and our neighbour, in which is our end and final consummation. They are deceived who invent any other perfection.¹⁰

What of the other virtues, such as faith, hope, prudence, justice, fortitude, patience, temperance, mildness and humility, do they not also contribute to the essence of perfection? Some theologians have thought so, and St. Thomas has said:

Primarily and essentially the perfection of the Christian life consists in charity, principally as to the love of God, secondarily as to the love of our neighbour, both of which are the matter of the chief commandments of the divine law[...] Secondarily and instrumentally, however, perfection consists in the observance of the counsels [...] For the commandments, other than the precepts of charity, are directed to the removal of things contrary to charity, with which namely, charity is incompatible, whereas the counsels are directed to the removal of things that hinder the act of charity, and yet are not contrary to charity.¹¹

9 Garrigou-Lagrange, op. cit., p. 130-135.

10 Francis de Sales, The Devout Life, Part I, Ch. 25.

11 Quoted by Garrigou-Lagrange, Christian Perfection and Contemplation, p. 144-145.

It follows that perfection consists essentially not in charity alone, but also in the acts of the other virtues which are of precept and which are ordered by charity. Thus the acts of faith, hope, religion, and prayer, attendance at mass, and reception of holy communion, belong to the very essence of perfection.

The Catholic Church has distinguished between precepts and counsels. The precepts of the Gospel practically consist of the Decalogue of the Old Law interpreted in the sense of the New. The chief of which, as we have already noticed, is Love to God and love to neighbour. Christ also taught certain principles which He expressly stated were not to be considered as binding upon all, but rather as "counsels" for those who desired to do more than the minimum and to aim at Christian perfection, so far as it could be obtained on this earth. The Scriptural basis for this is the story of the young man who asked what he must do to have eternal life and received the answer "if thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor." (Matt. 19. 16f) The difference between a precept and a counsel lies in this: that the precept is a matter of necessity while the counsel is left to the free choice of the person to whom it is proposed. The counsels, sometimes called evangelical counsels are three in number: poverty, chastity and obedience. The object of the three

counsels is to free the soul from the hindrances imposed by riches, pleasures of the flesh, and the appeal to honours and positions which delight the self love of individuals.

The counsels are not essential for Christian perfection but are only instruments for attaining Christian perfection.¹² As Christian perfection then "consists principally in the precepts—which means no Christian is exempt from them—it follows that every Christian, whatever his state or condition, is obliged to aspire to perfection."¹³ Thus all Christians, whether priests, religious or laity have the obligation to aspire to perfection. This obligation stems from the very nature of grace, which is received as a seed at the reception of baptism and by its very nature demands an increase. The obligation is common to all Christians by reason of their baptism.

The Second Vatican Council in the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church states:

In the various types and duties of life, one and the same holiness is cultivated by all who are moved by the Spirit of God, and who obey the voice of the Father, worshipping God the Father

¹² Garrigou-Lagrange, Christian Perfection and Contemplation, p. 183f.

¹³ Royo and Aumann, Theology of Christian Perfection, p. 137.

in spirit and truth [...] all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity.¹⁴

The Constitution confirms this truth that the holiness of the Church is fostered in a special way by the observance of counsels.

Outstanding among them is that precious gift of divine grace which the Father gives to some men, so that by virginity, or celibacy, they can more easily devote their entire selves to God alone with undivided heart.¹⁵

It further states:

In a particular appropriate way this holiness shines out in the practice of the counsels customarily called "evangelical". Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the practice of these counsels is undertaken by many Christians, either privately or in some Church-approved situation or state, and produces in the world, as produce it should, a shining witness and model of holiness.¹⁶

Section V of this Constitution deals with the universal call to holiness. Every person should walk unhesitatingly according to his own personal gifts and duties in the path of a living faith which arouses hope and works through charity. The shepherds of Christ's flock must

¹⁴ Vatican II, Documents of Vatican II, Edited by Walter M. Abbott, New York, Guild Press, 1966, p. 67. This digression shows the Catholic view at the present time and is therefore of interest.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 66.

fulfil the duties of their ministry in such a way that it is the principal means of their sanctification. Priests, by the exercise of their office through Christ, the one Mediator, are living witnesses to God, and by their office rise to holiness. Ministers of lesser rank, deacons and clerics, bring their hearts into accord with their offices. Lay apostles spend themselves in their apostolic labours. Married couples and Christian parents should follow their own proper path to holiness by faithful love. Widows and single people make great contributions to holiness and apostolic endeavour. Those who labour should better themselves by their human labours in their daily work, and raise all of society to a better mode of existence. In temporal service all Christ's faithful will show all men the love with which God loved the world.

The way and means to holiness is stated: the first and most necessary gift is love, by which we love God and neighbour. Each of the faithful must hear and accept God's will and complete what God has begun by their actions through the use of the sacraments, participation in the liturgy, prayer, self-abnegation, fraternal service and virtuous acts. It is charity that guides to the final end.

Similar teaching is taught by Father Garrigou-Lagrange when he says:

A second result of the precept of love of God is that every Christian each according to his condition, must strive for the perfection of charity. For each and every one it is a general obligation, and is not reserved to religious and clerics. Because of his vows, a religious must tend to perfection by practicing the counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience and by keeping the rule of his order. This special obligation places him in a state of perfection without at once making him perfect [...] The secular priest is not in a state of perfection, nevertheless he must tend to perfection on account of the holy orders he has received [...] The ordinary Christian must strive for perfection of charity according to the general obligation of the first commandment. How shall he do this? By avoiding mortal and venial sin, by having the spirit of the counsels, without binding himself to practice those which do not correspond to his condition, and by thus growing in charity until death.¹⁷

3. Christian Perfection and Mysticism.

Each soul follows its own path to sanctity under the direction and impulse of the Holy Spirit. The great Doctors of spiritual life have attempted to give various classifications by concentrating on the predominant dispositions of the soul, to determine the state in which a particular soul finds itself at a given time in the spiritual life. The division into three ways or three ages of the spiritual life, the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive; or that of three degrees, beginners, profi-

¹⁷ Garrigou-Lagrange, Christian Perfection and Contemplation, p. 191-193.

cient and perfect; or that of St. Theresa of Avila in her Interior Castle where she writes of six "mansions" which correspond to the three ways.

According to St. Bonaventure and the Franciscan school, the three ways are "hierarchical actions", that is, different orientations given spiritual exercises in order to achieve the elements that make up Christian perfection. Each way fulfils a particular role; and the three ways followed more or less simultaneously lead to interior order and loving union with God. Thus the three ways are not successive stages of spiritual development, but parallel methods of action at every stage.

The earliest occurrence in Christian writing of the terms purgation, illumination, and union is found in Pseudo-Dionysius (c. 550), who applied them to mystical experience. They describe, moreover, not only complementary functions, but also successive activities; being successive they correspond to the three stages of mystical growth set down by Evagrius Ponticus (d. 399). Hugh of Balma, a Carthusian of the 13th century, correlated the Dionysian ways and the three ages, beginners, proficient, and the perfect, designates the degrees by the corresponding Dionysian terms. Thus beginners are those who endeavour to purify themselves of sin and its effects; proficients seek illumination, that is growth in virtue; and

the perfect, exercise union with God. Spiritual writers have come to accept this identification of ways and degrees.

It is most important to emphasize the fact that the distinction between the three ways should not be overdone. On the one hand, all the authorities agree in saying that there is no peak in the spiritual life here on earth so high that it cannot be transcended. Conversely, God can, without doubt, in certain more or less exceptional cases, raise a soul from sin to a high degree of sanctity without any apparent period of transition. Although in theory purification precedes illumination, purification is only completed in and by illumination.

Before looking further at the classic "Ways", mysticism must be considered. Many who have progressed according to the ways have become mystics. One of the most controversial questions among the various schools of the Catholic Church is the relationship between mysticism and Christian perfection. Theologians have divided into two principal opinions. The first opinion holds for the unity of the spiritual life, considering asceticism and mysticism as two phases of the same path which all souls ought to travel to perfection. The ascetical phase serves as a basis and preparation for the mystical phase in which alone is found the full perfection of the Christian life.

Classic authors such as Jan van Ruysbroeck (d. 1381), and St. John of the Cross (d. 1591), and many modern writers such as R. Garrigou-Lagrange and Louis Bouyer adopt this view, laying down the same basic characteristics of the three ways as Evagrius. For them as for Evagrius, both the illuminative and unitive ways represent states of mystical contemplation.

The second opinion maintains a duality of ways—the one ascetical and the other mystical, and by either one the soul can arrive at Christian perfection. The ascetical way is the normal and common way according to the ordinary providence of God and is therefore the way all souls should strive to follow. The higher form of Evagrius' contemplation called mystical theology or the mystical experience is completely abnormal and extraordinary, and not necessary for high sanctity.

Mysticism is usually identified with "infused contemplation" for infused contemplation is the mystical act par excellence. To understand what is meant by "infused contemplation", it is necessary to note the difference between meditation and contemplation.

Most modern spiritual writers, beginning with St. Theresa of Avila, when they come to speak about personal prayer, mental prayer, make a radical distinction between contemplation and the meditation that precedes it.

Meditation, laborious by nature, is the activity of beginners in the spiritual life, or of those who have not progressed very far in it. Normally, one ought to attain a phase of spiritual progress in which meditation no longer adds anything, or even becomes psychologically impossible to carry out. Then, it would seem, contemplation will flower of its own accord.

Recently, among the spiritual writers whose work is mainly one of commenting on the great authorities of the sixteenth century, especially of the Carmelite school, a supplementary distinction has appeared which has aroused a violent controversy dividing the writers into camps. The question raised and debated is whether contemplation is always "infused" or can it also be "acquired". Louis Bouyer defines these terms:

By infused contemplation is understood one which is the effect of a pure influx of grace, taking hold of the soul independently of any effort (or at least any conscious one) of the soul. Acquired contemplation, by contrast, would be obtained by the soul itself, progressively simplifying and unifying its meditation and thus entering of its own accord, by a calm effort of concentration, into a state of spiritual tranquillity which is, to be sure, the fruit of grace, but of grace still making use of the normal play of faculties.¹⁸

¹⁸ Louis Bouyer, Introduction to Spirituality, Minnesota, Liturgical Press, 1961, p. 69. For a discussion of these controversies see pages 69-82.

Father Garrigou-Lagrange maintains in his book that infused contemplation is the normal way of sanctity.¹⁹ On the other hand Joseph de Guibert writes:

The way or state of infused contemplation is not the only normal way to perfect love although, apparently, generous souls do not ordinarily arrive at perfection unless God gives them some touches or brief participations in those graces which constitute strictly infused contemplation. Therefore souls can ascend to any degree of sanctity without habitually walking in the way of infused contemplation.²⁰

Father Pourrat agrees and also adds, "but history bears witness that as many and in fact even more authors do not admit this universality."²¹ The fulfilment of charity rather than any special contemplative prayer is the specific mark of the perfect.

All the theologians agree that mysticism is a passive and not an active experience, because only the Holy Spirit can produce this experience in man by the influence and actuation of his gifts.

Gustave Thils²² is concerned about the effect of these opinions on the average Christian. His natural

19 Garrigou-Lagrange, Christian Perfection and Contemplation.

20 Joseph de Guibert, Theology of the Spiritual Life, London, Sheed & Ward, 1954, p. 346. A. Tanqueray also reflects this view.

21 Pourrat, Christian Spirituality, London, Burns Oates and Washbourne, 19 , Vol. , p. 349.

22 Gustave Thils, Christian Holiness, Trans. John L. Farrand, Lannoo, 1961.

reaction is that the purgative and illuminative ways are within his capabilities, but the unitive way is just for some rare contemplative souls. He writes of the two essential dimensions of Christian holiness one commonly called the "Gift of God", that is mystical; and the other composed of human initiative, immersed in temporal activity and in the duties of one's state or calling in life. These two dimensions are presented as holiness "given" and holiness "acquired". The danger is that both dimensions are not recognized or one dimension exaggerated more than the other. Some would put too much emphasis on the "given". It is supernatural holiness which is given by God, which leads the average man to say "This is not for me". On the other hand, those who put all the emphasis on "acquired" holiness, stress one's work, effort and perseverance. "For them his life is holy who responds to his temporal calling to the full: Christian ideas and feelings, Christian environment and family life."²³

The same two dimensions can be seen in the alternative: apostolic action or religious contemplation. The error consists in too great an insistence on one or the other of the two elements. Active apostolic Christians identify the true saint with the man of apostolic action.

23 Ibid., p. 16.

"The visible and immediate devotion to men is the testimony par excellence of charity." Thils quotes Father Plé who states it is a very false type of action which does not spring from a deep interior life. He says:

The fault of 19th Century Christians, is, perhaps, that they practiced the life of prayer without any type of efficacious apostolic action. But the present generation, endeavouring to engage in the apostolate, often realises nothing more than social action, organization, propaganda or agitation [...]. Christian holiness demands not only an apostolic action in the temporal order, but also and most certainly an intense God-centred life, lived for itself as a constituent element of holiness.²⁴

Neither is holiness to be measured by the quality of the contemplative life of a particular person. The consciousness of the God-life is not the whole of holiness, but this impression has been given by some treatises which give a disproportionate amount of space to the various methods of prayer. There has also been undue emphasis on the private revelations, interior locutions, visions, and the phenomena of levitation which is read in the lives of the saints.

A further word is necessary concerning the Christian mystical life. Christianity is basically mystical. Participation in the Divine life is, of its very nature, the mystical life in germ. Mysticism in a general way

24 Ibid., p. 17-18.

requires the realization of the immediate presence of God. The realization of the immediate presence manifests itself in the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. Many Christians have had this experience on certain brief occasions, for instance after receiving the Sacrament. In order to say one has the mystical life it is necessary that the realization of the immediate presence of God should become habitual, and it must be predominant. Between the presence in germ and the predominant presence there are all stages and degrees. The meaning of mysticism, writes Louis Bouyer, is

nothing other than the most profound apprehension to which we can be led by grace here below—apprehension of the truths of the Gospel, the realities of the sacramental life which the Christian accepts by faith and makes his own by charity. It might be said, in consequence, that the first act of charity springing from faith in the divine Word, faith nourished by the sacraments, contains the whole of mysticism in embryo. This seed will develop more or less in each of us according to the development of our faith and our charity. It is quite certain that mysticism unfolds only in a consciousness augmented by grace at its most gratuitous, most transcendent to our own efforts. But (as Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, first among modern writers, should be credited with emphasizing and establishing on solid theological foundations in his chief work, Christian Perfection and Contemplation) mysticism, far from being a singular, questionable way, extraordinary in the least favorable sense of the term, must be considered the normal development of Christian perfection. Mysticism follows, that is, the vital logic of a life of faith fully consistent with itself.²⁵

25 Louis Bouyer, Introduction to Spirituality, p. 303.

The mystical life then, according to this school, is not restricted to any state in life. It is not reserved for privileged Christians. All can aspire to it, mothers, fathers, manual labourers, professors, priests and the religious. The Catholic Church, by her canonizations, guarantees this truth. With this in mind we will now consider the "three ways".

4. The Classical "Ways" to Christian Perfection.

In ordinary speech a "way" signifies a path whereby we go from one place to another; the ways of the spiritual life are not therefore permanent states in which the soul abides for life. They are different parts of the path whereby the soul travels on his pilgrimage to God. It is true that many souls who sincerely desire to give themselves to God never get beyond the purgative, or the illuminative way. Even in the unitive way there are many degrees and much possibility of progress. Neither are they divergent or parallel ways, but are all parts of one way and should be seen as stages on a road which runs further on. Neither must it be supposed that the road is laid down with such rigidity that aspiring souls have no margin to display their individuality. It begins by purification, and proceeds, by growth in the Christian virtues, to ecstatic union with God Himself.

i) The Purgative Way.

The primary aim of the purgative way is the production of real penitence for this will do more than anything else to detach the soul from sin and turn to God. This phase of the spiritual life is originally entered by way of penitence, or more precisely, by what the New Testament calls metanoia, which is a "change of spirit", a conversion. This experience of conversion can be either gradual or what may seem, in appearance only, to be instantaneous. Louis Bouyer writes on this subject:

A special question that arises here is that of the first personal developments of the spiritual life in a Christian who was baptized before the awakening of his conscience who has initially entered the faith before this first awakening. In such a case, can we speak of "conversion"? We most certainly can do so, even if childhood or adolescence do not involve grave faults later requiring a radical reform. For there is a decisive moment in every life in which the personality freely and consciously ratifies what was communicated to it before it enjoyed its proper autonomy, or breaks away from it. Yet here, even more than in adult conversions, the diversity of ways taken by grace defies all methodical description. Here above all, in many cases, the fixing of the precise moment in which the decision was taken escapes even the person concerned. Adolescence, obviously, is for the majority the period in which such decisions are taken. But in this respect there are personalities whose spiritual precociousness is astonishing, and others whose indecisiveness is prolonged beyond belief.²⁶

26 Ibid., p. 256.

God's purpose with men after this experience is to purify their souls. Their progress may be measured by the degree in which the longing for purity is inspired by the fear of hell and hope of heaven, or how much it is motivated by the pure love of God. The intermediate steps involve an apprenticeship to serious prayer, penance to atone for the past, mortification to safeguard the future, and a constant warfare against temptation and sin.

Spiritual directors seek to impart something of the science of prayer, instructing beginners in the methods of St. Ignatius and St. Sulpice. Moreover, they impose penances as a means whereby a sinner may be led the more heartily to detest sin, and more readily avoid it in the future. Mortification is intended to carry this process still further. It aims at subduing evil inclinations and make them subject to the will of God. It is not an end in itself but a means to an end. The old life is mortified that it may the more receive the life of heaven. The soul dies to itself that it may say with St. Paul: "For me to live is Christ."

Consequently, it is unceasing warfare against temptation and sin. The capital sins are labelled, unmasked, and set in order. The adversaries on the road are pride, envy, anger, gluttony, lust, sloth and avarice. The character of the sin is delineated, its subtlety

exposed, and the remedy offered.

Nor is the beginner left unaware of how these sins steal disguised upon the soul. Why God allows temptation is explained, its psychology is examined, and some indication is given of how it undermines resistance. The whole process aims at the purification of the soul.

It is not claimed that even the most fervent soul travelling the purgative way under the wisest spiritual director comes, at this stage, to perfect purity. The work of purification goes on in the illuminative way also, as the positive virtues are built into the soul; and it will not be thoroughly effected until the passive purifications of the unitive way have also been endured.

The next stage of the soul's upward ascent is along the illuminative way where new tests must be passed.

ii) The Illuminative Way.

It will be clear that any soul upon the illuminative way is advanced in the spiritual life. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the sins which did so easily beset the pilgrim are largely cast aside. The great aim on this part of the journey is the positive achievement and exercise of the Christian virtues and the imitation of Christ.

Other differences are apparent too. On the first stage of the journey the main struggle was against sin and

its causes. If the element of struggle is still present, the soul's aim now is to adorn itself with the virtues of Christ. On the first part of the pilgrim way thought centred in God the Father. On the second stage, the thought centres most in the Divine Son. Put at its simplest, the aim of the illuminative way is, so to identify with the Lord, so that He becomes the soul and centre of living.

He is the centre of man's thoughts. He revels in the Gospel records. Imagination comes to the aid of faith. He is the leper who is cleansed; the demoniac out of whom he casts the devils; the paralytic he heals and says sin no more. Christ becomes the background of the mind when the cares of the world are most absorbing, and when those cares no longer call for concentration, the mind turns to the full enjoyment of thinking of Him as lovers think of their beloved.

It follows that He becomes the soul and centre of the affections too. As knowledge increases, love deepens, and as love deepens, the eagerness for still more knowledge increases also. Christ is adored. His pure love on the shameful cross is personal. How can the soul help but love Him in return?

Love leads to imitation, conscious and unconscious. The soul aims to be like Him, and when not aiming, love

sets the soul's disposition that way. Consequently He becomes the centre and soul of all actions. So through thoughts, affections and deeds, the Holy Spirit works on and carries the pilgrim of holiness along the illuminative way.

There are seven characteristics of this way:

The first characteristic is the beginning of a new and deeper love of God.

The second is the deepening of the supernaturally infused virtue of faith.

The third is the deepening of the supernaturally infused virtue of hope.

The fourth is the imitation of Christ. The soul is becoming more and more in love with Christ and desires to please Him. It therefore seeks to model itself upon Him and its life upon Him.

The fifth is a deeper love of prayer. With the deepening practice of prayer goes an increased love of it, and there springs up in the soul a desire for silence and solitude.

The sixth characteristic is the beginning of real sacrifice of self. Progress in this way of sacrifice depends upon mortification, which must become deeper, more complete and more fully willed. If the soul is to give itself more wholly to God there must be a desire for

discipline and mortification.

The final characteristic is a deeper penitence. When Christ is known as friend, the struggle against sin changes its character. Evil is no longer resisted merely because it is evil, but hated because it hurts Him; and penitence becomes not merely sorrow for particular sins, but much more sorrow for one's whole part in the sacred Passion.

As a rule souls remain in the illuminative way for some considerable time, and many never get beyond it. Inevitably, the cardinal virtues are built up in them (prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance) and also the virtues classified as theological (faith, hope and charity). New temptations attack them and the seven capital vices assault them in more subtle forms, but while they are set firmly on their course, the Holy Spirit dwells within them, and they do not miss their way. The path is ever upwards, and the crest is now in view.

iii) The Unitive Way.

If the purgative way was characterized by the extinction of the vices, and the illuminative way by the development of the virtues, chiefly charity, then the unitive way can be defined by the predominance of the gifts of the Spirit. The same scholastic writers who

worked out the theory of the infused virtues, distinguished the gifts of the Spirit (traditionally listed in accordance with the beginning of the 11th chapter of Isaiah) as being wholly new and supernatural instincts of the soul. When the activity of these gifts predominates, they cause the soul to act with a holy spontaneity which is that of the Spirit within it. They are the gifts of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, piety, fortitude, and fear of the Lord.

This is what Pseudo-Dionysius described as union with God. This is the perfect way, that in which contemplation normally unfolds. The presence of the Holy Spirit within becomes as it were the object of direct experience. God becomes the sole master of the soul. The experience is so marvellous that it is difficult to describe. This is, indeed, the state described by St. Paul: "I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ lives in me." To live altogether to God is utterly impossible to unaided human nature. No man known himself who thinks he can do it. This is an office of the Holy Spirit. He unites the soul with the Lord. By His action in the soul, Christ "lives in us."

Apart from his mighty works in Jesus, God does nothing so wonderful as this. Here, surely, is the culmination of His mercy's whole design; that the Holy Jesus

may be formed in the nature of sinful men and women, and His conquering life overcome their inward death. Christ in you is the Life of God in the soul of man.

According to Catholic spirituality there is a great simplifying of all things for the seeker after holiness when he reaches the unitive way. The love of God becomes the only virtue of the soul. Even the pattern of prayer and meditation is simplified, in the sense that life is one perpetual prayer. Men of great discernment pick out these rare souls by three marks. They have a great purity of heart, a great mastery of self, and their minds are all taken up by God.

Contemplative prayer is the characteristic of the unitive way and the unitive life. The saints who have arrived at the summit of perfection have reached the unitive life. There are other souls who are still proceeding upon the unitive way. The dividing line, according to some writers, comes between the lower and higher degrees of contemplation. As previously noted, these writers held that the lower degrees of contemplation are open to everyone, but the higher degree, that of infused contemplation, is the consideration of mystical theology.

The same experts distinguish the active unitive way from the passive unitive way. Those on the active unitive way have not received as yet "the gift of infused

contemplation", but they are fervent souls, living in habitual union with God, and heroically practising Christian virtues, and in cultivation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They practise the "prayer of simplicity", put aside reasoning and gaze on God; and keep themselves docile to all the operations of the Holy Spirit; and the simplicity of their praying extends to their whole life.

Those on the passive unitive way have, in addition, the gift of infused contemplation, which is not easily distinguished from the prayer of simplicity, but does include the reception of a special grace which takes possession of these most advanced souls and brings them to the heights of holiness. Different phases of contemplation have been distinguished. Dark trials beset the souls who reach so high, but four steps can be distinguished as they come to the top. There is a phase of quietude (sometimes arid and sometimes sweet), then full union, then ecstatic union, (sometimes sweet and sometimes crucifying). Finally there is the state of transforming union or spiritual marriage... and beyond that, on this earth, no man can go.

The three characteristic marks of the unitive life are:

Charity as the motive power of life. This virtue becomes unique.

The second characteristic of the soul is habitual recollection. The soul desires to possess God and never depart from His presence. Recollection in the earlier ways was occasional, now it becomes very largely unconscious, the result of being constantly set towards God.

The third characteristic is the radical change in prayer, for the soul now enters on contemplation.

This is the way, says Catholic spirituality, to the heights of holiness. The road is made, well marked, and signposted. The soul must tread where the saints have trod. The purpose of God for man is to make him holy, and this is the path to the peak.

CHAPTER V

REFORMATION AND POST REFORMATION
THOUGHT ON HOLINESS

Beside the ordered development of Catholic spirituality, Protestant teaching on holiness seems at a hasty glance to be quite inchoate, and little more than a group of uncertain insights. Furthermore Protestant theologians seem to display hardly any interest in the acquisition of holiness in this life. In fact teaching on this subject has been so neglected, that one of its best exponents is compelled to speak of it as "a bypath in Christian theological systems".¹ This description is not true, of course, of Christian devotion throughout the centuries, nor does it adequately describe the theology of the past if the ideal of the vision of God is included.

Protestants begin the pursuit of holiness with a different understanding of the doctrine of grace and also of justification and sanctification.

1. Protestant Understanding of Grace.

The major disagreement between Catholic and Protestant meanings of grace, briefly stated, is that in

¹ An opinion of Dr. F. Platt quoted by H.W. Perkins The Doctrine of Christian Perfection, London, Epworth Press, 1927.

Protestant theology "grace" means the undeserved favour of God. In Catholic theology, as already seen, "grace" also means a divine power, and it speaks of an "infusion of grace".

Luther, breaking once for all with the idea of grace as a communicated quality of the soul, or divinely induced "habit", identified it rather with the personal mercy of God which is encountered in Christ, or in those whom Christ has changed, and which comes home to man primarily and essentially as forgiveness. To have faith is to have grace. In the gospel God Himself deals with us and gives Himself in Christ to be our own.

This means that the idea of grace is formed from the felt redeeming influence of Christ, the embodied love of God. So far from being a mere supernatural force emitted by Deity and acting upon the soul in various ways — a more or less physical energy, stored within the Church, and applied to the soul-essence in its unconscious depths, it is the Father's saving will, reaching the soul through means which appeal to a rational and spiritual nature. To the reformers, grace, which is God's love flowing down to the unworthy, excludes all merit and displaces the order of precisely adjusted rewards by an order in which forgiving mercy reigns.

From Luther to Calvin and on to Barth, Reformed Theology has maintained the unity of grace. The Divine reality itself comes concretely to man as Total Grace, tota gratia, which is Totus Christus, always one, undivided and indivisible; justifying man once and for all, i.e. judging and acquitting, condemning and vindicating, exposing him as guilty and making him righteous in Christ.

Karl Barth writes:

The heart and guiding principle of the Romanist doctrine of grace is the negation of the unity of grace as always God's grace to man, as His sovereign act which is everywhere new and strange and free. It is the negation of the unity of grace as His grace in Jesus Christ. It is the division of grace by which it is first of all His, but then — and this is where the emphasis falls — effected and empowered grace, it is also our grace. Against this view we must at once and quite definitely set our face.²

This dichotomy of grace is uncompromisingly rejected by Barth: "How dare we split up the grace of Christ and the grace of God in this way?"³

2 Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, Trans. G.W. Bromiley, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, Vol. IV, Part One, p. 84. The division of grace and so the negation of its unity referred to by Barth is the current Catholic distinctions between gratia increata and gratia creata; externa and interna; gratia gratiam faciens and gratia gratis data; gratia actualis and habitualis; medicinalis and elevans; praeveniens and concomitans; operans and cooperans; sufficiens and efficax; gratia Dei and gratia Christi; gratia supernaturalis and gratia naturalis.

3 Ibid., p. 87.

For Barth, there is one vital criterion by which it can be determined whether the understanding of grace is right, i.e. it is biblical; or wrong, i.e. it is unbiblical. It must be acknowledged as a state of need "a state in which — with all that this involves — [man] is and remains always a recipient, a state in which he not only does not cease but can never do more than begin (and he will always be a beginner) to beg and to reach out for it [grace] in his poverty, in order that in that poverty he may be rich."⁴ Barth does not believe that the Catholic doctrine of grace could survive this test.⁵

2. Justification and Sanctification.

It follows that there is a major disagreement between what the Catholics and Protestants mean by justification and sanctification. According to Bouyer, the Roman view of justification is an act of God whereby grace is infused into man, properly disposed and co-operative — which brings about in him a new state — a new habitus.⁶ The Council of Trent bears this out:

4 Ibid., p. 88.

5 Ibid., see p. 88 for his reasons.

6 Louis Bouyer, The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism, Trans. A.V. Littledale, New York, Collins Fontana, 1954, p. 181.

If anyone says that men are justified either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and the charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and remains [is inherent] in them, or also that the grace by which we are justified is only the favour [goodwill] of God, let him be anathema.⁷

Justification then is seen as the culmination of a process in which man himself co-operates with God, which began before, and continues after, his justification. There is a growth in justification. The Council of Trent says this of the justified:

Having, therefore, been thus justified... they, through the observance of the commandments of God and of the Church, faith co-operating with good works, increase in that justice which they have received through the grace of Christ, and are still further justified.⁸

Growth in justification is possible but the commission of mortal sin may entail its loss. Thus the Catholic usage of justification includes what Protestants and the New Testament call sanctification.

Now Protestants say that although justification and sanctification can never be separated, they must yet be distinguished from each other. Justification in

7 Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, Original Text with English Translation by H.J. Schroeder, O.P., London, Herder, 1941, Session 6, Canon 11, p. 43. Brackets mine.

8 Ibid., Session 6, Chapter 10, p. 36.

Protestant thought means the act of God by which the man who is saved is "declared righteous". The Greek word translated "to justify" means "to account" or "pronounce righteous", or "to treat justly". It does not mean to "make righteous".⁹ Contemporary Roman Catholic theologians now agree.¹⁰ Luther taught that justification takes place through faith, and through faith alone, not through works or merits in any sense. In virtue of his faith God views and deals with man as righteous; and this, not his being made righteous by moral renovation, not the process by which he is gradually turned into a righteous man and thoroughly and substantially changed, was always the basic thing for Luther in justification. None the less justification in the Lutheran sense, is effective as well as declaratory. Proof of this is supplied by the fact that Luther frequently uses the phrases "being justified" and being "regenerated" as equivalent; and he undoubtedly means by "being regenerated" that fundamental change whereby the natural man, who is incapable of good, is put in a condition in which he can do good spontaneously. In Luther's

9 W. Sandy and A.C. Headlam, The Epistle of the Romans, Edinburgh, T.T. Clark, 1895, p. 150. Augustine's theory that faith is a gift of grace infused into man, and therefore man "is made just by an infusion of grace" Rom. 3. 24 is discussed.

10 Hans Kung, Christianity Divided, London, Sheed & Ward, 1962, p. 309.

conception of justification and also Calvin's¹¹ is God's act of declaring man righteous on the sole ground of Christ's righteousness which is extrinsic to him, yet that grace not only saves him but changes him.

It is notorious that in later Protestant theology, justification was more and more interpreted as consisting in a nakedly juristic imputation of Christ's merits. Forgiveness became an external acquittal at the bar of heaven and thereby lost living touch with experience; if it was merely God's judicial decision outside a man, it could not change him inwardly.

Barth in Dogmatics certainly speaks of the reality of the Christian's new being.

There is no room for any fears that in the justification of man we are dealing only with a verbal action, with a kind of bracketed "as if", as though what is pronounced were not the whole truth about man. Certainly we have to do with a declaring righteous, but it is a declaration about man which is fulfilled and therefore effective in this event, which corresponds to actuality because it creates and there reveals actuality. It is a declaring righteous which without any reserve can be called a making righteous.¹²

¹¹ John Calvin, Institutes of Religion, Edited John T. McNeill, Trans. Ford Lewis Battles, London, S.C.M., 1961, Vol. 1, p. 768-801.

¹² Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, Trans. G.W. Bromiley, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1953, Vol. 4, p. 95.

There is certainly no "fictitious" justification in Reformation theology; the sinner is declared righteous and in being declared righteous he is made so. This righteousness is not man's — he has none prior to God's declaration — but Christ's, and because it is His, it is extrinsic to man. But when God declares man to be righteous, it becomes his, yet it is his only as the righteousness of Christ.¹³

Protestantism recognizes that it is impossible to separate justification and sanctification, they are two aspects of the one divine action. It is however, necessary to distinguish them in thought. It is equally impossible to separate faith and love, but they must be distinguished in thought. Faith is the reception of Christ, who justifies; love is the surrender of the believer to Christ, who sanctifies. Man loves the moment he is justified or appropriates justification, but he is not justified because he already loves God, or is already longing for Him.

The Catholic Church of the Middle Ages did not very clearly distinguish between justification and sanctification, and therefore did not sufficiently stress the

13 Louis Bouyer, The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism, Trans. A. V. Littledale, New York, Collins Fontana, 1954, p. 175-176. Bouyer maintains that in the Protestant view grace is regarded as saving man without changing him.

priority of the former to the latter. What the sinner receives freely is not justification but the "grace of justification". When the sinner has received this grace, co-operating and assenting, he is taken into a process set in motion. He does not hear the verdict of acquittal. This process is sanctification, of which justification is a part. At the end of the process sanctified man is justified. It is then that God pronounces his verdict of acquittal — it is a verdict not on the sinner who comes "just as he is", but on the sanctified, who having freely received the grace of justification, assented and co-operated with it.

From the point of view of the reformation and Barth is its true heir, the foundation and source of Christian assurance is what Christ, the grace of God has done for man. Justification is central. In the Catholic view what the grace of God is doing in man is central. Sanctification incorporating justification is for this reason the centre, and it is a sanctification to which man must assent and with which he must co-operate before he is saved.¹⁴

¹⁴ In the dialogue that is at present taking place between Catholic and Protestant theologians efforts are being made to reconcile the views of Trent and the Reformers. In particular Barth. Hans Kung, Justification: The Teaching of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection, London, Thomas Nelson, 1964. Louis Bouyer, The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism.

This stress on the priority of justification to sanctification is the great contribution of the Protestant Reformation. But it had its weaknesses. The followers of Luther sometimes developed this true teaching in a too one-sided way. In their zeal for the recognition of justification, they laid too little stress on the necessity for sanctification. For Luther, writes one historian, "to be saved by grace means not [...] to be transformed by divine activity, but simply to be forgiven and restored to the divine favour."¹⁵ Divine forgiveness had, of course, always been regarded as an element in salvation. Luther, for the first time, made it the whole of salvation.¹⁶ Now clearly forgiveness is more than merely one element in salvation, it is the prime element which conditions all that follows; yet there is something that must follow if salvation is to be complete. There is the danger of resting so complacently in the assurance of forgiveness that man ceases to be sufficiently troubled about his lack of progress in holiness. In other words, a justification that does not issue in sanctification is no true justification at all. This is plainly implied in our Lord's

15 A. C. McGiffert, Protestant Thought Before Kant, London, Scribners, 1909, p. 27.

16 Ibid., p. 25f.

teaching. "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt. 7. 16-18). It will be noticed that our Lord does not say that men are judged or justified by their fruits, but only that they are known by them. This is quite enough to disturb any over-complacent assurance of salvation. If a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, then a man must ask himself whether continued failure to become more holy does not indicate that his spiritual life is not yet set upon the sure foundation of reconciliation with God. One New Testament book goes further, the book which Luther naturally liked least, calling it in the Introduction to German translation of the New Testament "a right strawy epistle"¹⁷ namely the Epistle of James. He also did not hold it to be "of apostolic authorship". He writes: "He [James] does violence to Scripture, and so contradicts Paul and all Scripture."¹⁸

17 First Edition, Wittenberg, September 1552.

18 Reformation Writings of Martin Luther, Trans. Bertram Lee Woolf, London, Lutherworld Press, 1956, Preface to the Epistles of St. James and Jude, p. 306-308.

Here it does seem to be taught that some acquisition of holiness is not merely a necessary consequence of justification but even an essential part of it. "Yes, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without works, and I will show thee my faith by my works ... But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?... Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only... For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." (James 2. 18-26)

It is probable that, just as the divergency of thought on this point between St. Paul and St. James cannot entirely be smoothed out, so all one-sided extremes should be avoided; a never completely resolved "tension" between the two opposite truths have here to be kept in mind. It remains only to note that the main development of Reformation thought estimates very lightly the possibility of the acquisition of holiness during this present life. For the most part, it has been left to the German Pietists, the Quakers, the Methodists, and the Anglican writers of the Oxford Movement to preserve for the Protestant Church the ideal of sanctification.

It is a tragedy, the result of which is still felt, that Luther did not develop a doctrine of sanctification. In part, no doubt, this lack, for which there is no

adequate compensation in isolated sentences which speak of Christian Perfection, is the price exacted by his vital emphasis upon the doctrine that justification is by faith alone, and not by merit springing from the infusion of grace; in part, also, it is due to his instinctive reaction against wild forms of antinomianism; but perhaps most of all it is occasioned by his view of love as spontaneous and unmotivated, with the result that he can speak of God's love for man with exultation, but only with increasing difficulty of man's love for God and his neighbour. The well known dictum of Harnack reads: "Through having the resolute wish to go back to Religion and to it alone, it [the Lutheran Church] neglected far too much the moral problem, the 'Be ye holy, for I am holy'."¹⁹ Whatever may be the reason, the whole Protestant Church has suffered from the want of a doctrine of sanctification in the Lutheran and Reformed Communions. John Wesley wrote in his Works:

Who has wrote more ably on Justification by Faith alone, than Martin Luther, and who was more ignorant of the doctrine of Sanctification or more confused in his conception of it? On the other hand, how many writers of the Roman Church (as Francis de Sales and Juan de Castaniza in particular) have wrote strongly and scripturally on Sanctification,

19 Adolph Harnack, History of Dogma, London, Williams and Norgate, 1896-1899, Vol. 7, p. 267.

who, nevertheless, were entirely unacquainted with the doctrine of justification.²⁰

In general other communions too, in spite of their credal confessions, have often lapsed into silence and today have left the preaching of the ideal to Fundamentalists. In all cases the consequences of neglect are the same: want of height in spiritual attainment, weakness in the pursuit of social righteousness, and failure in the formulation of doctrine. Only as the Church seeks sanctity is she blessed with saints, leaders, and theologians.²¹

3. Protestant Schools of Thought.

In view of this, unlike the classic Catholic approach to holiness, the Protestant "schools" of thought have a certain sharpness of difference from one another. There are three main groupings. The divisions are not so sharp as to be exclusive. Rather they must be seen as indicating a central emphasis. The varied emphases can be

20 John Wesley's Works, Vol. 7, p. 195.

21 There are a number of exceptions:

P. T. Forsyth, Christian Perfection, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1899.

A. E. Garvie, The Christian Ideal for Human Society, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1930.

F.D.E. Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1928. Translation of 2nd edition 1910.

A. Ritschl, Justification and Reconciliation, Trans. from the German, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1900. See the last chapter.

grouped under three main headings: 1) Imputed, 2) Imparted, and 3) Improving.

i) Holiness by Imputation.

The main stream of Protestant theology does not estimate highly man's ability to achieve holiness in this life. Man is a sinner. He is always a sinner. There is sin not only in his vices but in his virtues. Sin pollutes the very fount of his being. This is what the Psalmist meant when he said: "In sin did my mother conceive me"; desire and motive, thought and action, are all infected with sin.

The idea that man can really be holy is, according to these writers, an illusion. Indeed, some theologians of this school put such emphasis on the total depravity of man that they regard it as an understatement to affirm that the image of God in the soul of man is defaced. They say, "the image of God in the soul of man is destroyed."

How then can man be holy? He cannot — at least in this life. But God, in his infinite mercy, flings around sinners the robe of Christ's righteousness, imputing to them a righteousness they do not and cannot possess for themselves and sees them now only in the spotless garments of His Son.

Not all who put their emphasis on imputation put it the same way. In this Protestant approach to holiness there are refinements of difference in the smaller groups within the larger group, but the differences are rather of emphasis than principle. Righteousness in this life — if superlative holiness is in mind — can neither be achieved or received. Man's righteousness is in him and in him alone.

While it is not denied that some theologians claim that this idea of imputed righteousness is in the Bible, it is when the emphasis is placed disproportionately upon it that the other aspects of the balanced truth seem obscure. Count Zinzendorf, Bishop of the Moravian Church, expounded this view of imputed righteousness to John Wesley, and no student of Wesley can forget the shock the founder of Methodism received when Zinzendorf wrote to him: "We spit out all self-denial; we tread it underfoot. As believers we do everything we wish and nothing beyond. We laugh at all mortification. No purification precedes perfect love."²² To Wesley this kind of imputed righteousness seemed like holiness "on the cheap". Discipline in the holy life was scorned.

²² John Wesley, *Journal*, London, Epworth, 1911, Vol. 2, p. 487ff. Letter written to Wesley 8th August 1741.

Nor does this unbalance in some Protestant theology belong only to the eighteenth century. In this century P. T. Forsyth has defended a similar view, but without Zinzendorf's extravagances. "God, though He wills that we be perfect, has not appointed sinlessness as His object with us in this world ... All life is the holding down of a dark elemental nature at our base, which is most useful, like steam, under due pressure!" Communion with God, he says, is "possible along with cleaving sin".²³ The exponents of this teaching do not deny either the possibility or the necessity of growing in grace, but their emphasis is on man's sin, and any strict use of the word "sanctification" as applied to sinners is, so they believe, the gracious imputation of Christ's holiness to those who can never be holy in themselves.

The terrible dangers of this doctrine are seen in the eighteenth century antinomianism when some of the early Methodist societies were nearly wrecked by teachers who urged people to live the life of faith by neglecting all the means of grace, public worship, the sacraments, prayer, study of the Bible, etc., and utterly confusing the minds of the uninstructed.²⁴

23 P. T. Forsyth, Christian Perfection, p. 12ff.

24 John Wesley, Journal, Vol. 2, p. 328-331.

ii) Holiness Imparted.

The use of the word "imparted" here does not imply that members of other schools of sanctity deny that all holiness is imparted by the Holy Spirit. It is employed here to designate, not just those who believe that holiness is imparted, but who believe that it can be given suddenly, in one "crisis" experience, and almost by "a stroke of omnipotence".

All these groups derive, directly or indirectly, from John Wesley. Dr. Benjamin Warfield says: "It was John Wesley who infected the modern Protestant world with this notion of 'entire instantaneous sanctification'."²⁵ Some exponents of this teaching deny their debt to him, others have grossly misunderstood what he taught, and many others look upon his teaching as bizarre and grotesque. Wesley taught sanctification by a sudden impartation of divine grace.

Wesley believed and taught that perfection was "wrought in the soul" in an instant, and by an act of God in response to an act of faith. There were, as he conceived it, two distinct stages in the Christian experience

25 B. B. Warfield, Perfectionism, New York, Oxford University Press, 1931, Vol. 2, p. 562.

of salvation: the first consisting of justification and sanctification, and the second of sanctification carried to the point of entirety. At the first stage of sanctification the disciple loves God and tries to please Him, and will not willingly sin against Him in anything "though sinful tempers" remain and require a constant vigilance and fight within the soul.²⁶

At the second stage of sanctification, God entirely cleanses the heart from sin, and the Christian enters into an experience that must be an ante-chamber of heaven. He loves God with all his heart and mind and soul and strength. He loves his neighbour as himself. He does the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven. He rejoices evermore, prays without ceasing, and in everything gives thanks. His soul continually streams to God in joy and prayer and praise.

While stressing the instantaneous act, he conceded that there was a growth before and afterwards, and borrowed an analogy from birth and death to clarify his points. There is a growth in the womb before birth and a longer growth after. But birth can be both timed and dated. A man may be dying for months but when he breathes his last he breathes it in an instant of time.

26 John Wesley, Plain Account of Christian Perfection, 8th ed., Dublin, Robert Napper, 1797, p. 90-99.

A man entirely sanctified (the doctrine was sometimes called entire sanctification) was still subject to ignorance, infirmity and mistake, but not now to guilt. All his thoughts, words and deeds are inspired by the pure love of God and of neighbour, and heaven itself can only differ in degree. Wesley never claimed to have had this experience himself but claimed he had known hundreds who had. Nothing he taught involved him in more controversy. Methodism's interest in this doctrine explains why she is not in the main stream of Protestant theology in regard to sanctification, and explains also the penetrating understanding and affection which many followers of John Wesley have had for the saints of the Roman Church.

John Wesley's Plain Account of Christian Perfection was published in 1777, but it sums up what he taught between 1725 and 1777. He states as his aim "What I purpose in the following papers is to give a plain and distinct account of the steps by which I was led, during a course of many years, to embrace the doctrine of Christian perfection."²⁷

The first book which stirred his interest and desire was a small but famous book by Jeremy Taylor (1613-

²⁷ John Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, 1952 edition, p. 5.

1667), titled Holy Living and Holy Dying, which will be examined later. It made such a deep impression on him that he instantly resolved "to dedicate all my life to God". The following year when he was twenty-four, he came across the more celebrated book by Thomas à Kempis entitled The Imitation of Christ. This led him to realize that God wanted his heart as well as his life.²⁸ With his thoughts already reaching out after holiness, a year or two later he was much moved by two books by William Law: Christian Perfection and A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life. These books will also be examined further on in this thesis. Wesley says these books convinced him more than ever of "the absolute impossibility of being half a Christian".²⁹ Having been so deeply stirred and influenced by these spiritual classics Wesley now began to study the subject of "perfection" or "sanctification" in the Bible.

In the beginning of the year 1738 the cry of his heart was:

O grant that nothing in my soul
May dwell, but thy pure love alone!
O may thy love possess me whole,
My joy, my treasure, and my crown!
Strange fires far from my heart remove
My every act, word, thought, be love!³⁰

28 Ibid., p. 5.

29 Ibid., p. 6.

30 Ibid., p. 9.

This was the year of his "heart warming experience" on May 24th, which he does not even mention in "Christian Perfection".

In the first tract he wrote on this subject he speaks of this perfection as Perfect Love. He sums up the heart of this tract by saying "These are the very words wherein I largely declared, for the first time, my sentiment of Christian perfection", and adds that, since then, for thirty eight years, he has never taught anything else.³¹

In all his teaching on holiness it is evident that Wesley was concerned for truth, and for that alone, and in his personal search for holiness he had found a great deal of help from Catholic and Anglican writers. It must not be forgotten that Wesley was an ordained Anglican priest. Thus his thought on this subject contains both Catholic and Protestant elements. The result was that Wesley brought back to Protestantism something which it had lost: an urgent concern for holiness.

Wesley firmly believed that his teaching was in the Bible, but as W. E. Sangster has shown he rests the weight

31 Ibid., p. 15.

of his teaching on about thirty texts.³² In his thought, however, "he seems not to have allowed enough for the difference between a changed relation with God and a completely changed life".³³ In his writings he seems to hover between ideas of Perfection as Given in an Instant, and Perfection as Growth. He is not always very clear or consistent in the way he speaks about this, but in one place he says plainly: "You don't grow into it; you are born into it, and you grow in it".³⁴ This is a statement which most could understand and be accepted by many.

Again, Wesley speaks of this "sanctified" life sometimes as though it were a permanent state, and sometimes as a life received moment by moment, in utter dependence on God. This is not so contradictory as it sounds. The same could be said about the practice of prayer: in a way it is a state which lasts all the time, whether man is aware of it or not, as long as his heart is set on doing the will of God in everything; on the other hand, prayer is also an activity, and moment by moment fresh life is

32 W. E. Sangster, The Path to Perfection, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1943, p. 37-52.

33 Ibid., p. 103.

34 John Wesley, Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 53, 80-81. Underlining mine.

received from God as man turns to him in set times of prayer, whether they are short or long.

Wesley, himself, was not happy about the title Christian Perfection. He wanted to drop it. A better phrase, he thought, which he used now and again, would be "perfect love".

Dr. R. Newton Flew, sums up the main points in Wesley's teaching on perfection thus:

- i. The necessity of aiming at perfection. He saw that every part of his life must be dedicated to God.
- ii. This perfection is love (in the deepest and widest sense).
- iii. Love includes the keeping of all the commandments of God.
- iv. Perfection is freedom from sin. (By sin Wesley evidently means a falling short of the divine ideal for humanity or a voluntary transgression of a known law of God.)
- v. Distinction between voluntary and involuntary transgressions. (Dr. Flew says that apparently Wesley deliberately avoided this distinction but that by 1759 the distinction between sin as the voluntary transgression of a known law and sin as the involuntary transgression of a divine law, known or unknown, is clearly stated as part of the doctrine which the Methodists believed.)

vi. The reception of the experience (sanctification) is instantaneous. (But work leads to and follows the instant.)

vii. The assurance of the Great Salvation. (Wesley nowhere claims the experience he so often described.)³⁵

Its main weakness, according to Dr. Flew, seems to be a defective view of sin. For instance, it is curious that he scarcely mentions the sins of omission, which are such a terrible part of the burden of sin of which man has to repent. When Wesley speaks of sin in connection with holiness, he speaks of it as if it were an evil growth which could be cut out as a whole, there is no sense of the pervading character of sin, which is more like a poisonous weed so deeply entangled with the roots of our being that it seems impossible to do more than cut it back, nothing but a long exposure to the divine Light will allow the healing grace of God to get through to the roots. The greatest saints have known and admitted that they were sinners to the end.

At the same time, it is possible that Wesley did not always express himself clearly on this point. In any case, those of his followers who exaggerated his teaching

35 Robert Newton Flew, History of the Idea of Christian Perfection, London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1934, p. 324-328.

and claimed that he taught the possibility of "sinless perfection" are certainly mistaken. Wesley, himself, says plainly: "A Christian is so far perfect, as not to commit sin".³⁶ But in his Letters he writes: "Absolute and infallible perfection? I never contended for it. Sinless perfection? Neither do I contend for this, seeing the term is not scriptural."³⁷

Wesley's positive ideal of the meaning of holiness is summed up in words which speak to the heart: "This it is to be the perfect man [...] to have a heart so all-flaming with the love of God [...] as continually to offer up every thought, word, and work as a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God through Christ." "This", he says, "is the doctrine which we preached from the beginning and which we preach at this day."³⁸

This reminds us of his brother's hymn:

O Thou who camest from above,
The Pure celestial fire to impart,
Kindle a flame of sacred love,
On the mean altar of my heart.

³⁶ John Wesley, Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 19.

³⁷ Id., Letters, Vol. 4, p. 213. To Mrs. Maitland, May 26, 1763.

³⁸ Id., Plain Account of Christian Perfection, p. 30.

Perfection then for Wesley was "perfect love". He sums it up: "Love is the highest gift of God, humble, gentle, patient love; [...] the heaven of heavens is love. Settle it then in your heart that from the moment God has saved you from all sin, you are to aim at nothing more but more of that love described in the thirteenth chapter of the Corinthians".³⁹ It is a given love, not a natural love.

Dr. G. C. Cell has stated that this doctrine is no "provincialism of the Wesleyan Reformation" but "an original and unique synthesis of the Protestant ethic of grace with the Catholic ethic of holiness".⁴⁰ The weakness of the synthesis is here when Wesley insisted that the grace of God which justifies by faith would entirely sanctify us by faith also, he seems not to have allowed enough for the difference between a changed relation with God and a completely changed life.⁴¹

Many variations have appeared through two centuries in this teaching on holiness given by John Wesley. Some groups have put the stress on the work of the Holy Spirit

39 Ibid., p. 90.

40 G. C. Cell, The Rediscovery of John Wesley, New York, Holt, 1935, p. 347.

41 W. E. Sangster, The Path to Perfection, p. 103.

and their thought has centred in Pentecost. Controversies have been provoked as to whether sin in the soul of those who enjoy this heavenly experience is suppressed or eradicated. Separate "holiness" sects have come into being by their insistence on the utter necessity of this second work of grace, most of whom are in the Fundamentalist school.

In this rough classification these schools of thought can be grouped together under the word "imparted" understood in this particular way.

iii) Holiness Through Improvement.

To those who put the stress on imputation and those who put the stress on sudden impartation, must be added those who see the long and steady work of grace in the surrendered soul as divine improvement. Recognizing the truth of imputation, they do not put the stress there, partly perhaps because legal metaphors do not appeal to them, and partly because they hold that God's task with man is not how He may "call" man holy, or "treat" him as holy, or "see" him as holy, but how can He make him holy.

Recognizing the truth in Wesley's teaching of sudden moments of vision and special occasions of divine receptivity, they recoil from any stress on "second" works of grace if only because life has brought them many moments

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of vision and receptivity, and they could not select just one experience which is to remain forever unique.

They would argue that God is constantly at work in the soul. There are times of spiritual crisis in the minds of all aspiring pilgrims, but the longer periods of ordinary living are important too. One has to keep open to the grace of God, and the grace will come in. The Holy Spirit will fashion the divine Son in the soul of the consenting disciple.

They see it as a steady advance in holiness. Swifter at one time than others, but the work steadily advances. Be open to God, use the means of grace, learn from the saints, and one will grow in holiness. The best word to describe this school in Protestantism is "improving". The work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification is progressive. This school would sum up the main Protestant stream of holiness today, with the result that a typical Protestant estimates lightly the attainment of great holiness in this life.

To these groupings should be added a tradition within the Anglican Church usually called Anglo-Catholic, which insists on historical continuity, that is, the total expression of Christian life as well as theology, liturgy and polity, must be retraceable through the medieval and patristic ages to the Bible. It draws its inspiration and

character from the diversity of Catholic Christendom. Its treatment of Christian perfection is therefore in line with that of the Catholic Church.⁴²

It would be easily possible to exaggerate the difference among these three groups. Each recognizes some truth the other is contending for. It is largely a matter of emphasis, and a balanced view of Protestant thought on holiness will make an effort to harmonize all three. All accept the admonition "Be ye holy for I am holy".

Superficially, there may not appear much similarity in the Protestant and Catholic approach to holiness. Many of the major theologians of Protestantism seem to display hardly any interest in the acquisition of holiness in this life, and while they expect the devout soul to grow in grace, the emphasis upon imputed righteousness has tended to distract attention from the impartation of it. Nor has the teaching of John Wesley, and those who followed him, made them look with favour on the subject. In fact, it has repelled them. The idea of being made holy in a moment seems to them grotesque, and while they cannot deny the

42 F. P. Harton, The Elements of the Spiritual Life London, S.P.C.K., 1932.

Martin Thornton, English Spirituality, London, S.P.C.K., 1963.

saintly lives of some who have maintained this teaching, they cannot either forget the record of those who have claimed perfection and being guilty of notorious conduct.

CHAPTER VI

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES ON HOLINESS

Francis de Sales was born of nobility in the castle of Sales, about fifty miles wouth west of Geneva in 1567. He studied at La Roche, Annecy, and rhetoric and the humanities for seven years at the Jesuit College of Clermont in Paris. After his studies in Paris he was sent for three years to Padua, accompanied by his tutor Déage. In 1591 he gained a brilliant doctorate in jurisprudence and in the following year returned to Annecy. His father had selected a noble heiress for his wife. A career of prominence awaited Francis in governmental appointments. But Francis had decided to enter the priesthood and was ordained on 18th December 1593.

The following years were spent in charge of the mission to the Calvinists of the Chablais and saw the preparation of Francis's first major work, usually called Les Controverses, an unfinished treatise defending the Catholic position from an ecclesiological point of view and drawn up in a series of leaflets for distribution to the Calvinists who were forbidden to attend his sermons. He returned to Annecy, Savoy, in 1602 and was made assistant to the bishop.

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On an important diplomatic mission to Paris he met with the leaders of the great spiritual renaissance. The young Bérulle introduced him to Mme Acarie who was then negotiating the foundation of the French Carmelites. He refused to act as her director. His fame was beginning to spread. A course of Lenten sermons, preached at short notice before the Queen at the Louvre, met with such success that the king at Fontainebleau summoned him too, and his sermons became the talk of Paris. Henry IV was short of well-born prelates, both learned and devout, and pressed him to stay in France and tried in vain to make him accept a pension.

This success in Paris and Francis's brief contact with the leading mystics of the reforming movement provided him with the final experience necessary to complete his formation and to bring him to maturity. On September 29th Francis learns of Granier's death on his way home from Paris, and is consecrated his successor as Bishop of Geneva. He held the office until his death on December 28th, 1622.

The chief source for Francis's spiritual doctrine is his letters of direction. There are many of these letters, to Rose Bourgeois, abbess of Puits-d'Orbe, and her sister Mme Brûlart, to Mme de Charmois, Angélique Arnauld, Mme de la Fléchère, to Mère de Blonay, and above

all to Mme de Chantal and the first members of the Visitation. There was in Francis a certain refinement and sensibility which made him peculiarly at ease in the direction of educated and often highly cultivated women.

Dom Benedict Mackey, writing of the saint's spiritual direction, points out that the great work of self-reform requires calm and patience rather than provocative ardour and violent combat. Hundreds of letters constantly insist on the necessity of avoiding agitations, tenseness, anxiety, of moderating all practices which disturb peace of soul.

The formal treatises grew in a very real sense out of the letters of direction. Like the letters, they are concrete and practical, a form of generalized spiritual direction rather than theoretical dissertations on the spiritual life. The Introduction to the Devout Life elaborates the advice already given to Mme de Charmoisy and was written with her in mind. Later additions deliberately universalize this advice, so that it shall be generally valid for persons living in the world — a reference to the reader's husband, is for instance, supplemented by the words "or wife". Letters written to Mme Jeanne de Chantal also compose a part of the book, but it is Mme Charmoisy who is the Philothea addressed in the classic.

As the author of the Introduction to the Devout Life his fame spread throughout the whole of Christendom. Six years before his death at Lyons, in December 1622, appeared his treatise On the Love of God, which in respect of its revelations of mystical raptures greatly exceeds the former treatise.

1. Introduction to the Devout Life.

St. Francis forms a school of spirituality by himself alone. He is the beginning, its development, its sum-total. In the ordinary way the founder of a school conceives some new idea, suggests its principles, then his disciples draw consequences from it and formulate the teaching with exactitude. This is what happened with St. Benedict, St. Francis of Assisi, and Bérulle. There are many disciples of St. Francis de Sales, but none of them added anything of importance to his thought. All they have done is to repeat, to imitate and reproduce.

The writings of St. Francis are very affective, and in this sense can be compared to St. Augustine, to St. Bernard, to St. Thomas Aquinas or to St. Theresa. He studied the writers who came before him, owing much to the Spanish School, to John of Avila, to Luis of Granada, and above all to St. Theresa. The Italian School deeply influenced him, especially the Spiritual Combat, which was

his bedside book for sixteen years. But he made their teaching so thoroughly his own, presenting it in a light so peculiar to himself, and adapting it so thoroughly to meet the wide needs of human nature, that it might be thought of as his own work. For it is not exactly the teaching which makes St. Francis original. What he said had been stated or perceived before, the teaching is classical, it can be traced to the Spiritual Combat and to the spirit, at least, of St. Theresa's Way of Perfection. What is new is: 1) the embodiment of these doctrines in a systematic guide for devout lay people; 2) the primacy given to mental prayer; 3) the emphasis on the interior virtues.

i) A Systematic Guide for Lay People.

Francis himself writes in the Preface:

This Introduction contains nothing which has not already been written; the bouquet that I offer you is made up of the same flowers, but I have arranged them differently. Nearly everyone who has written about the spiritual life has had in mind those who live apart from the world, or at least the devotion they advocate would lead to such retirement. My intention is to write for those who have to live in the world and who, according to their state, to all outward appearances have to lead an ordinary life: and who, often enough, will not think of undertaking a devout life, considering it impossible; no one, they believe, ought to aspire to the palm of

Christian piety while surrounded by the affairs of the world.¹

Yet he himself was persuaded that a "strong and resolute person may live in the world without being tainted by it [...] fly through the flames of temptation without burning the wings on which they soar to God."² This "strong and resolute person" was Mme de Charmois, whose husband was an ambassador of the Duke of Savoy and a relative of St. Francis, who visited Annecy to attend a lawsuit, and while there placed herself under his spiritual direction. While in court he continued to direct her through his letters.

All this was new to the age. In the sixteenth century most spiritual directors believed that perfection was impossible outside the cloister. If those in the world wished to aspire to it, they required them to live, as nearly as possible, the contemplative life. Spiritual writers therefore, scarcely ever wrote for any but those much withdrawn from temporal affairs, or else they taught a kind of devotion which led to such entire withdrawal. "It is not only erroneous, but a heresy, to hold that life in the army, the workshop, the court, or the home is

¹ Francis de Sales, Introduction to the Devout Life Trans. Michael Day, London, J.M. Dent, 1961, Preface, p. 1.

² Ibid., p. 1.

incompatible with devotion," writes St. Francis.³

He teaches them that devotion is, above all, inward, it

presupposes the love of God; is in fact that very love, though it has many aspects. In so far as this love adorns the soul and makes us pleasing to God it is called grace; in so far as it empowers us to do good, it is called charity; when it is so perfect that it moves us, not merely to do good, but to do good carefully, frequently and readily, then it is called devotion.⁴

This active charity is not limited to the mere observance of God's commandments, "but also moves us to do as much good as we can vigorously and zealously, going beyond what is commanded to what is merely counselled or inspired."⁵ No one who fails to keep God's commandments can be considered either good or devout.

Francis obviously draws this teaching from The Spiritual Combat who says that perfection consists in the love of God. "Outward works are but the means of acquiring sanctity; but it cannot be said that they constitute Christian perfection."⁶ But he completes this idea with Luis of Granada's conception of devotion. According to the

3 Ibid., p. 14.

4 Ibid., p. 10.

5 Ibid., p. 10.

6 Lorenzo Scupoli, Spiritual Combat, London, Methuen, 1950, Ch. 1.

Spanish Dominican, devotion is nothing else than "the readiness and ardour with which we tend to do good, to observe the commandments, and to serve God in all things."⁷

The true image of the devout life is Jacob's ladder "The two sides between which we climb represent prayer which obtains the love of God and the sacraments which confer it; the rungs represent the various degrees of charity by which we go from virtue to virtue, descending by the practice of charity to our neighbour or ascending by contemplation to loving union with God."⁸

If the man in the world is to walk the path of devotion he must seek out a spiritual director. In every age, spiritual direction has been recommended. It was always practised in monasteries. John of Avila and St. Theresa counselled it to those who wished to advance without hindrance in the spiritual way. St. Ignatius of Loyola places those in retreat under the strict control of one who is giving the Exercises. But nobody up to this time seems to have spoken out strongly on the necessity of a guide for the layman. "It is the most important advice I can offer you [...] it is the surest way to find the will of God."⁹

7 Luis of Granada, Treatise on Prayer and Meditation, Part II, Ch. 1.

8 Francis de Sales, Introduction to the Devout Life p. 12.

9 Ibid., p. 15.

The attitude towards the director which he suggests to Philothea is at the same time traditional and yet new. When a guide has been found,

do not place your trust in him as though he were no more than man, nor in his merely human knowledge, but trust God, who will speak to you and grant graces through him. God will put into his heart and on his lips whatever is necessary for your happiness. Listen to him, then, as though he were an angel from heaven sent to guide you there.¹⁰

If the director is regarded in this way he will inspire supernatural respect and confidence. But the opening of the heart is not easy, and therefore Francis counsels looking on a director as a faithful friend. Between himself and his penitents there should exist a strong and tender friendship, "full of filial respect so that your relationship may be strong, sacred, entirely spiritual and divine."¹¹ The words here are important because Francis does not want the relationship to become too humanized. Thus understood, direction calls for very high qualifications in the director, he must be full of "charity, knowledge and prudence; if he lacks any of these qualities there is danger." As Francis looks out on the clergy of his day he says "for those fitted for such a task are unimaginably few."

10 Ibid., p. 16.

11 Ibid., p. 17.

ii) The Primacy Given to Mental Prayer.

St. Francis insists that no one is incapable of mental prayer.

I specially recommend mental prayer, and the prayer of the heart, in particular meditation on the life and passion of our Lord; by often looking upon him, your soul will be filled with him and you will understand the dispositions of his heart and model your actions on his. [...] By keeping close to him and observing what he says and does and the desires of his heart, we shall learn with the help of his grace, to speak and act like him, just as children learn to speak by listening and chattering to their mother.¹²

Francis insists that "if you are able to make mental prayer you should always put that first." If during vocal prayer you feel the urge for interior or mental prayer it should not be resisted, for "the mental prayer which has taken place being much more pleasing to God and much more profitable to your soul."¹³ There is of course, one exception, and that is the obligation of the Divine Office, if the obligation has been accepted.

The Introduction to the Devout Life popularized this form of prayer. From this time on, the practice of devotion was not complete without it. Previously it was very little employed by people in the world. During

12 Ibid., p. 51.

13 Ibid., p. 53.

retreats and on other occasions dealing specially with the salvation of the soul, meditation was used, but it was not always methodical prayer: "As you may not know how to practise mental prayer, Philothea, for unfortunately it is a lost art in our age, I will give you a simple method which will help you until, [...] you are more fully instructed."¹⁴

Inspired by the Italian school, St. Francis had no love for complicated exercises, and so suggests a simple and brief method of prayer. The method of the Spiritual Combat is simple, but not sufficiently concise. That of St. Ignatius is too complex, and the same may be said of Luis of Granada. This method comprises the essential elements of the methods of both St. Ignatius and of Luis of Granada, but is better adapted to the inexperience of people in the world. It is composed of four parts: preparation, considerations, affections and resolutions, and the spiritual bouquet.

The preparation has three parts: the act of placing oneself in the presence of God, the invocation, and the subject proposed. There are four ways of placing oneself in the presence of God. This is done by an act of faith to realize more "vividly the omnipresence of God [...] the

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 53.

fact that God is everywhere and in everything". When "you begin your prayer, then, say from the bottom of your heart: 'God is truly here.'" God's presence is realized either in the universe or in a very special way "in the depths of your soul". A third way is to picture to ourselves the Lord looking down upon us from on high in his sacred humanity, while the fourth way is to use the imagination to represent the Lord near to us as a friend.¹⁵

This is followed by the invocation and the subject proposed for meditation, which is borrowed from St. Ignatius. They consist of asking God for the grace to meditate well and in proposing the subject by the "composition of place." Francis writes: "if you wish to meditate on the Crucifixion imagine yourself on Mount Calvary and that you see and hear all that took place on the day of the Passion."¹⁶ The outward aspect of the mystery on which to meditate is recalled through the imagination. He brings the imagination under discipline. He is of the opinion that this faculty, by producing distractions, may easily become an hindrance. Therefore it is with the understanding and will or with the heart that prayer should, above all, be performed. "After using your imagination you begin to

15 Ibid., p. 54-55.

16 Ibid., p. 56.

use your understanding, and this is what we call meditation."¹⁷

The end in view in prayer is to influence the will or the affective part of the soul.

Meditation moves our will to make spiritual acts such as the love of God and our neighbour, desire of heaven and eternal glory, or zeal for the salvation of souls; it makes us long to be like our Lord, awakens a sense of compassion, wonder and joy, or fear of offending God or of judgement and hell; it leads us to hate sin and to have confidence in the goodness and mercy of God and to be ashamed of the sins of our past life.¹⁸

The end of prayer is therefore attained, provided we convert "these general affections [...] into special and particular resolutions" for our spiritual amendment. The conclusion of prayer contains, in abridged form, the three last parts of the prayer of Luis of Granada: the act of thanksgiving to God for favours received in the meditation; the offering of "our desires and resolutions, in union with the passion and death of his Son, his virtues, his goodness and his mercy"; and the supplication by which God is asked to grant "the graces and virtues of his Son".

The spiritual bouquet or "nosegay of devotion" is peculiar to St. Francis. It is equivalent to commendation in ancient writings to recall, during the day, some thought

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 57.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 58.

from the morning's meditation.

Divine love is therefore developed in the soul by means of exercises of piety. Francis follows the exercises which the Clerks Regular of the sixteenth century usually practised. The Spiritual Combat recommends almost all of them. They are: mental prayer daily for one hour, prayers morning and night, examination of conscience, spiritual reading, the practice of inward recollection or "spiritual retreat", ejaculatory prayers, weekly confession and frequent communion. Mental prayer in common became to be substituted more and more among the religious of this period for the choir office.

The great novelty, or boldness, of St. Francis was to impose these exercises on devout persons living in the world, and to unite thus the contemplative with the active life. No one before him had dared to do this definitely. Almost all thought is impossible.

In regard to frequent communion, St. Francis advises Philothea to communicate every Sunday. He thus sanctions a custom which was apparently tending to become general in Italy. There the devout were admitted easily enough to weekly communion. In establishing this rule he showed it to be lawful from the text of Gennadius — attributed at the time to St. Augustine — which permits communion every Sunday, provided that the mind be without

any affection for sin.

"I neither praise nor blame," says St. Augustine, "the daily reception of Holy Communion, but I recommend and encourage everyone to go to Communion every Sunday, so long as they are not attached to sin." I myself neither praise nor blame daily Communion without qualification, but leave it to the discretion of your confessor, the necessary dispositions being such a delicate matter that it is not prudent to encourage it for everyone [...] every case must be considered individually according to the person's state of conscience.¹⁹

Mass is considered by St. Francis as the most important and sacred of all devotions. It is "the chief means used by God in pouring out upon us his grace and favours. Prayer when united to this divine sacrifice has unspeakable power."²⁰ It should be attended every day. Vespers on Sundays and holy days of obligation are also important because "it is certain that the public devotions of the Church are much more profitable and consoling than those which we choose ourselves, God having ordained that devotions in common should always be preferred to private ones."²¹ He recommends confession every week,²² the invocation of the saints,²³ the hearing and reading of the

19 Ibid., p. 82.

20 Ibid., p. 71-72.

21 Ibid., p. 73.

22 Ibid., p. 79-81.

23 Ibid., p. 74-75.

word of God, privately and in sermons,²⁴ and attention to inspirations.

By inspirations we mean all those interior attractions, movements of the heart, pangs of conscience, and illuminations of the mind by which God, in his fatherly care, prevents our hearts with his blessings, to awaken, stir, urge, and attract us to virtue, charity, and good resolutions, in fact to everything that serves our eternal good.²⁵

iii) The Emphasis on Interior Virtues.

It is a cardinal doctrine for St. Francis, as indeed for the whole French School of seventeenth-century spirituality, that all progress in the spiritual life comes through the practice of the interior virtues. The interior humility counselled by the Introduction is contrasted with the exterior virtue which approximates more closely to "wisdom" than to true humility. Interior virtue alone excludes the vain glory and self-complacency which for St. Francis are two principal obstacles to true piety. And he insists not only on the rigorous exclusion of complacency in the acquisition of virtue, but he is sensitive also to the different interior virtues required of different persons.²⁶ "Everyone must practise in a particular way the

24 Ibid., p. 75-76.

25 Ibid., p. 76.

26 Ibid., p. 100-106.

particular virtues required of their state in life."²⁷ It is necessary to distinguish between the virtues required of prelates, princes, soldiers, married women and widows. Since, therefore, virtue must be interior and since different states of life, different temperaments, call for different paths, St. Francis leaves a large freedom with regard to particular practices of devotion and piety. Philothea is bid to choose the best virtues. Some virtues because they are more striking and more material,

are commonly more highly preferred to spiritual; for example, temporal almsgiving is preferred to spiritual; wearing a hair shirt, fasting, using the discipline and similar mortifications of the body, are preferred to gentleness, kindness and modesty and other mortifications of the heart, which in point of fact are more sanctifying. [...] Everyone should make a point of practising some particular virtue.²⁸

The first two chapters of Part Three of the Introduction deal with the choice to be made in the exercise of virtues. "We should prefer the virtues which accord with our duty rather than our inclination."²⁹ St. Francis then goes on to write of false virtues and the "little virtues":

27 Ibid., p. 90.

28 Ibid., p. 90.

29 Ibid., p. 90.

There are certain things which many consider as virtues but which certainly are not: for example, the ecstasies, raptures, states of insensibility and impassibility, levitations, and so on, mentioned in certain books, which promise to raise the soul to a purely intellectual contemplation, to an essential application of the spirit and to a supereminent life; but please notice, Philothea, that these perfections are not virtues but rather rewards given by God for virtue, foretastes of the happiness of heaven sometimes granted to man to awaken a longing for the complete bliss of paradise. Since these graces are in no way necessary for the true service and love of God which should be our only aim, we should not aspire to them. [...] Should God lift us up to this angelic perfection, we should also be good angels, but in the meanwhile let us practise with simplicity and humility the little virtues, put before us by our Lord: patience, gentleness, the mortification of the heart, humility, obedience, poverty, chastity and thoughtfulness for others, forbearance, diligence and above all charity. Let us be prepared to leave exalted graces to exalted souls.³⁰

As to the method to be followed in order to make progress in virtue, St. Francis counsels attachment to the virtue that is opposed to our ruling passion. "For example if tempted to pride or anger, I must force myself to practise humility and gentleness, making use of prayer and the sacraments, and exercising prudence, perseverance and temperance."³¹ Thus the enemy will be overcome and progress will also be made in the other virtues too.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 94-95.

³¹ Ibid., p. 92.

This method rests on one of the fundamental principles of St. Francis's spirituality, which is wholly that of love. Love is not only that which constitutes perfection, but it is also the means of acquiring it. The soul becomes perfect, less by fighting the vice directly than by loving the contrary virtue strongly. "Charity never enters our hearts without a retinue of virtues which it orders and directs as a captain his men, employing them, however at different times, in different ways, and in different places."³²

The counsels as to the choice of virtues forming the two first chapters in Part Three, differ notably from the first edition. In this edition St. Francis puts in the first place the three great virtues: obedience, chastity and poverty. They are the three vows of the religious life. When they are thus "vowed", they place man in "the state of perfection", but they do not place him in perfection except in so far as they are observed. The order followed in the first edition was that of the greater number of religious writings. As they were meant for the religious, they treat first of all, of the virtues of their state. Even though St. Francis wrote for the people in the world he conformed to this custom. On reflection, however, he

32 Ibid., p. 89.

came to the conclusion that the old plan of virtues, as far as the order of their exercise was concerned, was less suitable for people amid the pressures of temporal affairs. So, the question that Philothea must settle is how to unite an exalted piety with every social requirement. He therefore recommends that she try first of all to perfect herself in the social virtues. He begins with patience: "To possess one's soul, Philothea, is man's greatest happiness and the more perfect one's patience the more perfect that possession."³³ Humility and the love of humiliation follows,³⁴ for "humility perfects our relationship with God, gentleness our relationship with our neighbour."³⁵ So she must show gentleness to her neighbours and to herself and calmness in business. Afterwards, come the three great virtues: obedience,³⁶ chastity,³⁷ and spiritual poverty.³⁸

St. Francis then moves on to what are called the natural virtues. He discusses friendships,³⁹ including

33 Ibid., p. 96.

34 Ibid., p. 100-109.

35 Ibid., p. 113-116.

36 Ibid., p. 120-122.

37 Ibid., p. 123-127.

38 Ibid., p. 128-135.

39 Ibid., p. 135-148.

flirtations and the differences between true and false friendships, mortifications and society and solitude,⁴⁰ suitable dress,⁴¹ seemly conversations,⁴² lawful recreations and undesirable games, especially those of chance,⁴³ dangerous pastimes such as balls and dances.⁴⁴ He looks at these natural virtues in a very Christian way. Christian devotion should be made lovable to everyone. It should be made attractive.

He continues the practical teaching with advice to those who are married,⁴⁵ discusses the sanctity of marriage, "for it is never lawful to exclude the primary end of marriage which is the procreation of children,"⁴⁶ and ends with advice to widows and virgins.⁴⁷

This is the order in which he treats the virtues in the final edition, and the choice is more in accordance with the saint's own heart and mind.

40 Ibid., p. 149-156.

41 Ibid., p. 156-158.

42 Ibid., p. 159-165.

43 Ibid., p. 172-173.

44 Ibid., p. 173-177.

45 Ibid., p. 184-191.

46 Ibid., p. 191-194.

47 Ibid., p. 194-199.

The fourth part of the Introduction sees St. Francis rejuvenating the subject of temptation.⁴⁸ The counsels he gives in order to repel evil suggestions, and to preserve peace of soul amidst moral tempests, have their living commentary in the letters of direction, especially in those written to Baroness de Chantal, who was obsessed and devoured by scruples, during the first years in which he directed her.

St. Francis is aware of the temptations that come to those living in the world. The world is an unjust judge.

The wordly will be scandalized if we condescend to laugh, play or dance in their company, but if we refuse they will call us melancholy hypocrites. If we dress well they will attribute it to a bad motive; if we dress simply, they will attribute it to meanness. They will call our joy dissipation, our self-denial sadness, their jaundiced gaze never satisfied. They will magnify our imperfections into sins, count our venial sins as mortal and our sins of frailty as sins of malice. Charity is kind, they are spiteful, charity never thinks evil, they always do, and if they cannot find fault with our actions, they censure our intentions.⁴⁹

48 It is Part IV in the final edition, but in the first edition temptations are dealt with in Part II, together with the virtues and exercises of piety. First Edition was published in 1609 and the final edition was dated 1619. It is this latter edition which Dom Mackay gives in Vol. III of the Works of St. Francis de Sales, Annecy 1893. The first edition is added as an appendix to this volume.

49 Francis de Sales, Introduction to the Devout Life, p. 204.

But St. Francis says to meet with reproaches and criticisms at the beginning of the spiritual life helps to establish devotion.

Temptation comes to everyone and it is not displeasing to God. It cannot be dismissed like a messenger, but consent can always be refused. To help Philothea to refuse consent St. Francis gives remedies for great temptations, and also for resisting small temptations. "The best remedy against temptations, whether they are great or small, is to open our hearts to our confessor, making all these suggestions, temptations, feelings known to him, for silence is the first condition the devil makes with a soul he wishes to seduce."⁵⁰ Small temptations are to be treated like flies and gnats. As we cannot be rid of them the best defence is to remain undisturbed, and resolve to serve God. They can be driven away by making acts of love of God or any other virtue. "An act of love of God is the surest weapon against temptations great and small; for the love of God contains to an eminent degree the perfection of all the virtues and is the most perfect remedy for vice."⁵¹

50 Ibid., p. 214.

51 Ibid., p. 217.

Anxiety is also a temptation and the source of many others. Sadness may be good or evil, depending on its effect, although it produces many more evil effects than good. The two good effects are compassion and repentance; whilst there are six bad effects: anxiety, discouragement, anger, jealousy, envy and impatience. All tendencies to sadness should be resisted, especially by being occupied with exterior works.

St. Francis writes of consolations and desolations. Circumstances are always changing, therefore, "we must strive to preserve our equanimity in the midst of these various changes, though all should change about us we must remain immovable, our eyes and our hearts ever fixed on God."⁵² St. Francis gives this advice: Devotion does not consist in feelings of pleasure, sadness, consolation or compassion. Some of these feelings are the result of our natural temperament, but they can be useful in helping us to practise devotion with joy and cheerfulness. Some consolations are good and come from God, others are useless and therefore dangerous. Such feelings and consolations that do come to the soul must be accepted with thankfulness and humility. On the other hand there are times when the soul should detach itself from such consolations.

52 Ibid., p. 223.

Just as there are times of consolations there will be times of spiritual desolation when the soul will be in despair. St. Francis recommends the recognition of our nothingness before God; a prayer for joy; opening of the heart to the confessor; resignation to God's will; and finally courage.

The fifth and last part of the Introduction contains the renewal and preservation of devotion. This is the annual retreat which Philothea should make: "Having consulted your confessor, choose a suitable time and having secured for yourself a greater solitude than usual, both interior and exterior, make two or three meditations in the way I have already described."⁵³ Her desire to serve God made at the beginning of her conversion should serve as a theme for her reflections and examination of conscience. Then she must examine the state of her soul towards God, and herself, and her neighbour. Subjects for appropriate prayers are also drawn up for the days of retreat.

53 Ibid., p. 242.

2. On the Love of God.

Even as St. Francis was writing the Introduction which dealt with the classical purgative and illuminative ways, he saw the need for a second book which would be at once both a sequel dealing with the unitive way and more fundamental in character and more exalted in purpose than it. The first mention of the projected work appears in a letter to Mme de Chantal dated February 11th 1607. In succeeding years references are made to the progress of the work, but it is not until 1616 that the work was finally printed.

There is no question that the book owes much to the inspiration and encouragement of Mme de Chantal. When the two saints met, both, in virtue of their aptitudes for spiritual realities, were revealed to each other. St. Francis kept his disciple informed about his work, confiding to her not only his cares, but also his literary aims and hopes. He constantly kept in touch with her concerning the preparation of "our dear book" (On the Love of God). On her part she steadily encouraged him in the prosecution of the work. With rare loyalty, she considered his counsels as nothing short of laws prompted by the Holy Spirit. There was an intimate bond between the two, the secrets of conscience were candidly revealed, and

aspirations after perfection freely discussed. It was therefore a natural consequence of their intimate life that, in 1610, they should become the founders of an Order — that of the Nuns of the Visitation, of which Mme de Chantal became the first superior — a position for which she was exceptionally qualified as a mother, a succourer of the poor, and a great lady would keep her place with dignity as being first and last a disciple of Jesus. After a few years, charitable institutions which were not monastic began to cover the world. Their houses were not enclosed, but centres of active Christian benevolence. Mme de Chantal set herself to be the living embodiment of the ideas which he developed in her.

Thus it was that the Daughters of the Visitation, and especially Mme de Chantal, collaborated in the composition of the book. They also urged St. Francis to hasten its completion. In the Preface he writes:

In this book I address souls that are advanced in devotion. I must explain to you that we have in this city a community of young women and widows who have retired from the world so as to live together with one mind in God's service under the protection of his most holy Mother. Their purity and piety of mind have often given me great consolation. Frequently I have tried to repay them by dispensing the holy word and I have delivered it to them both in public sermons and in spiritual conferences. [...] A large part of what I now share with you I owe to this blessed community. The mother superior who presides over it knew that I was writing on the subject, that I would hardly be able to complete the task if God did not give

me very special help, and that I was continually weighed down with work. Hence it was her constant concern to pray and to have others pray for this project.⁵⁴

St. Francis says he had no intention of writing a treatise on mystical theology. "Long ago, in fact, I formed the project of writing on sacred love. However that project can in no way be compared to the work that the present occasion has caused me to produce."⁵⁵

At first St. Francis appears not to have been very favourable towards mysticism. His Ignatian training made him give preference to the sure ways of asceticism. He also feared illusions. His relations with the Protestants and the history of the first reformers had unveiled to him the ravages of a false mysticism. Mme de Chantal was very quickly raised to passive prayer. Even before she was under the guidance of St. Francis she had been raised, from time to time, without knowing it, to the prayer of simplicity. She hastened to receive instruction in this kind of prayer by having conversations with the Carmelites of Dijon. She did not wish to do anything without her director's consent and St. Francis immediately brought her back

⁵⁴ Francis de Sales, *On the Love of God*, Trans. John K. Ryan, New York, Image Books, 1963, Vol. 1, p. 48.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

to common prayer. In the Introduction he states firmly his views on ecstasies and raptures.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, in the very year of the foundation of the Visitation, he admitted the need he had to be instructed in the knowledge of mystical prayers. This knowledge he was fully to acquire by directing his religious, who were thus, unconsciously, his collaborators in the composition of the mystical part of the famous treatise. He, too, began without intending it, he says, to learn of the mystical states by experience.

Nevertheless neither his own mystical experiences, or those of the Visitandines were to be the only sources from which he drew. He studied, as he states in the Preface, the principal writers, both ancient and modern, who have written on divine love. Among the modern, the Spanish writers, and especially St. Theresa, held a prominent place. "I have said nothing that I have not learned from others."⁵⁷ As the great humanist he is, he draws not only on the great theologians and mystical writers, but also on Greek and Roman writers such as Pliny, Plutarch, Livy, and Tacitus. Virgil is the only pagan poet quoted by name but certain phrases from Horace appear. He also

⁵⁶ Francis de Sales, Introduction to the Devout Life, p. 94-95.

⁵⁷ Id., On the Love of God, p. 42.

quotes the Holy Scriptures freely, for instance there are 110 references to Genesis, 96 to St. Matthew's Gospel. Out of 106 verses that make up the Canticles, 63 are quoted.

St. Francis states the purpose of his book:

I have in fact thought solely of presenting in a simple, natural way, without art and still more without dissimulation an account of the birth, progress, decay, operations, properties, benefits, and excellencies of divine love.⁵⁸

By divine love, St. Francis means the theological virtue of charity, or such friendship for almighty God as can come only as a free gift from God himself. It relates to God and tends to him, not by way of any mere natural knowledge that we have of his supreme goodness but according to supernatural knowledge brought to the soul by faith. It is a form of friendship in which, by God's grace, a man chooses God with a special, supreme love, and chooses and prefers Him in a manner that is supernatural, sovereign and incomparably higher than his love for anything else. The book is addressed to souls that are in a state of sanctifying grace and desire to make further advances in their life of holiness. It was recommended to people living outside religious Orders. To instruct such readers he makes a thorough analysis of divine love.

58 Ibid., p. 40.

The work is divided into two main parts. Of its twelve books, the first four provide the fundamentals of his science of the love of God. The Books 5-12 give the application of these basic principles. In Books 6 and 7 he rises to the highest regions of mystical theology, where he discusses the exercises of love in prayer and the soul's union with God as perfected in prayer.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the work is its point of departure, "the natural and first inclination to love God", which makes it impossible to think of God without feeling a "certain sentiment of love which the secret inclination of our nature draws from the depths of the heart." These first green buds of love excite the will, wherein finally love comes to reside, in harmony with the higher part of the soul, ignoring the heaviness, the agitation, the revolt of the senses. The union of the will with that of God, revealing Himself to us in the highest point of the soul, is the essence of the whole treatise. Setting out from the natural inclination to love God, the soul is led through the unity of wills to the highest perfection of "loving God above all things." There is an overriding characteristic of joyfulness and of expansive optimism. God is, above everything else, a good and merciful Father, who loves beyond anything that can be conceived. If he deals with sin, no doubt it is to punish

it, but this again is because it frustrates his loving design towards man.

In the same way St. Francis considers human nature not so much in its original fall as in its restoration through Christ. It shows man healed and redeemed and to some extent returned to its state of innocence. St. Francis has nothing of the pessimism of St. Augustine. There is no doubt a reaction against the harsh predestination of much of Reformation teaching, an insistence that the Gospel is for all men which comes out pleasantly in much of the Counter-Reformation teaching.

It is not surprising that St. Francis has been found to have affinities with the preachers of natural virtue during the preceding decades, for although he is at pains to go beyond them and to point out their insufficiencies, he can praise Epictetus and be courteous, if critical, of pagan virtue. He teaches prudence, as they had done, but carefully distinguishes it from mere worldly wisdom, and adopts much of their vocabulary. He emphasizes the stoic virtues and if he penetrates much further into the workings of grace than they had done, he shares their basic optimism about the human condition.

His doctrine is in the finest sense humane. Starting out from man's natural inclination to love God, Francis forms and develops it, requiring for spiritual

growth exactly that self possession and peace of soul which are also the normal prerequisites for the true flowering of the human personality. The freedom from constraint which St. Francis personally achieved and constantly advocated is seen by him to be the condition for self-transcendence in the all dominating and all demanding love of God. He goes further than the Christian stoics but he does not contradict them. He did not disagree with their moral maxims but realized that true moral virtue is the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul rather than one's own unaided achievement. Self knowledge led the Christian stoic to find and follow that nature whose laws lay hidden deep inside the human personality, but for St. Francis the deepened humanity of the self-possessed leads to the discovery of the "God of the human heart". To possess oneself and in one's self-possession to find the natural inclination to love God, this is the essential aim of Christian humanism.

The word humanism today has, perhaps inevitably, come to possess unfortunate associations. At the best it is suspected of meaning unsupernatural; at worst, it is used as a synonym for paganism. St. Francis lived in an age when a real synthesis of antique "wisdom" and Christian piety seemed possible. In an age when an authority on mysticism could so unequivocally extol the virtues of

reason and human nature. When he talks with this supreme confidence of human reason, which leads to a holy inclination towards God, he is referring to reason aided by grace, as it is experienced in human lives. He never uses the abstract and technical concept of "pure nature" from which theologians exclude the supernatural life. For him, supernature is part of that which is experienced in nature, faith is what he refers to as reason of redeemed man.

In the speculative first four books, which he says might be omitted by those who only seek the simple practice of holy love, St. Francis accepts the traditionally Platonist conceptual framework of mystical theology and leans heavily on St. Augustine. He begins the work with a small treatise on the will and the passions, according to teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas. The will is supreme over all the powers of the soul, but it does not have absolute sway over each of them. "The will rules over memory, intellect, and imagination, Theotimus, not by force but by authority. [...] It is the same with regard to sensual appetite, which in us sinners, as St. Augustine says, is called concupiscence."⁵⁹ The sensual appetite is "in strict fact a rebellious, seditious, and subversive subject. We must acknowledge that we cannot conquer it so

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 57.

completely that it will not rise up again, make opposition, and assail reason."⁶⁰

In this connection St. Francis explains his conception, which is a fundamental point in his spirituality, of the two parts of the reasonable soul. The "lower" part of the rational soul reasons discursively on data derived from sense perception, while the "higher" part enjoys an intellectual knowledge quite independently of the senses. To this portion of the soul belong the humane sciences. The reasor or soul (the words are used interchangeably) possess an even higher faculty to which belongs the discursive knowledge of the objects of faith and "finally beyond this, there is a certain eminence or supreme point of reason and the spiritual faculty"⁶¹ which is the seat of non-discursive knowledge infused directly by God. Here will and understanding are reduced to their simplest forms, and here is the "special residence and natural abode"⁶² of the infused virtues of faith, hope and charity, where God reveals Himself and so satisfies the mind and entices the will.

60 Ibid., p. 58.

61 Ibid., p. 85.

62 Ibid., p. 86.

It is in the higher part of reason, with its two degrees, that mysticism is concerned. This "supreme point of reason" is the apex of the soul of which mystics so often speak. Following other writers he compares this highest apex of the soul to the sanctuary of Solomon's temple:

1) In the sanctuary there were no windows for giving light. In this degree of the soul there is no discursive thought that will illuminate it. 2) In the sanctuary all the light entered by the door. In this degree of the spirit nothing enters except by faith, which produces, in the manner of beams, sight and feeling of the beauty and goodness of God's beneficence. 3) None but the High Priest entered into the sanctuary. In this point of the soul discursive thought does not enter, but only the great universal and supreme feeling that the divine will must be supremely loved, approved, and embraced [...]. 4) When the High Priest went into the sanctuary, he obscured even that light which entered through the door [...]. All the vision made in the supreme point of the soul is in a certain manner obscured and veiled over by acts of renunciation and resignation that the soul makes. It wishes not so much to look upon and see the beauty of the truth and the truth of the goodness presented to it but rather to embrace and adore them. Hence the soul would almost wish to close its eyes as soon as it begins to see the dignity of God's will. This is to the end that without further occupying itself in considering it, it can more powerfully and perfectly accept it and by absolute complacence unite and submit itself without limit to his will. Finally 5) the ark of the covenant was kept in the sanctuary [...]. In the supreme point of the soul are found the following: the light of faith [...], the utility of hope [...], the sweetness of holy charity, [...] by which we acquiesce in the union of our spirit with God's, which union we scarcely perceive. Faith, hope and charity diffuse their divine movements into almost all of the soul's faculties, both rational and

sensitive [...] However, their specially dwelling, their true and natural abode, is in this supreme point of the soul.⁶³

This view of man's spiritual faculties underlines all St. Francis's teaching. It emphasizes the harmony between reason and faith, nature and supernature. The direct activity of God in the soul, in mystical gifts or the ordinary life of grace, is characterized by the manner in which the experience of God's infused gifts satisfies the soul, eliciting the simple assent of understanding and will. This complicated theory amounts to saying that while contemplation is a supernatural activity, nevertheless it has its roots in the natural structure of the soul.

St. Francis has analysed the soul and its faculties to better demonstrate how love rules. He gives a description of love in general.⁶⁴ He shows how it is produced and developed. He gives a history of it summing it up in five motions of the will. "The will has so great an affinity with the good that as soon as it perceives the good, it turns towards it so as to take delight in what is its most agreeable object."⁶⁵ Love is born of the affinity of the will and the good. Delight in the good perceived is

63 Ibid., p. 85-86.

64 Ibid., p. 67-71.

65 Ibid., p. 67.

the second motion of the will. The third is the effort of the will to be united with the thing loved. The fourth is the search for the means to realize the union. Finally, at the end of these movements union is achieved.

It is like a beautiful tree: its root is the affinity that the will has to the good; its foot is the complacency; its trunk is the movements; its searches, pursuits, and other efforts are the branches; union and enjoyment are the fruits.⁶⁶

Divine love has a similar history, but it is wholly supernatural. Divine love springs from the consideration of the divine perfections and the eternal love of God for man. This is the subject of the second Book. How can man help loving God who is so perfect? His supernatural providence operates in such a manner, especially through His redemption through His son, and through the abundant graces which he distributes to man, that St. Francis thinks it is impossible for man not to love Him. St. Francis then shows how faith, hope and penance combine together to make love spring up in the soul. Love is the last thing to arise and should be preceded by faith and hope, but once it has entered the soul everything else must be subject to it.

Holy love takes up its abode in the soul's highest and most exalted region. [...] This is to the end that from so exalted a place it may be heard and obeyed by its people, namely, by all the faculties and affections of the soul,

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 67.

which it governs with an incomparable sweetness. Love has no convicts or slaves, but brings all things under its obedience by so sweet a force that, just as nothing is as strong as love, so nothing is as worthy of love as its strength.⁶⁷

The end of love is the union of the soul with God, a union which is brought about in heaven by the beatific vision.

Love to God is exercised in two chief ways: the one affective and the other effective or active. The first is the love of willingness and of goodwill, the other is the love of obedience.

By the first we have affection for God and what he loves; by the second we serve God and do what he ordains. The first joins us to God's goodness; the second enables us to fulfil his will. The first fills us with complacency, benevolence, and spiritual impulses, desires, aspirations, fervours, and causes us to use the sacred infusions and minglings of our spirit with that of God. The second pours into us solid resolution, firm courage, and inviolable obedience required to carry out the ordinances of God's will, and to suffer, accept, approve, and embrace all that comes from his good pleasure. The first enables us to find pleasure in God, the second makes us pleasing to God. By the first we conceive; by the second we bring forth. By the first we place God upon our heart like a banner of love around which all our affections are ranged; by the second we place Him upon our arm, as a sword of dilection whereby we accomplish all victorious exploits.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 66.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 267.

The whole of the fifth Book is devoted to the love of willingness and goodwill. In the sixth and seventh Books St. Francis writes of the mystical experience.

Mystical theology is identical with prayer, because it has God as its object. It tends less to the knowledge of God than to the love of God, by which it is distinguished from speculative theology.

Here we do not use the word "prayer" solely for petition [...] we use the term as St. Bonaventure does when he says that prayer generally speaking, comprehends all the acts of contemplation; or like St. Gregory of Nyssa, who teaches that a "prayer is a conference or conversation of the soul with God", or again like St. Chrysostom, who asserts that "prayer is discussion with the divine majesty", or finally like St. Augustine and St. John Damascene, who say that "prayer is an ascent or elevation of the mind to God." If prayer is a colloquy, a discussion, or a conversation of the soul with God, then by prayer we speak to God and God in turn speaks to us. We aspire to him and breathe in him; he reciprocally inspires and breathes upon us.⁶⁹

In this simple sense meditation belongs to mystical theology. "Prayer is called mystical because its conversation is altogether secret."⁷⁰ St. Francis sums it up: "prayer and mystical theology are simply a conversation in which the soul lovingly speaks with God concerning his most loving goodness so as to be united and joined to that

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 268.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 269.

goodness."⁷¹ The first degree of prayer or mystical theology is therefore meditation, which means simply "attentive, repeated thought of such nature as to produce either good or bad affections."⁷² But contemplation is different. Contemplation is "simply the mind's loving, unmixed, permanent attention to the things of God. [...] Prayer is called meditation until it produces the honey of devotion, after which it is converted into contemplation."⁷³ St. Francis summarizes this teaching by saying that "meditation is the mother of love but contemplation is its daughter."⁷⁴

There is a second difference between meditation and contemplation. Meditation considers in detail objects suitable to move the soul, while contemplation takes a completely unified view of the object it loves. The third difference is that "contemplation always has this special quality, that it is made with delight. It presupposes that we have found God and his holy love and that we find joy and delight in him. [...] In this it differs from meditation which is almost always made with difficulty, labour, and reasoning."⁷⁵

71 Ibid., p. 269.

72 Ibid., p. 271.

73 Ibid., p. 275.

74 Ibid., p. 276.

75 Ibid., p. 284.

Divine love also produces passive recollection, and the prayer of quiet.

The recollection I speak of is not made by love's command but by love itself. That is, we do not make it by our own free choice, since it is not within our power to have it when we so will, nor does it depend on our own efforts. At his own pleasure God works it in us by his most holy grace.⁷⁶

St. Francis explains this further by drawing on St. Theresa. He also follows St. Theresa in describing the "prayer of quiet", and very carefully unravels the degrees.⁷⁷ The Mystical experiences of Mme de Chantal and the nuns of the Visitation must have specially guided him in this part.

Before reaching ecstatic union St. Francis notes several mystical phenomena brought about by love. He writes of "the soul's overflow or liquefaction in God"; "the loving languor of the heart wounded with dilection."⁷⁸

Book Seven, which is also inspired by St. Theresa, deals with the mystical union of the soul with God which is brought about by love. It has different degrees. The highest is that of rapture or ecstasy in which the union suspends the faculties of the soul, totally or partly, according to its intensity. The supreme effect of

76 Ibid., p. 286.

77 Ibid., p. 289-299.

78 Ibid., p. 299-314.

affective love is to unite the soul with God by slaying the body, this he calls the "lover's death".

"Love is as strong as death." Death separates the dying man's soul from his body and from all the things of this world. Sacred love likewise separates the lover's soul from his body and from all things of the world. Between death and sacred love there is no difference except that death always does effectively what love ordinarily does only affectively.⁷⁹

St. Francis follows with examples: St. Peter and St. Paul, Catherine of Siena, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Charles, St. Mary Magdalen, St. Basil and many others. He gives a whole chapter⁸⁰ to an account given by St. Bernardine of Siena of the nobleman who travelled in all the regions of Palestine sanctified by the presence of Christ in the body, and died of love on the Mount of Olives uttering this prayer:

"O Jesus, my sweet Jesus, I know no further place to seek and follow you upon earth! Ah, Jesus, Jesus, my love, grant to this heart that it may follow and go after you on high." With these ardent words he shot his soul like a sacred arrow into heaven.⁸¹

After listing the saints who died of love, St. Francis goes into raptures over the death of the Virgin

79 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 37.

80 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 44-51.

81 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 47.

Mary. She died out of love for her Son and of a love supremely sweet and tranquil.⁸²

Beginning with Book eight St. Francis turns from affective love to effective love, that is love which is in conformity with the divine will. This conformity springs from the loving heart's delight in God. The soul cannot help but conform itself to that which it loves. He explains at length, in this book, how His will is signified by the Ten Commandments, by the evangelical counsels, and by the inspirations of grace.

Christian doctrine clearly proposes to us the truths God wills us to believe, the goods he wills us to hope for, the punishments he wills us to fear, the things he wills us to love, the commandments he wills us to fulfil, and the counsels he desires us to follow. All this is called the signified will of God, because he has signified and made manifest his will and intention that all these things should be believed, hoped for, feared, loved, and practised.⁸³

Everyone should love and practise what he can of the counsels, but the faithful are not obliged to keep all.

The soul should also conform to the will of God by following his inspirations. God inspires man in a thousand ways, either in order to make him practise virtue with extraordinary perfection or persevere in the way he is

82 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 48-55.

83 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 62.

going. The love of God is better shown by submission to the divine will:

Sin excepted, nothing is done except by what is called God's absolute will or the will of good pleasure. No one can block this will. It is known to us only by its effects. When they are accomplished, they make clear to us the fact that God has willed and planned them.⁸⁴

The soul should then unite the will to the divine will by resignation and by indifference. The will should love God with a wholly pure and disinterested love. The will is thus dead to self. It lives purely in the will of God. Pure love is crucifying.⁸⁵

The treatise could end here but St. Francis wants to write further on the great commandment to love God and love one's neighbour. He devotes a whole book to this subject.

Hence, the same charity that produces acts of love of God produces at the same time those of love of neighbour. Just as Jacob saw that one and the same ladder touched heaven and earth and equally served the angels both to descend and ascend, so also we know that one and the same dilection reaches out to cherish both God and neighbour. Thus it raises us up to unite our spirit with God and brings us back again to loving association with our neighbours. However, this is always on condition that we love our neighbour in as much as he is God's image and likeness, created to communicate with the divine goodness, to parti-

84 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 97.

85 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 126-128.

pate in his grace, and to enjoy his glory.

Theotimus, to love our neighbour in charity is to love God in man or man in God. It is to cherish God alone for love of himself and creatures for love of him.⁸⁶

In this passage St. Francis recognizes the relationship of the numinous to the ethical, the mystical to the moral. In loving one's neighbour, he speaks highly of zeal which he links with jealousy⁸⁷ and the qualities of goodness and prudence which are needed.⁸⁸

Book eleven shows the precious influence of sacred love on all the other virtues.

The great St. Augustine says that the love of God includes all the virtues and performs all their operations in us. These are his words: "What is said about virtue being divided into four" — he means the four cardinal virtues — "in my opinion is said because of the different affections that proceed from love. Hence I do not hesitate to define those four virtues thus: Temperance is love which gives itself entirely to God. Fortitude is love that willingly bears all things for God's sake. Justice is love that serves God alone, and therefore disposes justly of all that is subject to man. Prudence is love that chooses what is useful to unite itself to God, and rejects what is harmful. [...] The man who possesses charity has [...] a perfection which contains the virtue of all perfections and the perfection of all virtues."⁸⁹

86 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 171.

87 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 174.

88 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 173-193.

89 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 219.

Perfection is perfect love. Love also includes within itself all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This is the classical teaching.

In order that the human spirit may easily follow the movements and promptings of reason so as to attain the natural happiness it can strive for by living according to moral law, it has need of 1) temperance, to restrain the rebellious inclinations of sensuality; 2) justice, to render what is of obligation to God, our neighbour, and ourselves; 3) fortitude, in order to vanquish difficulties we experience in doing good and repelling evil; 4) prudence, to discover the most proper means to attain to good and virtue; 5) knowledge, to know the true good we must aspire to and the true evil we must reject; 6) understanding, to penetrate well into the first and chief foundations or principles of the beauty and excellence of virtue; 7) and at the very end, wisdom, to contemplate the divine nature, the first source of all good.⁹⁰

These gifts are not only inseparable from charity, but are the principal virtues and qualities of charity.

Holy love also includes the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit. Love is the only fruit of the Holy Spirit, "but this one fruit has an infinity of excellent properties."⁹¹

St. Francis further explains this:

The Apostle simply means that the fruit of the Holy Spirit is charity, which is joyful, peaceable, patient, kind, bountiful, long-suffering, mild, faithful, modest, continent and

⁹⁰ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 239.

⁹¹ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 251.

chaste. [...] All this is to the end that our entire being may be given over to divine dilection both interiorly by joy, peace, patience, long-suffering, goodness and fidelity, but also exteriorly by kindness, mildness, modesty, continence and chastity.⁹²

The treatise ends with Book twelve in which St. Francis gives further advice for the making of spiritual progress in holy love, leading up to Mount Calvary as the true school of love. "All love that does not take its origin from the Saviour's passion is foolish and perilous."⁹³ So ends this magnificent work on the Love of God.

92 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 251-252.

93 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 281.

CHAPTER VII

WILLIAM LAW ON HOLINESS

William Law was born at King's Cliffe in Northamptonshire, England, in 1686. His father was a tradesman of good standing and he was raised in a religious home. He was educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, later becoming a Fellow of his College and was ordained in 1711. About the time he went up to Cambridge he drew up "Rules for My Future Conduct" which remind us of the austere conscientiousness which characterizes the Serious Call. Already he had begun to study mysticism and no doubt he would have been happy to remain a resident Fellow at Cambridge but his rather obstinate conscientiousness led him to become one of the Non-jurors on the accession of George I. This refusal to take the oath abjuring the Pretender resulted in him forfeiting his Fellowship and all prospect of preferment in the Church, although he remained to the end a faithful member of the national Church. He spent the rest of his life in retirement and meditation, in writing books and in charitable works.

In 1727 Law became tutor to Edward Gibbon, father of the great historian, and accompanied his pupil to Cambridge. He also spent much time in the elder Gibbon's house at Putney. The latter had a great admiration of

Law's religious character and writings and in his house Law became the centre of an admiring circle which included John and Charles Wesley and Miss Hester Gibbon, the daughter of the house. On the death of the elder Gibbon the establishment was broken up and Miss Hester Gibbon joined a friend, Mrs. Elizabeth Hutcheson, now a widow, in a plan to retire from the world and live a life of charity and piety with Law as their chaplain. They fixed on King's Cliffe, Law's birth place. Here Law spent the last twenty years of his life and he was present at every service in his parish church.

Law's first important contribution to positive theology was A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection, published in 1726, which he defines as "the right performance of our necessary duties". This was written about a year before he entered the employ of Mr. Gibbon. Later during his quiet residence at Putney he wrote his famous masterpiece A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life.

It was about the year 1734 when Law first became acquainted with the writings of the German mystic, Jacob Boehme. His study of them was destined to colour all the rest of his life. All his works from that time were of the same character and therefore we have to include Law in the group of English "Christian Mystics". In conjunction

with Mrs. Hutcheson and Miss Gibbon they devoted nine tenths of their joint income of 3000 pounds to charity. Their manner of life was simple but not ascetic; Law lived mainly in two rooms, well furnished with books and spent the greater part of each day in reading and writing. Together they established schools and almshouses in King's Cliffe. It was while he was visiting one of his charity schools that he caught a severe cold that ended in his death in 1761.

The last words that were heard from his lips were something like these: "Take away the filthy garments from him and clothe him with a change of raiment." And these: "I feel within me a consuming fire of heavenly love which has burned up in my soul everything that was contrary to itself and transformed me inwardly into its own nature." Thus like a saint already satisfied with Divine likeness he breathed his last.

William law wrote many books but here we are concerned with two: Christian Perfection and the Serious Call, both written before he came under the influence of Jacob Boehme.

Few books in the English language have exercised, directly or indirectly, so vast an influence as these two books, especially the latter. It is remarkable that so far as the Evangelical revival can be traced to any one

individual, that man is William Law. His book Serious Call so far as human instrumentality was concerned, originated the revival. Warburton said of Methodism, that "William Law was its father, and Count Zinzendorf rocked the cradle." The remark was somewhat galling to Wesley for afterwards he abhorred the opinions of both the father and the nurse, yet he owned that the Serious Call and Christian Perfection sowed the seed of Methodism. He used the Serious Call as a text-book for the highest class at Kingswood School. A very short time before his death, after a lifelong quarrel with its author, he spoke of it as "a treatise which will hardly be excelled, if it be equalled, in the English tongue, either for beauty of expression or for justice and depth of thought." Charles Wesley was equally impressed with the work; so was George Whitefield. "Soon after I went to the University," he says, "I met with Mr. Law's 'Serious Call', but had no money to purchase it. Afterwards I purchased a small edition, and by means of it God worked powerfully upon my soul as He has since upon many others by that and by Law's other excellent treatise, the 'Christian Perfection'."

It is amazing the different kind of minds which were permanently affected by the Serious Call. Dr. Johnson attributes his first serious impressions to the reading of it. "I became," he says, "a sort of lax talker against

religion [...] this lasted until I went to Oxford, where I took up Law's 'Serious Call to a Holy Life', expecting to find it a dull book (as such books generally are). But I found Law quite an overmatch for me, and this was the first occasion of my thinking in earnest." Henry Venn in 1750 read repeatedly the Serious Call and subsequently tried to frame his life according to that pattern. He later tried to realize the Christian Perfection. Thomas Scott, in consequence of reading the Serious Call made a vow never to engage in any pursuit which was not subservient to his ministerial usefulness. "Mr. Law's masterpiece," says Gibbon, "is a powerful book. His precepts are rigid but they are founded on the gospel." The parish priest of a small country village recommended the book to his parishioners and said: "I had the satisfaction of beholding my people reclaimed from a life of folly and impiety to a life of holiness and devotion." Well might Southey say of it: "Few books have made more religious enthusiasts."

William Law was an enthusiast in a century when "enthusiasm" was frowned upon, yet he was never an Evangelical. Abbey and Overton wrote of him:

"William Law begot Methodism" wrote Bishop Warburton; and in one sense the statement was undoubtedly true, but what a curious paradox it suggests! A distinctly High Churchman was the originator of what afterwards became the Low Church

party—a Non-juror, of the most decidedly 'orange element in the Church, —a Quietest who scarcely ever quitted his retirement in an obscure Northamptonshire village, of that party, which above all others, was distinguished for its activity, bodily no less than spiritual,—a clergyman who rarely preached a sermon, of the party whose great forte was preaching.¹

The ascetic austerity of Law's life is reflected in his teaching. From the beginning to the end of his life he never swerved from the high and uncompromising type of holiness which he constantly set before himself as the goal of all human effort. He held all the distinctive doctrines of Christianity, the fall of man, his redemption by Christ, his sanctification by the Holy Spirit, and his absolute need of God's grace both preventing and following him. He was assured that corrupt, fallen, and earthly as human nature is, there is nevertheless in the soul of every man "the fire and light and love of God, though lodged in a state of hiddenness, inactivity and death [...] overpowered by the workings of flesh and blood." The one worthy object of life was purification and by mortification of the lower nature to remove all hindrances to the enlightening efficacy of the Holy Spirit.

Thus these two works are a tremendous indictment of lukewarmness in religion and a ruthless exposure of the

¹ C.J. Abbey and J.H. Overton, The English Church in the Eighteenth Century, Vol. 2, p. 61.

sin and folly of trying to make the best of both worlds. They are applicable to men of all times, for it is the old contrast between the Church and the world, between the ideal and the real, between Christianity as it actually is and Christianity as it ought to be. He presses home what most people must see, the inconsistency between profession and practice. They are especially addressed to the leisure class. William Law offers to his readers a way of life, the Christian way, that of the cross. He writes not for atheists but for people who still profess to be Christians. His method was to kindle the spark, to rouse the man, for he thought that men are fast asleep who do not consider eternity.

The Serious Call is Christian perfection reduced to a formula or system of religion, with rules for devotion, appointed hours for, and subjects of prayer. He believed "that man is a bundle of habits" and the majority of even religious people, from want of sufficient earnestness, require to be led and instructed by "Rules" at every step, as if they were mentally and spiritually blind.

[...] either Reason and Religion prescribe rules and ends to all the ordinary actions of our life, or they do not: If they do, then it is as necessary to govern all our actions by these rules, as it is necessary to worship God.²

2 William Law, Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, London, Griffiths, Farran Browne, p. 20.

The seekers after Christian perfection, according to Law, must

devote ourselves wholly unto God, to make the Ends and Designs of Religion, the Ends and Designs of all our Actions. That it calleth us to be born again of God, to live by the Light of His Holy Spirit, to renounce the world and all wordly Tempers, to practise a constant universal Self-denial, to make War with the Corruption and disorder of our Nature, to prepare ourselves for Divine Grace by a Purity and Holiness of Conversation, to avoid all Pleasures and Cares which grieve the Holy Spirit, and separate him from us, to live in a constant State of Prayer and Devotion, and as the Crown of all to imitate the Life and Spirit of the Holy Jesus.³

Law gives three reasons why we should seek after Christian perfection. First,⁴ he argues there is nothing else worth seeking after; secondly,⁵ it is necessary to our salvation. "To labour after our Perfection, is only to labour after our Salvation."⁶ Thirdly,⁷ there is a double advantage, for there are blessings in this life and in the life to come. "No degrees of Mortification and Self Denial, no private Prayers, no secret Mournings, no instances of Charity, no Labours of Love will ever be forgotten, but all treasured up to our everlasting Comfort

3 William Law, A Practical Treatise on Christian Perfection, Works of Wm. Law, Vol. 3, p. 232.

4 Ibid., p. 238.

5 Ibid., p. 240.

6 Ibid., p. 241.

7 Ibid., p. 244.

and Refreshment. For though the Rewards of the other Life are free Gifts of God, yet since he has assured us that every Man shall be rewarded according to his Works, it is certain that our Rewards will be as different as our Works have been."⁸ There is also a great reward in this life because we are not divided between God and the world. The person who lives in a state of "Half-piety", that is, adding religion to a worldly life, will always be in the "Uneasiness of a divided State of Heart".⁹

On one occasion Law will exclaim: "I want so much to touch the heart of my reader!" but there is a lack of tenderness in these two books, for he wishes to speak to the intellect. The claims of man's sensitiveness are not forgotten but they are subordinated to the judgment of his intelligence. By some ironical trick of self-inconsistency this fierce scorner of reason, constantly appeals to reason. Sensibility is individual and subject to all the frailties of the individual's nature; reason is one and the same in all, and should be addressed first. This conviction even shapes his definition of love: "By love, I do not mean any natural tenderness which is more or less in people according to their constitutions, but I mean a

8 Ibid., p. 245.

9 Ibid., p. 247.

larger principle of the soul, founded in reason and piety."¹⁰ Tenderness will follow, as he also says, but as a strong, reliable outcome of reflection not to be compared with a transient emotion. Only what is founded on reason will endure. This is the clue to William Law's dialectic.

He lays down a general principle of Christian perfection and he follows it through with faultless logic. He sees through all our pretences and shows how ridiculous it is to believe one thing and do another. He craves for single mindedness. He drives home his teaching to the lukewarm Christian, (with direct questions) and leaves him crushed under the burden of all these queries. His favourite conjunction is "if": "If contempt of the world, [...] If self-denial [...] If humility [...] If poverty of spirit [...] If we are to relieve the naked [...] If we are to love our enemies [...] If content and thankfulness [...]"¹¹ Innumerable are these sentences in which he urges us to face our responsibilities. He constantly repeats himself on the basis of the old rule that repetition will make him finally be heard. Hence there is a monotony in the pattern of successive sentences. At all

¹⁰ Serious Call, p. 232.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 17.

costs Law will arrest his readers' attention.

The first principle of Law's argument, as stated above, is that only what is founded on reason will endure. The second principle is that man must know himself. Like so many philosophers, theologians and mystics before him, Law is convinced that no change of life is possible for anyone until he knows himself. To help readers know themselves he decided to draw "characters", whose ridicule, well emphasized, might teach them to live more reasonably. The imaginary characters are admirably sketched with a profusion of wit and biting satire. For example, the character of Calidus is most up-to-date and could apply to many a businessman today.

Calidus is a typical businessman who spends all his time in business. He needs liquor in the evening to drive the thought of business out of his mind. He utters one or two short prayers especially when things go wrong. When he has succeeded in business he is afraid to retire for fear of having no interests in life and becoming depressed.¹²

On the other hand he paints a picture of the model country minister Ouranius. At first on being settled in a parish Ouranius thought the people too poor and uneducated.

¹² Ibid., p. 42-43.

He gave himself to intellectual studies of Homer and Plautus, and had little time to pray with the poor. But when "devotion had got the government of his heart" he discovered it was a joy to minister to the poor and uneducated. "This makes Ouranius exceeding studious of Christian perfection, searching after every grace and holy temper."¹³

Law proposes Miranda as a common example of purity and perfection of life. Again he appeals to what is reasonable and sensible and according to nature.

If you would be a good Christian, there is but one way, you must live wholly unto God; and if you would live wholly unto God, you must live according to the wisdom that comes from God: you must act according to right judgments of the nature and value of things; you must live in the exercise of holy and heavenly affections, and use all the gifts of God to his praise and glory.¹⁴

Miranda goes to worship, she practises devotion and prayer, but her rules of living also include the right use of her time and money, of eating, working, dressing and conversing. The lessons drawn from Miranda are austere and severe. He is particularly hard on women.

¹³ Ibid., p. 242-244.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 112.

If a woman seeks for happiness from fine colours or spots upon her face, from jewels and much clothes, this is as merely an invention of happiness, as contrary to nature and reason, as if she should propose to make her self happy, by painting a post and putting the same finery upon it.¹⁵

When he writes of time and money, he is typical of the Caroline spiritual writers:

But the two things which of all others, most want to be under a strict rule, [...] are our time and money [...] he that is happy in the religious care and disposal of them both, is already ascended several steps upon the ladder of Christian perfection.¹⁶

The circumstances of his life account for the social status of his characters. The range of his observation is limited as a result of his aims as a moralist. There are no scoundrels in his portrait gallery, only good, honest citizens, according to the judgment of the world, so far as it goes. It did not go far enough for Law and that was precisely what he sought to prove. He was determined to take the scales off men's eyes, and compel them to realize that they did not truly know themselves. Nor are Law's men and women downright hypocrites. They are blind, but not completely so, for their self deceit extends to some particular passion rather than the whole man. How

15 Ibid., p. 175.

16 Ibid., p. 93-94.

true that men and women have their moral blind spots is seen as the characters of Christians of all generations are examined.

Devotion, writes Law, signifies a life given, or devoted to God.

He, therefore, is the devout man, who lives no longer to his own will, or the way and spirit of the world, but to the sole will of God; who considers God in everything, who serves God in everything, who makes all the parts of his common life parts of piety, by doing everything in the name of God, and under such rules as are conformable to His glory.¹⁷

How then does a man become devout? In the Serious Call, Law lays down the rules which, if followed, will lead to this end.

It is first necessary to have a sincere intention.

It seems but a small and necessary part of piety to have a sincere intention. And yet it is purely for want of this degree of piety, that you see such a mixture of sin and folly in the lives even of the better sort of people. It is for want of this intention that you see men that profess religion, yet live in swearing and sensuality; that you see clergymen given to pride, and covetousness, and worldly enjoyments. It is for want of this intention, that you see women that profess devotion, yet living in all the folly and vanity of dress, wasting their time in idleness and pleasures, and in all such instances of state and equipage as their estates will reach.

And when you have this intention to please God in all your actions, as the happiest and best thing in the world, you will find in you as great an aversion to everything that is vain and impertinent in common life, whether of business or pleasure, as you now have to any thing that is profane.¹⁸

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 22.

A clergyman who has a sincere intention will not talk "of noble preferment or a glorious chariot!" It will make a tradesman a saint in his shop; a gentleman of birth and fortune will not be able to live in idleness and indulgence. Law is careful to say "this doctrine does not suppose that we have no need of Divine Grace, or that it is in our own power to make ourselves perfect."¹⁹

Law further recommends Thankfulness, which is "of great importance to true religion. For there is no state of mind so holy, so excellent, and so truly perfect as that of thankfulness to God, and consequently nothing is of more importance [...] than that which exercises and improves this habit of mind [...] For he sufficiently disowns God who does not adore Him as a Being of Infinite Goodness."²⁰ "If anyone would tell you the shortest, surest way to all happiness and all perfection, he must tell you to make a rule to yourself, to thank and praise God for everything that happens to you. For it is certain that whatever seeming calamity happens to you, if you thank God for it, you turn it into a blessing."²¹

19 Ibid., p. 27.

20 Ibid., p. 164.

21 Ibid., p. 165.

The motivation to seek Christian perfection, Law sees in two things: the love of God and "holy fears". He writes:

The measure of our love to God, seems in justice to be the measure of our love of every virtue [...] when we cease to live with this regard to virtue, we live below our nature, and instead of being able to plead our infirmities, we stand chargeable with negligence.

It is for this reason that we are exhorted, to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.²²

No man will make progress in piety unless he is constantly afraid of falling short of it. So fear will:

excite them to an earnest examination of their lives, to such zeal, and care and concern after Christian perfection, as they use in any matter that has gained their heart and affections.²³

Fear of death is also a powerful motive:

The best way for any one to know how much he ought to aspire after holiness, is to consider [...] how much he thinks will make him easy at the hour of death.²⁴

Law, then goes on to paint a vivid picture of the consequences of death. Feasts, business, pleasures, and enjoyments all fall into perspective in the hour of death.

Judgment awaits all men, "the angry Judge, [...] the fire that is never quenched, the gates of hell, the powers of

22 Ibid., p. 21.

23 Ibid., p. 22.

24 Ibid., p. 23.

darkness, and the bitter pains of eternal death."²⁵

"Prayers are particular parts or instances of devotion"²⁶ and Law writes at length about the time, the hours, the subjects and the art of prayer. "Prayer is the nearest approach to God, and the highest enjoyment of Him, that we are capable of in this life. It is the noblest exercise of the soul."²⁷ "He who has learnt to pray has learned the greatest secret of a holy and happy life."²⁸ Prayer is better than sleep, therefore he urges early rising.

I take it for granted that every Christian that is in health is up early in the morning, for it is much more reasonable to suppose a person up early because he is a Christian than because he is a labourer, or a tradesman, or a servant, or has business that want him [...] how odious we must appear in the sight of heaven if we are in bed, shut up in sleep and darkness, when we should be praising God [...] He, therefore that chooses to enlarge the slothful indulgence of sleep rather than be early at his devotions to God, chooses the dullest refreshment of the body before the highest, noblest employment of the soul.²⁹

Speaking of the method of daily prayer he does not prescribe any particular forms of prayer but seeks only to

25 Ibid., p. 29.

26 Ibid., p. 13.

27 Ibid., p. 138.

28 Christian Perfection, p. 215.

29 Serious Call, p. 138.

show the necessity of praying at such times, and in such a manner. As a true Anglican he points out that a prepared form of prayer is necessary for public worship, but if any one can find a better way of raising his heart to God in private he has nothing to object against it. His own recommendation is to begin with a form of prayer, but not to be tied down to it, so as to be free to make new expressions as the Spirit leads. On the other hand for the times when our souls are heavy and our minds are dull it is necessary to have available forms of prayer as may best suit us.

The first thing that you are to do, when you are upon your knees, is to shut your eyes, and with a short silence let your soul place itself in the presence of God [...] if you were to use yourself (as far as you can) to pray always in the same place, if you were to reserve that place for devotion, and not allow yourself to do any thing common in it: if you were never to be there yourself, but in times of devotion [...] this kind of consecration of it as a holy place unto God, would have an effect upon your mind, and dispose you to such tempers, as would very much assist your devotion [...] When you begin your petitions, begin in words like these: O Being of all beings, Fountain of all light and glory, gracious Father of men and Angels, whose universal Spirit is everywhere present, giving life, and light and joy to all Angels in Heaven, and all creatures upon earth, [...] For these representations of all Divine attributes which show us in some degree the Majesty and greatness of God, are an excellent means of raising our hearts unto lively acts of worship and adoration.³⁰

30 Ibid., p. 146-147.

Here Law emphasizes the numinous.

It is interesting that Law should recommend in private devotion the chanting or singing of a psalm: "A psalm only read is very much like a prayer that is only looked over." Nothing opens heaven or carries your heart so near it, as these songs of praise. "Singing is a natural effect of joy in the heart, so it has also a natural power of rendering the heart joyful." "All men therefore are singers, in the same manner as all men think, speak, laugh, and lament."³¹

Law recommends devotions at set times of the day, and some fixed subject which is to be the chief matter of prayer, although there will be freedom to add other petitions. He is obviously influenced by the monastic system Opus Dei. The connection of the prayer of the "Hours" with phases of Christ's passion was a vital element in medieval Christian prayer. At night monks would rise for the Vigil (Matins) and the Canonical Hours were Lauds, Terce, Sext, None, along with Vespers in the evening. In the morning, rising early, the first devotions should consist of praise and thanksgiving to God, as for a new creation; and the consecration of body and soul to His service

31 Ibid., p. 156-161.

and glory.³² Again, at nine o'clock in the morning, the set subject of the prayers should be humility. To make progress in the practice of humility you have to begin by taking it for granted that you are proud, and that it is your greatest weakness. Every good thought that we have, every good action that we do, lays us open to pride. Even our devotions and alms, our fastings and humiliations, expose us to this temptation.³³ Law writes a whole chapter to show how difficult is the practice of humility.³⁴ Here Law is aware of "creative consciousness" in the presence of the deity.

The next time of devotion is twelve o'clock and the main subject is Universal Love. Realizing that some will think these hours of prayer come too close together and are only for those in monasteries and nunneries, he says they are not necessary but lead to the best, happiest and most perfect way of life. Further, because we spend so much of our time in the world, far more than Law thinks necessary, these times are imperative for a holy life. Universal love is the subject of these prayers because Jesus recommended His love to us as the pattern and example

32 Ibid., p. 149-156.

33 Ibid., p. 173-180.

34 Ibid., p. 181-191. Ch. XVII.

of our love to one another. "A new commandment," he says, "I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another" (John 13: 34,35). Law proceeds to show how we are to love our neighbour and the place of intercession as its expression. He writes:

Now that self-love which is just and reasonable, keeps us constantly tender, compassionate, and well affected towards ourselves: if therefore, you do not feel these kind dispositions towards all other people, you may be assured, that you are not in that state of charity, which is the very life and soul of Christian piety.³⁵

Three o'clock in the afternoon is recommended as the time for considering the necessity of resignation and conformity to the will of God.

Resignation and thanksgiving to God are only acts of piety when they are acts of faith, trust and confidence in the Divine goodness [...] faith is the true pattern of Christian resignation to the Divine pleasure; you are to thank and praise God, not only for things agreeable to you, [...] but when you are, like Abraham, called from all appearances of comfort to be a pilgrim in a strange land [...] It signifies a thankful approbation of God's general providence, and God's particular providence over us.³⁶

Evening prayer is at six o'clock in the evening, and is to be used for examination and the confession of our sins. "There seems therefore to be the greatest

35 Ibid., p. 238.

36 Ibid., p. 259-260.

necessity, that all our daily actions be constantly observed and brought to account, lest by negligence we load ourselves with the guilt of unrepented sins."³⁷ The result of this examination of particular sins will "fill your mind with a just dread and horror of all sins, and help you to confess your own, in the most passionate contribution and sorrow of heart."³⁸ Finally you should pray just before retiring and the subject at that time should be death.

Represent to your imagination, that your bed is your grave; that all things are ready for your interment; that you are to have no more to do with this world; and that it will be owing to God's great mercy, if you ever see the light of the sun again, or have another day to add to your works of piety. And then commit yourself to sleep, as into the hands of God [...] and waiting for the judgment of the last great day.³⁹

Such are the times and subjects of prayer as recommended by Law.

Self-denial is an important part of the development of the holy life. Law bases his exhortation on the words of Jesus "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life." He writes:

Now, if Christians are to walk in a narrow way that leadeth to eternal life, the chief business of a Christian must be to deny himself all those things which may either stop or lead him out of his

37 Ibid., p. 266.

38 Ibid., p. 272.

39 Ibid., p. 276.

narrow way [...] Self-denial is therefore as essential to the Christian life as prayer is, it being equally necessary to deny ourselves such things as support our corruption as it is necessary to pray for those things which will do us good and purify our natures [...] If there are any denials or mortifications that purify and enlighten the soul, that lessen the power of bodily passions, that raise us to a heavenly affection and make us taste and relish the things that be of God; these are as necessarily to be practised as it is necessary to believe in Jesus Christ [...] When we speak of self-denial, we are apt to confine it to eating and drinking; but we ought to consider that though a strict temperance be necessary in these things, yet these are the easiest and smallest instances of self-denial. Pride, vanity, self-love, covetousness, envy, and other inclinations of the like nature call for a more constant and watchful self-denial than the appetites of hunger and thirst [...] till we do enter into this course of universal self-denial we shall make no progress in true piety.⁴⁰

Law works out this necessity for self-denial further, basing it on the word of Jesus, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his Cross daily and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall find it." This denial of self is a call to suffering and self-denial which is to be inflicted on ourselves. Since the Atonement is accomplished through suffering, suffering is recommended to all sinners. This suffering is the exercise of mortification. "Self denial and mortification are only other words for Repentance and

40 Christian Perfection, p. 104.

Sorrow from Sin"⁴¹ and "to suppose a Repentance without the Pain of Mortification and the Punishment of Self-Denial is as absurd, as to suppose a Labour after Holiness, which takes not one step towards it."⁴² So self-denial and mortification are only other words for a real repentance, and we should be constantly in a state of penitence, but this state can only exist through constant daily self-denial.⁴³

Now self-denial and mortification are seen in a constant poverty of spirit;⁴⁴ by not demanding vengeance, by turning the other cheek to the smiter, by not recouring to law when someone steals your coat, rather let him have your cloak also.⁴⁵ In all this a Christian shows meekness, self-denial and patience under suffering. The commandment of our Lord "to love one another as I have loved you" when fulfilled is a means of self-denial, of mortification and suffering to which the Christian is called.⁴⁶

41 Ibid., p. 85.

42 Ibid., p. 86.

43 Ibid., p. 88.

44 Ibid., p. 90.

45 Ibid., p. 92.

46 Ibid., p. 94-95.

Fasting, Law considers a common duty of all Christians. It is placed along with secret almsgiving and private prayer. "When thou fastest anoint thy Head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but to the Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6. 17-18). "Now fasting is a denial of Bodily Indulgences, as it disciplines the Body into a State of Obedience, and contradicts its appetites, is the most constant and universal means of procuring liberty and freedom of mind."⁴⁷

A man who makes every day, a day of full and cheerful meals, will by degrees make the happiness of every day depend on it, and consider everything with regard to it [...] For every indulgence of the Body in Eating and drinking, is adding to its Power, and making all our ways of Thinking subservient to it.⁴⁸

In recommending Christian temperance in food and drink he says its purpose is "to put the Body into a State of Purity and Submission, and give the soul a divine and heavenly Taste."⁴⁹

As already mentioned, one of the most fundamental duties of a truly Christian and spiritual life and part of self-denial is to rise early. "Mortification of all kinds

47 Ibid., p. 107.

48 Ibid., p. 108.

49 Ibid., p. 116.

is the very life and soul of piety; but he that has not so small a degree of it, as to be able to be early at his prayers, can have no reason to think that he has taken up his cross, and is following Christ."⁵⁰

In Christian Perfection Law devotes two chapters⁵¹ to show that the reading of plays or any other books of this kind, is a dangerous and sinful entertainment, that corrupts our hearts and separates the Holy Spirit from us. He further declares it is unlawful as for a Christian to be a drunkard or a glutton, to go to a Playhouse. Law is conscious that what he asks is strict and rigid but wonders if there are not more people "strangers to the true Spirit of Religion by what are called Pleasures, Diversions and Amusements, than by confessed vices, or the cares and business of life."⁵²

The ascetic austerity of Law's teaching is both a recommendation and an impediment to the influence of his writings. His asceticism is so severe that it defeats his own ends as a moralist and advocate of religion. Like François de Sales, he aimed at a "perfection that does not consist in any singular state or condition of life, or in

50 Serious Call, p. 140.

51 Christian Perfection, Ch. X-XI.

52 Ibid., p. 194.

any particular set of duties, but in the holy and religious conduct of ourselves in every state of life [...] It calls no one to a cloister, but to a right and full performance of those duties which are necessary for all Christians and common to all states of life."⁵³

Such were his premises, but he is not faithful to them. As one of his adversaries shrewdly remarked: "Though you seem to disclaim monastic retirements, yet your principles manifestly serve to promote the same effect." Indeed Law never grasped Luther's conception of ordinary life as a genuine vocation. His conception of perfection is built on "an entire Renunciation of the World, a forsaking all its Enjoyment, in order to be true disciples."⁵⁴

Christianity is so divine in its Nature, so noble in its Ends, so extensive in its views, that it has no lesser Subjects than these to entertain our Thoughts. It buries our Bodies, burns the present world, triumphs Death by general Resurrection, and opens all into an eternal state.⁵⁵

Writing of the parable (Matthew 21. 45) he says: "this teaches us that not only the vices, the wickedness and the vanity of this world, but even its most lawful and allowed

53 Ibid., p. 5.

54 Ibid., p. 55.

55 Ibid., p. 18.

concerns, render men unable to enter, and unworthy to be received into the true state of Christianity."⁵⁶

He further taught

that Christianity is a calling that puts an end to all other callings; that we are no longer to consider it our proper state, or employment, to take care of oxen, look after an estate, or attend to the most plausible affairs of life, but to reckon every condition as equally trifling, and fit to be neglected, for the sake of the one thing needful.⁵⁷

Here is a serious defect in the ideal of Law, for if human activities have a divine meaning, all the legitimate work of mankind may be transfigured. It is possible to do the duties of one's vocation as an expression of faith in God and as an integral part of communion with God. This means, that every task may be seen as a service rendered to one's fellows and therefore to God. Just as those who visit the sick or the prisoner are thereby in communion with God, so the Christian mechanic or storekeeper may hear after every day's work the words: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brothers, ye did it unto Me" (Matt. 25. 31-46).

William Law also fails to include in the Christian ideal the various realms of the good life. He does not see

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 36.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 37.

that the Christian ideal must be the life of a society and the perfect life of that society must include the pursuit and partial attainment of justice and beauty as well as of moral goodness. This is clearly expressed as Law draws to a close his book on Christian perfection.

It now only remains, that I exhort the Reader to labour after this Christian Perfection. Were I to exhort anyone to the study of poetry or eloquence, to labour to be Rich and Great, or to spend his time in Mathematics or other Learning, I could only produce such Reasons as are fit to delude the Vanity of Men, who are ready to be taken with any Appearance of Excellence. For if the same person were to ask me, what it signifies to be a Poet or Eloquent, what advantage it would be to him, to be a great Mathematician, or a great Statesman, I must be forced to answer, that these Things would signify just as much to him, as they now signify to Poets, Orators, Mathematicians, and Statesmen, whose Bodies have been a long while lost amongst common Dust [...] For when we are at the top of all human attainments, we are still at the bottom of all human Misery, and have made no further Advancement towards True Happiness, than those, whom we see in the Want of all these Excellencies. Whether a Man die before he has written Poems, compiled Histories, or raised an Estate, signifies no more than whether he died an hundred or thousand years ago.⁵⁸

Nothing could be plainer. Verse, eloquence, statesmanship, scholarship, mathematics, business: nothing matters. Law seeks after perfection, but it is a perfection which is lean, ascetic, solemn and pitifully unattractive.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 232.

Now and then he makes a feeble effort to tone down this terrible doctrine, but he is not altogether successful. How could he be? He could not evade his own conclusions, for there is in Law's ethics a coherence, a compelling logic. His ethics only assume their true meaning in relation to Paradise Lost.

The world in which we live is also in a disordered, irregular state, and cursed for the sake of man [...] It is no longer the Paradise God made it, but the remains of a drowned world full of marks of God's displeasure and the sin of its inhabitants [...] It is a mere wilderness, a state of darkness, a vale of misery, where vice and madness, dreams and shadows, variously please, agitate and torment the short, miserable lives of men [...] The excellency of the Christian religion appears in this, that it puts an end to this state of things, blots out all the ideas of worldly wisdom, brings the world itself to ashes and creates all anew. It calls man from an animal life and earthly conversation to be born again of the Holy Ghost and be a member of the Kingdom of God.⁵⁹

The "sole end of Christianity" for Law, is "to lead us from all thoughts of rest and repose here, to separate us from the world and worldly Tempers, to deliver us from the Folly of our Passions, the slavery of our own Natures, the Power of evil Spirits, and unite us to God, the true fountain of all real Good. This is the mighty change that Christianity aims at."⁶⁰

59 Ibid., p. 12.

60 Ibid., p. 12.

As to how this is to be accomplished Law is as evangelical as any teaching of Wesley. Christianity requires a change of Nature: "There is this one Term of Salvation, He that is in Christ, is a new Creature."⁶¹ It is only by grace that we are disposed towards that which is good, and made able to perform it. He does not give as much prominence as Wesley gives to saving faith, and this may have been part of the reason that led the leaders of the Evangelical party to complain that there was too little of the Gospel in the Serious Call and Christian Perfection. Since his aim is to set forth the moral ideal to which all Christians without distinction are called, he uses the doctrine of grace to prove his main thesis, that self-denial is perpetually necessary.

The chief characteristic of the positive teaching of Law is the emphasis on taking up the cross. No less than six chapters out of fourteen in Christian Perfection are devoted to this one theme. He sees that the duty of self-denial is grounded in the very constitution of the world, in the facts of life. The consequences deduced from this main principle, as we have seen, are drastic. It is the need for renunciation in every part of life, and a complete dedication, without compromise. The true end

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 35.

of Christian perfection is likeness to Jesus Christ and here he is one with the tradition of the Church Catholic. But he is never a mere literalist. His imitation of Christ is not a blind reproduction of the outward acts. But "we may as well expect to go to a Heaven where Christ is not, as to go to that where He is, without the Spirit and Temper which carried Him thither."⁶²

The ideal way of life that Law sets out is also purely individualistic. The motive adduced for aiming at Christian perfection is that it is our only chance of happiness here and hereafter.

As sure, therefore, as these works of charity are necessary to salvation, so sure is it, that we are to do them to the utmost of our power; not today, or tomorrow, but through the whole course of our life. [...] It is ever necessary to our salvation, to take care of these works of charity, and to see that we make ourselves in some degree capable to doing them; it is as necessary to our salvation, to take care to make ourselves as capable as can be, of performing them in all the parts of our life.⁶³

There is a sense in which individualism in religion is imperative and justifiable. This appeal awakened the consciences of men like John Wesley, Samuel Johnson, George Whitfield, Henry Venn and many others, and has accomplished a great work in the world, but the individualism is

62 Ibid., p. 217.

63 Ibid., p. 77.

excessive. One gains the impression that the only reason for loving your neighbour is to save your own soul.

Law does not offer mere contemplative asceticism but a life fruitful in practical virtues, but it is impossible not to feel that he is approaching very closely to the morbid pietism of the recluse. The ethical and the moral elements in holiness take up a large proportion of Law's works, but he never departs entirely from the truth that loving one's neighbour is an integral part of loving God and vice versa. He stresses the numinous in regard to the presence of God, worship, adoration and prayer. His writings would probably have had a greater and wider influence if his piety had been less austere, and his ideal of life more expansive and comprehensive.

These books are just what they promise in their titles, A Serious Call and Christian Perfection and there is not much of the joy and peace in believing to be found in their pages.

CHAPTER VIII

JEREMY TAYLOR ON HOLINESS

To turn from the asceticism and austerity of William Law to Jeremy Taylor's twin books, The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living and The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying, is to enter a more expansive ideal of life and therefore more attractive. Here there is a more cheerful reliance upon the goodness of God.

Like Law, Jeremy Taylor can claim a share, although only partially and indirectly in the Evangelical Revival and the founding of Methodism. It was the reading of these two books while at Oxford which caused the first spiritual awakening in John Wesley. Later Wesley wrote that he was incited in his quest for Christian perfection by Taylor.

In the year 1725, being in the twenty third year of my age, I met with Bishop Taylor's Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying. In reading several parts of this book, I was exceedingly affected: that part in particular which relates to purity of intention. Instantly I resolved to dedicate all my life to God.¹

This occurred thirteen years before his Aldersgate experience.

¹ John Wesley, Plain Account of Christian Perfection, Dublin, Robert Napper, 1797, p. 5.

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Taylor also had an influence upon the man who launched the greatest revival in the Church of England. John Keble, leader of the Oxford Movement, writing to his friend, J.T. Coleridge in 1817, says:

I never read Holy Living and Dying regularly till this spring, and I cannot tell you the delight it has given me; surely that book is enough to convert any infidel, so gentle in heart, and so high in mind, so fervent in zeal, and so charitable in judgment, that I confess I do not know any other author, except perhaps Hooker (whose subjects are so different that they will hardly bear comparison), worthy to be likened to him. Spenser I think comes nearest to his spirits in all respects. Milton is like him in richness and depth, but in morality seems to me as far below him as pride is below humility.²

Jeremy Taylor was the third son of Nathaniel Taylor, a church warden and barber, and was born in Cambridge in 1613. He was raised at home in a godly family, and taught to say his prayers and learn his letters by his father. Dr. Stephen Perse, Fellow of Caius College, Cambridge, in 1615 left his money to found a free school and a hundred boys were chosen from Cambridge and the surrounding district. Taylor was one of these boys. When he was thirteen he was admitted as a sizar of Gonville and Caius College, on a Bursary established by Dr. Perse, where he took his Master of Arts degree and was ordained

² J.T. Coleridge, Memoir of John Keble, Oxford & London, J. Parker & Co., 1869, p. 68.

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in 1633. To be a sizar was a poor man's means of getting education but on the other hand the best education of the day was open to him. In College Taylor's roommate was a certain Thomas Ridsen, a man three years his senior and was engaged in London as a lecturer at St. Paul's Cathedral. Something made it impossible for Ridsen to fulfil his duties and he asked his roommate to go in his place. Taylor accepted the invitation and made such an impression on the congregation of St. Paul's that the news of the brilliant young preacher was brought to the ears of Archbishop Laud. Taylor received a command to appear at Lambeth and preach before the Archbishop. Laud listened with "wonder and satisfaction" and promised to help him, knowing that if he remained in London, too much popularity and too much preaching would be bad for a young priest. Being Chancellor of Oxford University, Laud had him incorporated M.A. at University College, Oxford. Some of the Fellows were not willing to elect Taylor so the Archbishop as Visitor of the College made the appointment. He was appointed Fellow of All Souls. Taylor was now definitely started on a career, having for patron the greatest man in the Church of England of that day. His academic life came to an end in 1638 when the Bishop of London presented him with the living of Uppingham in Rutlandshire on the

instructions of the Archbishop. Now at the age of 26 he married Phoebe Langsdale.

At the commencement of the struggle between Charles and his Parliament, Taylor joined the King at Oxford, and published by the King's command a treatise, Episcopacy Asserted. The king was so pleased with it that the degree of D.D. was conferred by royal command. During the Civil War he lost his living at Uppingham and had no means of livelihood except the little his chaplaincy to the King produced. The King appointed him to a new living where the royal authority was still respected but with the decline of the Royalist cause he took refuge in Wales. Prior to this it seems he was taken prisoner when serving as an Army Chaplain.

All over England there were Royalist clergy, dispossessed of their churches, seeking refuge and a means of livelihood. Taylor was more fortunate than many. With two friends he started a school and they had considerable success. Nearby was Golden Grove, the seat of the Vaughan family. Richard Vaughan was the Second Earl of Carbery and was to become an intimate friend of Taylor. About this time Taylor's first wife being dead, he married Mrs. Joanna Bridges who possessed an estate, and therefore it was no longer necessary for him to teach to earn his living.

In 1648 he published The Great Exemplar and this was followed by his Holy Living and Holy Dying, composed at the desire of Lady Carbery, wife of Richard Vaughan, now his patron. In 1654 he published his Catechism for Children which he called Golden Grove. Later he moved to London, and in 1658 to Lisburn, Ireland as a lecturer, under the passport and protection of Cromwell. In 1660 he made a journey to London and his name appeared on a list of subscribers to the declaration of the Royalists. At the Restoration he was not overlooked and was appointed to the Bishopric of Down and Connor and shortly afterwards was elected Chancellor of the University of Dublin. Later he was made a member of the Irish Privy Council.

His death took place after ten days of sickness on the 13th of August 1667, at the age of fifty five and in the seventh year of his episcopacy. Throughout his life Taylor wrote and published many books and sermons. Jeremy Taylor presents as fine a pattern of a Christian Bishop as the Anglican tradition can afford. He was the first to write a whole treatise on religious liberty, a Life of Christ in English; and the first to write in English, and on his own plan, a complete manual of conduct, Holy Living and Holy Dying; and it is with these two books we are here concerned.

Holy Living was published in 1650 and was followed a year later by Holy Dying. The two are now generally bound together and regarded as one work. They are both the outcome of the same design, for Taylor could hardly have written a book dealing so fully with the Christian life and saying so little about sickness and death, unless he had the intention to write a special work on that subject. The very title Holy Living suggests that it needs a parallel, Holy Dying, to bring it to completion. However, there is a considerable difference in their tone.

1. The Rule and Exercise of Holy Living.

Taylor calls no one to the cloister and unlike Law is faithful to his avowed purpose. He is concerned with Christians in the world and how they may best fulfil every duty they have to God, their brethren and themselves.

God provides the good things of the world to serve the needs of nature, by the labours of the ploughman, the skill and pains of the artisan, and the dangers and traffic of the merchant: these men are in their callings the ministers of Divine Providence, and the stewards of creation, and servants of a great family of God, the world, in the employment of procuring necessities for food and clothing, ornament, and physic [...]. So that no man may complain that his calling takes him off from religion; his calling itself and his very worldly employment in honest trade and offices is a serving of God.³

³ Jeremy Taylor, The Rule and Exercise of Holy Living, London, Appleton, p. 8.

He shows again the breadth of his conception of the holy life when he writes:

He that does as well, in private, between God and his own soul, as in public, in pulpits, in theatres, and market places hath given himself a good testimony, that his purposes are full of honesty, nobleness and integrity.⁴

The plan of Holy Living is of four chapters, each divided into sections and these again subdivided. In the first portion of every section the particular virtue under review is treated generally and in the succeeding portion it is reduced to rule, with prayers and meditations suitable for it. Taylor wastes little time inveighing against evil. He assumes his readers only require such help from him that will enable them to live a holy life. In his teaching there is no place for devotion completely apart from the Church. For him the divinely appointed order of the Church has its counterpart in the disciplined devotional life of the soul.

His first chapter is a "Consideration of the General Instruments and Means serving to a Holy Life, by way of Introduction." Here he deals with the care of our time, purity of intention, and the practice of the presence of God. The other three chapters are concerned with the Christian religion and this subject is divided into three

⁴ Ibid., p. 20.

parts, "sobriety, justice and religion [...] We should live 1. Soberly, 2. Righteously, and 3. Godly, in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." The first contains all our deportment in our personal and private capacities, the fair treatment of our bodies and our spirits. The second enlarges our duty in all relations to our neighbour. The third contains the offices of direct religion, and intercourse with God.

Taylor stresses that God is present everywhere, sees everything, hears all and understands every thought. He is both transcendent and immanent.

That God is present in all places, that he sees every action, hears all discourses, and understands every thought, is no strange thing to a Christian ear who hath been taught this doctrine, not only by right reason and the consent of all the wise men in the world, but also by God himself in Holy Scripture [...] God is wholly in every place, included in no place; not bound with cords except those of love: not divided into parts, not changeable into several shapes; filling heaven and earth with His present power and with his never absent nature; and we can no more be removed from the presence of God than from our own being.⁵

In words such as these Taylor stresses the numinous in holiness. God is indeed the mysterium tremendum. "He is to be feared in public, He is to be feared in private: if you go forth He spies on you; if you go in, He sees you."⁶

5 Ibid., p. 24.

6 Ibid., p. 27.

Because of His majesty one has to "make an act of adoration, that is solemnly worship God, and place thyself in God's presence and behold Him with the eye of faith."⁷

He is "specially present in holy places and in the solemn assemblies of his servants. [...] His presence there signified nothing but a readiness to hear their prayers, to bless their persons, to accept their offices, and to like even the circumstances of orderly and public meetings."⁸ Having laid emphasis on the services of the Church he allows that God is present in the hearts of His people by the Holy Spirit. "God is in every created being or thing."⁹ The immanence of God is linked to man's behaviour. Man must not be cruel to any created being or thing. If man is ever in the presence of God he should "not pollute it by unholy and impure actions."¹⁰ Man must remember that "'God is in the bowels of thy brother' refresh them when he needs it, and then you give your alms in the presence of God, and to God; and he feels the relief, which thou providest for thy brother."¹¹ In this

7 Ibid., p. 28.

8 Ibid., p. 25.

9 Ibid., p. 29.

10 Ibid., p. 29.

11 Ibid., p. 29.

manner Taylor naturally moves from the emphasis on the numinous to the ethical element of holiness in the need to love and minister to one's brother.

Christian sobriety is considered in regards to eating, drinking, pleasures and thoughts. "Sensual pleasure is vain, empty and unsatisfying, biggest always in expectation, and a mere vanity in the enjoying [...]. It is most contrary to the state of a Christian, whose life is a perpetual exercise, a wrestling and warfare."¹² Asceticism for its own sake does not attract him, neither does he encourage it in others. Discipline is necessary to fight the war against our temptations, and it consists in prayer, fasting, cheap diet and hard lodging. Yet one can eat and drink for pleasure, and may choose pleasant food in preference to unpleasant food. His recommendations for eating would receive the blessing of a modern dietitian; eat not between meals, not hastily, not extravagantly and not overmuch.¹³ Alcoholic beverages can be drunk in moderation. This can be accomplished by knowing how many glasses he can take, not attending too many feasts, only drinking with meals, and never urging another to drink beyond his limits.¹⁴

¹² Holy Living, p. 48.

¹³ Ibid., p. 51f.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 58f.

There is no glorification of celibacy.

Natural virginity, of itself is not a state more acceptable to God; but that which is chosen and voluntary, in order to the conveniences of religion and separation from worldly encumbrances, is therefore better than the married life, not that it is more holy, but that it is a freedom from cares, an opportunity to spend more time in spiritual employments.¹⁵

Marriage and the single life are therefore both states to which men are called by God, and neither is more or less holy than the other. Chastity is urged on all, which he defines as sexual relations only for the married and then only in moderation. Relations outside marriage are wrong for two reasons: God has given His Holy Spirit to us and our bodies are made temples of the Holy Spirit; and marriage is hallowed into a mystery, to signify the sacramental and mystical union of Christ and His Church. To break the marriage tie is to dishonour a great rite of Christianity.¹⁶

As one reads Holy Living it becomes obvious that Taylor has no intention of pointing out ways in which the soul can enjoy spiritual delights, or cultivate a spiritual perfection. He is concerned with ordinary Christians; he lays down rules concerning their morals, and therefore the

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 61.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 63.

book becomes to some extent a manual of casuistry. This is what might be called a "Do it yourself" book.

Here he is in line with Puritan and High Church thinking of the Caroline period. The whole aim of casuistry was that men might not be left to the vagaries and perils of private judgment, but given through the Church the help they could not find alone. Caroline writers evolved a casuistry of economic conduct, the right use of money, especially in regard to lotteries; the right use of leisure, and the dissolution of marriage. They discussed such subjects as anger, when is it a virtue, when is it a vice? When is it in order to tell a falsehood or when should the truth be told? Even as they were concerned about man's relation to other men, they also asked questions about man's relation to God, and in this context gave answers about prayer, worship and the sacraments.¹⁷

If you wish to be holy, this is what you must do, says Taylor. "Humility is the great ornament and jewel of Christian religion," and it can be obtained in this way.

¹⁷ See H.R. McAdoo, The Structure of Caroline Moral Theology, London, Longmans, 1949; and T. Wood, English Casuistical Divinity During the Seventeenth Century, London, S.P.C.K., 1952. T. Wood's book shows that Puritan and High Church Casuists were at one, but H.R. McAdoo tries to distinguish between the two, but finds it difficult to keep the distinction clear.

Methodically Taylor spells out the rules: Confess your sins often to God, let us be as severe in judging ourselves as others, let us not disparage or lessen our neighbour when he is honoured, avoid worldly honour, judge not others by their kindness or unkindness towards us, avoid flatterers, pray often for grace, meditate upon the effects of pride, recall the humility of Jesus.¹⁸

A Christian should be modest in church, in public meetings, in dress, not merry at a funeral nor sad at a festival.¹⁹ He should seek contentedness. "Enjoy the blessings of this day, if God sends them; for this day is only ours; we are dead to yesterday, and we are not yet born to the morrow."²⁰

The third chapter which is headed "Of Christian Justice" is concerned with what today would be called practical Christianity. The sections are worked out under the titles Obedience, Provision (duties of Superiors to Inferiors), Negotiation or Civil Contracts, and Restitution.

18 Holy Living, p. 80.

19 Ibid., p. 90.

20 Ibid., p. 101.

Obedience is a complicated virtue, and many graces are exercised in one act of obedience. It is an act of humility, of mortification and self-denial, or charity to God, of care of the public, of order and charity to ourselves and all our society, and a great instance of a victory over the most refractory and unruly passions.²¹

Taylor maintains that Princes and Prelates and the father of the family hold their authority from God alone and therefore are to be obeyed. There were good reasons for this in Taylor's time. Government by force of arms had passed away but the time for government truly based on popular consent was not ripe. Hence in these pre-democracy days, laws were made by Kings and princes. Therefore "we must obey all human laws appointed and constituted by lawful authority, that is, of the supreme power according to the constitution of the place in which we live."²² At the same time the Princes must provide "useful and good laws for the defence of property, for the encouragement of labour, for the safeguard of their persons, for determining controversies, for reward of noble actions and excellent arta and rare inventions, for promoting trade, and enriching their people."²³ In making laws princes must have a regard to the popular feeling or else the people will be

21 Holy Living, p. 134.

22 Ibid., p. 129.

23 Ibid., p. 137.

tempted to disobey. He further makes allowance for Christian conscience when he writes all laws are to be obeyed except those "which are against the law of God."²⁴

There is no doubt Taylor here is well ahead of his time. Good Royalist that he is, he is not afraid of making recommendations to the King as to how he should govern. Good government of a king is to be regarded as action of religion, "so that the prince who defends and well rules his people is religious."²⁵

The doctrine of passive obedience and the Divine Right of Kings found his support. There was at this time a real need to find some basis for the place of royalty. The fact that for the moment the King's authority was overruled made no difference to Taylor; he, like every other Royalist, would consider that his allegiance now bound him to Charles II, whom a few successful revolutionaries had deprived, rather than the nation had repudiated. So Taylor wrote:

Lift not up thy hand against thy prince or parent, upon what pretence soever; but hear all personal affronts and inconveniences at their hands and seek no remedy but by patience and piety, yielding and praying, or absenting himself.²⁶

24 Holy Living, p. 129.

25 Ibid., p. 132.

26 Ibid., p. 131.

Here the doctrine of non-resistance is set out complete. It was certainly not the government in power that Taylor had in mind when he wrote this passage; the King was just as much King as he had ever been, and there was just as much need to show from where his right to rule was derived.

Holy Living becomes to some extent a manual of casuistry. A section, for instance, dealing with the duties of merchants, headed "Rules and measures of justice in bargaining", treats the ethics of buying and selling with considerable detail. His advice is relevant to the twentieth century. "In making contracts, use not many words; for all the business of a bargain is summed up in a few sentences; and he that speaks least, means fairest, as having few opportunities to deceive."²⁷ One is reminded of present day advice on contracts; read the small print! His opinion is that: "in prices of bargaining concerning uncertain merchandise, you may buy as cheap ordinarily as you can,"²⁸ providing certain conditions are observed. There must be no violence, the prices must be governed, roughly, by what is customary in such cases; there must be neither monopoly nor what is called in modern language the cornering of products, and the good of the public as a

27 Holy Living, p. 143.

28 Ibid., p. 144.

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whole must be considered. Wages must be paid promptly, and no one is to take in hand anything for a fee which he has not the ability nor some reasonable chance to perform. A doctor, for example, is forbidden to undertake the treatment of an incurable disease without first explaining to the patient that he considers the case hopeless. The whole section is of special interest because it shows Taylor was fully aware of some of the difficulties which were being created by the increasing complexity of the nation's commercial life.

Taylor in his fourth chapter writes of Christian religion.

Religion, in a large sense, doth signify the whole duty of man, comprehending it in its justice, charity and sobriety, because all these being commanded by God, they become a part of that honour and worship which we are to pay Him.²⁹

But now he examines it in a narrower sense and is concerned with what he terms the internal and external actions of religion. The soul ministers to God in actions of faith, hope and love. Faith believes the revelations of God; hope expects his promises; and love, loves his excellencies and mercies.

The acts and offices of faith are to believe everything which God has revealed to us; to believe nothing

²⁹ Holy Living, p. 159.

concerning God but what is honourable and excellent; to give ourselves wholly to Christ; to believe all God's promises and the conditions of the promises; to profess publicly the doctrine of Jesus Christ; and to pray without doubting.³⁰

Faith must be manifested in the good life:

Faith, if it be true, living, and justifying, cannot be separated from a good life; it works miracles, makes a drunkard become sober, a lascivious person become chaste, a covetous man become liberal.³¹

Hope differs from faith. Hope has for its object things only that are good, and fit to be hoped for. The acts of hope are to rely upon God with a confident expectation of His promises; to interpret no evil that befalls man as a defect on God's part, "but either a mercy on His part, or a fault on ours;"³² to rejoice in the midst of misfortune or seeming sadness; to desire and pray for the object of our hope; and to persevere in this duty of hope.

"Love," writes Taylor, "is the greatest thing that God can give us: for Himself is love: and it is the greatest thing we can give to God,"³³ therefore the acts

30 Holy Living, p. 159f.

31 Ibid., p. 161.

32 Ibid., p. 162.

33 Ibid., p. 167.

of love are to keep His commandments; to give generously; to suffer cheerfully; to have patience; to develop a deep friendship with God; and to be careful of little things. "Love to God includes love to our neighbour; and therefore no pretence of zeal for God's glory must make us uncharitable to our brother; for that is just so pleasing to God as hatred is an act of love."³⁴

Taylor is not too impressed with enthusiasm in religion. Speaking of zeal, he says:

That zeal is only safe; only acceptable, which increases charity directly; and because love to our neighbour and obedience to God are the two great portions of charity, we must never account our zeal to be good but as it advances both these, if it be a matter that relates to both; or severally, if it relates severally.³⁵

The opposite of faith is infidelity; of hope, despair; and love, enmity and hostility.

The external actions of religion relate to the word of God, or to prayer; fasting and the mortification of the body; and the keeping of Sunday and feast days.

There is little of the mystic in Taylor. When he writes about prayer, he is practical, down to earth. He recognizes the difficulties of the ordinary man who feels glad when they are said, and is so weary at their length,

³⁴ Holy Living, p. 173.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 173.

yet he affirms that apathy to prayer is a spiritual danger.³⁶ His recommendations are relevant to the lives of all people. Here are some: Never omit morning and evening devotions.³⁷ In the beginning of actions of religion, make an act of adoration.³⁸ Set apart portions of every day for more solemn devotion.³⁹ In the course of the day's work retire to God in short prayers and ejaculations.⁴⁰ Reduce the length of your prayers if they become tedious and what is missing supply in the earnestness of thy spirit.⁴¹ Do not seek for deliciousness and sensible consolations. "We must not judge our devotion to be barren or unfruitful, when we want the overflowings of joy running over; so neither must we cease, for want of them."⁴² Pray often and you shall pray oftener.⁴³ On the stroke of the hour say a short ejaculation.⁴⁴ "In all forms of prayer, mingle petition with thanksgiving."⁴⁵ Whatever we beg of

36 Holy Living, p. 196.

37 Ibid., p. 203.

38 Ibid., p. 27.

39 Ibid., p. 13.

40 Ibid., p. 10 and 207.

41 Ibid., p. 206.

42 Ibid., p. 207-208.

43 Ibid., p. 208.

44 Ibid., p. 14.

45 Ibid., p. 201.

God let us work for it.⁴⁶ Whatsoever we may lawfully desire of temporal things, we may lawfully ask of God in prayer.⁴⁷

On the subject of repentance, Taylor agrees with Law that it is a punishing duty. It

judges and condemns the sin by voluntary submitting to such sadnesses as God sends on us, or by judging ourselves, and punishing our bodies and our spirits by such instruments of piety, as are troublesome to the body: such as fasting, watching, long prayers, troublesome postures in our prayers, expensive alms and all outward acts of humiliation.⁴⁸

Holy Living contains one of the first attacks Taylor ever made upon the idea that a death-bed repentance is sufficient to save a man who has consistently disobeyed God throughout his life. This was a crusade he never gave up. "Defer not," he wrote, "to repent; much less, mayest thou put it off to thy death-bed. On a man's death-bed the day of repentance is past."⁴⁹ It would be interesting to know what personal incident lay behind this idea. It seems such a conviction would almost certainly come from something actually experienced. No doubt a good many of those whom he met in his army days would be tempted to silence

46 Holy Living, p. 201.

47 Ibid., p. 198.

48 Ibid., p. 234.

49 Ibid., p. 237-238.

the exhortations of a too persistent chaplain with the promise to think of the repentance he advocated at a more convenient season; and it may have been the body of such a one whom he was called on to bury after a quick death in battle first impressed upon Taylor the wickedness of deferring the contrition until a later day.

Taylor also maintained that a "true penitent must, all the days of his life, pray for pardon, and never think the work completed, till he dies."⁵⁰ It was on this point that Wesley parted with Taylor. Said Wesley, "God's mercy obliged him to do more than pardon, it obliged Him to put a glad confidence in the penitent's heart that all was forgiven." Thus assurance became a dominant note in his effective preaching from the beginning.

Fasting is recommended by Taylor because it has always been practised in the Church and because it is necessary to prayer, to mortification of bodily lusts, and to repentance. He recommends it as necessary before receiving Communion. "Let us receive the consecrated elements with all devotion and humility of body and spirit: and do this honour to it, that it be the first food we eat and the first beverage we drink that day, unless it be in case of sickness or other great necessity."⁵¹ He sees

50 Holy Living, p. 237.

51 Ibid., p. 186.

little value in the substitution of fish for meats. Fasting must be a total abstinence from all meat or a reduction in the quantity.⁵² If it is to serve the duty of repentance it should be total and for a short time, and during this period a man must also mourn for his sin.⁵³ If it is as an act of mortification, that is to subdue the temptations of the body, it must not be for example, a total fast for three days, but rather a "diet of fasting", that is a steady reduction in the amount of food and drink taken.

Another important part of a Christian's duty is mercy and almsgiving. They are both an expression of our love to our neighbour. Mercy without alms is acceptable but alms without mercy are like prayers without devotion. Alms is the relieving of the poor and needy. They are to be given privately,⁵⁴ cheerfully,⁵⁵ according to our ability and men's need, not to support another in sin,⁵⁶ and without any hope of reward.

The final section of the book deals with Holy Communion. This was a subject on which, doctrinally, Taylor

52 Holy Living, p. 186.

53 Ibid., p. 187.

54 Ibid., p. 212.

55 Ibid., p. 214.

56 Ibid., p. 214.

was never very sure of himself. His teaching in different places is apt to seem contradictory. But one thing never changes, his devotional attitude to the Blessed Sacrament is always the same; awe at the approach to an exceeding great mystery; complete abasement coming from a sense of his own unworthiness to approach the altar, to which he was commanded to come and from which his soul drew life and health. He clung throughout his life to the doctrine of the Apostolic succession and consistently repudiated the doctrine of transubstantiation.

Taylor is also aware of the value of confession. He speaks of it as "laying open our wounds for cure."⁵⁷ He adds that a spiritual guide will be very helpful. To accept such a guide is to obtain "the prayers of the holy man who God and the Church have appointed solemnly to pray for us; and when he knows our needs, he can best minister comfort or reproof, oil or caustics [...] and the shame of opening such ulcers may restrain your forwardness to contract them."⁵⁸

This is a manual of direction for the conduct of ordinary life. From a literary point of view it falls short of Holy Dying or his Sermons, but there is a high

⁵⁷ Holy Living, p. 208.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 208.

level of strong, interest-holding prose. The argument of the book suffers considerably through being broken. There is not one evolving train of thought, but a bundle of disconnected reasons, all to some extent bearing on the same point. Consequently the reader finds his progress hampered a little. Taylor feels no devotional raptures and does not try to inspire them. His concern is with action in this world. Yet there is about the whole a sweet reasonableness and trust in the goodness of God and an air of holiness of life.

2. The Rule and Exercise of Holy Dying.

Almost as soon as Holy Living was published death took both his wife and his patroness, Lady Carbery. Both in the dedication to Holy Dying and in a magnificent funeral sermon in which he gloried in the memory of Lady Carbery, he speaks of her as one who had shown him the fullest and deepest friendship. Holy Dying is dedicated to Lord Carbery and he offers his patron the same consolation as that with which he has fortified himself. But the book did not spring suddenly out of his own sorrow, because in the dedication he says: "This book was intended first to minister to her piety and she desired all good people should partake of the advantages which are here recorded."

This suggests that Lady Carbery had prompted the writing of Holy Dying. but when the time for publication came she was dead, and Taylor could do no more than "dress her hearse with the bundles of cypress" which were intended to "dress her closet".

The first paragraph of the dedication reads: "I shall entertain you in the charnel-house, and carry your meditations awhile into the chambers of death, where you shall find the rooms dressed up with melancholic arts." This beginning is not the type to attract the modern reader and it is questionable whether the first paragraph is in the best of taste, for he reminds Lord Carbery of what is happening to the body of his wife whom he had buried a short time ago. This is not the only occasion in the book when the ghastliness of corruption is dwelt upon. But on the whole there is far less of the horrible side of dissolution than in other books on death which the age had produced. He goes into the charnel-house when it is necessary to read his readers a lecture upon what he finds there. He, himself, is neither repelled or attracted by decay. The human body has none of the horrible fascination for Taylor that it had for Donne. He can see it approaching its end and feels neither curiosity, wonderment, nor regret at its fate. When a man comes to death he has come to "that harbour whither God has designed

everyone that he may find rest from the troubles of the world." Taylor neither feared this end, nor longed for it. It is inevitable, it is God sent, and therefore it is well. Compare this with Rolle: "O death where dwellest thou? Why comest thou so late to me, living, but yet mortal... Behold I grow hot and desire after thee; if thou come I shall forthwith be safe."⁵⁹ Even as he avoids any extravagant clinging to this world, so he refuses to go into raptures and dilate upon the glories of the next. There is no mention of harps, singing, or angel choirs, but patience in sickness, self-examination and repentance for sin, followed by a cheerful abiding in the goodness of God.

All this is new in the literature of the age. It was a refusal to see death as a macabre monster, a black figure hurling poison darts. It was a breakaway from a literary convention which had been observed by many and had lasted too long. Taylor writes about death exactly as people underwent it in his day, and as they do today. He must obviously have been profoundly affected by his experiences at the bedside of his wife and of his patroness, but though these recent experiences have a share in

⁵⁹ Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love, and the Mending of Life*, London, Methuen, 1914, p. 74.

determining the tone of his writing the main explanation must be found in the serenity of his religious faith. His theology avoided extremes, it neither threatened him with the pains of purgatory, nor the wrath of God who delights in anger. He feels he can commit himself into the hands of a merciful Saviour because he has done all he could to fortify himself by a life of devotion.

The essence of the whole book is this: we must all die, we ought therefore to endeavour to die worthily; which is of course, a stock reflection of every moralist, pagan or Christian. He writes:

My Lord, it is a great art to die well, and to be learnt by men in health [...] All that a sick and dying man can do, is but to exercise those virtues which he before acquired, and to perfect that repentance, which was begun more early.⁶⁰

Here again he gives a hint of his opposition to death-bed repentance, but he is more explicit when he says: "But concerning sinners really under the arrest of death, God hath made no deathbed covenant, the Scriptures hath recorded no promises, given no instructions; and therefore I had none to give."⁶¹ Law here overstates his case. Repentance is always open to man this side of the grave,

60 Jeremy Taylor, Rules and Exercises of Holy Dying London, Appleton, p. 4.

61 Ibid., p. 7.

as our Lord demonstrated in His offer of forgiveness to the dying thief on the cross.

Taylor claims that these are "the first entire body of directions for sick and dying people to have been published in the Church of England,"⁶² and it is certain there was nothing like it in English before he wrote, for he disagreed so profoundly with the Roman Catholic teaching, that it is doubtful if any Latin manuals influenced him. On deathbed repentance I quote him at length.

In the church of Rome, they reckon otherwise concerning sick and dying Christians, that I have done. For they make profession, that from death to life, from sin to grace, a man may very certainly be changed, though the operation begin not before his last hour: and half this they do upon his eternal punishment in an instant, by a school-distinction, or the hand of the priest; and the temporal punishment shall stick longer, even then, when the man is no more measured with time, having nothing to do with any thing of, or under, the sun; but that they pretend to take away too, when the man is dead; and, God knows, the poor man, for all this, pays them both in hell. The distinction of temporal and eternal is a just measure of pain, when it refers to this life and another: but to dream of a punishment temporal, when all his time is done, and to think of repentance, when the time of grace is past, are great errors, the one in philosophy, and both in divinity, and are a huge folly in their pretence, and infinite danger if they are believed; being a certain destruction of the necessity of holy living, when men dare trust them, and live at the rate of such doctrines, the secret of these is soon discovered: for by such means though a holy

62 Holy Dying, p. 11.

life be not necessary, yet a priest is: as if God did not appoint the priest to minister to holy living, but to excuse it: so making the holy calling not only to live upon the sins of the people, but upon their ruin, and the advantages of their function to spring from their eternal dangers.⁶³

He also condemns the extreme unction. He calls it a "charm" and says "it must needs be nothing for no rational man can think any ceremony can make a spiritual change without a spiritual act of him that is to be changed."⁶⁴ How can such an action, he maintains, make any difference when a man is half dead, when he can exercise no act of understanding. On prayers for the dead, he unhesitatingly condemns intercession for those who have lived evil lives, for their state is determined; but he does not condemn making supplication on behalf of those that have lived faithfully and died trustfully.

Taylor did not intend it to be used only, or even chiefly, by those who are nearing their end. He wanted it to be read while men were in health and strength, so that they might fitly prepare themselves for sickness and death. The book is too long for any sick person except those whose illness does not make them incapable of sustained mental effort.

63 Holy Dying, p. 7-8.

64 Ibid., p. 8.

In the first chapter Taylor writes on "A General Preparation towards a Holy and Blessed Death." It is here he reaches the height of his literary glory. The grandeur of his theme is matched by the exaltation of his language and the range and beauty of his imagery. This fact has been recognized by most makers of anthologies, for in nearly every collection in which Taylor has a place, something is taken from this chapter. His debt to the classics throughout the book is conspicuous, not only in pointed stories skilfully borrowed, but in allusions, quotations and paraphrases. His subject is the inevitability of death and the pathos of it coming suddenly to one who, like the dead captain in the shipwreck, strong in earthly hopes and confident in the future, meets a catastrophic end. "They cannot pray because they are busy [...] they cannot attend to the things of God. Such men are like sailors loosing from a port, and tossed immediately with a perpetual tempest, lasting till their cordage crack, and either they sink, or return back again to the same place: they did not make a voyage, though they were long at sea."⁶⁵ Everyone of us has but the feeblest hold on life. "Death," he writes, "meets us everywhere and is procured by every

⁶⁵ Holy Dying, p. 27.

instrument and in all chances."

Taylor has a poet's mentality and proves himself in this chapter a master of prose rhythm. Yet it is not merely fine writing, for there is a sincerity; a pathos, a beauty in it that almost persuades us he is saying something new, when actual originality is entirely wanting in his basic ideas.

Holy Dying follows a similar plan to Holy Living. There are five chapters, each divided into sections. Here again he first considers the subject and then reduces it to rule. The second chapter is concerned with a daily examination of all actions to be practised during the whole of our life and in preparation for our death-bed. In the third chapter he treats the temptations which arise during sickness and the place of patience. In sickness we must not despair, or murmur against God's providence, or show peevishness. Then follow remedies against impatience and the fear of death. The theme of chapter four is the practise of the graces which a sick man can practise alone, acts of patience, of faith, of repentance, followed by an analysis of the Decalogue.

The book obviously comes straight from his heart and his experience. In the last chapter he writes of the difficulties a parish priest finds in actual ministrations among his flock. He shares the same experience as the

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clergyman of today of families who are reluctant to call the priest to a sick person until life is almost extinct. Throughout the whole book there are prayers to be said by the sick and by the priest.

Like Law, Taylor wrote for the leisured class. These were the people he understood best. He was typical of most High Anglicans of his day for he understood the spiritual needs of the Squire excellently, but had little message for the shopkeeper and the cottage dweller, except to suggest they model themselves on the best gentry. He valued most, spiritual beauty, delight in and wonder at the love of God, a life of ordered holiness, and worship within the Church. He was a valued confessor and without doubt was fully aware that true holiness must include both the numinous and the ethical.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this study of holiness and Christian perfection within the Bible, within Catholic and Protestant teaching up to the end of the 18th century, and in selected writings of St. Francis de Sales, William Law, and Jeremy Taylor, holiness is clearly set forth as a religious term. The overall teaching agrees with Otto in his statement that "Holiness — the holy — is a category of interpretation and valuation peculiar to the sphere of religion." It refers to the sacred as against the secular or profane. It testifies to the inscrutable mystery and otherness of God, to the separation between the Creator and the creaturely.

Anthropologists have shown persuasively that amidst the great diversities of religion something akin to the holy has been a universal element in the religions of widely-varying cultures. Primitive man felt himself to be in a world in which he stood over against a threefold "otherness": i) things, ii) other men, iii) Someone or Someone high and eerie. It is with this awareness of this Someone this thesis has been concerned, and one element has been isolated in particular, the "germ" of the holy. This element, Otto called the "numinous". It is an element that lives in all religion, and it is basic to Christian

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writings on holiness up to the end of the eighteenth century, as this thesis shows.

The numinous which includes elements of awefulness and dread; overpoweringness which is the unutterable majesty of God; energy which is the power that resides in the living God, whereby the "wholly other" does things; mystery in which God is surrounded and is therefore beyond comprehension but not beyond being approached; and the fascination and daunting of God, whereby man was allured and repelled, charmed and terrified; is found in the experience of writers in the Bible and on Christian spirituality.

The reaction of man to the numinous was "creature consciousness" with its attendant feelings of human littleness and abasement. Another sort of disvaluation awakes with this: uncleanness, pollution and profanity. A man must "see" the numinous to feel profane. Only the numen is truly holy. Only God is of transcendent worth, and, therefore worshipful: perfect, beautiful and sublime. Man, on the other hand, is sinful, and when the awe of the tremendum is united with the ethical, man needs cleansing, atonement and sanctification.

In the Christian religion the numinous and the ethical are conjoined and not by mere conjunction but by inward cohesion and affinity. The numinous and the ethical

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combine like oxygen and hydrogen in water and become indistinguishable in experience.

The non-ethical character of holiness is observed in Chapter II on Holiness in the Bible. Holy has to do with the very nature of deity. Only God is Holy, but there is a derivable holiness which attaches to things, persons, places and seasons. The experience of Isaiah contains all the elements of the numinous. In his vision there is awe, overpoweringness, energy and fascination. In the cry of the seraphim, Isaiah knows the truth about God: "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts." The foundations of the thresholds shudder and the house is filled with smoke. A sense of unworthiness fills the prophet, not just the abasement of creature-consciousness, but pollution, profaneness, sin. He knows he is unclean, because his "eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." He longs to be holy. Yet only God is holy.

The numinous is present in the teaching of the New Testament. Man's holiness is a by-product of the reception of the Holy Spirit. It is He who makes man continually aware of the transcendent dimension. The gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was an experience of the numinous. The Holy Spirit indwells the disciples in order to make them holy. The idea of the "Vision of God" is strongly based on New Testament teaching. It involves looking to

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God in worship, adoration and awe.

From both the Catholic and the Protestant point of view holiness is not primarily ethics, or intellectual knowledge, or asceticism, or interior or exterior worship due to God, or contemplation, or acts of piety. Holiness consists primarily in love to God and secondarily in love towards one's neighbours. Only God can make man holy: the Catholics tend to speak of sanctifying grace, and the Protestants of the work of the Holy Spirit. Both recognize the action of the Trinity.

The Christian in his pursuit of holiness lives a life which is essentially communion with God. The beliefs which are its intellectual prelude, accompaniment and consequence are themselves secondary to this communion. This "vertical" communion with God has as its consequence a "horizontal" relationship of communion with his fellow-men within the Church. The ethical fruit, the life of good works done to all men is one aspect of this communion with God, but in another aspect it is a form or expression of it. The goals which a Christian sets before him, whether the attainment of perfect love in this world or of the Beatific Vision in the next, are themselves richer forms of it; heaven is being with God; it involves seeing God; but it is still communion with God.

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Holiness, as Otto states, is a religious term, and therefore a holy life begins with the recognition of the mysterium tremendum. The response of the Christian to the mysterium tremendum is worship, for worship is an acknowledgement of transcendence; that is to say, of a Reality independent of the worshipper, which is always more or less deeply coloured by mystery, and which is there from the first. Directly this strange thing called worship is taken seriously, it obliges man to take up a particular attitude toward that Reality. The first and central act of religion is adoration, a sense of God, His otherness though nearness, His distinctness from all finite beings. Even though this gives way to a deep religious mood of dependence and gratitude it gives priority to the fundamental religious mood of adoration. The Seraphic hymn gives its very essence: "Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord Most High." That is worship.

It follows that worship and prayer, though their relation is close, and frequently overlapping, must never be treated as equivalents. For worship is essentially disinterested, but prayer is only in some respects disinterested. In practice there is always a mingling of motives. In every human society which has reached even a rudimentary religious consciousness, worship is given

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concrete expression in institution and ritual. The fact of worship is the complete fulfilment of the First Commandment. Worship, then, is an avenue which leads man out from his inveterate self-occupation to a knowledge of God, and ultimately to that union with God which is the beatitude of the soul.

This truth stands out clearly in the teaching of the Catholic and Protestant traditions. The teaching of the "Three Ways", the writings of St. Francis de Sales, Jeremy Taylor and William Law bear testimony to it. The way to holiness is first and foremost to attend to God. St. Francis de Sales writes of "fixing our eyes and hearts on God"; Jeremy Taylor is concerned about the man who is too busy to "attend to the things of God"; and William Law says seekers after Christian perfection "must devote themselves wholly unto God." To attend to God is an absorbing, adoring, passionate gaze they fix on Him. Worship is the means, especially praise, prayer and thanksgiving. It is an adoring contemplation of God in all his majestas, and mystery. In prayer they look on God, and God looks on them. They grow in holiness as they grow in the steadiness and fixity of their gazing. It is important to see that they are not setting out for ethical perfection. They set out for God. They gaze on God in love and longing and the Holy Spirit makes them holy as they gaze.

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St. Francis de Sales, Law and Taylor stress the importance of placing oneself in the presence of God. God is the mysterium tremendum. St. Francis de Sales in his method of prayer suggests that it must begin first with an act of placing oneself in the presence of God. One of the ways to do this, is to realize vividly the omnipresence of God, and say "God is truly here." He recognizes the immanence of God but emphasizes His transcendence. Jeremy Taylor writes: "God is present in all places, sees every action, hears all discourses [...] filling heaven and earth with His present power [...] we can no more be removed from the presence of God than from our own being." Because of His majesty one has to "make an act of adoration, that is, solemnly worship God, and place thyself in God's presence and behold Him with the eye of faith." Law likewise takes up the refrain, it is common to all three. "Let your soul place itself in the presence of God." Make representations of the divine attributes which show in some degree the majesty and the greatness of God. They are excellent means of "raising our hearts unto lively acts of worship and adoration."

Communion with God calls for prayer. After the reformation prayer for many Protestants was basically petition. The element of adoration, praise and thanksgiving was lost. "Prophetic prayer" as it was called was

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considered higher than contemplative prayer. Therefore within Protestantism, the primacy, in private devotion, of worship, contemplation, mystical prayer, was allowed to lapse. At the same time, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, within the Catholic tradition, prayer became in essence, meditation with a view to progress in virtue. But not for St. Francis de Sales. He writes prayer is not to be used solely for petition but is to comprehend all the acts of contemplation, it is a conference or conversation of the soul with God, a discussion with divine majesty. Contemplation is important to him, it is to be distinguished from meditation. Contemplation is "simply the mind's loving unmixed attention to the things of God."

For William Law, prayer "is the nearest approach to God, the highest enjoyment of Him," therefore he writes on the length of the time, hours, subjects and art of prayer. "He who has learnt to pray has learned the greatest secret of a holy and happy life." Jeremy Taylor warns of the spiritual danger in being apathetic to prayer. In the beginning he recommends an act of adoration, and then suggests that prayers should be uttered throughout the day.

To attend to God involves not only private waiting on God, but also public worship in the church. Worship, the mass, or the Anglican liturgy, and communion are important means to a holy life.

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These writers speak of the Glory of God, of His majesty, sovereignty, and the unfathomable mystery, before which man must bow in adoration and awe. St. Francis, alone of these writers, explores the unitive way, in the treatise On the Love of God. In contemplation the mind gives permanent attention to the things of God. Whereas Law and Taylor only bid the soul to attend to God, St. Francis carries this attention to its logical conclusion by suggesting that the attention should be permanent. The experience of the numinous reaches its climax in union with God.

What of the ethical? The attitude of worship produces "creature-consciousness". The holiness of God is not only His majesty but His perfection. In the presence of God man realizes he is sinful. His sins must therefore be forgiven, the body must be disciplined and mortified, for only "the pure in heart shall see God." So in the Catholic approach the purgative way marks the first stage of the soul's pilgrimage after conversion. The classical Biblical experience of Isaiah, who discovered that his terror before the majesty of God was removed by divine cleansing is followed.

While the soul must attend to God it must also obey God. In the Bible, the Psalmists and Prophets emphasize the ethical meaning of holiness, and the "Holiness

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Code" (Leviticus ch. 17-26) combines elaborate ritual law and moral law ("you shall love your neighbour as yourself"). The effect of the moral emphasis is evident in the fact that profane, which originally meant simply the non-sacred (literally outside the temple) has come to imply corrupt.

The ethical element is always present in Catholic and Protestant writings on holiness, but they are careful to point out that the way to Christian perfection or holiness is not to set out for ethical perfection. The danger here is that if a man should achieve ethical perfection he is in great danger of spiritual pride. On the other hand if he fails to achieve it, he will be plunged into spiritual despair. Either way he will be preoccupied with himself. If holiness is to be looked upon as primarily moralistic, in so far as it sets before men a rule of conduct by which it is their first duty to measure themselves, it is in essence egocentric. It is only one of the forms which selfishness can take, even though its rule appear superficially altruistic. This is where the numinous is important, for it is the worship of God that disinfects from egoism. By this test worship is vindicated as being indeed an integral part of the full Christian life.

The history of teaching on holiness in the Catholic and Protestant traditions shows that Christendom has tried to be faithful to the New Testament principle of loving God

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and the ethical consequence of loving one's neighbour. The problem has always been one of interpretation.

There are at bottom only three alternative approaches to follow in making moral decisions. They are: 1) legalistic, 2) the antinomian, which is the opposite extreme, that is, a lawless or unprincipled approach, and 3) the situational. All three have played their part in the history of Christian morality, legalism being by far the most common and persistent. Just as legalism triumphed among the Jews after the exile, in spite of the revolt of Jesus and Paul, it has managed to dominate Christianity from early days.

Legalism demands a whole apparatus of prefabricated rules and regulations. Not just the spirit but the letter of the law reigns. Its principles, codified into rules, are not merely guidelines or maxims to illuminate the situation; they are directives to be followed. Solutions are preset and they can be looked up in a book, a Bible or a confessor's manual. The great danger is whenever law instead of love is put first.

Within the Christian tradition legalism has taken two forms. In the Catholic line it has been a matter of legalistic reason, based on nature and natural law. These moralists have tended to outline their ethical rules by applying human reason to the facts of nature and to the

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lessons of historical experience. By this procedure they claim to have adduced universally agreed and therefore valid "natural" moral laws. Protestant moralists on the other hand, following the same procedure, have taken Scripture and done with it what the Catholics do with nature. Their Scriptural moral law is, they argue, based on the words and sayings of the Law and the Prophets, the evangelists and the apostles of the Bible. One is rationalistic, the other Biblicist, but both are legalistic. This is not to say that Catholics do not also deal with "revealed law", the divine positive law of the Ten Commandments, or that Protestants have not tried to use reason in interpreting the sayings of the Bible.

If it be granted that a holy life is a good life and life is to be disciplined by ethical standards, what kind of discipline shall it be? Two particular variations stand out in marked contrast, the "otherworldly", and the "this-worldly" code of ethics.

The code of ethics expressed by the writers in this thesis are of the "otherworldly" school. Throughout Christian history there have been teachers and sects who have prescribed for their adherents, and individuals who have prescribed for themselves, a life of rigorous self-denial, self-mortification and other worldliness. This life is not lived regardless of the active duties of society, but it

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tends to test the worth of every action by its cost to the giver, and the degree to which it requires him to mortify his own affections and exercise restraint upon his natural instincts, rather than by its value to the receiver. One gets the impression in the writings examined in this thesis that the ethical command to love one's neighbour is in order to save one's own soul, rather than a true concern for the welfare of the neighbour.

The asceticism of the Catholic and the Puritanism of the Protestant is a well marked type of thought and practice, which in all ages has appealed to the self-abnegation and cross of the Redeemer as its final example and justification. It has claimed to represent the sole ideal of life worthy of being called holy. It is this ideal which is set forth so clearly in the writings of St. Francis, Law and Taylor. It is an ideal that makes little appeal to modern man.

St. Francis de Sales, making use of the "Three Ways" emphasizes the theological virtues of faith, hope and love. He develops the moral virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance). The saint in the Catholic tradition must have all these virtues in an heroic degree. The whole of Part III of the Introduction is devoted to the choice of virtues. First, Philothea must perfect herself in the social virtues, afterwards come the three great

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virtues of obedience, chastity, and spiritual poverty. He then moves on to discuss the natural virtues: friendship, mortification, suitable dress, lawful recreations and undesirable games, balls and dances, advice on marriage, the procreation of children, and advice to widows and virgins. Obedience to the Ten Commandments, and an effort to practise the counsels are enjoined, although the faithful are not obliged to keep the counsels. The ethical demand is made clear in the metaphor of Jacob's ladder which stretched from heaven to earth and served equally for the descent and the ascent of the angels, and so the same love reaches up to God and down to our neighbour. "To love God in charity is to love God in man or man in God."

William Law also expresses the ethical element in holiness as self-denial, self-mortification and other worldliness. He writes "the chief business of a Christian must be to deny himself all those things which may either stop him or lead him out of his narrow way [...] self denial is therefore as essential to the Christian life as prayer [...] The commandment "to love one another as I have loved you" when fulfilled is "a means of self denial, of mortification and suffering to which the Christian is called." He recommends the virtues of poverty of spirit, meekness, patience, fasting, and above all the need for

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renunciation in every part of life.

The same spirit of self-denial and other worldliness is expressed by Jeremy Taylor, but he is more aware than Law that he is writing for the laity. The practical, ethical living of the holy life that he expounds makes his book to a large extent a manual of casuistry. The third chapter headed "Of Christian Justice" deals with a variety of practical matters such as obedience to kings and the ethics of buying and selling.

There is no doubt that in the writings of St. Francis, Law and Taylor, a holy life must be a morally good life, but it is to be interpreted from the point of view of rigorous self-denial, self-mortification, and other worldliness.

The other code of ethics which appeals for its sanctions to the gospel is the "this-worldly" code, sometimes called humanist. It recommends enjoying life in due moderation, and realizing the highest possibilities of every instinct and factor in the complex organism of personality. It prescribes social virtues as the ideal. It finds goodness in embracing the world and its joys, not in a flight from them. This is more in mind with the modern temperament.

Within the Christian Church these two variations in ethics have striven for mastery. It is therefore not

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surprising that writers on spirituality express one point of view or the other, or a combination of both.

It was said earlier that a second approach to morality is the antinomian. This approach stands over against legalism. It has no maxims, no principles, no rules. One must rely upon the situation of itself, there and then, to provide its ethical solution. One form was libertinism, the belief that by grace, by the new life in Christ and salvation by faith, law and rule no longer applied to Christians. This license led by inevitable reaction to an increase in legalism.

In the history of the doctrine of holiness there have always been those who have denied the ethical element. One could be holy without keeping the Ten Commandments, said Johannes Agricola (1492-1566), a friend of Luther. Within the Protestant Church some sects of English Puritans, some of Wesley's followers, the Anabaptists, the aberrations of the Oneida community in the United States in the nineteenth century, have yielded to antinomianism. Thus there came into existence the same moral aberrations as had found earlier expression in Gnostic groups such as the Ophites. These exponents of holiness are unfaithful to the theme of this thesis that the numinous without the ethical bears no relationship to the Biblical concept of holiness.

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For completeness, one should mention the third approach, known as Situation Ethics, which is becoming increasingly popular today, and stands between legalism and antinomianism. In Christian situation ethics man has only one norm, or principle, or law, that is binding and unexceptional, always good and right regardless of the circumstances. This is "love", the agape of the commandment to love God and the neighbour. Ethical maxims of the community or heritage are to be treated not as law or rules but as illumination of man's problems. Yet he is prepared to compromise them or see them set aside in the situation if love seems better served by doing so.

This view differs from the classic rule of moral theology that laws were to be followed as much as possible according to love and reason. Situation ethics calls upon man to keep law in a subservient place so that only love and reason really count in the final decision.

Ethics, however interpreted lie at the heart of the Biblical doctrine of holiness. In other words, ethics is simply one aspect of religion. The writers examined in this thesis recognize this fact. But they also recognize that holiness is not just the observance of a code of moral rules, for they never separate the holy life from its origin in God. The worship of the mysterium tremendum is an integral part of their understanding of holiness. In this

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they are faithful to the biblical conception of holiness.

However modern man seeks to express the meaning of holiness for today, it seems to me that it will incorporate a "this-worldly" ethic, in which man serves his neighbour out of genuine compassion for him, and in which the "love" of situation ethics rather than the "law" of legalism will be understood, and over all will be the numinous, man's communion with God. To safeguard the numinous and the ethical elements, one could perhaps speak of Holy Goodness.

The first meaning, that of the numinous, without the ethical significance can degenerate into crude superstition, magic ritualism, irrational fear, and the risk of antinomianism. The second meaning, the ethical, without the numinous, has often become trivial moralism, or legalistic demands making the gospel into law, and the Christian religion into a code of ethics, and so lacking the reverence which marks the original conception.

Neither the numinous without the ethical, or the ethical without the numinous is faithful to the Biblical significance of holiness.

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