

"When we consider how much the philosophers of this world have labored, we should be ashamed to be inferior to them"; "We should seek always to comprehend by reason what we hold by faith." Richard of St. Victor.

His works fall into the three classes of dogmatic, mystical, and exegetical.

In the first, the most important is the treatise in six books on the Trinity, with the supplement on the attributes of the Three Persons, and the treatise on the Incarnate Word. But greater interest now belongs to his mystical theology, which is mainly contained in the two books on mystical contemplation, entitled respectively "Benjamin Minor" and "Benjamin Major", and the allegorical treatise on the Tabernacle.

He carries on the mystical doctrine of Hugh, in a somewhat more detailed scheme, in which the successive stages of contemplation are described. These are six in number, divided equally among the three powers of the soul — the imagination, the reason, and the intelligence, and ascending from the contemplation of the visible things of creation to the rapture in which the soul is carried "beyond itself" into the Divine Presence, by the three final stages of "Dilatio, sublevatio, alienatio".

This schematic arrangement of contemplative soul-states is substantially adopted by J. Gerson in his more systematic treatise on mystical theology, who, however, makes the important reservation that the distinction between reason and intelligence is to be understood as functional and not real.

In addition to the De Trinitate, he was known for such mystical writings as the Benjamin Minor or Twelve Patriarchs, the Benjamin Major or Mystical Ark, and the Four Degrees of Violent Charity. The De Trinitate seems to be a work of Richard's later years, written probably toward the end of his life; the style, the structure, the content all bear witness to the workings of a mature theological life.

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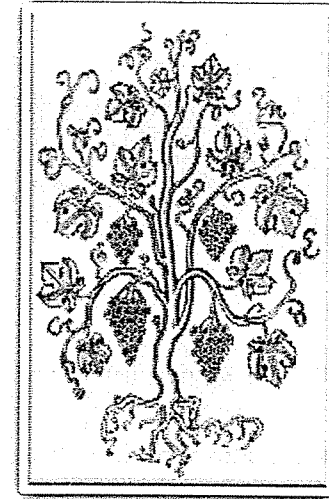
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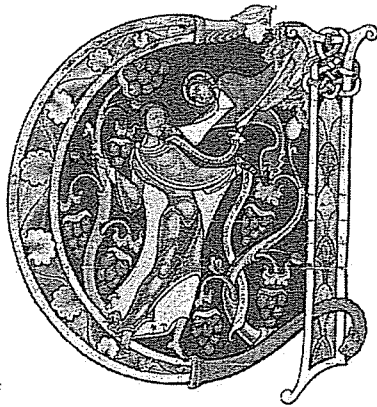


Contemplative Series

Volume Six

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Dear Reader

1 Corinthians 2: 7-15. We speak the hidden mystical wisdom of God, which God ordained before the world unto our Glory, Which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. But, as it is written, eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the Heart of man to conceive the things, which God has prepared for them that Love him. However, God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, yes, and the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of a man, which is in him? Even so, the thing of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the Spirit of this world, but the Spirit, which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given us of God. Which things also we speak, not in your words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the, Holy Spirit teach, comparing spiritual things with Spiritual. However, the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God. For they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. Nevertheless, he that is spiritual judges or discerns all things.

Behold I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears my voice and opens the door; I will come in and dine with him, and he with Me. He who overcomes, I will grant to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and with My Father on His throne. " Rev. 3: 20-21

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Contemplative Series

Is designed and presented to accent a fine library of the essentials required for further in-depth investigation of this genre.

The focus of this series is to provide today's reader with the essentials of background and investigative writings that are a part of our Christian heritage. The selected written works are a culmination of screening the best of this genre from the numerous documents, which are available. We selected these works based on a number of factors. The greatest impact upon the body of Christ, their insight of the genre, their related impact on other writers, and the feasibility of this text to be used as a guide, or in a standalone application. They are the primary indicators used, coupled with other factors in making our selection.

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For many of these texts, this is the first time they are available in this format and to these standards. These are not a scholarly reference work editions. For that purpose, there are other publications available. This series is intended for those who have a fundamental familiarity with the subject, and some of the writers. The intent is to address the needs of the readers who are journeying forward on their quest in union with God.

There are other selections to be added as certain texts are processed. Please look forward to these great works in print, audio and E-book formats at your local bookstore, though us directly.

Staff at Revelation –Insight

Series Forward

In this segment of editions, we have chosen some known writers and some not as readily recognizable, yet all are titans. This work is indeed not for the novice, yet, in keeping with Walter Hilton, "God does provide a variance of grace and understanding to some more readily than others." Discern your placement.

This work is a task of love, formed from a passion and burning love to come to the place where He is. This work is a culmination of numerous hours of research, annotations, reference checks and a sheer tenacity to know the meaning of what happens and how to move forward in the unification with God.

In truth, experience is key, it is vital, and it is essential to spirituality. Scholasticism and intellectualism indeed answers what we need to grasp onto, however, often times it transcends our understanding, and we must move with discernment and not be inquisitive to the point of contradiction. Therefore, these works are not written nor designed to be read as a novel, letter, nor other treatise. They are to be nibbled on, chewed and experienced and then when the need arises to return and continue the process as you are guided.

With contemplation, we have to relate and move in a transcendent manner, which is the substance of what we have come to know and understand. This particular series is designed unlike the others, to specifically unite us once again into a mystic unification with God. Philosophy only moves us in a horizontal plane. It is the same as if we were to meander about the infamous "Winchester House" where there are numerous doors and stairways leading nowhere, all in a futile attempt to reconcile the past and their demons. Contemplation is the passage which guides us into the proper passage, much as Hilton relates to his pilgrim in book 2 chapter 3. It is indeed our hope that these works will re-ignite within you a deeper sense of what our faith is and the way of life, we are to be exemplars of. We are not suggesting fleeing to a monastery, convent, nor the desert. It is the spirit of what these individuals have garnered, we are desirous for you to acquire and find within your own lives these same virtues and understanding.

Editor's Notes

- 1) I will however add that the majority of this work has some editorial alterations solely for readability purposes. The numbered sections remain to the original outline. Please refer to the notes of each work as to the *Sectional* layout followed.
- 2) Added footnotes, to address the meaning of his concepts. There are a sum of 412 notes, comprised of an additional 63 comparatives and additional 76 notations when compared to other English translations.
- 3) Regarding *The Four Degrees of Violent Charity*, although the VTT Series has sectioned this treatise, I have followed that of "Les Quatres Degresde la Violente Charite", Paris 1955.

Excerpt from "BENJAMIN MAJOR" COGITATIO, MEDITATIO, CONTEMPLATION

In order that we may rightly understand what is to be said about contemplation and form a judgment on it, we must first seek to determine its meaning, to define its nature and to observe how it differs from cogitation and meditation.

It should be known, then, that we mentally observe the same matter in three different ways. "We view it in one way through cogitation, examine it in a different way through meditation, and yet otherwise wonder at it through contemplation. These three processes greatly differ from each other in manner, although they are sometimes all found together in the same subject. Yet, while cogitation deals with the same matter in one way and meditation in another, the process of contemplation stands out as being far different from the other two. Cogitation rambles indifferently here and there in a haphazard way, without regard for the outcome of its rambling. Meditation strives with great assiduity, often over a harsh and difficult ground, to reach the end of the road.

Contemplation is with admirable agility borne up in its free flight, where so ever inspiration carries it. Cogitation creeps, meditation walks and runs; but contemplation soars above over everything and can, if it chooses, be poised on high. Cogitation involves no labor and brings no fruit; in meditation, there is labor and fruit; contemplation bears fruit without labor. Cogitating we stray, meditating we scrutinize, contemplating we admire.

Cogitation issues from imagination, meditation from reason, and contemplation from intelligence. These are the three sources. Intelligence holds the highest place, imagination the lowest and reason is in the middle. Every notion, which is subject to the inferior mode of thinking, must also be subject to the superior one. It follows that ideas, grasped by imagination, and many others above them, are grasped by reason as well. Similarly, those that are apprehended by imagination or by reason, as well as those that reason and imagination cannot apprehend, submit to intelligence. See then how widely the radius of contemplation expands, how it embraces and lights up everything.

Also, if three persons are engrossed in the same subject — one through cogitation, the other through meditation, and the third through contemplation — they may not follow different paths but are impelled by different motions. Cogitation always strays and wanders from one thing to another; meditation steadfastly keeps its attention fixed on one thing alone; contemplation, guided by a ray of vision, sheds its light over numberless things.

Indeed, owing to intelligence, the inner mind expands to an immense extent, and its keenness, when in contemplation, is sharpened, so that it gains the capacity to perceive many phenomena and a sharp-sightedness to penetrate things, which by nature are subtle. For there can be no contemplation without a certain swiftness of intelligence. It is intelligence that keeps the mind's eye fixed on corporeal things, and it is also through intelligence that the mind, while looking on corporeal things only, expands so as to understand the infinite. Thus, whenever the mind in contemplation penetrates into the very depth of things, whenever it is elevated to the highest regions, sharpened to search the unsearchable, whenever, with wondrous agility, it is borne almost instantly through a world of things without number, be sure that all this happens by force of intelligence.

I say this to contradict those who deem it unworthy that those inferior states of mind should be classed as aspects of intelligence, or that they in any way pertain to contemplation. Above all, however, we appropriately call contemplation that mental process which is concerned with things sublime, and which operates when pure intelligence comes into play. However, there is always room for contemplation in other things, whether they are manifest to the eye, known through study, or lucid, owing to divine revelation.

It seems to me, therefore, that the three modes of thinking can be defined in the following way:

- a) CONTEMPLATION is an unlimited clarity of the mind, suspended in admiration at the sight of wisdom. Thus it is an unrestricted, all-embracing penetration of the mind into those things, which are to be comprehended.
- b) MEDITATION is an eager and persistent effort of the mind in searching and finding out; or a steadfast and careful speculation of the mind passionately fixed on the search of truth.
- c) COGITATION is an improvident looking about, prone to aimless wandering.

Thus it seems to be an essential feature, common to all the three modes of thinking, that the mind has a certain faculty of seeing. For, if the mind sees nothing, none of these processes can be correctly denned, nor can we assert that they exist at all. It is a common quality of contemplation and meditation to deal with questions which are purposeful and to be wholly and constantly engaged in the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge.

However, the action of the mind, which occasionally relaxes its efforts in order to think of inept and trivial things and, unrestrained by discretion, rushes into everything, still greatly differs from cogitation as such.

For contemplation and cogitation have this in common that they are born aloft here and there in a certain free movement according to their inclination, and find no obstacle in their wandering; yet strives laboriously to comprehend every arduous problem, regardless of difficulties, to break down every hindrance and to penetrate into things obscure.

On the other hand, it often happens that while our thoughts go astray, the mind assails something that it eagerly seeks to know and insists on finding out. While satisfying its desire the mind zealously applies itself to a search of this kind, it exceeds in the process the due measure of cognition, so that its cognition passes into meditation. A similar thing happens to meditation; when truth has been long sought and at last found, the mind frequently takes it up, marvels at it in exaltation and persists in admiration for a long time. This means that the mind crosses the bounds of meditation, and that the latter passes into contemplation.

This cogitation, as we have said, rambles around in different directions, while meditation always follows its course in a fixed and forward motion to things lying further beyond. Yet what is the dominion of contemplation: "To behold with wonder the sight of its own delight." It is there that this process differs so fundamentally from the two others.

Benjamin Minor

Chapter 1 *Love of wisdom and its commendation*

*"Benjamin, a youth, in ecstasy of mind."*¹ Let young boys hear a discourse about a youth, let them awake to the voice or the prophet, "Benjamin, a youth, in ecstasy of mind." Many people know who this Benjamin is, some from books, others through experience. Let those who acquired that knowledge through learning hear it again patiently, and those who have gained it by experience listen with good will; for whoever has once met with him will not, I feel sure, be satisfied with a discourse about him, however long that discourse may be. Besides, who would be able to speak of him in a worthy manner?

He was a handsome boy, compared with all the other sons of Jacob, and it was fitting that Rachel should bear such a son. Leah, on the other hand, although a mother of several children, was unable to have any handsomer ones. It is known, as you can also see from this account, that Jacob had two wives. The one was Leah by name, the other was Rachel. Leah had more children; Rachel was more graceful. Leah was prolific, but blear-eyed; Rachel was almost sterile, but of singular beauty. Let us examine the inherent qualities of these two women, that we may understand more easily the true nature of their sons. Rachel was a seeker after truth, Leah a devotee of virtue. Rachel longed for wisdom, Leah yearned for justice. Jacob spent seven years in service for Rachel's sake, and yet time seemed short to him, so great was his love for her. It should not surprise anyone: his great devotion was proportionate with her great beauty. I will endeavor to say something in praise of wisdom, though, whatever I may say, will be less than satisfactory. For what is held in higher esteem, what possession is more gratifying than wisdom? Its dignity eclipses all beauty; its attraction exceeds all personal charm. It radiates with greater force than the sun and soars above the stars of the universe. *"I chose to have her instead of light."*² For day gives way to night, but wisdom does not bow to wickedness. *"She reaches therefore from end to end mightily, and orders all things sweetly. Her have I loved, and have sought her out from my youth, and have desired to take her for my spouse; and I became a lover of her beauty."*³ Is it then surprising that Jacob was aflame with love for his bride and unable to overcome the glow, the ardor of such great affection? Let us recall how immense was the love of him who said, *"I loved wisdom-above health and beauty."*⁴

For, as I have just said, nothing commands higher esteem than wisdom, and no possession affords greater pleasure. That is why everybody wants to be a sage, but only very few are able to achieve wisdom.

Chapter 2 *The longing for justice and the peculiar nature of the same*

I shall now speak in like manner about love of justice. We all want to be just, but perhaps we are unable to be so. In fact, however, everybody could be just if he whole-heartedly wished it. For to be fond of justice means to be already just; the case of wisdom is different: one can be singularly fond of it and yet be devoid of it. Past all doubt, then, the more you value justice, the more just and righteous you are bound to be.

Let us now reflect on the principles of true justice and find out why men detest so intensely the marital union of Leah. Why is it that the wedlock of Leah is so violently abhorred by nearly all those who sigh amorously for the embraces of Rachel?

Perfect justice bids us to respect personal enemies and comply with their desires, to relinquish what is one's own, to endure patiently wrongs done by others, to reject fame that has been offered. Naturally, those who adore this world of ours will regard this as a very foolish and toilsome course to follow. This is why they believe Leah to be blear-eyed and why they call her a woman with laboring heart. For the name, Leah means *laboring*. They find it very distressing and think it a great error to take pleasure in tribulation and to shun worldly possessions like a plague. And so, since she does not refuse her friendship to many of them without, however, allowing them sensual gratification, they call her blear-eyed or half-blind, not totally blind, because she has, in their opinion, no foresight in judging human affairs. If, therefore, by Leah we understand longing for justice and by Rachel zeal for wisdom, it is clear why everybody looks on Leah almost with contempt, while Rachel enjoys the love of all.

Chapter 3 *The two-fold source of all good: reason and affection*

I will now give my attention to the two wives of Jacob and explain clearly the thought, which is in my mind. The Father of Divine Light, from whom comes the highest good of man,⁵ has given to every rational being a certain double power: reason and affection. Reason that we may distinguish one thing from another, affection that we may love; reason to seek truth, affection to aspire to virtue. These are the two sisters given in marriage by the Lord — Oolla and Ooliba, Jerusalem and Samaria: the two wives of the rational soul, from whom a noble race and the heirs of heavenly kingdom take their beginning. Reason breeds right judgment, affection gives rise to pure desires. The former gives us the thinking faculty of the mind; from the latter issues the controlled disposition of it. To sum up, affection is the source of all virtue, reason the source of all truth.

Thus, Leah represents affection every time she begins to worry how to conform to the principles of justice; Rachel, on the other hand, is said to personify reason, whenever she is illumined by the light of that great and true wisdom. It is easy to see how laborious the task of the one is, how pleasing the faculty of the other. Indeed, not without much toil is affection restrained and diverted from things illicit to those, which are fair and just. Rightly, therefore, is this wife of Jacob called Leah, the woman *with laboring heart*. As for Rachel, what can be sweeter and more gratifying than to lift up one's mind to the contemplation of the highest wisdom? When reason expands to contemplate it, it justly obtains the name of Rachel. People then say of her that she *can see the principle, the beginning of things*, or call her *a lamb*. Therefore, that she may be worthy of such a name, let her fulfill the ordinance, as she has found it written, "*Think of the Lord in goodness and seek Him in simplicity of heart.*"⁶ Indeed, whoever thinks of the Lord in goodness, has already discerned with the eye of his faith Him who is the beginning of all things. He is also a lamb, if he seeks Him in simplicity of heart. Can you see how Rachel represents not just any kind of wisdom but the highest wisdom, which is sought in all simplicity? Now, I think, you will not wonder why Rachel enjoys such great esteem, since even her female attendant — I mean the wisdom of humanity — who, if compared to her mistress has nothing but ignorance to offer, is so ardently sought by the philosophers of the world.

Chapter 4 *How the mind, through love of wisdom, is often brought unknowingly to the exercise of justice*

Those who, as it often happens, are acquainted with the fact not from hearsay but from their experience, will easily recollect how Leah is put in place of Rachel, while the latter is full of expectation. It often happens that, when Rachel retires to her bedchamber, the spirit of everyday conversation grows less clean and is not yet fit for considering matters of divine nature. While this spirit is all ready for Rachel's embrace, and believes that she now holds it in her arms, it suddenly and unexpectedly finds itself embraced by Leah. What else, then, shall we call Holy Scripture than the bedchamber of a Rachel? Here, we are convinced, divine wisdom lies hidden under the comely guise of allegory. In such a bedchamber we look for Rachel, whenever, in reading Scripture, we seek spiritual understanding. However, as long as we are not adequate to obtain an insight into things sublime, we do not find Rachel, whom we have long desired and sought with diligence.

Therefore, we begin to groan, to sigh after her, to bewail our blindness and also to feel ashamed of it. As in our anguish, we ask whether we have deserved this blindness, the recollection of the evils done suddenly flashes on our mind. "What is more, while we reluctantly read the holy books and exert ourselves to concentrate on something else in the course of reading, that very reading often comes into collision with our vile thoughts and forces our minds to reflect on our vileness. Therefore, whenever we read matters of divine order, and find a stimulus therein in place of contemplation, we may be sure to have found in Rachel's bed Leah, not Rachel. For, just as it is the nature of Rachel to revolve in her mind, to contemplate, to distinguish things from each other and understand them, so it is Leah's concern to weep, to groan, to grieve and to sigh. As I have said before, Leah represents affection, lit up by divine inspiration; Rachel personifies reason, illumined by divine revelation. Leah is affection, seeking harmony with the principles of justice; Rachel is reason, rising to the contemplation of heavenly wisdom. So much for the two wives of Jacob. Let us now turn to their handmaids.

Chapter 5 *Imagination is held subject to reason, sensual perception to affection*

Now, each of the two wives has received a female servant: affection has sensual perception as her handmaid and reason has imagination. Sensual perception submits to affection, imagination owes obedience to reason. Each of the two handmaids is considered so utterly indispensable that without her assistance the whole world seems unable to satisfy the needs of her mistress. For, without imagination, reason would know nothing; and affection, without sensual perception, would not discern anything. Why, for example, does Leah become so violently fond of things that pass away, if not because, owing to the subservience of her maid, sensual perception, she delights in the many forms which they assume; now for the other handmaid. It is written, "*For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.*"⁷ We can gather from these words why reason would never be able to rise to the knowledge of the invisible, unless her maid, that is imagination, called up for her its image in a visible form. For, through the appearance of a visible object, reason rises to the cognition of things invisible, whenever it draws a certain likeness between the two. It is evident that without imagination, it would know nothing of corporeal matter, and being dispossessed of that knowledge, it would be unable to ascend to the contemplation of things divine. For we can discern visible objects only with the senses of the body but, as for the invisible, the mind's eye alone can behold it. The senses of the body are concerned with the impressions from the outside, but the inclination of the heart goes towards the inside. Reason cannot depart from home and stray outside, just as bodily senses are unable to enter the seat of reason. It would not behoove a delicate daughter, singularly attractive and of tender age, to roam about the streets, but it would be equally improper for the slave to burst without due respect, into the most private domains of her mistress. Therefore, imagination, in her capacity of handmaid, runs to and fro between her mistress and the slave, between reason and the senses; and whatever it absorbs outside through the senses of the body it obediently portrays to- reason on the inside. It is always at hand to assist reason, nor does it withdraw from its servitude for a moment. Although it has no senses of its own, it does not cease to give service. For, surely, we cannot see anything in the darkness, except what we are able to imagine, if we want to. Thus, imagination is always there, and reason can in every case avail itself of its subservience. Sensual perception, however, also bustles about, carrying out her frequent duties, ready, as she is, always and everywhere to obey Leah, her mistress. It is she who usually spices the choice food of Leah's sensuous pleasures, sets it before her, invites her to it in good time, and urges Leah to indulge in it in excess. Yet, in this capacity, she is different from sensuality, which inflames the mind with the desire for sensual gratification and inebriates it with the delight it affords. It is as sensuality that she precedes her much-troubled mistress on her escapades and leads her around

here and there. As Leah is half-blind and cannot see well, she is not ashamed to hold on to the one who leads her. That is why Leah (the mind as the seat of affection) now loves what is despicable, now scorns that which she ought to love.

For, while her eyesight is dim in the judgment of things, she still feels no shame to satisfy her bodily appetite.

Such are the two handmaids of Jacob's wives; Scripture gives them the names of Bilhah and Zelpha, Bilhah being the servant of Rachel, Zelpha the servant of Leah.

Chapter 6 *The vices of imagination and sensuality*

We have seen their servility but I think we must not keep silent about their vices; for Bilhah is garrulous, Zelpha addicted to drunkenness. As for Bilhah, not even Rachel, her mistress, is able to hold in check her loquacity. Neither is Zelpha in a position to quench her thirst with the abundance her mistress can provide. The wine Zelpha thirsts for is sensual gratification. The more she drinks of it, the more passionately she craves for it; the whole world will not suffice to satiate her sensual appetite. While she is having her fill, she always gapes curiously at her own drinking, firmly in the grip of her unquenchable thirst. She is, therefore, rightly named Zelpha, which means a *gaping face*.

As for imagination, it rings in the heart with such persistence that Rachel herself, as we have said, is scarcely able or altogether fails to suppress the noise caused by it. Often when we sing our psalms or say our prayers, we try hard to dispel from our minds various irrelevant ideas and images of things and, alas, fail in our effort. As we have every day to endure, much against our will, a noisy thinking of this kind, we learn by daily experience the nature and exuberance of Bilhah's chattering. She recalls everything we heard or saw, all our actions and words, and never tires of repeating again and again what she has already related in detail before. Moreover, often, when the heart is unwilling to give a hearing and approval to the narration, she, nevertheless, unfolds her story with no one listening, as it were. It reminds one of the decrepit old men or stubborn old women who have a way of talking to themselves and holding a conversation, as if other people were present. Not without cause, therefore, is she given the name of Bilhah, which means *inveterate*, since she copies the manner of obstinate old people.

Everybody is acquainted with Bilhah's garrulity and Zelpha's inebriety, except perhaps those who have an imperfect knowledge of themselves.

Chapter 7 Which are the principal dispositions of mind and how they become virtues

It seems now right to speak of their sons, and in the first place, of the sons of Leah; for she was also the first to become a mother. The sons of Jacob begotten by Leah represent, as we have said, orderly dispositions of mind. If they were not ordinate, they could not be regarded as Jacob's sons.

Leah was a mother of seven, so these seven personify seven virtues, provided we define virtue as nothing else than a disposition of mind, orderly and controlled. Orderly, when it serves the right purpose, and controlled, when it does not exceed its bounds. Thus, there are seven principal dispositions of the mind, which alternately spring from affection alone. They are hope and fear, joy and pain, hatred, love and shame. They can all be now orderly, now inordinate; but only when they are orderly, can they be reckoned as Jacob's sons. If there were no inordinate fear, the following words of the psalm would be void of meaning, *There were they in great fear, where there was no fear*" ⁸ Likewise, if there were no ordinate fear, this would not have been written, *"The fear of the Lord is holy, enduring forever."* ⁹ Again, if the feelings of love were not sometimes orderly and sometimes riotous, Holy Scripture would neither encourage the first, nor denounce the second. For this is what it says, *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might and your neighbor as yourself."* ¹⁰ Also, elsewhere, *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world."* ¹¹

A similar judgment ought to be accepted as regards other dispositions of mind, which at one time are orderly and therefore good, at another out of control, and therefore bad. Let us see how the good ones, which we have also called the sons of Jacob, succeed each other.

Chapter 8 How and whence orderly fear originates

It is written, *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."* ¹² So of all the virtues this is the first offspring of Leah: Without it, we cannot have the other virtues. Let him who wants to have such a son often carefully consider, on one hand, the magnitude of the evil he has done, and on the other, the power of Him who is to judge his offences. Such consideration gives rise to fear, in other words, it brings forth the son who bears the fitting name of RUBEN, that is, *son of vision*. For, in fact, that man in a way is blind and sees nothing who is not afraid to offend, cannot foresee his future punishment, does not blush with shame at his depravity, and has no fear of the divine power. However, once he begins to realize these things, he will also begin to fear and the deeper the consciousness of his wrongdoing, the greater the fear that will come upon him.

I think, you now see, how justly the boy is given the name of Ruben, considering that he comes into the world as an issue of a visionary power of this kind. His mother is right, when at his birth she exclaims. *"The Lord has looked upon my affliction,"* ¹³ because, at that moment, she truly begins to see and be seen; to understand God and be understood by Him; to see God through an intuitive feeling of awe, to be seen by Him through her reverence and piety.

Chapter 9 *How pain arises and how it is controlled*

When the first son was born and grew up a little, the second came into the world, because great fear must be followed by pain. The more violently man fears the penalty he has deserved, the more bitterly he bewails the fault committed. Let him bear in mind, however, that as soon as he turns to God and bemoans his action, he shall be saved, as we read in the psalm, "*A broken and contrite heart, oh God, You will not despise.*"¹⁴ What do you think? Is not SIMEON, that is *hearkened-to*, a well-merited name for such a son? For he who truly repents and sincerely grieves shall no doubt meet with prompt indulgence. A prayer, which comes out of a contrite and humiliated heart, is more likely to be heard; humiliated by fear, broken by repentance. Humiliated in Ruben, it is crushed in Simeon, whose remorse is drowned in tears. However, "*Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.*"¹⁵

Chapter 10 *How hope arises and how it is controlled*

Can those who truly repent and mourn bitterly find any other comfort than the hope of forgiveness? This is the third son of Jacob, named LEVI, which name means *addition* or *given in addition*, because he is added to the two sons of Leah born earlier. Scripture calls him "given in addition", not just "given", lest anybody should entertain any hope of forgiveness, before he became conscious of the fear of God and felt the well-deserved pain of repentance. For whoever after perpetrating a crime makes no amends for his guilt and flatters himself that he may go unpunished, will be shattered by his presumption, much rather than cheered by hope. By giving this name to the boy, Holy Scripture meant to impress on us that we could neither have this son born before the two others, nor could he be wanting immediately after the two who preceded him. For there is no doubt that the more often and the more intensely man suffers at heart because of his guilt, the greater the relief from anxiety and the feeling of security which divine indulgence and forgiveness bring to his mind: "*In the multitude of my thoughts within me your comforts delight my soul.*"¹⁶

It is for this reason that the Holy Spirit is called Paraclete or *Comforter*; He often and readily consoles the soul, which repents and is afflicted. He frequently visits it, gladly comforts and thoroughly restores its confidence in divine forgiveness, because He considers that by weeping the soul condemns its sins and weeps while condemning them.

Chapter 11 *When love awakens and becomes controlled*

From that time onward a certain intimacy begins to sprout between God and the soul, a kind of friendly alliance, as the soul becomes aware of being more and more often visited by Him, and not only comforted by His presence, but, what is more, filled now and again with ineffable joy.

Leah, if I am not in error, had a presentiment of this league of friendship, when, after the birth of Levi, she cried out in exultation, "*Now will my husband be joined unto me.*"¹⁷ In truth, it is God who actually becomes betrothed to the soul; we bind Him to us, when we adhere to Him through true love. Or rather, He binds us to Himself, when by a certain intimate communication He inspires us to love Him and draws us closely to Himself. For, is there a heart so crude and unfeeling that divine mercy would not soften by its very presence and allure by its sweetness? How does it happen, that having before always dreaded Him, it afterwards begins to love Him ardently?

You will now see, I think, that, just as fear, increasing from day to day must result in pain, so also hope, once it is born and proceeds in its daily growth, will generate love. In addition, this is the time when the fourth of Jacob's sons comes into being, named JUDAH by Scripture, which name means *confessing*.¹⁸ The reason for such a name can soon be found. We know that, if anybody approves of a thing, he is pleased with it, and the more he likes it, the more he approves of it. Is then approval not the same as praise? It is, indeed, the highest praise and absolute confession emanating from pure love and growing in its admiration of what is right.

Do you wish to know more clearly about the voice of exultation and confession, which is known to Judas alone, or, at any rate, more intimately to him than to all the others?

Chapter 12 *The distinguishing characteristic of love*

Consider now a heart that loves beyond measure, all ablaze with overflowing love. See what it feels, listen to the words it murmurs to itself about the person it loves and admires so intensely. What does it say? "What are the secret words of its inner self? It says, "Oh what a good fellow he is", how kind, gentle and amiable, how sweet and lovable, how altogether admirable! I so wish to embrace him and show him my devotion. Blessed are those whom he loves and deems worthy of his affection! If only I could enjoy its fruits, it would make me a happy man; but what a blessing it would be, if I happened to possess it! This, if I am not mistaken, is that voice of exultation and confession which always rings from Judas' mouth and is carried into the Divine Presence.

What do you say, Leah? How do you express your gratitude for Judas? What do you offer to the Lord in return for such a boy? This, she says, shall now be my confession: "*I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth.*"¹⁹ It is true and beyond all doubt that you make your confession to the Lord many times, nay even incessantly, if only you truly love Him. "*I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.*"²⁰ Indeed, you always praise the Lord, if at all times you love Him and long for Him; for there would be no love in you, if there were no approval. As I said before, when we approve, we praise; and the praise itself is nothing else than confession. Do not imagine, however, that it is enough for Judas to confess in his heart only; he must also make his confession in speech. He is anxious to inspire in others a feeling of love for Him whom he deems worthy of universal love and desires to be loved by all.

All this has been said about the confession of excellence. But what shall we say of the confession of crime? Perhaps Judas has no knowledge of the latter, although he so admirably realizes the existence of the former. I do not think so, because I recognize the fact that both these admissions pertain to the praise of God. I am also aware that whoever truly loves Him will joyfully do whatever he knows may serve the honor of God. The goodness of God is heightened not only by His bounty, but even more so by our iniquity. For if it is an act of greatness to accord favors to those who do not deserve any, what grandeur there is in conferring blessings on those who deserve punishment! What supreme mercy this is which no impiety on our part can withhold! He mercifully forgives us some things and grants others in abundance. The faults He forgives are ours, the largesses He confers — His. He is always there to pardon, always ready to lavish gifts in profusion. Merciful to one, munificent to another; kind-hearted to both, good to everyone.

Let us then confess to Him our wrongdoings; let us speak humbly of our material goods. Let us confess that our trespasses issue from us, so that He may forgive them in His mercy. Let us confess that our possessions come from Him that He may preserve and multiply them. This is what Judas does repeatedly, lest he appear ungrateful for indulgence conceded or for favor granted. So I think it is right that this son should bear the name of Judas, or *confessing*, because true love has always a confession to make. And so, since it is written, *Because God is truth*,²¹ if a man is ashamed to confess the truth, we can convince him that his love for God is non-existent. "*The righteous man, says Scripture, is in the beginning his own accuser.*"²² Therefore, whoever believes himself to be inspired with the love of God, or desires to be so inspired, will know how to act, unless, perhaps, he imagines that to adore God is one thing and to love divine justice — another.

This is what we know of the four sons of Leah. The first symbolizes the fear of punishment, the second — the pain of repentance, the third represents the hope of forgiveness, the fourth — the love of justice. After that, Leah had a respite from childbearing. She was satisfied with four, because she believed that she now possessed all the pure goodness that she loved.

Chapter 13 *How from love of the invisible the mind is urged to the investigation of the invisible*

Now what do you think goes on in Rachel's heart, what vehement desire shakes her whole frame, when she sees her sister Leah rejoicing in motherhood, and contemplates her own sterility? Let us hear her words and try to understand the torment she is in. This is what she says to Jacob, her husband, "*Give me children or else I die.*"²³ There is no doubt that if the craving for wisdom is not on the increase, it decreases rapidly. Now let us carefully examine the reason, why Rachel, since the birth of Judas, develops a stronger affection toward that child than to the other offspring of Leah.

As we have said before, the feeling of love is an attribute of Leah who incarnates affection, just as the faculty of knowing belongs to Rachel who personifies reason. The first gives rise to orderly affection, the second is the source of understanding or pure intellect. Nevertheless, what else do we understand by Judas than orderly love, love of the divine, of God and of the highest good in man? Accordingly, now that Judas is born, in other words, when a fervent longing for the invisible supreme good is surging, Rachel begins to glow with a loving desire for a child, because she wants to know. Love is all eyes. We eagerly contemplate the person we love. He who is able

to approach things invisible with loving emotion can, beyond all doubt, discern and learn what he wants to know. Therefore, just as Judas, that is emotion of love, grows, so also Rachel's desire to be a mother, that is her longing to now, becomes more powerful.

Chapter 14 *The first way, leading toward the contemplation of things invisible, is the way of imagination*

We all know how difficult, nay almost impossible, it is for the carnal mind, crude until now in its spiritual pursuits, to rise to the comprehension of the invisible and set on it the eye of contemplation. It has so far known physical phenomena only; nothing else has ever occurred to it, except the usual things visible to the eye. It seeks to see what cannot be seen, yet nothing but visible forms appear to it; it longs to look upon immaterial substance and thinks idly of nothing but images of matter. How then should the mind proceed? Would it not be better for it to reflect upon the invisible things in some way or other, rather than abandon them and relegate them to oblivion? Indeed, if the mind is lovingly devoted to a thing, it does not dismiss it easily; it finds, nonetheless, its effort to contemplate the invisible all the more difficult. It does, however, what it can; it looks into the unknown as well as it can. It pictures what it wants to see, by way of imagination, being as yet unable to see it by way of pure intelligence.

This, as I understand it, is the reason why Bilhah, Rachel's maid, that is imagination, is the first to bear children for her, before her mistress has an offspring of her own; because it is a source of joy to Rachel at least to imagine and keep in mind those manifestations which she is as yet unable to perceive by reasoning. We remember that Rachel is reason, her maid imagination. Accordingly, reason advises that it is more sensible to think of the highest good in any way whatever and, by setting before the eyes some imaginary beauty, to inflame the mind with a desire for it rather than fix one's thoughts on formless, spurious possessions. And that is why Rachel wants to give up the handmaid to her husband. We are all aware that this is the first path leading toward contemplation of the invisible; only those who have not had sufficient life-experience may be unaware of it.

Chapter 15 *How Holy Scripture alludes to the search for the invisible by the weak human kind*

We must not pass over in silence the manner in which Holy Scripture eludes to the search for the invisible world, and how it stoops to human weakness.

It describes the invisible by using forms of visible objects and impresses the thought of them on our minds by exhibiting the beauty of certain images that we ardently long after. As the case may be, now it promises us a land flowing with milk and honey, now it speaks about flowers and their aromas, or dwells on the harmony and joy caused at one time by the singing of men, at another by a chorus of heavenly birds. Read the Revelation of St. John and you will find the celestial Jerusalem described in various ways, as being adorned with gold and silver and decked with pearls or other precious gems. Yet we know that none of those things is to be found there, although we believe that a city so sublime should have everything. The truth is that each of those adornments only bears its own semblance, but none has a real substance of its own.

All these images give Bilhah ample means by which to serve her mistress expediently, whenever she sets them before her mind at any place or time she wishes and whenever represents them as an object of desire; for we can instantly imagine those things when we want to. It is by such compliant service that imagination makes itself most useful to reason.

Chapter 16 *The imagination of the animal must be distinguished from that of a rational being*

To continue the discourse about Bilhah and the offspring she is going to have, we must bear in mind that the imagination of the animal differs from that of the rational being. In case of Jacob's sons, the animal imagination should not enter into the question; neither will it ever be Rachel's wish to have an adoptive son of such a nature. Human imagination becomes animal-like, when stray thoughts impel it, without any profit or intent, to flit here and there around objects recently witnessed and actions recently done. This surely suggests an animal disposition of the mind, because a beast can behave in the same way.

On the other hand, rational imagination conies into effect when we conceive in our minds images of things which are already known to our bodily senses. For example, we can see gold and we can see a house, but we never see a golden house; yet we can imagine a golden house, if we want to. This is possible for the rational creature only; an animal is incapable of imagining

such a picture. We often indulge in imaginings of this kind when we seek to visualize the blessings or sufferings awaiting us in our future life. Our good fortune in this life never comes alone, unaccompanied by misfortune, nor does the latter do its work alone, but they are always mingled together. Moreover, although each kind may come our way in abundance, neither is it ever to be found alone. In the realm of fancy, however, the good can be seen all by itself without the admixture of the bad, and so can the bad without any trace of good in it. Again, just as in the world of reality we do not encounter some things only and no others, so also nothing in this world is at its worst or at the peak of perfection. Yet we seem pretty certain that in that other world all things are either the very best or bad in the extreme. Therefore, whenever we judge the nature and magnitude of the highest good or of retribution in our future life by the good or bad already experienced with our senses, and thus conceive an imaginary picture of the future, imagination of this kind is clearly rational and should be regarded as pertaining to Bilhah and Rachel. It concerns Bilhah in so far as it is imagination; it is within Rachel's domain since it is rational. Such then is Bilhah's offspring, the issue of imagination by birth and of reason by adoption. The one brings it forth, the other brings it up; from Bilhah it is born, by Rachel it is nursed.

Chapter 17 *The terms imagination, reason or will we understand in more than one sense*

Let it not confuse anybody that I apply the term imagination both to the mother and to the offspring. However, the mother, in my view, differs from her son in the same way as the instrument differs from the actions of the genus from the species. When a genus becomes united to another genus of opposite sex, it generates a species, just as a man through sexual union fertilizes a woman that she may produce the child.

We often give the instrument and its action the same name. For instance, we call sight that which we see as well as our faculty of vision. When the terms reason, will or intellect are used, they are sometimes understood as instrument, at other times as action. We know however that the instrument is always there before the action takes place, and that it can also exist without any action following. This action is caused by the instrument and not the other way about. Hence, it is fitting to understand the mother as instrument and the son as action.

When imagination is defined as instrument, it is that power of sensitive life, which can picture whatever and whenever it likes. Yet when the mind makes use of this instrument to conceive an image, a certain action must undoubtedly follow which we likewise call imagination.

I briefly mention this circumstance and will not dwell on it any longer. Let us now, in due course, return to the narration.

Chapter 18 *The two-fold speculation issuing from imagination* ²⁴

I have just said that only rational imagination seems to pertain to Rachael and that the non-rational is wholly unworthy of her choosing. Yet, there is one rational imagination, controlled by reason, and there is also another, mingled with intelligence. We use the first to draw up in the mind something that can be seen with the eyes, something conforming to the familiar appearance of visible objects, but we do not attempt to conceive, thereby, a thought of the invisible. We make use of the second, when, by the same method that is by evoking the mind forms of visible things, we strive to rise to the knowledge of the invisible. In the former case, there is imagination not without reason in the latter — intelligence not without imagination.

These are the two sons of Bihah: the first-born named DAN and the second-born named NEPHTALIM. Dan is primarily concerned with the contemplation of future sufferings, but Naphtali speculates on the nature of future blessings. Dan knows nothing but things pertaining to body and matter, although he searches for things, which are far removed from sense perception. Naphtali, while imagining visible forms, rises to the understanding of the invisible. The torments of hell are strange to our sense perception, because we are unable to see them; nor can we tell what they are. Yet, whenever we want it so, they appear by the agency of Dan before our mind's eye.

No true believer, on reading in the Scriptures about hell, the flames of Gehenna, and the ultimate darkness, accepts these images in a figurative sense but believes that these phenomena actually exist physically somewhere. Hence, it is not surprising that, when imagination calls them up in the man's mind, he does not at once seek their meaning by resorting to spiritual understanding; he is convinced that they are not meant figuratively but rather handed down as a tradition to be taken for granted. Accordingly, when we deal with imagination alone even though it remains in a matter of

this kind under the control of reason, we are right to say that the whole process of reflection is primarily Dan's concern.

However, when we read of a land flowing with milk and honey, the heavenly Jerusalem, its walls built with precious stones, its gates made of pearls and streets laid out in gold, what person of sound mind will accept this vision literally? Everybody will immediately appeal to his spiritual understanding and will seek the mystical signification of this picture. You realize that only Naphtali can be concerned with a description of this kind, where, as we all know, imagination alone without intelligence will not suffice. Therefore, it is correct to say that Dan is especially given to the consideration of future sufferings, and that Naphtali speculates on the nature of future blessings. Nevertheless, much that has been written of the torments of the future should be accepted in spiritually allegorical sense,²⁵ and, likewise, many promises regarding the blessings of future life (though these are described as corporeal matter) should be understood in like manner.²⁶

Chapter 19 *The first speculation and its distinctive qualities*

We should bear in mind what indeed must be known to everybody, that the flow of thought, confined to imagination only, runs through our minds fairly easily. Yet, when it is blended with intelligence alone, the more subtle it is, the greater are its difficulties. That is why Dan comes into the world first and Naphtali second.

It is noteworthy in this two-fold consideration that, by imagining a true picture of existing objects, Dan conceives a fictitious picture of the things to come. On the other hand, Naphtali, while setting before our minds a fictitious picture of something often referred to but never seen, rises to true understanding. If we resort to spiritual understanding, we are not at liberty to invent anything false, regarding the unknown happiness of the future world, although there is no harm in imagining the future torments in a different light from what they really are. For who has the power to know, in this life, what they are in the other? Everybody describes these visions in accordance with his own judgment, not such as they really are, but by fashioning them in his own way.

It is perhaps for this very reason that the boy bears the name of which means *judgment*, because in the fulfillment of his duty he follows at discretion his own judgment, and not the lesson of experience. Since Dan shapes in everybody's mind an image of the future his own judgment, I think we are justified in calling him to account as maker of such ideas.

Chapter 20 *The duty of the first speculation*

here is also another reason for Dan's name; the more accurately we describe the reason, the more helpful it will be found. Every time a venerable, devout man feels disturbed by improper thoughts and incited to illicit pleasures, at the very approach of the temptation, he calls up in mind the torments of the future and, as if this reflection, quenches the unseemly hints of his mind even before he begins to find delight in them. Thus, in view of the impending punishment, he at once censures himself and condemns the allure of a base thought.

Since it is by the agency of Dan that we curb the thoughts enticing and denounce, chastise and condemn them, we have reason to thank Dan that is judgment. Yet, why should we dwell on wanton thoughts only? Men of excellence also disdain those thoughts, which, without being vicious, are just as useless and empty. This is how Scripture refers to it: "*Woe to those whose thoughts dwell on futilities.*"²⁷ and "*The Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the deceitful, and will withdraw himself from thoughts that are without understanding.*"²⁸ What, then, I ask, will be the outcome of the thoughts, which enter our minds coupled with a certain illicit desire, since the Holy Spirit withdraws Himself even from those that are without understanding? It often happens that in our speech we at heart tolerate some fanciful ideas, which press upon us with great importunity. Should we divulge them carelessly without any attempt at checking them? Should we not rather censure them severely and, as I have said before, by calling to mind the future punishment, repress them and cleanse our thoughts of the temptation? Hence, it is written: "*Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.*"²⁹

The sons of Zilpah are concerned with the discipline of work to Leah's sons belongs the disposition of desires, to the sons of Rachael the assertion of judgment, and the control of thoughts is the work of the sons of Bihah. Therefore, each thought is judged within its own tribe, as it were; each error is rectified by its like; a desire, is amended by another desire; an action is purified by action, assertion corrected by assertion. As soon as we begin to play false, intend something wrongful, or act in an inordinate way, we are at once perfectly aware of being reprehensible. Yet, when people dwell on futilities, when they indulge in empty and inordinate thinking, do they all take the view that they deserve censure?

The truth is that many will condemn their own perverse action or vicious desire; few will find fault with their own inordinate thinking. Since, however, men of rectitude do not shrink from such fault-finding and it benefits those who want to be righteous to judge their own thinking, Scripture predicts and teaches it in these words: "*Dan shall judge his people, as does any other tribe in Israel.*"

Chapter 21 *The advantage of the first speculation*

While Dan keeps a stern watch over his own people and judges them with diligence, it may happen that he will be seldom found among the other tribes, a circumstance which should be duly condemned. For the mind which cuts short an enticing thought, as soon as it suggests itself, is not easily carried away by a perverse delight just as a crime, if checked before the mind has given its evil consent to it, is never carried into execution.

Dan, therefore, is bound to be vigilant: he must be severe towards all the others in the exercise of justice, so that the remaining tribes may live free from quarrel and dispute. He will always find in his own tribe something to inquire into and justly to reprove, though among the other tribes there may be sometimes found one without any blame at all. For, if the others commit an offence, they do so from their own will; but the guilt of his own tribe often just cannot be avoided. We never approve of an evil act nor agree to perpetrate it, unless we want to. An evil thought, however, can flash into the mind even against its will. It is Dan's duty to summon the sprouting evil before his court at once, that is as soon as it begins to throb in the mind, to surprise it and to condemn it, scrupulously to dispel it, to stamp out the misleading thought by a reflection of some other nature and to extinguish the temptation with a warning of future torments.

I think you now realize how rightly this son is named Dan, or judgment, lest anybody doubt if he has the ability to judge his people; seeing that he must carry on his duties incessantly, with severity and all by himself, so that if possible, there may not be cases left for others to handle.

Chapter 22 *The second speculation and its distinctive qualities*

Just as it is Dan's duty to repress the arising vice by depicting the future punishment, so it pertains to Naphtali to arouse noble desires with the thought of the reward to come. Naphtali in a wondrous manner stirs those desires every time he sets before our mind's eye ³⁰ the image of eternal happiness. He does it in two different ways: sometimes by using a metaphor, at other times by way of comparison. He resorts to comparison, when from the multitude or magnitude of earthly blessing he concludes how numerous and how great the joys of the future life are going to be. For instance, by often contemplating the brightness of the sun, that is, of material light, he ponders on how great that future spiritual light will be, if the light now visible to the eye is so immense and prodigious. How great, do you think must be the light, which we shall behold together with the angels, if the one that on earth we share with the beasts is so brilliant? Of what nature will the future light of the blessed be, if such is the present light of the wretched! In like manner, he foretells the exuberance of gifts, which are now invisible from the abundance of visible possessions. Who can tell how copious they are going to be? Who would be able to count them all? How great are the delights of our eyes, ears and other senses, how numerous the colors, aromas and tastes! In addition, if the sensuous allurements are so abundant, will not the eternal possessions be unlimited? If so great are the blessings we enjoy for a time only, how great shall we find those, which are timeless?

This is how Naphtali avails himself of comparison. However, as said before, he also makes use of metaphor, when he figuratively describes visible objects to signify things invisible. For example, he hears that in the Scriptures light is referred to where God's name is mentioned, "*Because He dwells in light unapproachable.*" ³¹ He seeks to understand that immaterial light inhabited by the incorporeal and invisible nature of God, and finds it to be the wisdom of God, because that wisdom is the true light. What is more, just as the material light falls on the eyes of the body, so that supreme light illumines the eyes of the mind.

Thus Naphtali, by pointing to the nature of visible objects, rises to the cognition of the invisible. It is obviously right, therefore, that his name should bear a double meaning, for Naphtali means *comparison* or *conversion*. He is in the habit of converting any known quality of visible matter into its equivalent as viewed with spiritual intelligence. Therefore, since he converts to its spiritual meaning whatever he finds in the Scriptures, he rightly received the name conversion. Likewise, since he continually

resorts to comparison, he justly bears the name Naphtali, with its other meaning of comparison.

Chapter 23 *What is familiar to us and even singular in the second speculation*

Let it be known that the kind of contemplation, which is the attribute of pure intelligence can be reached only through Naphtali's speculation and that the keener the speculation, the loftier is the contemplation. There is in speculation of this kind something singular and highly noteworthy. If compared to the activity of other minds, still raw and untrained, it is both easier to understand and more pleasing to heed. It occurs more easily to a person given to meditation, and appeals more sweetly to one who yields to it. It is prompter in meditation and more affable in argument.

Accordingly, Jacob says about Naphtali, "*Naphtali is a deer let loose and giving words of beauty.*" ³² The boy is called a deer because of his speed in running; and let loose because of his eagerness for running. The deer, a swift animal, can run about a great deal and, if let loose, is eager to run far and wide. With good reason, therefore, if I am not mistaken, is Naphtali named a deer let loose, because through the grace of contemplation, he is able to cover vast ground in running, and as there is sweetness in contemplation, he is fond of running. In his great fleetness our Naphtali now lifts the spirit of the contemplating man to the highest regions, now wirings it down to the depths, now rushes it through countless obstacles. Man's spirit has been trained in a matter of this kind only in a very small degree; so, having to endure all this, it follows Naphtali's benevolent instruction and often wonders how fittingly he is named a deer let loose.

It should also be noted how appropriately, he is compared to a running hart, and not to a soaring bird. For a bird in flight is suspended in the air, far from the ground, while a deer stays on the ground to make its bounds, and, even in leaping, parts with it only very little. So also Naphtali, in his search for the nature of the invisible by means of visible forms, usually makes some bounds into the unknown, but is not strong enough to fly high, because, while rising to the regions on high, he drags behind the shadow of corporeal things and so does not abandon the ground altogether. ³³

Note: Kirchberger adds the following to this chapter; "After Naphtali, Richard continues with the moral and ascetic interpretation of the other sons' names. Gad and Asher represent abstinence and patience, Issachar joy in inward sweetness, Zebulon hated of sin, Dinah shame. Finally, he comes to the other children of Rachel, and first Joseph who represents discretion. This virtue Richard holds as the cornerstone of the spiritual life refers frequently to it in his other works. Moreover, this section seems to have been especially appreciated by some of the English writers of the fourteenth century. It has therefore been translated. It is followed immediately by the chapters on Benjamin and the outline of contemplation proper."

Chapter 24 *How great is the pleasure, derived from the second speculation*

This is how the deer is let loose. We will now show more clearly how it gives out words of beauty, by quoting, perhaps, a few examples; we will thus convince you more fully. Listen to those beautiful words, full of ornament and sweetness, such as are spoken by Naphtali, or such as are fitting for him to utter. "*Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth.*"³⁴; "*stay me up with flowers, encompass me with apples, because I languish with love.*"³⁵; "*your lips are a dropping honey-comb, honey and milk are under your tongue, and the smell of your garments is as the smell of frankincense.*"³⁶ Can you think, I ask, of other words more pleasing and sweeter? Words, which would be listened to with greater delight and avidity? They seem to convey the idea of carnality, and yet, they portray the world of the spirit. Naphtali knows how to mingle bodily and spiritual attributes together and how to describe the incorporeal by the corporeal, so that both these parts of human nature may find in his words the source of their marvelous reinvigoration. This may be the reason why man has a taste for such words as these, since, as I have just said, they somehow reanimate both parts of his nature.

One other thing makes us wonder and fills us with admiration: As words almost always gratify us most, when, beside their literal meaning, they do not seem to imply anything else. For example: "*Your hair is as flocks of goats which come up from mount Galaad. Your teeth of sheep that are shorn which come up from the washing.*"³⁷ "*Your nose is as the tower of Libanus that looks toward Damascus, your head is like Carmel.*"³⁸ When we hear or read these and other words of such kind, they appear to be enchanting but, if we follow their literal sense only, we do not find in them anything deserving of admiration. Yet, perhaps we so willingly cherish descriptions of this kind

because they force us to escape to spiritual understanding from what we might call pleasurable fatuity of words.

If, then, we consider how fluent our Naphtali is in meditation, and how gratifying in speech, we shall the sooner be able to comprehend the words we find in Scripture: "*Naphtali is a deer let loose and giving words of beauty.*"³⁹

Chapter 25 *Virtue's two offspring born from subdued sensuality*

For the time being, I have said enough about the sons of Bihah; let us now speak about the sons of Zilpah. On seeing her sister Rachel rejoice in the possession of the child she has adopted, Leah herself feels challenged to a similar action. She accordingly gives her handmaid to her husband for his mate, so that she may likewise delight in the adoption of his sons.

If, therefore, by Zilpah we understand sensual perception or sensuality, what offspring of virtue can she bring forth, except such as will learn how to live moderately in prosperity, and endure adverse fortune with patience? They are GAD and ASER, the two sons of Zilpah, the first of whom personifies rigor of abstinence, the second vigor of patience. Gad is born first, followed by Asher, because we must first observe moderation in enjoying the material good, which is our own, and only afterwards have the courage to endure misfortune, which is foreign to us. These are the two offspring of virtue, whom Zilpah bears in pain, but nonetheless to the great joy of her mistress.

If, indeed, the flesh grows feeble through practicing abstinence or enduring patience, the mind, as a result, regains its composure and tranquility. Accordingly, when Gad is born, Leah exclaims, "*Good fortune has come to me*";⁴⁰ and again at Asher's birth she utters these! words, "*This is for my happiness.*"⁴¹ For my happiness, she says, not Zilpah's. For when the senses are outwardly worn down in the flesh, the heart retrieves its purity and integrity.

Chapter 26 *Rigor of abstinence and vigor patience*

Just think what peace of mind we can find in not striving after any diversions of this world, in not fearing any of its calamities. That peace is in the first case attained by Gad, in the second by Asher. For what worldly distractions are to be sought by him who rejects them for the love of abstinence? Again, no calamities of this world has a man to fear, if strengthened by the virtue of patience, he is able to triumph even over sufferings that have been inflicted on him. As it is written about the apostles, "*And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.*"⁴² Or, as Paul says in his teachings, "*Patient in tribulation.*"⁴³

If then man exults even in contumely or oppression brought upon him, is there anything to weaken his feeling of joy? All harshness the body has to endure for the love of God leads to the blessedness of the soul. As the body wastes away, conscience derives from the fact a feeling of joy. It is evident that the more unhappy man seems on the surface, the happier he is at heart.

The joys of happiness are twofold: to be free from that which you do not want to have, and to have what you desire. If, therefore, we call happy the man who does not endure what he is unwilling to endure, we likewise deem blessed the one who is well provided with that which he desires to have. Whoever, longing for heavenly blessings, hates the enjoyments of his generation will surely be able everywhere to repel the enemy by his abstinence. Rightly, therefore, is rigor of abstinence called Gad, that is *happiness*, since he everywhere tramples underfoot the allurements of his age, which are detestable to him. Again, if for the sake of God, man loves bodily affliction, is there a place, I ask, where he would be unable to find a source of such affliction? If, then, we are right to consider blessed the one who at every turn finds what he loves, it is also right that the vigor of patience or Asher, that is *blessed*, should be so named, as everything he longs for comes his way.

Here, then, are the two lovers — one a lover of God, the other a lover of his age. The latter, in his devotion to God, chooses temporal affliction, the former wishes for abundant temporal possessions. The first can find everywhere what he cherishes for the sake of God, while the second can nowhere gain the wealth he thirsts for. "Which of them is more blessed than the other? Here, again, are two others: the one hates the adversity of this world, the other detests worldly pleasures. Yet, when will either the former

be able to repel his enemy, or the latter be unable to crush his foe underfoot? Which of the two is happier?

"*Blessed is the man*", says Scripture, "*that has not gone after gold nor put his trust in money nor in treasures.*"⁴⁴ And "*Blessed is the man that endures temptation: for when he has been proven, he shall receive the crown of life.*"⁴⁵ These are Gad and Asher, the first of whom spurns worldly fame, and the second willingly suffers, for the love of God, the pressure of this world. We should therefore note carefully and keep it deep in our minds that Holy Scripture chose to call the labor of abstinence happiness, not calamity, and resolved to give the vigor of patience the appellation blessed, not miserable.

I wish to mention here briefly that under Gads name we must not understand mere abstinence from food and drink. Gad and Asher represent respectively abstinence from all superfluous enjoyment and patience in submission to any bodily affliction whatsoever; they are concerned with all the manifestations, which, as the case may be, either delight or molest the body through its five senses.

Chapter 27 *The appetite of the senses is not under control, if the ravings of imagination are not restrained*

Now would Leah have given her maid to Jacob for his mate, or adopted his sons thus begotten, had she not been challenged to it by her sister's example? For it is always Rachel's maid who comes into Jacob's power first, before the maid of Leah. If the roaming of imagination, caused by sterile thinking, is not first repressed, the excessive appetite of the senses cannot be kept under control. Therefore, let him who wants to hold his craving for sensual pleasure within bounds makes it a habit of never or at least rarely, to call it forth in his mind. For, assuredly, the less you think of delights of this kind, the more rarely and less warmly will you desire them. This, I should think, is the reason why Bihah submits to a man earlier than Zilpah.

Nevertheless, it is obvious that Leah would never make Gad and Asher, that is, abstinence and patience, her adoptive sons, if she did not continually keep her eyes fixed on the offshoot adopted by her sister Rachel. For who could ever persuade the affection of the heart to despise the prosperity of this world and not to dread its adversity, unless it were compelled, at the suggestion of Dan and Naphtali, to look almost incessantly to future torments or to the rewards of eternity? So that now, owing to the unremitting consideration of future sufferings, Leah, the affection, is easily persuaded to disdain earthly

possessions. Again, owing to incessant contemplation of everlasting happiness, she is inspired voluntarily to endure the pressure of the times.

This, in my view, is the reason why Dan and Naphtali come into the world first, while Gad and Asher are begotten later.

Chapter 28 *How through abstinence and patience the soul gains strength for total obedience*

Thus, now that Gad and Asher have been born, time has come for Ruben to find mandrakes, if only it does not distress him to go out of doors. Yet why should we doubt that he is willing to go abroad, knowing him, as we do, to be capable both of leaving his home and going into it? We must believe that, after his mother brought forth so many children and so many others were born to Bihah and Zilpah, Ruben, now fully grown, both can and wants to move in and out at his father's command. If then we agree that Ruben, as I said before, personifies the fear of God, how are we to understand his entrances and exits?

Ruben stays indoors, when within our heart our conscience makes tremble at the thought of God as being omnipresent. Ruben was abroad, when, for the sake of God, we give way to other people, to the point of complete obedience. Thus to fear God for one's own sake and to fear men for the sake of God means, in the case of Ruben, now to linger at home, now to be found abroad. Therefore, Ruben goes out at the time of wheat-harvest, and, following the rule of obedience, trains himself in works of justice. Yet, when, do you think, would he grow strong enough to attain the condition of perfect obedience, had not Gad and Asher (that is, love of abstinence and of patience) inspired him to scorn pleasure and to endure tribulations? For, there two things preventing obedience from being perfect: the concern lest we be compelled to give up what we love or to endure what is sinful. Once, however, the soul grows warm with love of abstinence and patience, immediately Ruben accepts the condition of total obedience, without any opposition. In fact, if one has in his heart resolved to suffer adversity as well as not to seek delight in prosperity, is there anything else in the way to weaken his spirit of obedience? If, for the love of God, I even desire every harshness to come my way, why should I not rather endure it in a spirit of obedience, for a greater glory of my tribulation?

Accordingly, after the birth of Gad and Asher, Ruben is rightly said to be going out of doors, because the fear of God, through voluntary obedience and patience, gains strength to reach the state of total obedience.

Chapter 29 *How abstinence gives rise to praise, and how carefully should the desire for praise be controlled*

How great and delicious is the aroma of one's good repute, as it spreads abroad, while no sense of modesty or poverty can stop one from indulging in it. These are the mandrakes that Ruben has found, and which he gave to his mother Leah. What else but high opinion is to be understood by mandrakes, which commonly spread their odor everywhere? Leah accepts them, when praise appeals to her feelings, when her mind becomes affected by the publicity given to that praise and delights in the perverse atmosphere of popular favor. Rachel, who burns with the desire for a child, asks for a part of the mandrakes, and Leah agrees to give her the poisonous plant.

For, indeed, the Holy Spirit does not in the least fertilize a mind to bear an offspring of virtue, if that mind, despite reason's advice, does not moderate its appetite for vainglory. The Spirit is one, which bestows fecundity upon both sisters; the same spirit illumines reason with the desire to know the truth and causes affection to burn with the love of virtue. Therefore, reason advises affection to rein in its appetite for other people's favor, if it wishes to find joy in its bond with the divine Spirit for the purpose of producing more and more fruits of virtue. And so, when the longing for praise is moderated under the rule of reason, the number of mandrakes under Rachel's control is reduced.

It should be noted how moderately Rachel asks not for all the mandrakes, but only for some of them; for, as reason well knows, it is most difficult for the mind, however bright it may shine, not to grow merry at the praise won. The fondness for human praise should first be controlled; then, if this can be done, it should also be utterly torn from the heart. That is why Rachel is said to have asked for; part of the mandrakes. Now, afterwards, Leah, speaking to Jacob, does not pride herself on just a few mandrakes. "*You shall come in unto me*", she says, "*because I have hired you for my son's mandrake.*"⁴⁶ For the mandrakes, she says, not for a part of them. When her husband was away, Leah barely agreed to give up even a part, but on his arrival, aware of her fertility, and incited, as she was, by a desire for him, she refused to keep any of them to herself. For it is no wonder that, as the mind encounters spiritual sweetness, it willingly forgets whatever praise it coveted before. Thus,

although the mandrakes in Leah's possession are of use to her, their number I grow less under Rachel's control. Rachel knows better than Leah how [to apply the mandrakes: whatever the affection of the heart appropriates for its own glory, reason, with far greater rectitude, reverses to the glory of God.

I elucidate this point to show that it was Ruben, of all the sons of Leah, who was able to find the mandrakes of good opinion.

Chapter 30 *How praise usually arises, and that true praise comes from right desire*

We know that virtuous deeds which breed the other virtues almost always extinguish humility. For the deeds of abstinence and patience, accomplished by Gad and Asher, which men must admire, commonly make the one who carries them into effect tumid, not timid; and haughty rather than humble. Is there anything more strange? And yet should we not extol the fact that, while, with humility decreasing, regard for other people often disappears, the reverential fear of God does not decrease but grows? We usually exalt the person who, having performed a noble deed, is not a little alarmed at a small offence she has committed against God or even against men: with justice then is Ruben said to have found the mandrakes after Gad and Asher had been born. In addition, since this is so, we must wonder why a person, after performing a distinguished action, has chosen tumidity, rather than timidity.

Let us observe that the mandrakes we have spoken of are said to have been found, not after so many children had been born to Leah, nor after the two sons of Bihah, but immediately after the birth of the sons of Zilpah. For the sons of Leah are concerned with desires, those of Bihah with thoughts, but actions pertain to the children of Zilpah. Now, how can we admire or when are we to praise these desires and thoughts, if we cannot see them? However praiseworthy may one's right desire be we still do not commend that desire, unless it is revealed in action. For it is through a good action that the right desire becomes known, so that it may deservedly win good name, or find, as it were, mandrakes spreading their fragrance far and wide.

Thus after Zilpah gives birth to her offspring, the son of Leah finds the mandrakes; in other words, after the right desire is revealed in good action, that desire meets with high praise from every quarter.

Chapter 31 *How the previously mentioned virtues strengthen both the discipline of the heart and of the body*

Let us not light-heartedly omit what we know about the sons of the two female servants. We should retain it in our memory for evermore that under their perennial vigilance and wakeful care our conscience enjoys wonderful protection and moves on surely towards its ennoblement.

For the first-born of Bihah tranquillizes that conscience inwardly, the first-born of Zilpah fortifies it outwardly. By the agency of Dan, the evil springing up from within, is repressed; by Gad the evil rising on the outside is repelled. We know that all temptation arises either within or outside within in our thoughts, outside through the senses. Now it throbs inside through the mind; now it breaks in from outside through the senses. At one time, there comes from within the unfriendly advice to do wrong, at another, the enemy from outside launches his weapon of inducement to pleasure. Since, however, Dan has regard to the discipline of thoughts and Gad looks after the discipline of the senses, Dan must naturally be watchful in his judgment of discretion, while Gad is bound to conduct a resolute struggle by practicing abstinence. It is the duty of one to allay a civil strife; it is binding on the other to repel a hostile assault. The first is on guard against the treachery of the citizens, the second against an incursion of the enemy. The former is all set against perfidy, the latter against violence.

If Dan neglects his duties, the mind goes easily astray, while if Gad proves to be slow, the mind is suddenly carried away to base enjoyment. However, what does it matter, whether the city of our heart gets lost by fraud or by violence, whether it is overthrown by civil dissension or a hostile band?

Chapter 32 *Without the discipline of senses there is no protection for the discipline of thoughts*

We should also bear in mind that the discipline of the body, without the discipline of the heart, is assuredly useless; but it is downright impossible to observe the discipline of thoughts without the discipline of the senses. Hence, it is evident that without the aid of Gad who has to keep watch against external influences, Dan labors in vain in setting at peace the minds of his fellow-citizens. For how is it possible for Dan, as judge of his people, continually to remove causes of dissension, unless Gad makes efforts to prevent the inducements to vice (a certain hostile army, as it were) from entering the gates of the senses? For although Dan remains always seated on the throne of judgment and incessantly settles disputes among discordant thoughts, he vainly toils, unless Gad with equal zeal fortifies our domain of thought with the discipline of the senses and inflicts heavy blows on the hostile bands of vice in a battle of abstinence.

Hence it is written, "*Gad, being girded, shall fight before him.*"⁴⁷ For only then does Dan keep vigil within our minds and to our advantage against the perfidy of traitors, when Gad shuts off the charging foe on the outside and assails him. Therefore, Gad first girds himself so as to engage with vigor in the combat. He surely girds himself, when he checks the dissolution of the senses by means of discipline; the fierce engagement takes place when he suppresses carnal desires by the mortification of the body. A great slaughter of the enemy follows and the odious army of vices is put to flight: the senses of the body are restrained by discipline from roaming about and the carnal appetite is kept by abstinence from its gratification.

It is in this manner, as we can all learn by experience, that Dan sets in order our domain of thought within, and Gad renders it strong without.

Chapter 33 *How the previously discussed virtues cooperate with each other in the guardianship of the heart*

Their brothers also stand by, ready to offer help — Naphtali within, in keeping together with Dan the peace among the citizens, and Asher without, in subduing with Gad the violence of the enemy. Thus, Gad and Asher are on the lookout for the assailant; Dan and Naphtali are solicitous about the citizens. Dan gives warning, Naphtali coaxes. Dan alarms them with threats; Naphtali gratifies their vanity with promises. The first punishes the wicked; the second rewards the good. The one fills the hearts with terror at the thought of hell; the other soothes the minds by the hope of eternal happiness. You will surely agree that Naphtali, by giving words of beauty, greatly assists his brother in a matter of this kind, seeing that by the sweetness of his speech he almost instantly inclines the minds of his hearers to do as he says. Apart from this, Asher helps his brother without, so that they both fortify the city against a hostile assault. Gad protects one part of the wall; Asher defends the other.

The first fights on the right, the second contends on the left. Gad, the prosperity of this world lies in ambush; Asher, the adversity, persecutes. Now Asher toys with the foe without difficulty, as he examines the place assigned to himself, he sees it fortified by a lofty rock of patience, and so he is able from safe ground to look down on and deride the enemy, who in vain offers resistance from below. As a result, the adversary, instead of molesting him with his attack, repeatedly gives him an opportunity to enjoy a triumph. Then, having scorned his assailants (that is, the adverse fortune of this world), he whole-heartedly rushes against the tormentors of his brother (that is, carnal delights), and severely punishes them. As soon as Asher joins Gad in this combat, such treat fear suddenly seizes the enemy that immediately he takes to flight. For seeing that the brothers cooperate with each other, he dares not resist them for any length of time.

Bodily pleasures are the true enemy of the spirit. However, is there room left for perverse delights amid the torments of life, which, as we have said, our friend Asher not only endures with patience but even ardently strives after for the sake of God? How rightly he is named Asher or blessed, after those words of the Lord: "*Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice's sake.*"⁴⁸

Chapter 34 *Mercy always accompanies perfect patience*

Who has been able to carry out with such magnificence that injunction of the Lord, "*Forgive, and you shall be forgiven.*"⁴⁹ Who has the power so readily and with all his heart to forgive the wrongs he has suffered at the hands of others, if not the man who has learned to rejoice in the torments of the body, rather than be aggrieved by them? Why should he not love his enemies, why not be indulgent to those who inflict on him the ordeal he asks for? Rather than feel pity for his body, he has compassion on his persecutors, so that he is blessed again and again. "*Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.*"⁵⁰ Oh glorious man, three, four times blessed! Blessed through his longing for justice; blessed with voluntary suffering; blessed for his gentleness; blessed for his mercifulness. Likewise "*blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice and suffer persecution for its own sake*"⁵¹; but blessed are also the kind, blessed the merciful. One of these is our friend Asher; that he may be blessed in all truth and many times over, he ardently thirsts for justice; he readily suffers for justice's sake; he takes pity on others, and cannot be aroused to anger. For, although he greatly hungers for the bread of justice, he nevertheless deems it unworthy of being eaten, unless besprinkled with the oil of mercy. As he is in possession of over-abundant wealth and carries off many spoils in his frequent victorious encounters with the enemy, he has become soft in his tastes. All bread, however rich, is tasteless to him, unless besprinkled with oil so that Scripture plainly says about him. "*Asher, his bread shall be fat.*"⁵² Who else, do you think, so abounds in dainties as he, that he may be able to sing the words of the psalm: "*I have been delighted in the way of your testimonies, as in all riches.*"⁵³

Chapter 35 *Commendation of perfect patience*

Just think how vast are the riches of spiritual comfort Asher abounds in, or how overflowing the luxury of his spiritual joy, seeing that all adversity commonly increases those riches rather than lessens them, while not even a torment can spoil his enchantment. For the harder he is oppressed in the body, the more he prides himself on it, the greater his inner delight.

These are the dainties which are thirsted for so passionately not by the poor and the unknown, but even by kings and princes themselves, and which they all accept with such great gratitude. I would not be telling the truth, had not Scripture said about him, "*Asher, his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield dainties to kings*"⁵⁴ Indeed, with what pleasure, we think, they feast on them; what an exquisite delight, we believe, they take in them! In addition, not just

any kings at that, but those most appropriately so-called, to whom that King of kings and Lord of lords restored their power over their bodies and among whom He distributed the kingdom of His Father. How pleasing it is, I say, to such kings as these, how they savor of it at heart, when they see a man who for love of justice does not fear suffering and preserves amid persecutions his peace of heart and tranquility of mind. For, if, there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that does penance."⁵⁵ How great will be the rejoicing over a righteous man readily dying for a just cause?

This is true about Asher: his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield dainties to kings. Oh what a wonderful bread that bread of his! How exquisite the dainties, which the kings relish so immensely, real kings that they are! Surely, those kings have now joined the nuptials of the Holy Lamb, taken their seats at that eternal feast, and live on the bread of the angels and the dainties of everlasting life. They are not overcome with a torrent of delight, and yet they insatiably hunger: the dainties of Asher. What is more, as they hunger to this day and thirst for justice, they are unable, in face of such great abundance of the joys heaven, to appease their hunger and to slake their thirst.

"Asher, his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield dainties to kings. Just think how bountiful he can be to the poor, considering that possesses in excess of what he needs to provide dainties for kings. As for those who still live in the valley of tears, oppressed by their weakness, how they admire him, how they rejoice at his firmness, if even those carried away into the land of everlasting felicity find sue great delight in his works. Where does this affluence of wealth come to him, if not from the spoils, taken in frequent victorious battles with the enemy? For it is evident that the more the enemy of justice grow weary, the fuller becomes the joy of conscience. "*Glory and wealth shall be in his house*", says the psalmist.⁵⁶ In addition, the Apostle, as if by way of explanation, speaks in these terms about the glory and wealth of this kind, "*Our glory is this: the testimony of our conscience.*"⁵⁷

This is that house or that city, in other words our very conscience, where the spiritual wealth is stored in abundance, when the sons of the two maidservants keep an anxious watch over it; namely, Dan and Naphtali busily engaged in strengthening peace among the citizens; Gad and Asher striving manfully to crush the foe. For, through the sagacity of the former, the citizens become pacified; by the firmness of the latter, the enemy is vanquished.

Chapter 36 *How and in what order true joy arises*

Now that the enemy has been routed and the citizens pacified, there is nothing, I should think, to prevent our city from finding that *"peace of God, which surpasses all understanding"*,⁵⁸ or learning *"how great is the multitude of sweetness which God has hidden for them that fear Him."*⁵⁹ Has hidden, says Scripture. Is it surprising then that those who love the world they live in have no knowledge of that sweetness, if God has hidden it even from them who love Him? For those who pin their hopes on spurious and I deceptive possessions are unable to find out the true nature of good. Hence, they say, *"Who shows us good things."*⁶⁰ The bread of heaven is hidden and utterly unknown, except to those who taste of it. Sweetness of that kind is a condition of heart, not of flesh; hence, no human flesh can comprehend it. *"You have given gladness in my heart,"*⁶¹ it says. Carnal pleasures, as well as the body itself, can be seen with the eyes of the body; but the eyes of the body cannot discern the delights of the heart, just as they cannot see the heart itself. How then can a man understand the delights of the soul, unless he truly, without pretence, enters his own heart and dwells in it? Hence, he is told to do so, *"Enter you into the joy of your Lord."*⁶²

Therefore, that inner joy is to be found in spiritual life alone. That sweetness, which one feels within is the son of Leah who was her fifth-born. For joy, as we have said before, is one of the essential emotions. When it is orderly, it can justly be reckoned among the sons of Jacob and Leah. Only then, we feel true and orderly joy, when we rejoice at the true inner possessions. The apostle wished to inspire us with a desire for such an offspring when he said, *"Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say, rejoice."*⁶³ These are the words of the prophet, *"Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you just, and glory, all you right of heart."*⁶⁴

In expectation of an offspring of this kind, Leah readily disdained the mandrakes, so that she might have such a son. For a mind that delights in being praised by others does not deserve to meet with inner joy. So it was right that, after the birth of Gad and Asher, Leah bore a son of such nature; because it is only through abstinence and patience that human mind can achieve true joy. Therefore, if you want to rejoice in the spirit of truth, you should exclude both spurious delight and vain anxiety. Whoever takes pleasure in baseness is utterly unworthy of inner joy, and he who feels disturbed by empty fear cannot enjoy spiritual sweetness. Truth condemned false unrestrained joyfulness in these words, *"Woe to you- that now laugh."*⁶⁵ It tried to eradicate empty fear with the following warning, *"You are not to fear them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul!"*⁶⁶ One of these

two emotions we overcome by abstinence; the other we tread down by patient endurance. False delight is rooted out by Gad, empty fear by Asher. Both brothers cast out deceitful joy and introduce joy, which is true.

Now, I presume, there will be no question why such a son is named Issachar, which means *reward*. Is it not reward that we seek with such great labor? Is it not true joy, which we look forward to with long persevering suffering? Every time we enter the abode of that internal joy of our Lord, we receive the first fruits, as it were, a certain portion of our due, a taste of this reward.

Chapter 37 *A comparison of internal and external sweetness*

Holy Scripture calls internal sweetness now taste, now intoxicated, in order to show how small or how great it is. There is little sweetness in the effort to secure the plenitude of future blessings, but there is much in procuring the pleasures of this world. To a spiritual man his present delights, multiply as they may, are small, compared to the joys of future life. Yet, in striving to earn those future joys, there is none of the sweetness that external pleasures offer.

Oh strange sweetness, so great and yet so small! But is it really small, seeing that it excels all the sweetness of this world? And, on the other hand, can it be great, if it collects scarcely a tiny drop of that future plenitude? Out of a vast sea of happiness, it instills only a very small amount into the minds of men, yet, when it pours that drop into a mind, it completely inebriates it. Justly, the partaking of so little out of so much is called tasting; rightly, too, that which befuddles the mind is termed drunken. Accordingly, it is just that: a taste, which can with justice, be defined as ebriety.

"Oh taste", says the prophet, *and see that the Lord."*⁶⁷ Again, the same prophet says about ebriety, *"You has visited the earth, and has plentifully watered it."*⁶⁸ I have heard of a man, overflowing with this kind of inebriation and entirely unaware of what was going on around him. *"Whether in the body"*, he said, *"or out of the body, I know not, God s."*⁶⁹ Think how inebriate he was, how oblivious he had become of the world, if he did not know his own self.

Chapter 38 *What commonly stands in the way of inner joy*

Surely, those who are still tossed by a surge of carnal desires do not deserve to go drunk with this sweetness. *"You have visited the Earth and has watered it."* ⁷⁰ Why, do you think, the Lord is said to have watered the earth alone, why not the sea also?

A mind, driven about by different passions and tossed by the bustle of secular cares, is not admitted to that inner joy; and, as it does not drink of that torrent of delight, how much less is it inebriated! We know that the sea is always in motion, but the earth stands still forever. So also, the other elements are in constant motion and, where as the earth alone does not move, they cannot stand still, is not earth, then, to be regarded as steadfastness of heart? Therefore, he who is anxious to drink of that cup of true sobriety, and who believes that he must be inebriated with it, should repress the agitation of his heart and concentrate the flow of his thoughts and affections on the desire : for one true joy alone.

This is that truly blessed land, the peaceful stability of mind, when the mind is fully composed and immovably fixed on the single desire for everlasting life. This is the land which Truth has promised to us in these words, *"Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the: land."* ⁷¹ It is the land which the psalmist set before our eyes with the words of promise, and which he promised to us with an admonition, *"Dwell in the land, and you shall be fed with its riches."* ⁷² The land, which our Issachar, "the strong ass", saw, aspired to and marvelously longed after. *"Issachar shall be a strong ass lying down between the borders. He saw rest that it was good; land the land that it was excellent. And he bowed his shoulder to any, and became a servant under tribute."* ⁷³

Thus, if we want to experience true inner joy and know it, we should go from land to land, from an alien country to our own, from exile home again, from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people, from the land of the dying to that of the living. Let us, too, strive to reach that land which Issachar saw and strove after. For, if he had not seen it, he would not have known it; and had he not known it, he would not have striven for it.

Chapter 39 *How inner sweetness both gives the soul strength for acts of fortitude and bends it to humility*

Having become the ass, destined to work on behalf of this land, Issachar, now endowed with strength, bowed his shoulder to carry tend became a servant under tribute. He had suddenly grown worthless fen his own eyes because he thought of himself as an ass; that is, an animal cheaper than any other. He strongly desired to possess the land, which he saw and he bravely persisted in the resolve to undertake Every labor for its sake. He had seen all too well that, confronted by the excellence of that land, *"all our justices were as the rag of a menstruous woman."* ⁷⁴ However, he had also seen that *"the bufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in us."* ⁷⁵ Thus, he acknowledged his worthlessness in one thing and tenacity in another; humbled because of one and strengthened by the other, he readily bent down the shoulder of his fortitude to assume every burden, and, in so adding to divine glory, not to his own, he paid tribute worthy of a king.

Would you like to hear how another man made himself lowly in a similar way and yet grew strong and fit to endure every labor? This is what he said, *"I am become as a beast before you."* ⁷⁶, and elsewhere, *"For your sake we are killed all the day long."* ⁷⁷ See how humble, and yet how brave: cheap as a beast, strong enough to endure mortification.

Issachar, the strong ass, lying down between the borders, saw rest that it was good, and the land that it was excellent. Since he made his abode between the borders, he had nearly, not wholly, abandoned the land of the dying; almost, not entirely, had he taken hold of the land of the living. As he had been contented with the fewest and cheapest things of life, he held the remotest parts of this unhappy land; and as, frequently in a state of rapture, he had a foretaste of the highest good of perennial life, he was also able to reach the threshold of the blessed land. He would not depart from this land entirely, because he did not spurn this life's good and, at the same time, could not attain the future life except on its very edge. This land he tolerated, as humans must; that one he yearned for as a land of joy. He was making efforts to desert this one but could not; he sought to enter the other wholly but was not able. So he did what he could: he dwelt between the borders. Day after day, he strove to reach that land, and each time he would fall back to this one. Thus, he lingered between the borders.

Is it surprising that he saw the land on whose boundary he dwelt? Is it strange, I ask, that he saw it, understood it and longed for it? So he bowed his shoulder to carry and became a servant under tribute. He saw, as it is said, rest that it was good. Therefore, there is rest in that land, good rest. For, if there were no rest, he would not have seen it. Moreover, were it not good, he would never have, for its sake, bowed his shoulder to carry "*The meek, says the prophet, shall inherit the land, and shall delight in abundance of peace.*"⁷⁸ See what sort of land it is. There is peace and rest in it. Full peace, good rest; undisturbed tranquility, peaceful repose. There is no labor to be found in that land, yet one cannot reach it without labor. One labors because of it, not in it. Outside that land, no true rest is to be found.

There are two things, the land, and the rest; two against two; two blessings against two evils. There are two great evils: misery and concupiscence; that is, punishment and guilt. And two great blessings — tranquility and steadfastness. Peace of mind against misery, steadfastness of heart against concupiscence. To feel no annoyance means to be well at rest. To be tossed by no surge of concupiscence cans, beyond doubt, to dwell in that land already. Such is rest in a land.

A mind that has not yet wholly composed itself for inner joy has no experience of the nature of true rest. Woe to wretched me who, until this day, lives roving and fugitive on earth. Roving by yielding to concupiscence; fugitive by running away from misery. That which covets is never there; what I flee from I find at every turn. Desire for worldly pleasures makes me rove; misery renders me a fugitive. A sinister and, indeed, a land of misery, in which I must live such a life, a land of misery and darkness, a land with no harmony in it, and with the shadow of death prevailing. Surely, a land of this kind is not steadfastness of heart, but harshness and insensibility of mind. Yet, "*your good Spirit, Lord, shall lead me into the right land.*"⁷⁹ Into such and as Issachar saw at last and aspired after, because rest was good in it and the land excellent.

Happy is the man who has been able even for a while to forget all [his sufferings and in some measure at least obtain that inner peace or rest. Nevertheless, how very happy is he who can gather up his scattered heart and fix his desire on the source of true happiness! The happiness of the first is a blessing, but that of the second is the highest good of all. It was bordering on the latter that Issachar saw rest that it was good and the land that it was excellent. For it is a good thing to be removed from all evil, but it is much better, in fact, best of all, to cleave entirely to the greatest of all blessings. Aware of this, Issachar was unwilling to move further away from land of this

kind. Dwelling between the borders, he remained in its vicinity, but eagerly strove, at least by rare exits and round about ways to reach it suddenly and furtively, and to eat more often of the fruits of that land.

For, as you surely realize, the fruit of that land is of wondrous ineffable sublimity. If the human mind becomes now and again satiated and somewhat fertilized with it, it all at once gains singular fortitude to fight every peril. It soon grows so strong in its aversion for vice that it needs but little effort to dismiss its own vicious thought, unless that mind is also anxious to proceed manfully against the vice in others and annihilate it by forcible censure.

Chapter 40 *In what manner and in what order aversion for vice arises*

Let him now come who both has the strength to face all the perils, and who is a high-spirited enemy of every vice.

Therefore, after Issachar ZABULON is born, whose name signifies habitation of strength. For by Zebulon we understand aversion for vice. Honest, orderly aversion for vice. No doubt, the prophet wanted to set in order this affection of ours when he said, "*Be angry, and do not sin.*"⁸⁰ What, however, does it mean to grow angry without sinning, and not be guilty of sinning, when in anger? It is to be truly kind to other people and yet, for their own good, to fret and fume at their depravity. The same prophet was intimating that he had a son of Zabulon's nature, when he said: "*I have hated them with a perfect hatred.*"⁸¹ and again, "*have hated and abhorred iniquity.*"⁸²

Zebulon, then, is that devout soldier of God who never wearies of fighting the wars of the Lord, and to whom Holy Scripture gives the familiar designation "zeal for the Lord", or "zeal of righteousness." "*The zeal of your house, oh Lord, has eaten me up, and the reproaches of them that reproached you are fallen upon me.*"⁸³ Again, "*My zeal has made me pine away, because my enemies forgot your words.*"⁸⁴ Elsewhere, "*With zeal have I been zealous for the Lord.*"⁸⁵ Phinehas was also moved with zeal of the Lord and received perpetual priesthood.⁸⁶ Yet, from where, do you suppose, comes that great fortitude and prodigious firmness? Elias rose alone against a hundred and fifty prophets of Baal; Phinehas burst single-handed into the camp of the Madianites and ran the adulterers through with his own sword. See how mighty they become, what strength is given to those who eat the fruits of the land we have spoken of before, and who are thus revived by its inner sweetness.

Rightly, therefore, after Issachar, whose name is interpreted as *reward*, Zebulon, that is, *habitation of strength*, is brought forth, because, after tasting of the sweetness of eternal recompense, the mind gains a marvelous power of resistance against temptation; it suddenly decides to slight its own dangers and resolutely avenges the injuries done to the Lord. This is how Moses, the meekest of all those who stayed behind in the land was, after forty days of fasting, inspirited by a wondrous over-abundance of spiritual delight; he suddenly broke into such a fury against the contrivers and worshippers of the idol that, having assembled those who pledged themselves to the Lord, he went through the camp from end to end inflicting punishing blows and put three thousand offenders to the sword.⁸⁷ Thus Zebulon comes into the world after Issachar, because, once inner sweetness has been tasted, aversion for vice arises, and strength inspiring terror is acquired. It is our friend Zebulon who by being angry is accustomed to placate the wrath of God. Raging piously, he smites the vices of men, but while he does not spare, as it were, the vices, he acts sparingly towards the guilty. For nothing so pleases God, nothing so placates Him, as zeal, born in a man's soul.

Chapter 41 *It is a rare thing for an aversion to vice to become a zeal for righteousness*

A great many people have, by the grace of God, conceived in their minds and begotten offspring endowed with the other virtues, but they could not have Zebulon for a son. We can see today how numerous they are, the poor in spirit, rejoicing in hope, burning with affection, strictly refraining from iniquity, suffering acutely and yet lacking zeal, far too lukewarm and altogether inactive. Some, as if in observance of their humility, do not venture to reprove the offenders; others shrink from denouncing them lest they themselves appear to be disturbing the brotherhood of men. So also other people in other and yet other ways imagine that their reluctance to be zealous for the Lord is due to their virtuous conduct or believe it to be one of the virtues. On the other hand, there are many who think they are moved by zeal for righteousness because they act in a spirit of anger. What they actually do out of hatred for other men, they believe or pretend to be doing because of their aversion to vice.

But, pray, let people of this kind, who believe they have begotten Zebulon already, ask themselves: let them ask whether they truly respect those whom, at Zebulon's bidding, as it were, they censure so bitterly. Perhaps they themselves have as yet been unable to learn by experience the nature of

spiritual delight. And yet they lash or upbraid others, scourge them or castigate and, by doing so, wish to appear to be calling them into that world of spiritual joy, which they themselves do not know. We must believe that those who know the inner joy by experience and with such pains urge the guilty to enter its abode will proceed against them with affection rather than severity.

We read that Leah gave birth to Judas and Issachar before Zebulon was born; and we have already said that Judas embodies affection, whereas Issachar personifies insight into spiritual joy. It is essential that Judas and Issachar should be born first, since the mind, being until then destitute of the feeling of love and of inner sweetness, cannot in its zeal observe a due measure of rectitude. For love teaches how to handle those who are chastised by Zebulon, and the knowledge of spiritual joy reveals to us the nature of that sweetness towards which men are drawn or even driven when, forbidden to indulge in external, that is, carnal pleasures, they are, at Zebulon's insistence, harshly reprimanded. Thus, Judas should teach the manner of chiding the offender, while Issachar has to teach the cause of the chiding, so that with Judas' restraining influence the chastising may be done in a spirit of leniency, and with Issachar's prompting the cause of reprimand may be clearly shown.

Zebulon should see to it that both his brothers make themselves useful, so that his blows against the offenders may be put to good use and not be struck as a punishment.

Chapter 42 *The duty of a truly zealous man*

However, it is Zebulon's duty not only to reprove the offenders but also to defend them in time of tribulation against those seeking revenge; if he fails to do so, his zeal is not sincere, nor can he be truly named Zebulon should he show greater readiness to strike a blow than to give protection. Not in vain has this sixth and latest son of Leah been named *habitation of strength*.

Note how a house protects all its inhabitants from above and walls them around on each side and yet it cannot be a habitation of strength unless it is strongly built and solidly fortified. In the same way, zeal so perfect that it may by right be called Zebulon, or even be Zebulon, should by teaching and prayer protect the weaker against the powers of evil, defend them on all sides against the dangers of worldly life and persevere in both these courses indefatigably and invincibly. It is necessary, therefore, to keep watch on one side against the snares of the devil, on the other against the pressure of the

world. If you have the vigor to resist both, you are beyond doubt the habitation of strength, worthy of the name Zebulon, which indeed you deserve.

Zebulon must show greater readiness and always greater alacrity in enduring injury than in inflicting it on others. Moreover, as he considers it essential to be angry with those who at times by doing wrong expose themselves to his indignation, he is more grieved, when compelled to strike for an offence than when forced to punish them for their own good.

56He therefore readily exposes himself to perils as they come and resists the vehemence of raging tempests. In other words, he dwells on the seashore and sets up his dwelling in the road of the ships. He does it all in vain, however, if he is frightened of the perils of the sea- that is, of worldly pressure; unless he soothingly welcomes the tempest-worn mariners cast ashore by heavy storms, and generously warms them.

Chapter 43 *Not only against rage but also against deceit should a zealous man keep vigil "Zebulon", it is said, "shall dwell on the seashore, and in the road of ships, reaching as far as Sidon."* ⁸⁸

What other reason, do you think, there is for his dwelling on the seashore than that he must fortify the farthest reaches of the earth, and as the habitation of strength protect the weaker members of the Church? He consequently enters the fray on behalf of those imperiled whom he sees harassed by incessant storms and persecutions. He stays, as it is written, in the road of ships that he may always be ready to bring help to the shipwrecked. For, when they have been overwhelmed by lasting temptations and, after suffering shipwreck, as it were, have now almost been crushed, he knows how to welcome them with comforting words, restore their feeling of security and call them back into a haven of tranquility.

This is how Zebulon shall dwell on the seashore, in the road of ships, reaching as far as Sidon. Spreading out over a wider extent of the seashore and moving to and fro, he in every quarter keeps watch over his own people and everywhere gets himself ready to repel an assault of the foe. He thus reaches as far as Sidon. The word Sidon signifies *hunting*, and by hunting fraudulence and deceit should rightly be understood. Accordingly, Zebulon is busy endeavoring not only to arouse all the weaklings against the fury of the mischief-makers, but even to deliver the honest from the snare of the hunters. And so he reaches as far as Sidon", whenever he discovers an ambush of the cunning enemy and detects the deceitful plans of false companions. "And

their speech spreads like a canker" ⁸⁹ said the apostle. For this is the snare set by the hunters, a net, as it were, cast by malignant spirits in pursuit of candid souls of men; the speech of flatterers, the language of seducers, sowing discord between fellow-citizens, instigating wrath, and quarrel. Therefore, Zebulon reaches as far as Sidon, whenever he anticipates a crafty device of way layers, malignant spirits, or perfidious men. For we know that hunting of this kind after men's souls takes place sometimes by way of disguised prompting of evil spirits and sometimes by open persuasion of other men. Zebulon knows how with caution to intercept either course and to show it up even in cautious instigators. He fixes, as we have said, his habitation of strength over against the sea, on the border of Sidon, so that here he may keep watch against the fierceness of the pursuers, and there against the fraudulence of those lying in ambush. That the words which Scripture says about him may be fulfilled.

Chapter 44 *How much it means for the soul to have perfect zeal*

Let anyone who is able reflect on the greatness of Zebulon's virtue; let him consider what kind of a son he is. By his agency, everybody not only protects himself against vice but even strives to deliver others from the snare of sin. And if he is unable fundamentally to change their wrongful intention, he at least makes an effort to restrain it by his resistance.

I do not know whether man can in this life receive anything more precious from the hands of God. I am not aware that God might grant man a greater favor than the power of improving perverted characters, so that from the sons of Satan they might change into children of God. Perhaps somebody will think that restoring the dead to life is a matter of greater import. Now is it really a matter of greater consequence to bring to life a dead body bound to die again than to revive a soul destined to live forever? Will it be more important to recall the flesh to the joys of this world than to restore to the soul the joys of heaven? Moreover, would it matter more to give back to the flesh its transient possessions which must vanish a second time, rather than return to the soul the eternal possessions which will stay forever?

Oh what a dowry it is, what dignity in receiving such a favor from God! The bride of God was not to receive from her bridegroom any other dowry, nor did the heavenly bridegroom think it right to grant his bride any other dowry than the gift of pregnancy, so that she might, thanks to the grace of adoption, give many sons to the Almighty, and add, from among the sons of wrath and hell, new heirs to the heavenly kingdom. Justly, therefore, Leah, as mother,

exclaimed at the birth of Zebulon, "*God has endowed me with a good dowry.*"⁹⁰

Can you see what greatness there is in a true zeal for justice? In bringing it forth from a heart full of vice and training it in the service of truth? The woman who gave birth to such a son confidently sings the psalm with the prophet, "*I have hated every way of iniquity.*"⁹¹

Chapter 45 *How and the source an orderly sense of shame arises*

After these six offspring of virtue, will anybody be permitted to live without sin, so that, when the aversion for vice has sprung up, he may be free from vice? Who could anticipate such a thing? Who would dare even to hope for it in this life, bearing in mind these words of the Apostle: "*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*"⁹²

Where is the man, to say nothing of others, who might in this life be rid at least of the sin of ignorance and avoid it altogether? Are those who upbraid others for their faults entirely free from the contagious influence of sin? On the contrary, God who, in dispensing divine justice, sets some to reform other people's faults, often permits them to torment these others harshly so that they may learn from their own fault how compassionate they should be in their reprimand. Just think how they blush with shame, how humble they feel when they realize that they have sunk into the error for which they blame others, or perhaps into a more serious one, while it is their duty to set to others an example of rectitude. Who, do you think, could worthily estimate the confusion arising in their hearts when they see the errors of their own lives? Such errors as rightly deserve to be censured even by those whom, as they well remember, they often bitterly reprove and harshly castigate.

That is the reason why, after Zebulon, DINA is born, because, no wonder, excess of zeal, when fault comes between, is often followed by a feeling of shame. Thus, by Dina we understand shamefacedness but one that is subject to control; to blush with shame at the commitment of sin means to have an orderly sense of shame. However, if a man has not yet deserved to procreate Zebulon, vain is his hope that he can bring Dina into being.

Chapter 46 *The orderly sense of shame and its nature*

Learn first to hate sin and then you will begin to be truly ashamed of it. The more earnestly you hate it, the sooner it fills you with a sense of shame. Only that sense of shame is known to be true which is preceded and accompanied by an aversion to vice. Otherwise, if you are caught in a sin and become confused by a feeling of shame, I am certain you feel ashamed of your disgrace, not of your fault. This kind of shame is not the outcome of the sin itself, but is rather due to the damage done to your good name. Therefore, there is no reason to extol yourself, as if you had brought Dina into being.

Even perverse people have a sense of shame, but would that it were sincere and well ordered! If, at least, it were sincere, perhaps they would not be perverse. In fact, if they were thoroughly ashamed of a sin, they would not commit it so easily. Just think what sort of shame it is to feel disgraced by poverty, to blush for one's humble condition! People have the insolence to be ashamed of their humility, while the heavenly Master was not ashamed to descend from heaven in order to teach it to them, "*Learn of Me, because I am meek, and humble of heart.*"⁹³ Now they, on the contrary, abhorring humility rather than accepting it, blush with far greater shame at their dirty clothes than at their unclean mind. How numerous today are those who would think it more infamous to have used a barbarism in their speech (contrary to the rules of Priscianus)⁹⁴ than to have uttered a lie contradicting the teaching of Christ.

Yet, why do we dwell on those who often even boast of the crimes committed, seeing that not even men who seem spiritually inspired easily overcome this kind of shame? Often, when in praising someone they serve the interests of their intimate friends and perhaps raise an argument against pride, it happens that they themselves show haughtiness, from which it is evident that they argue in a subtle, evasive manner. However, if in the course of conversation (as is commonly the case) they happened to make a long accent short, they would probably be more flushed with shame at the fault in the oration than at the duplicity of their elation.

Believe me; you must not think that this is the shamefacedness Dina stands for.

Chapter 47 *It is a rare thing to have a true sense of shame*

Do you want to know still better how rare it is to stimulate the human sense of shame to the full and to have it true and orderly; in other words, to have generated Dina?

I will omit carnal phenomena and deal with spiritual matters only. See then you who believe yourself to have begotten Dina already, whoever you are, if you were compelled to pass naked in front of a multitude, could you do so without blushing? Think then whether you are just as much confused when you abase yourself by despicable thinking. Why should you brag of having produced Dina and of possessing an orderly sense of shame, if you blush less at the degradation of your heart than of your body? If you dread more the gaze of men than the sight of angels? Should you be more ashamed of that which God has done well than of what you have done wickedly? It is true that God has made even those parts of the body, which make us feel prudish; but the shameless thoughts of your mind have been conceived by you alone.

It is a rare quality, limited to few, to have gained full control of human shamefacedness and only to possess the orderly sense of shame. He who discerns this truth and diligently considers it will have, in my opinion, no reason to wonder why Leah conceives and brings forth such an offspring as Dina at so late a stage.

Chapter 48 *The distinguishing characteristic of the sense of shame*

Lest I appear to have passed over in silence the meaning of Dina's name, it should be understood as "*the very judgment*". It is that judgment, by virtue of which everyone is visited, convicted and condemned by his own conscience, and pays the penalty of confusion, which his mind deserves. For if he were not conscious of guilt, there would be no reason why he should feel shame. Also, if confusion were not a punishment, there would be no point in detesting it or in trying to be rid of it. Thus the mind of every man, being in a wondrous way convicted by its own conscience and dejected by the confusion it merits, at the same time pronounces judgment and inflicts punishment upon itself. Such then is the judgment in which the judge and the defendant are the same person; the condemned is the one who condemns, and he who takes punishment is also he who inflicts it.

It was therefore with intent that Holy Scripture desired to give a distinguishing name to judgment of this kind. For "the very" always implies such a distinction, and what else does this additional word do but stir to admiration the spirit of the one who hears it! Indeed, it is a prodigious judgment, worthy of admiration, and it should be uttered in a worthy manner along with its accompaniment. While submitting to that judgment, the more ardently the man loves himself, the more fiercely he rages against himself. Moreover, the more desperately he desires to be spared, the less sparingly he treats himself, because the more he dreads his confused state of mind, the more bitterly he is harassed by that confusion.

If this virtue takes its worthy place among the others, it may still leave someone wondering why it finds its expression in the feminine, and not in the masculine sex. We are all aware that there is a greater bodily attraction in a woman than in a man, yet her fortitude and firmness in maintaining a virtuous effort is less. It is commonly known how a stout heart can be enfeebled by the feeling of shame, however honest, and how often determined action can be embarrassed by it, while human soul seeks not to be confused beyond measure. Thus, Dina is not a man but a woman, and a daughter, not a son.

Chapter 49 *The advantage and charm of shamefacedness*

Perhaps it was not without cause that, after Zebulon had been born, God resolved to give Leah a daughter, not a son, so that she might soothe and mitigate her brother's boldness and by her complaisant behavior assuage his raging mind. It is evident from our previous narration that Zebulon is a boy of vast impetuosity and fiery temper. Now we all realize that women know how to address in caressing terms a man of tempestuous disposition and sweetly to flatter the angry one. Therefore, it seems most opportune that after Zebulon Dina is born, that by a sister's gentleness a brother's fierceness may be restrained. For when man finds in his heart a reason to feel shame, he largely and in every way moderates the passion of his overzealous mind. It is after Zebulon then, that Dina is brought forth, so that by her modesty she may keep in bounds her brother's impetuosity.

However, as Dina does nothing beneficial, performs nothing outstanding, she is not entitled to establish a tribe among the people of Israel. On the contrary, whenever, as I said before, she is afraid of being overmuch confused at heart, she not only does not gain strength to accomplish a brave and virile action, but, what is more, she gets into the habit of hindering such an action.

Yet, however inefficient she may prove as regards fortitude, seeing that she is a woman, she is nevertheless found to be prudent and circumspect in guarding her reputation; and, although she cannot please others by a show of strength, she knows, just the same, how to impress them by her good looks. For Dina is a girl of singular gracefulness and wonderful beauty, she easily attracts the admiring gaze of those who look on her and soon wins over the hearts of her admirers. It is a well-known fact that modesty and shyness make one commendable and amiable to everybody. We nearly always show greater affection to bashful people than to others. Yet, while in men, we admire their sense of shame, modesty, and simplicity, in the case of Dina we become in a certain way enticed by her beauty, which is so great that we finish by losing our hearts to her.

How fascinating that girl is! How far-famed her love! Where is the man who would not be struck by her beauty or delight in winning her affection? May Sicheu, the son of Emor, testify to it; the man who clung to her with such passionate love that he chose to have all the males of his city circumcised rather than renounce Dina.

Chapter 50 *How the mind with its innate sense of shame crosses the bounds of moderation when it becomes corrupted by conceit and vain glory*

How many even today are those who often do not hesitate to do for the love of Dina what they wished to do for the sake of God! Should a state of confusion arise in their minds, they are ready to prune away all superfluities, which cause the feeling of shame. They should have done so for God's sake, but they so act only in order that their shamefacedness may not suffer any damage. They prefer, by cutting away what is superfluous in their lives, to suffer the vexation of a circumcision rather than appear impudent and have no sense of shame.

Who then is Sicheu, and who is Sicheu's father? The name Sicheu is translated by the word *shoulder* or *labor*; the meaning of the word Emor is *ass*. What are we to infer from these two names? To find out who they are we have only to consider what they have done. These are the men who usually circumcise the things that shame them, not so much for the sake of God as because of Dina, not from a sense of guilt but to safeguard their shame-fadedness. What else will they come to represent but love of their own selves and thirst for vainglory? Like father, like son: from self-love to love of vainglory.

Now turn your attention to this man Emor and see how foolish he is, you will understand how justly he is named ass. What makes him so vain and boastful? If he prides himself on that which he has not but believes he has, can anybody, I ask, imagine anything more foolish? But if he has it, let him heed these words of the apostle, "*What has you that you did not receive? And if you have received, why do you glory, as if you had not received it?*"⁹⁵ Indeed, to have received is the commendation of the giver, not of the recipient. For what does a man possess that is his own, except sin? What sense is there in boasting of one's own misdeed or of good action of another? Such is the conceited man: a fool who bears the well deserved name of ass.

As for Sicheu, the two meanings of his name seem to point to the same thing, because we carry burdens on our shoulders and, by doing so, we obviously labor. Therefore, Sicheu bows his shoulder to carry and toils readily, but he does so only to give himself a name. Let us only call to mind what we have read about Issachar, "*Issachar, the strong ass, saw rest that it was good, and the land that it was excellent, and he bowed his shoulder to carry.*"⁹⁶ There Issachar in his humility sees himself as an ass and bends his shoulder to carry; here Emor is given the name of ass and Sicheu is described as having a laborious shoulder. That which should be done with the view of attaining true joy is performed for the sake of vainglorious joy. Issachar labors for rest, which he sees, Sicheu for the vanity of a praise he covets. He is rightly called "labor", not "laborious", because by his labor he does not achieve true rest. That he deservedly bears that name is shown by the labor of hypocrites who also "labor" zealously in order to gain the idle approval of men.

Chapter 51 *How a mind, in spite of its sense of shame, deviates from a righteous intention*

Such then is that man Sichem who meets Dina when she goes out of doors, overpowers, and seduces her. Had she stayed within, she could perhaps have preserved her chastity; having gone out, she lost it. For, seeing that almost everybody commends, extols, and admires the charm of modesty, Dina, on going outside, abandons her inner self that is her sense of shame, and soon forgets her weakness, the memory of which used to humiliate her. She suddenly hears the praises of men who compliment her, speak flattery, and so lead her into corruption. While she delights in those praises, what else can we expect than the violation of her chastity by Sichem, that is, by love of vainglory? Yet only then does Dina suffer the injury of her defilement brought upon her forcibly and not accepted voluntarily, when she struggles with all her might against the allurements of vicious delight. However, every time her mind, thrown into disorder by the thought of corruption, is flushed with shame and offers vigorous resistance, Sichem carries it away even against its will to its inglorious delight; and while he so overpowers Dina, she is only ostensibly unwilling to surrender.

However, what do you think happened to induce her to leave her abode and go strolling outside? The answer is that, when we are ashamed beyond measure of our weaknesses, we begin to wonder what it is that makes others aware of the same weaknesses in themselves. We think it would be comforting if we could find fellows in our misconduct. Accordingly, we begin to examine with curiosity the leanings of others, frequently to watch now their faces, now their gestures and the carriage of their whole body and to learn the secrets, which other people willingly tell about them.

Therefore, when Dina strives by external signs to understand other people's minds, what else can she do but abandon her own affairs, leave the house to take a look at other women and stroll abroad? She eagerly surveys their figures and finds some of them very graceful, others less so. Deep in her mind, she compares them with herself. In addition, while she realizes how many of them she excels by her outstanding beauty, is it surprising that she becomes violently disturbed by an indomitable desire for vainglory? As she is unable to resist the fury of this desire and cast it away, the only thing she can do, when overcome by Sichem, is to yield to him.

Chapter 52 *While one virtue is being debilitated, the others at the same time are drawing strength from the same source*

It is worthy of notice that, while Dina is being corrupted, her brothers are at the same time occupied in pasturing their herds.

Truly enough, the man whose mind thrives on love and other virtues, both grieves over his own misfortunes and rejoices at the success of his nearest. Accordingly while he watches the lives of his kinsfolk, considers their advantages and compares his own benefits with theirs, just as he cannot help feeling pleased with the compliments of others, so also he will find it necessary to congratulate other people on their good fortune. This is certainly true of a devout mind. As it looks closely and with attention on the progress of some people, the failure of others, on the infirmity of these, the perfection of those, it becomes, naturally, affected by emotions of various kinds. Therefore, it begins to fear for some, grieve for others, to expect good things from these and better ones from those. It now sees which qualities it should esteem in other people and which to abhor; it finds out the nature of things that gladden it and of those it should justly deplore.

Thus Dina's brothers, the sons of Leah, watch the behavior of their next of kin and are pleased. Moreover, while their simple thoughts and good emotions lightly succeed each other, what do they do but pasture their herds? Do you see how the two emotions come into play simultaneously — the true love of the next of kin on one hand, and the vain self-love on another? The true love of the next-door neighbor secures pastures for the herds of the brothers; vain self-love provides for Dina an opportunity of corruption. As the matter is not unknown to the father, even before news of it reaches the brothers, the only consideration that occurs to us here is that the knowledge of Dina's seduction enters the mind by way of reflection first, and of emotion next. But when the matter dwells longer in the heart, it is often apt to be lost to reason altogether; it then penetrates the innermost regions of the heart and forces itself into the emotions.

Therefore, when the mind is solicitous about the event and tossed by different emotions in turn, there is no doubt that news has now reached the sons of Leah who, as we have said, are the brothers of Dina.

Chapter 53 *With what precaution and perseverance should corrupt intention be set right again*

Now do you realize how they rage when they can no longer be ignorant or at least pretend to be ignorant of their sister's corruption? Scripture says about them that they burst out in anger, also that the disgrace of their sister drove them into fury.⁹⁷ This anger or rather frenzy of the brothers manifestly teaches us how angry a man should be with himself, what indignation he should feel and how bitterly he must censure and upbraid himself when he recognizes that he has defiled his conscience by an empty boast. In order to allay his swelling pride he should, whoever he is, place his infirmity before his eyes, call to mind his faults, such as in this life no one can escape, and consider carefully how often they disgrace him in his work, how unworthy they sound in his speech, how unclean they render his thoughts. From this, he will plainly gather if that is really his desire, how numerous are the imperfections in his conduct, which should be pruned out, and not shamelessly extolled.

When an objection to a situation of this kind revolves in the mind, what happens next is that an agreement is reached with the son of Emor regarding circumcision. For when the brothers say, "Cut out the shameful ways in your conduct", is it not the same as to say, "Circumcise the foreskin of your masculine parts?" In addition, if they say, "Otherwise you will not be able to glory without impudence", what else does it signify than, otherwise you will not be able to enter into a bond with Dina? If Sichem personifies boastfulness and Dina shamefacedness, what is shameless boastfulness, or, in other words, boastfulness without shamefacedness, if not Sichem without Dina? Rightly then inveterate habits, difficult to overcome, are embodied in the masculine sex. Those concerned are the males whose circumcision was demanded by the brothers of Dina; Scripture, however, makes it clear that the condition of circumcision was offered Sichem treacherously.

As we can easily see, they were not planning to give their sister to such a husband, and although he might have been able to fulfill the condition of the agreement, they in no way regarded him as worthy of such a union. For, indeed, even if we could cut out all vileness from our inward life and cleanse that life entirely, we should nevertheless glory, not in our merit, but in God alone. Perhaps Dina's brothers proposed such hard conditions to Sichem in order to exclude all hope of his joining their sister in marriage. Nevertheless, Sichem was prepared to endure any adversity of whatever nature rather than bear a separation from his beloved Dina.

It often happens, as we have stated before, that while we fail to wrench certain ideas from our minds, disposed as we are to remove them for the sake of God, it may yet be easy for us to do so for fear of risking the loss of our sense of shame.

Chapter 54 *While changing our intention we must be on guard not to give up the integrity of our conduct*

What shall we say to these events? Since we cannot deny them, perhaps it will be better to deplore them in silence rather than look for an answer. Indeed, I would say that Sichem well deserved the dislike of Dina's brothers and that circumcision very properly could not placate them; it was performed not so much for the sake of God as for Dina, not out of consideration for the divine but by virtue of the human sense of shame. Yet they were in the wrong when they exceeded the bounds of rightful severity and, by seeking revenge for the injury, wholly disregarded the due measure of equity. Jacob was therefore justified in condemning their inconsiderate boldness and reprimanding them for their indiscriminate harshness. How incomparably more satisfying it would have been to lead those circumcised step by step to the true adoration of God, rather than smite them with a deathblow, so cruel and unexpected!

Thus let everybody gather from these events, let him consider carefully how to treat with forbearance the circumcised under his control, bearing in mind that it was not in honor of God that he thus purified them. What else do those circumcised stand for but men's conduct unreformed by good intention? However, we should not wreck what is honest in their conduct, but only change its intention. They err therefore beyond doubt who cast away good deeds, though perhaps undertaken with wrong intention. What then do the avengers of this kind, avengers of their own errors do? With Simeon and Levi, they make a violent assault on the circumcised and slay them.⁹⁸

Chapter 55 *What is to be considered above all in censuring the distortion of intention*

It is also worth considering how it happened that so few men were able to effect such great slaughter. The time they chose was opportune for the action, which naturally helped them in their design. It was the time when bitter anguish had overwhelmed the circumcised men who were to be slain by them. The third day after circumcision was chosen for the deed, the day when, as Scripture testifies, the pain is commonly most felt. Yet, what are those days, and why are they said to be no more than three?

If the darkness of night conveys to our minds the notion of ignorance, we should rightly understand day as knowledge. Thus, the first day is the knowledge of those things which are without us, the second is the realization of things within us, the third — the recognition of that which is above us. Without us are the things of the body, within are things spiritual, and above are things divine. Accordingly, those who circumcise themselves, yet do not do so for the sake of God, should first of all consider, or, rather, do usually consider, when they attend closely to the matter, the nature of the adversity they have suffered from without. Their second consideration should be devoted to that which they have acquired within from so many torments of the body, or rather lost within owing to their birthmark of bad intention. The third thought will be about the retribution they should expect from God whom they have, beyond doubt, exasperated rather than propitiated by the insincere humility of their servitude. Thus, on the first day, the day of the first consideration, they become aware that the license of illicit love has been curtailed, and pain inevitably follows, a heavy pain indeed; one does not give up loved possessions without pain. On the day of the second consideration the mind discovers that it has, owing to the injury suffered by the body, reached a state of frenzy, and the more justified the pain is, the more agonizing it becomes. On the third day, the mind perceives that it has endured a heavy ordeal by its own resolve, but that it must expect heavier ones, which shall come by the will of God. This is that third day on which, according to the testimony of Holy Scripture, the pain is heaviest.

For how great, do you think, must be the pain suffered by the mind when man deeply ponders on:

- a) the misfortune he has undergone,
- b) the wrong he has committed,
- c) the severity he has earned,
- d) the external injury of the body he has endured,

- e) the inner calamity he has brought upon himself by being accused of a great offence,
- f) the heavenly punishment he has deserved in the eyes of the Creator.

Surely, the pain of him who has been circumcised to no purpose, and has survived until this day, has been severe, severe in the extreme.

Chapter 56 *A corrupt mind should both suffer patiently and not despair of its improvement*

However, when the mind becomes conscious of the offence it has committed and confused by its infirmity, it should both grieve in patience and not give up hope of its improvement. It should be healed by grieving over its corruption and yet hoping to become better again, so that, distressed by moderate pain and uplifted by hope, it may make amends for the past and guard against the future.

We have already explained before that by Simeon we should understand pain, and that Levi symbolizes hope. These are the two brothers of Dina, Simeon, and Levi, the cruel avengers of their injuries. Yet, would that they were as discreet as they were resolute! It belongs to Simeon to give satisfaction for the wrong done; it is the regard of Levi to stir the mind to have an eye to the future. Therefore, if you deplore your corruption but despair of improvement, Simeon by himself is with you. If you neglect to give compensation for the past, you have with you Levi alone. It is essential that in a matter of such great import they should stand together and give support to each other.

Chapter 57 *How and with what caution should a corrupt mind be scourged with blame for sin and debts be exacted*

Let us again consider the fact that men who act resolutely often exceed the right measure and lose their balance. This can be easily proven from the action we are dealing with. Having snatched their swords, they slay in a moment of fury those who were bound to them by a pact of fellowship and, in requital for the violation of the chastity of one girl; they all of a sudden bring about the carnage of so many men. The sword of Simeon is the emblem of reproach, that of Levi the symbol of exaction. For Simeon is in the habit of violently upbraiding the corrupt mind with the evil it has done, while Levi in his impetuosity usually insists that the good be done which should be done.

What is this fight, sword in hand, if not scourging of the mind with the stimulus of a reproach and a demand for exaction. Men, whose minds are vehemently roused by these two impulses, often inconsolably lament even over those actions they cannot avoid doing. Prompted by these incentives, they frequently undertake even such tasks, as they have never before been able to accomplish. Hence, that excessive dejection of some, hence also their indiscriminate austerity, which purge away not only their bodily strength but also the vigor of mind. Indeed, while Simeon rages, we can see some of them engrossed in such unreasonable anguish that not even in little measure can they be relieved by any consolation. As for others, we know that, as a result of excessive austerity and abstinence, they have wasted away so seriously that no dainties, however copious, no cooks, however industrious can hereafter satisfy them.

This is how those warriors (I mean Simeon and Levi) fight and revenge themselves. The fact that they slay the lovers of Dina illustrates this state of mind: by reproaching them with what is unavoidable and by exacting what is impossible they so weaken both the body and the mind that not even the sense of shame can restrain the mind from excess. Therefore Jacob is right when he says to them, "*Simeon and Levi brethren; vessels of iniquity, waging war, let not my soul go into their counsel, nor my glory be in their assembly.*"⁹⁹

See what warriors they are! While they wish to appear to have acted manfully, they cruelly in a fit of rage slay the allies united to them for the sake of peace. Vessels of iniquity, waging war, let not my soul go into their counsel. Inconsiderate men who undertake what they are not able to carry out, and lose even that which they are able to accomplish. Therefore, do not let my soul go into their counsel, nor my glory be in their assembly. Walking among the great, among men admirable and superior to oneself, is not a title to glory priding oneself on that account might well mean glorying, as it were, in one's own virtues. Such glorying would be wrong. Thus, do not let my glory be in their assembly. "*Because in their fury they slew a man, and in their sell-will they undermined a wall.*"¹⁰⁰

Chapter 58 *How through excess of dejection the mind sometimes reaches the state of unbridled impudence*

What do these words convey to our minds? Is not "a man" vigor of the mind, and "a wall" discipline of the body?

Accordingly, the lover of Dina is given a deathblow, when the vigor of the slayer's mind has been exhausted by an excess of affliction and his spirit becomes ungovernable and impudent. Then, indubitably, does Dina's lover perish by the sword, when dejection becomes too great and the vigor of the mind sinks so low that, as we have said before, even the sense of shame cannot restrain its excesses. As for the wall, it is being destroyed when, for want of abstinence, the rigor of former discipline is being utterly dissipated.

It is strange, or rather most detestable in warriors of this kind, that at no time do they accept the advice of any sensible man, nor do they follow their own experience, not even when they already begin to grow weak in the body and to waste away at heart. On seeing the obstinacy of his sons, Jacob invokes a curse on their heads in the following words, "*Cursed be their fury, because it was stubborn; and their wrath because it was cruel.*"¹⁰¹ A singular stubbornness, but madness nonetheless, when nothing but the bridle of impossibility can check the impetus of a man's action and keep him away from by-ways of error. This is how they engage in fight, vessels of iniquity, waging war. See what horrors they do, what atrocities are committed for the sake of Dina. For her sake, men are circumcised, for her the circumcised are annihilated. All this is being done for Dina, for the human sense of shame.

Chapter 59 *An orderly sense of shame is not truly good, unless it is also moderate*

Since we have just spoken in harsh words about the human sense of shame, you may wonder why we claim it to be the attribute of Dina, seeing that by Dina we should understand orderly shamefacedness only. Our answer is that it is one thing to feel shame before God and another to blush for one's own sake. We quote from Scripture, "*Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*"¹⁰² Thus, it is right to feel ashamed of infamy and to feel so for the divine glory, not one's own. This happens to be the case when Dina goes out of her dwelling and blushes at the thought of the infamy she may incur at the hands of men and so offend God. Yet, when in matters concerned with the secrecy of inner life our conscience becomes confused in the face of God, we may be sure that Dina remains indoors. Therefore, to blush before men and at the same time feel guilty before God is to have the right sense of shame. This, we are certain, is Dina's attribute. The sense of shame, then, is orderly and can, along with other attributes, be called a human quality. However, this quality is truly good if only it is not excessive. Surely, if Dina were still a little girl or if she confined herself to the privacy of her bedchamber, she would not have incurred the disgrace of corruption and there would have been no reason for the subsequent great evils to arise.

Chapter 60 *A brief recapitulation of the principal affections in their successive order*

So this is Dina who was born after Issachar and Zebulon, because after the joy of inner sweetness has been experienced and an aversion to vice ascertained, the more earnestly does a man think of his infirmity, the more violently he feels disturbed by it.

Thus, by Issachar, we understand the joy of conscience, by Zebulon the hatred of wickedness, by Dina the charm of bashfulness; these are the three youngest children of Leah. With the four older ones, the number of all is seven. As we have said before, there are also seven principal affections; we dispose them in ourselves in a certain order and number them among the virtues. The first, then, in the order set by us, is *fear*, then *pain*, after these *hope* and *love*. Next to these, four come *joy* and *anger*; the latest of all is the sense of *shame*. The fact that Jacob begot children of such nature by Leah denoted that her mind, as a seat of affection, has, by setting its impulses in order, procreated truly virtuous offspring. Therefore, by Ruben, the first-born

of Jacob, we understand orderly fear; Simeon personifies orderly pain, Levi and Judas orderly hope and orderly love. Issachar represents orderly joy, Zebulon orderly anger, Dina orderly sense of shame.

Chapter 61 *Orderly emotions are good, if they are also moderate*

All these emotions are believed to be truly good when they are not only orderly but also moderate. For often when an emotion passes beyond its power of discretion, it ceases to be a virtue. Perhaps we shall show this better by adducing the first-born son as an example. Surely, if immoderate fear were not perilous, Jacob when speaking to Ruben would not have said these words, "*You are poured out as water, grow you not; because you went up to your father's bed, and did defile his couch.*"¹⁰³

If by Ruben we are to understand orderly fear, why, I ask, does Jacob call upon him "not to grow?" The words signify that it is wrong to exceed the due measure of moderation when one is seized with orderly fear.

Chapter 62 *In what ways fear oversteps the proper measure of moderation*

In two different ways does this son often fail to observe the due measure of moderation he either does not strain his powers enough to accomplish one particular thing, or gives himself up to numberless and even useless distractions.

Will anybody question that Judas, after his crime of treason must have been afraid and that he was so with good reason? Moreover, who can fail to see the most execrable of all his qualities: while he was unwilling or did not know how to keep his fear within bounds, by so despairing of himself, he even increased the evil, which he was able to set right, and made the final outcome of his act more abominable than the beginning. Thus, one becomes easily misled by that excessive fear which extends indiscriminately over multiple things; it often steals over the minds of excellent men. Is there a master, however perfect, who in providing his subjects with the necessities of life so controls his anxiety for future needs that he is never afraid of adverse fortune? Fear of this kind lies well within Ruben's domain, but only when it arises from his concern for his nearest, not from love of the world. Who would be able to tell in advance of all the misfortunes, which are bound to arise for him here and there? Also, if he is strong enough to face what is coming, does not the weakness of his subjects make him tremble? Who is blind to the fact that it is most difficult, in fact, almost impossible never to

exceed the limits of justified fear? Hence it results that the more prudent a man is, the greater his concern for the future; and the more far-sighted he is in providing against the coming dangers which may beset him, the stronger is his urge to relax the reins of his solicitude now that fear is the spur.

This is how the words spoken by Jacob to Ruben should be understood. "*You are poured out as water, grow you not.*"¹⁰⁴ For water sometimes means earthly wisdom, by wine we often understand singular intelligence. The water is turned into wine for everybody, when that wisdom, as she mounts the stair of external knowledge, is, by the favor of God, raised to the understanding of the invisible; when "*the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.*"¹⁰⁵ The more widely does one's mind enlarge on the knowledge of external things, the more everyone abounds in water of this kind. Furthermore, the more copiously this water spreads, while it cautiously winds its way around everything, the thicker, no doubt, grows the wood of solicitude, inspiring fear. Rightly therefore says Jacob, "*You are poured out as water, you shall not grow.*"¹⁰⁶

Thus, when the water of worldly wisdom is in abundance, be on your guard lest fear and manifold solicitude grow beyond measure.

Chapter 63 *Excessive fear exposes the mind to straying and impudence*

Surely, when Ruben was still very young and led the life of a youth, he did not attempt to defile the couch of his father, because he either could not or dared not do so. We read, however, that, when he had become of age, he mustered up such uncommon audacity that he seduced Bihah, his father's concubine, the maidservant of Rachel. However, if by Bihah we understand imagination, how can a maid, such as she is, be corrupted? And yet, what is the corruption of Bihah, if not inordinate and impudent straying of thought or of imagination? For sometimes superfluous fear, I would not say corrupts, but drives imagination so far that, even during prayer, it is hardly able or totally unable to refrain from acts of fornication. When in a state of exaggerated anxiety the mind conceives, even in the midst of prayer, a fanciful picture of earthly affairs, this signifies that Bihah exposes her body to an illicit intercourse with Ruben.

Think, then, how absurd it is that at the time, when you should pray humbly to the Lord that he may avert the torment of everlasting punishment; you should set before your eyes only the passing dangers and revolve these alone

in your mind, forgetful of those which you have come to avert by your prayer and remembering only those that you should have forgotten. Your mind, at first, calls forth in your imagination only the blessings and torments of future life. Yet, being overcome later by superfluous fear, it often has no power to exclude from your heart the onset of the worries of our day. And so, since imagination is frequently, owing to excessive fear, led into such an inadvertent straying, rightly does Ruben's father point out his indecency, when he speaks to him in these terms about the corruption of Bihah, "*You are poured out as water, grow you not; because you went up to your father's bed and did defile his couch.*"¹⁰⁷

Chapter 64 *The power and efficacy of fear; without fear we neither give up doing wrong nor begin to do good*

However, to speak somewhat more clearly about this emotion, it seems, if compared with other dispositions of the mind, to have a greater power to produce an effect whether for good or for bad. Although through fear the mind frequently loses its sense of rectitude, in whatever way it loses that sense, it never recovers it without fear. For who is free from the impulse to commit a sin, unless he first becomes apprehensive of it? Without fear, we never give up our evil ways; without fear, we do not even begin to do right.

Jacob expressed this clearly in the following words, if only we understand them correctly, "*Ruben my first-born, you are my strength, and the beginning of my sorrow, excelling in gifts, greater in command.*"¹⁰⁸ Then come the words we have quoted before. "*You are poured out as water, grow you not.*" That Ruben is the first-born and that he proves to be the beginning of sorrow is, I think, evident from my earlier elucidation. It can also be easily shown what kind of strength he has and what the other designations given him by Jacob really mean. "*You are my strength*", he says. For who has ever proved victorious in that fight, in which the spirit battles against flesh, and flesh strives to overcome the spirit? Has anybody vanquished the huge army of desires, if he fought without fear? Thus, Ruben is rightly called first-born, because all good action has its beginning in the fear of the Lord. Rightly is he given the name of strength, because it is through fear of the Lord that heart gains strength to combat its concupiscence. Rightly, too, is he named beginning of sorrow, because beneficial sorrow attends the fear of the Lord. In order that everybody may have his own sorrow, which should be beneficial to him, that sorrow must inevitably be preceded by the fear of the Lord.

Chapter 65 *About the preponderance of fear, and how other emotions predominate over one another*

Excelling in gifts, greater in command, says Jacob. Among all the gifts of God, which seem to aim at the salvation of man, goodwill is recognized as the first and foremost. Through it, the image of divine likeness is restored in us. Nothing man does can be good, unless it proceeds from goodwill; what is done with good will cannot be bad. With goodwill at heart, you cannot perish altogether. What a marvelous, what a unique gift! It is the first and the principle gift, granted to Ruben, the first-born, because through the fear of God, ill will changes, beyond doubt, into goodwill. Why then should he not excel in gifts, considering that he receives the first and foremost of them all? The first, because all good takes rise from goodwill, the foremost, since nothing more beneficial than goodwill is granted to men.

Excelling in gifts, greater in command. Who would question that Ruben is among his brothers the greater in command, seeing that he is even in the habit of giving orders to each of them? Levi gives way to him, when under his eyes, because with fear coming on, his self-confidence fades, Judas often withdraws at his command. Zebulon stands by him, because affection influenced by fear often cools down, and aversion takes its place. Issachar comes out at his nod, and Simeon goes in: as fear creeps over them, often both joy is excluded and sorrow admitted.

We see then how Ruben habitually orders his brothers about at one time or other; let us now observe how he wields his authority over the others. Naturally, there are things we are fond of and others that we abhor, but both kinds usually raise our apprehensions, since we often feel alarmed lest we lose the former or that we meet with the latter. Thus, Judas and Zebulon divide the dominion between themselves, but Ruben's power extends over the whole of it; because true love spreads to good things only, aversion goes to bad things alone, but fear accompanies the one and the other. Zebulon lets his brother Simeon have a part of his share: even if we grieve over adversity, we do not deplore all its results because we do not endure them all. Levi has less authority than Judas, yet he is much greater in command than Issachar, for there are more things to love than we would dare to hope for. Moreover, there is more apparent substance in hope than there is real substance in joy, because few are the possessions, which make us rejoice in relation to those we hope to secure. Thus, Judas and Zebulon surpass the other brothers by the magnitude of command, but are, nevertheless, unable to attain Ruben's level. Ruben, the eldest son, exceeds them all and leaves his brothers far behind him. For, in effect, all things that men commonly love, hate, or hope for, grieve or rejoice over can give reason for fear of manifold kind. We often

find many reasons to be restless, where one particular thing, which we love, is concerned. Every time it can be lost to us, there is occasion to be alarmed. Thus, Ruben broadens his vast dominion, but its forces are controlled not only by manifold causes hidden to the eye, but also by the mutability of the evident ones. For how can I go untroubled, seeing that I possess nothing that cannot be lost? When do I in this world attain the certainty that knowledge gives, since there are infinitely more things I do not know than there are which I do know? Therefore, considering that fear spreads wider than the other emotions, true is the saying that Ruben is, by the side of his brothers, greater in command. His father urges him "not to grow", and that at the time when he was "poured out as water" after he had gone up to his father's bed and defiled his couch.

See, then, how much evil Ruben has done, because he grew beyond measure. Unless our fear is controlled by discretion, we soon run into great danger.

Chapter 66 *How virtues turn into vices unless controlled by discretion*

We should extend this belief to other emotions also; namely, that they are perilous unless we hold them within the bounds of moderation. From what has been earlier said about Simeon and Levi, we can see clearly how injurious both pain and hope can become, if they go to extremes. Jacob said of them, "*Cursed be their fury, because it was stubborn; and their wrath, because it was cruel.*"¹⁰⁹ Therefore, we should be on our guard, and see that our emotions are not only orderly but moderate as well. For excessive fear often grows into desperation, extreme pain into bitterness, extravagant hope into presumption, superfluous love into adulation, needless gaiety into dissoluteness, violent anger into fury. This is how virtues change into vices, if discretion has no control over them. Notice how each of them must be accompanied by the virtue of discretion, if it is not to lose its designation of virtue.

Chapter 67 *In what way and how late discretion steps in, as the first offspring of reason*

Now enters that famous JOSEPH who was born far on in time but was loved by his father more than the rest. We all know that true good cannot be gained or preserved without discretion. Justly, therefore, this one virtue has been singled out, because without its aid no other virtue can be sought, consummated, or preserved. When, at last, we deserve to receive such a son, he is not really late in coming, because perfect discretion can be achieved

only through long practice and after a vast experience. First, we must exercise ourselves in one virtue at a time and see what we can learn by experience from each; then we should acquire full knowledge of all of them and form a sufficient judgment of each one. We become acquainted with many instances of discretion by reading, learn a lot about it from what we hear and a great deal owing to our own firmly rooted common sense; but our pursuit will never be complete without the aid of experience. After that anybody who is to judge of all the virtues must pursue them all. And so our first duty is to apply ourselves to a frequent exercise of every single virtue. While doing so, we will inevitably fail time and again; we should each time rise anew and from a succession of failures learn the constant vigilance and caution which are indispensable to gain and preserve the blessings of virtue.

Thus, through long practice, one learns the discipline of virtue, and the mind, after being exercised in that discipline for a long time, achieves the power of discretion, which is to govern our conduct, and rightly rejoices as it were at the birth of Joseph. Prior to Joseph's birth, his brothers acted in every situation without proper discernment, and the more they exerted themselves to do what was beyond their power, the more disastrous and humiliating was their failure. That is why Dina, as we have mentioned before, came into the world later than they because a vile offence, often repeated, is followed by a confused feeling of shame. So, after Dina's birth, her brothers, as if confused by the consciousness of a shameful action, find out and learn by experience that nothing can be better than to be guided by good judgment. "*The patient man is better than the valiant*" ¹¹⁰; "*An obedient man shall speak of victory*" ¹¹¹; "*The word of a man who hears, will endure.*" ¹¹² Therefore, when the pressing necessity and usefulness of good sense become, owing to our experience, recognized and then, through exertion and assiduity, sought and found, Joseph is born, the son who embodies the virtue of discretion.

It is evident why neither of the female servants, not even Leah, none but Rachel alone, could bear such a son. For neither sensuality, nor imagination, nor affection itself can distinguish between things and understand them. If then by Rachel we understand reason, we at once see that she alone could give birth to Joseph because there is no doubt that reason is the only source of discretion. Like mother, like son; Joseph from Rachel, discretion from reason.

Chapter 68 *The usefulness and the distinctive quality of discretion*

He is that famous Joseph, the only one of the brothers who wears a long robe falling to the ankles, because only an action which is tempered by prudence and discretion can be carried through from end to end to its ultimate consummation. He is that son, loved by his father more dearly than all his brothers, because the virtue, which stands guard over all the other virtues, is, with justice, placed before them.

Joseph the dreamer and interpreter of dreams, because the moment the temptation sets in, true discretion already discerns future perils from the nature of the apparitions which suggest themselves in dreams. Thus to others, who are about to speak their thoughts, discretion reveals the snare of impending disaster and makes them alert to the dangers of the future.

He is the man, sold by the Hebrews and bought by the Egyptians, the man, his own people strive to excel and strangers to honor, because they are soon satisfied with a good counsel, and, being aware of their own errors, they willingly yield to another's judgment rather than rely on their own prudence and moderation.

He is that Joseph, bridegroom of a maiden, and a lover, not a violator of chastity, because discretion is the guardian, not the corrupter, of inner purity. He is that boy and messenger who alone was able to abide by the blessed Job in all his sufferings, and was anxious to report at once the calamities, which had befallen him, because it is only by the exercise of discretion that the mind recognizes and repairs the harm suffered by the virtues.

The boy refuses to perish with those perishing, for discretion cannot be missing when we suffer a loss, or because temptations grow stronger; on the contrary, it should then prove beneficial. In fact, the more irresistible are the temptations pressing upon us, and the more numerous the dangers besetting us, the more effectively we are trained in the use of discretion, and often losses incurred by other virtues become the gains of that one alone. Thus Joseph knows not only how to grow together with the others, or how to be serviceable along with those capable of rendering service, but also how from the failings of his brothers find his way to success and with the losses of others build up the gains of his own wisdom. Justly then this son bears the name of Joseph, since Joseph means *growth*. Rightly his father says of him, "*Joseph is a growing son, a growing son and comely to behold.*" ¹¹³ Rightly is he named growth and spoken of as a growing son. He grows forever; his growth is without end.

Chapter 69 *How useful and also how difficult it is to submit to discretion entirely*

Joseph's dreams as well as the words of his father testify to the excellence of this virtue. His father says to him, "*Shall I and your mother and your brethren worship you upon the earth?*" ¹¹⁴ His parents and his brothers worship him because, either of their own free will or driven by necessity, they ever and anon submit to discretion. For, indeed, discretion guides in its course that sun of the intellectual world, that inner eye of the soul, the intention of the mind; it gives rise to subtle reasoning and stimulates it; it tones down all that sisterhood of virtues, and any one of them, which does not yield to discretion or acquiesce in its counsel, quickly forfeits the designation of virtue.

He is the man who does not make light of the heedlessness of his brothers; he alone censures their intemperance. In his presence, they may not venture anything that is beyond their power; in his presence nothing may be overlooked through carelessness, they may not deviate to the left or to the right, do anything slothfully or with haste; nothing to undertake before time, nothing to defer until a favorable moment has been lost.

Hence arises that grave, almost irreconcilable dissention between him, and his brothers, which Scripture reveals, when it says openly that his brothers hated him and could not speak peaceably to him on any subject. Joseph's admonitions seemed very severe to them, his instructions harsh, his counsels unbearable. For what can be more difficult and burdensome than to neglect nothing that should be done, never to unsettle the proper manner of every proceeding, never to confound it, never to exceed the due measure? Believe me, there is nothing less attainable than to force the mind to keep all its emotions within bounds.

Time and again, as Joseph's brothers, laboring on something great, were acclaimed on all sides and welcomed with shouts of "well done", they used to reach out not only for that which was useless, but for the impossible as well. Often, in consequence of such laudatory clamoring, the mind, loosened from all restraint, grows excessively bold and presumptuous. What is more, its distorted intention leads it even into hypocrisy and drives out of its course. Hypocrisy is that worst and most abominable offence, more detestable to God than all the others. Joseph accused his brothers of hypocrisy and Scripture mentions it in these words, "*Joseph accused his brethren to his father of a most wicked crime.*" ¹¹⁵ Hypocrisy is rightly understood to be the one vice particularly detested by God. For, as Augustine expresses it,

"*feigned equity is no equity but double iniquity.*" ¹¹⁶ Joseph brings this vice to light, when lurking evil is surprised by discretion and condemned by it. The vice of hypocrisy corrupts the sons but is reformed by the father: this happens, when it affects the feelings, violently stirs them and holds them fairly long in its power, yet cannot bend the mind into submission.

Chapter 70 *The various duties of true discretion*

Therefore, it is Joseph's concern to look about wisely not only for this vice but also for any insidious wrongdoing, to lie in wait for it, to take precautions against it, skillfully to surprise, quickly to expose and sharply to denounce it. It is Joseph's duty to have the care of all his brothers, to watch them and control their conduct. To him belongs the disposition of things to be done, the provident care for things to come. He is bound frequently to summarize and carefully to consider the daily gains or perhaps losses of the mind, the thoughts, which invade it more readily and the feelings which work upon it repeatedly. Joseph is the man who must know thoroughly not the vices of the mind alone but the weakness of the body as well and, according to the needs of each, seek and apply means to their deliverance.

He should also know his own faults as well as his gift of being kind to others; be aware of his own virtues and of the good done by them; distinguish between them with diligence and weigh them accurately, so as to tell the good qualities of his character from the gift of grace conferred upon him. He should make it plain to the eye with what artful temptations the spirit of evil assails him, how abundant are the comforts of his spiritual joy, how often the divine Spirit visits him, that Spirit, which though one, does not always come in the same guise and manner; but he becomes filled now with the spirit of wisdom, now with that of comprehension, now of good counsel, or actuated by feelings of various kinds.

To conclude it all in brief terms, I would say that this Joseph of ours ought, as far as possible, to know the whole of man's inner and outer condition, and not only to know it for what it is, but scrupulously to search and carefully to investigate what it should be.

Chapter 71 *The two offspring of reason, the grace of discretion and the grace of contemplation*

Therefore, the mind is assiduously taught by Joseph and at times attains full knowledge of itself, just as through the agency of Benjamin, Joseph's brother; it sometimes rises to the contemplation of God. For just as Joseph personifies the grace of discretion, so by BENJAMIN we understand the grace of *contemplation*. Both are born from the same mother, because both the cognition of God and the knowledge of oneself proceed from reason. Benjamin is begotten a long time after Joseph, because the mind that has long been trained in self-knowledge but has not fully acquired it cannot lift itself up to the knowledge of God. In vain does the man, who is not yet capable of seeing his inner self, raise the mind's eye to behold God. Let him first learn to know his own invisible self before he conceives the idea that he can apprehend the invisibility of the divine. You must first get an insight into the invisible nature of your soul before you may be capable of approaching the invisible world of God. Otherwise, if you are not able to know yourself, have you the impudence to imagine that you are able to apprehend what is high above?

Chapter 72 *How the mind through full self-knowledge rises to the contemplation of God*

The rational soul, which is the prime and unique mirror enabling man to see God, can indubitably find its own self. For, if the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made,¹¹⁷ where, I ask, are those tokens of the divine to be found more distinctly impressed than in the image of God, conceived as a result of that self-knowledge. We both read and believe that, as regards the soul, "*God has created man in his own image*",¹¹⁸ and for that reason, "*as long as we walk by faith and not by sight*",¹¹⁹ "*as long as we see through a glass in a dark manner*",¹²⁰ we cannot find a more appropriate glass for this, so to say, visionary image of God than the spirit of reason.

Therefore, let him who thirsts to see his God, cleanse his mirror, and let him purify his spirit. Joseph, the righteous man that he is, does not cease to hold that mirror, polish it, and look through it endlessly. He holds it lest, falling to the ground, it might lovingly cleave to it; he polishes it so that it does not become impure in the dust of empty thoughts; he looks into it lest he turn his eyes away to a vain pursuit of his intention. When the glass has been wiped clean and looked into with diligence, a certain brightness of divine light

begins to shine upon him, an immense and unusual radiance to fall on his eyes. This light shed its rays upon the face of him who said, "*The light of Your countenance oh Lord, is signed upon us; You have given gladness in my heart.*"¹²¹

Therefore, the mind, beholding within self the image of that light and marveling at its presence, becomes in a wondrous way kindled by it and inspirited with the desire to see the light, which is above it. As a result of this vision of God's presence, it becomes aware of a burning desire and full of confident expectation. May then the mind perceive that, while it is stirred by that desire, if it now hopes to obtain what it longs for, it has already conceived Benjamin. For by hoping, it conceives; by longing, it brings forth, and the stronger its longing, the sooner comes the day of Benjamin's birth.

Chapter 73 *It is arduous and difficult to obtain the grace of contemplation*

We know, nevertheless (for this too we have learnt from Scripture), that "*Hope that is deferred afflicts the soul.*"¹²² Nothing affects the mind so intensely as uncontrolled desire. What other thing more salutary than this vision of unutterable sweetness can ever be sought? Can we feel anything more delightful? Does the mind ever experience anything more pleasing?

Rachel knows it, for it cannot be concealed from reason that, when this state of delight arises, all sweetness is love. That is why she can neither relax her ardor nor moderate her desire. Hence, the boundless anxiety of the woman in childbirth and the immensity of her pain. For from what source do you suppose, comes such great pain, if not from an unceasing fondness and impatient desire? Day by day labor grows out of desire, pain out of labor. They increase continually, desire arising out of fondness, fondness out of desire. Rachel knows, however, that it is beyond her power to overcome this process, nor is she strong enough to control her fondness and desire. For the mind never reaches forward to this high grace through its own industry. It is a gift of God, not a merit of man. Yet it is certain that no one can obtain grace of such nature and magnitude, unless he is capable of immense fondness and ardent desire. Rachel is aware of it, so she intensifies her fondness and inflames her desire by adding to it day after day. In the anxiety of her daily effort and in a pain so immense both Benjamin comes into the world and Rachel departs from life, because when the mind is carried above its own self, it exceeds all the limits of human reasoning power. All human reason, when raised above itself and in a state of rapture, succumbs to that

ray of divine light, which it gazes on. What else then is the death of Rachel than the eclipse of reason?

Chapter 74 *The kind of contemplation, which is above reason*

At the birth of Benjamin Rachel dies, this happens because the mind carried away to contemplation learns by experience the utter failure of human reason. Did not Rachel also die, when all notion of human reason had failed the apostle who said, "*Whether in the body, or out of the body, I know not, God knows.*"¹²³ Cor. XII). Thus let no one presume that he may penetrate the brightness of the divine light by way of argument; let no one believe that he can comprehend it by the exercise of his reasoning powers. For, if that divine light could be approached by force of some reasoning, it would not at all be unapproachable. Furthermore, the apostle glories that he did not go near it but was undoubtedly carried unto it. "*I know a man, he says, whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know, God knows; such a one caught up to the third heaven.*"¹²⁴ The "third heaven", which is between earth and heaven, is that between body and soul. The human and the angelic spirit differ from each other in dignity, but the sublimity of the divine spirit is by far different from both. The human spirit is subject to guilt and punishment; the angelic nature, being free from both, surpasses it by its excellence, but the human and the angelic spirit are, beyond all comparison, preceded by that spirit which has created them both. Thus, the mind is truly guided to one of the heavens when it abandons the lowest regions of earthly thoughts and gives itself to the contemplation of those heavens.

The first heaven denotes self-knowledge, the second the contemplation of God. Moreover, who, do you think, ascends that third heaven, if not the One who also descends from it, the Son of man who is in heaven? So if there are men who ascend to heaven and descend to abysmal depths, they rise perhaps to the first and second heaven, but they cannot reach the third. It is true, men can be carried up to this heaven, but they can by no means ascend to it of their own free will. It is possible, nevertheless, to distinguish by their three grades things which can be attained in this life and assign them to one of the three heavens according to their triple difference. I refer here to the comprehension of God. God is seen by faith in one way; in another way we perceive Him by reason, and yet in another we discern Him by contemplation. Thus, the first sight of Him pertains to the first heaven, the second to the second, and the third to the third. The first is beneath reason, the third above it. Men are able to ascend to the first and second heaven of contemplation, but that, which is above reason they can never reach, unless

they are carried beyond themselves in ecstasy of mind.¹²⁵ We should then understand by Benjamin the kind of contemplation, which is above reason, a circumstance that we can reasonably infer from the death of his mother.

Chapter 75 *The pre-eminence of spiritual insight*

In comparison with the sublimity of contemplation of this kind, all knowledge of things created is narrow, and occupies the bottom scale. It holds the earth, because of its limited possibilities, in awe of heaven, and regards it only as a point in space. However vast the knowledge of things created may be, it stands in the same relation to the comprehension of the Creator, as does the earth to heaven, as does the central point to the revolution of the whole circle.

Yet this earth, this lower knowledge of things lower in excellence, embraces mountains and hills, plains and valleys. Therefore, just as there is a difference between things created, there will also be a difference in kind in knowledge. To begin with, there is a great unlikeness between one body and another; there are heavenly bodies and there are also the earthly ones. Greater, however, is the remoteness between the body and its spirit than the difference between bodies, whatever they are, and however unlike they may be. The spirits themselves differ from each other: some are rational, others irrational. It follows that men who admire corporeal things only seem to have their eyes fixed, as it were, on the lowest and lowliest realities.

However, those who in their search turn to the spiritual are already on the way upward. When the mind strives to ascend to the sublimity of knowledge, let it be its first and foremost task to acquire the knowledge of itself. Deep knowledge lies in knowing oneself perfectly. The power of comprehension of the rational spirit is like a big and lofty mountain. That mountain rises above the peaks of mundane knowledge and looks down from its height on all philosophy and wisdom of the world. What did Aristotle and Plato find out, what could such a great crowd of philosophers bring to light? There is no doubt that had they been able to reach the summit of their genius, had their pursuits enabled them to find their own selves and had they attained full self-knowledge, they would never have worshipped idols, never bent their backs before a created being and never lifted their heads in defiance of the Creator. Thus, searching, they have failed in their search. Herein, I say, they have failed and so were utterly unable to ascend this mountain. "*Man shall come to a deep heart: and God shall be exalted.*"¹²⁶ Learn then to think, learn to commune with yourself, and you have come to deep heart. To the extent that

you advance to-day on the path of self-knowledge, to the same extent you rise to the region on high. The man who has attained perfect self-knowledge has already reached the peak of the mountain.

Chapter 76 *How pleasing, though rare, it is, when spiritual principles are applied in practice and thus become a source of delight*

How few are those who ascend to that place: few because they are either unwilling or unable to do so. It is very rare for one to climb this mountain, but it is far more so to stand firm on its summit and linger there; yet the rarest of all is to dwell on it and find peace of mind thereon. "*Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord, or who shall stand in his holy place?*"¹²⁷ First to ascend, then to stand on it; standing in it involves labor, but ascending is more toilsome. Many have failed in the very act of ascending, because the strain of climbing was too much for them; many others have rapidly stepped down from its high peak because of the toil of standing in it. Possibly the task seemed unbearable to them, since not only is great exertion needed in ascending the mountain, but it is only under great strain that one is permitted to linger there.

Let us assume, however, that you have reached the summit and have now learned to stand in that place. Do not be satisfied with it. Learn to dwell in it and make your abode there, and should you be diverted from it by the straying of your mind, know how to return to it again. Through constant practice, it will at some time or other become so delightful to you that you will be able without any toil to stay there incessantly; what is more, you will even regard it as a punishment to linger elsewhere for any length of time. It gives one an immense joy to be able to stay on that mountain, without finding it laborious.

Peter, who was attracted by such great and uncommon sweetness, confirms it by his exclamation, "*It is good for us to be here.*"¹²⁸ Happy the man who has been able to ascend this hill and set his mind at rest! How great he is, how seldom found! "*Lord, who shall dwell in your tabernacle? or who shall rest in your holy hill?*"¹²⁹ Indeed, it is great to ascend it and stand in it; yet, it is greater to dwell in it, to find rest in it. To ascend and to stand is virtue; to dwell and to rest is felicity. Clearly, either is noble, either worthy of admiration; the prophet admires both — the one for the magnitude of difficulty involved, the other for the magnitude of delight it affords. This is how he wonders at the difficulty of the task, "*Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place?*"¹³⁰ Then he

exclaims at the delight it gives, "*Lord, who shall dwell in your tabernacle? Or who shall rest in your holy hill?*"¹³¹ To ascend and to stand firm, what great fortitude that is! To dwell and to rest, what beatitude! Who is equal to the task and worthy of the gift? "*Lord, who shall ascend; Lord, who shall stand in your holy hill? Send forth your light and your truth; they have conducted me and brought me unto your holy hill, and into your tabernacles.*"¹³²

Chapter 77 *Without the guidance of grace, our efforts to reach the height of perfection are vain*

Can you see that it is truth alone which guides you into this mountain and brings you up there? It guides one along- it leads one through. I follow truth gladly and spontaneously, nor do I hold such a guide in suspicion. Truth knows how to lead; it does not know how to mislead. Nevertheless, what is truth? What do you say, oh Christ, good Master, what is truth?

"*I am the way, and the truth, and the life.*"¹³³

Let then the one who wants to ascend the mountain follow truth; follow Christ, if you desire to ascend it. For this, we have learned from the teaching of the evangelist, "*And Jesus takes unto him Peter and James and John and brings them up into a high mountain apart.*"¹³⁴ Therefore, the disciples of Jesus are conducted upward, each apart, that they may take hold of that lofty mountain. An arduous, solitary path, unknown to many, leads to the top of the hill. They alone, I believe, hurry there without straying, they alone reach the summit, unimpeded, for they follow Christ and are guided by truth.

Thus, whoever you are, if you are in haste to attain the sublime, you may safely make your way there, as long as truth precedes you; without it you will labor in vain. Truth refuses to deceive, nor can it be deceived. Therefore, walk after Christ, if you do not want to go astray.

Chapter 78 *The advantage which full self-knowledge confers*

However, lest the toil of the journey and the difficulty of ascension frighten you and make you fall back, listen, and consider what the fruit of your endeavor is to be.

On the summit of that mountain, Jesus was transfigured. In it Moses and Elias were both, without any visible sign, seen and recognized; in it was heard the voice of the Father, speaking to the Son. Which of these happenings was not a great wonder? Which was not desirable? Do you want to see Christ transfigured? Ascend the mountain- learn to know yourself. Are you anxious to see Moses and Elias, and recognize them without any sign, to understand the law and the prophesy without a teacher, without exposition? Ascend the mountain and learn to know yourself. Do you wish to comprehend the mystery of the Father? Ascend the mountain- learn to know yourself. For He came down from heaven, when He spoke these words: *know yourself*.¹³⁵

Do you see now how potent this ascension is, how beneficial one's full self-knowledge can be to one's relatives and friends?

Chapter 79 *How the heights of knowledge are scaled*

We ask, however, why Christ was unwilling to ascend this mountain without his three disciples and sought no more than three to accompany him. Perhaps from this act we may derive the lesson that without a threefold endeavor one cannot attain the eminence of this knowledge. Little by little, we move on owing to our zeal for works, our pursuit of meditation and application to prayer, and thus we are one day brought to the state of perfect knowledge. For we experience many things by toil, find out a good many through inquiry and succeed in obtaining much by prayer. Moreover, although there are countless things we fail to learn by the experience, which works bring us or by the scrutiny of reason, we deserve to draw them out, through importunate prayer, from the inspiration of divine revelation. When these three companions join us, truth, which lies within us makes headway, rises high aloft, and becomes in its daily growth more and more exalted, until it reaches the top of the mountain of which we speak. How numerous are those whom we see to-day, eager for a lesson but indolent at works and tepid in prayer, and yet expecting to be able to take possession of the summit of that hill! Yet when, I ask, will they possess it, seeing that Christ is not there to guide them? He does not give them a lead because he is unwilling to ascend without his

three disciples. Whoever, then, seeks Christ as the leader of the way, the leader of the ascension, let him add to the zeal for a lesson his zeal for works and prayer. There is no doubt that the mind, which does not follow unreservedly in the wake of Christ nor enters rightly the path of truth by intense exercise, frequent endeavor, and ardent desire, cannot rise to the sublimity of perfect knowledge.

Chapter 80 *How after our utmost efforts divine revelation confronts us*

Let us make it clear that many believe that they have already taken possession of the summit, when it is evident that they have barely reached its fringe. Let it then be a sure sign to you that you have by no means arrived at the top of the hill, if you have not as yet deserved to see Christ in his brightness.

As soon as Christ, who guides you, has placed you on the summit, he appears to you in another garment, and before your eyes assume a vesture, which, as it were, radiates light. According to the testimony of the evangelist, his vesture soon becomes white as snow and of a kind that no earthly fuller of cloth can fashion, because the brightness of divine wisdom, which is discerned afar from an exalted field of vision, cannot in the least degree be defined by human sense perception. Mark then that in the valley Christ wears a different garment from that on the mountain. In the valley, it is spotless, but on the mountain, it is resplendent. For plain truth does not comprehend the dissensions between various schisms, and that is why the vestment of Christ is always unblemished whether he wears it in the valley or on the mountain. However, there is a marked difference between a spotless vestment and one that dazzles you by its brightness. Do you wish to know that difference and understand the distinction, which manifestly exists between a garment and a garment? "*I have spoken to you earthly things, said He, and you believe not, how will you believe, if I shall speak to you heavenly things?*"¹³⁶ Distinguish then between one teaching and another, and you will find the difference between the garments. Oh how deep is the disparity between the teaching of earthly things and the teaching whereby we learn heavenly things! Yet, neither comes to us without the guidance of Christ, because neither can be understood without truth. For what can be judged to be true, when truth does not speak up? It is Christ who teaches both, the earthly things in the valley, the heavenly ones in the mountain. Therefore, as long as you linger in the valley, as long as you do not ascend the heights, Christ is your teacher only in the least important earthly realities.

Chapter 81 *All revelation, not supported by the testimony of the Scriptures, should be suspect*

However, if you consider that you have at last ascended to the heart on high and occupied that big and lofty mountain, if you now believe that you see Christ transfigured, you should not easily believe what you see in Him, or what you hear from Him, unless Moses and Elias are present there as well. We know that the words of two or three can be accepted as a complete testimony. I am suspicious of all truth, which is not confirmed by the authority of the Scriptures, nor do I pledge myself to Christ in his luminousness, unless Moses and Elias stand near Him. I often admit the presence of Christ without a witness both in the valley and in the ascension of the mountain but never on the summit or in his dazzling brightness. If Christ teaches me things about the outer life or about my inner self, I learn them easily, just as I do those that I can verify by my own experience. Yet, when my mind is lifted up because deep, heavenly matters are being discussed, I do not acknowledge the presence of Christ in the high place of such sublimity without the testimony of a witness. However probable the revelation may be, it cannot be regarded as certain without the attestation of Moses and Elias, without the authoritative judgment of the Scriptures.

May, therefore, Christ summon the two witnesses of his transfiguration, if He wants me to look upon the brilliance of his appearance as being above suspicion, a brilliance so great and so unusual. To prove the verity of his revelation by the testimony of two or three witnesses, let him give effect to the authoritative statement of Scripture, not only in its figurative sense, but also in its literal meaning. It is a beautiful and gratifying sight, when an account of the revelation of truth has been manifestly recorded in Scripture, while, to prove that the revelation has taken place, speech, both open and figurative, proceeds from the witnesses.

Otherwise, from height of day I shall dread that I may be guided by a demon at noonday. For why are there so many heresies, why so much error, if not because the spirit of error becomes transfigured into the angel of light? Surely, you see that Christ is transfigured and so is Satan. Christ, however, has *the truth of his* brightness confirmed by two witnesses: Moses and Elias appear together with the Lord in the mountain. They appear in their majesty, not in the obscurity of a written record, but in the clarity of spiritual intelligence.

Chapter 82 *How incomprehensible are the things, which the mind in ecstasy sees as a result of divine revelation*

See how great are the events, which take place in the mountain; but those that follow are even greater. For, at first, as the disciples stand by and look upon all that happens, they do not yet fall to the ground. The voice of the Father has not been heard yet; he who shall hear it does not yet fall on his face. Rachel is still alive- Benjamin is still unborn. As soon, however, as the voice of God resounded, it struck the disciples to the ground. At the thunder of the divine voice, he who hears it casts himself down with his face to the earth, because the capacity of human perception ends before the divine, and unless man abandons his narrow reasoning, he is unable so to lift up his power of understanding as to grasp the secret of divine inspiration. Therefore, he falls prostrate, where human reason fails. It is then that Rachael dies, so that Benjamin may be born. Thus, if I do not err, the death of Rachel and the prostration of the disciples symbolizes the same phenomenon, except that in the three disciples there is shown the failure of three qualities: the senses, consciousness, and reason. When the mind is carried above itself and raised to the regions on high, the senses of the body, consciousness of the external world and human reason are interrupted.

Let us now consider the meaning of God's words to understand why those present fell to the ground on hearing them.

*"This", said the voice, is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."*¹³⁷

It is one thing to say I am well pleased, and still another to say He has pleased me; yet one evangelist writes this, and another that. It follows that, if the expression I am well pleased has really been used, the meaning of the phrase, as quoted by the other evangelist, can be rightly understood, but cannot be used interchangeably. Truly and without contradiction, He has pleased Me in Himself (in ipso mihi complacuit), in whom I myself am pleased (in quo ipse mihi complacui), but not yet in whomsoever it has pleased me, in him I am well pleased. If, therefore, "I am well pleased" (complacui) had not been uttered, the evangelist would by no means have dared to say this. *"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."*¹³⁸ Surely, if the Son were not other than the Father, the Father could not be well pleased in the Son. What do the words *"I am well pleased."* (complacui) mean, unless as I have pleased myself, in myself, so I have taken pleasure in my Son. Alternatively, perhaps in the words "I am well pleased" He shows himself to have a companion in his good pleasure, for, as the Father is well pleased in the Son, so also is the Holy Ghost pleased in him. Perhaps also the

phrase "I am well pleased" was used to make us understand that, as the Father is well pleased in the Son, so naturally He is also well pleased in the Holy Ghost. Which of the phrases has the more exact meaning? Are both sayings to be understood together or rather one of them alone?

These words can be differentiated in this way or that, should their meaning be inadequate to intimate the depth of the mystery. However, it is certain that whichever of the utterances is chosen, it reveals, if rightly understood, oneness of substance and distinction of persons. For the words "This is my Son" indicate distinction of persons: the same person cannot be both Father and Son to himself. Yet, who can understand this that one may be to another, other in person, but the same in substance? Should you seek an example of the same among created beings, you will nowhere find anything that could satisfy you; if you consult your reason, you will see that all human reason rejects this interpretation. Indeed, the assertion is to such an extent above all human estimation and beyond all human reason that reason would never assent to it, unless faith raised it to level of certitude.

Justly, therefore, in the revelation of this mystery, those present fall to the ground, their senses fail them and reason succumbs.

Chapter 83 *Only the mind accustomed to dwelling with things innermost is perceptive of divine revelation*

It was with very good reason that revelation of this nature had taken place on the mountain, nor could the profound sublimity and sublime profundity of the divine mystery be disclosed in the valley. For those who in their speech and reasoning are still in the very depths, show themselves unworthy of the honor of this gift. Let, then, man ascend to the heart on high, let him ascend the mountain, if he wants to grasp and embrace those things which are beyond human understanding. Let him ascend through himself to the regions above himself, through self-knowledge to the knowledge of God. Let man first learn from God's image and likeness how to dedicate his thoughts to Him.

The ascension of the mountain pictures, as has already been stated, the process of self-knowledge; that which happens on the summit leads on to the cognition of God. The former, no doubt, is the course of Joseph; the latter pertains to Benjamin. It is imperative that Joseph be born before Benjamin. If the mind does not rise to the scrutiny of its own self, how can it rise on wings of contemplation to that realm which is above it? The Lord stepped down to

the mountain Moses ascended it. Here the Lord taught and Moses learned how to construct the tabernacle. What else do we understand by the tabernacle that bore record of the covenant than the state of excellence? Therefore, to him who ascends the mountain, applies his mind to it with diligence, makes a prolonged search, and, at last, finds out the truth about himself, there now remains this to do: he must learn from divine revelation what kind of man he should be, how he should frame and equip his mind for the sake of God, how to propitiate God by submitting to his will.

When, do you think, a mind, still tossed about by various desires and distracted by diverse thoughts, will deserve to obtain this favor? A mind which is yet unable to collect itself and does not yet know how to enter its inner self, — when will it be able to ascend, through contemplation, to those things which are high above it?

Chapter 84 *How the mind, yearning to contemplate things divine, should concentrate its thoughts on the inner life*

Accordingly, let him who yearns for the contemplation of heavenly things and sighs for the knowledge of those divinely illuminated learn how to gather into a flock the dispersed Israelites, bestir himself to restrain the wanderings of his mind, make it a habit to abide in the deep recesses of his soul and forget all things external. Let him build up a church not only of desires but also of knowledge, that he may learn to love the only true good of man, and uninterruptedly ponder over it alone. "*Bless you God in his holy place.*"¹³⁹ For it is in this dual holy place of thoughts and desires, in this two-fold unanimity of endeavor and affection, that Benjamin goes into rapture, and the mind, divinely inspired, is raised on high: "*There is Benjamin, a youth, in ecstasy of mind.*"¹⁴⁰ Where, do you think, if not in the holy place, the church? In the holy place, bless you God, the Lord, who comes forth from the source of Israel. There is Benjamin, the youth, in ecstasy of mind.

Each, however, should build out of his thoughts or desires first the synagogue and then the church. You surely know that synagogue means congregation (Greek "synagogue" a bringing together), and church means convocation (Gr. "ecclesia" an assembly called together). It is one thing to bring people in some way together to one *place*, without or against their will, and another to go to meet others of one's own accord, at the invitation of the bidder. Insensible and irrational beings can be herded together, but cannot be called together. However, the assembly of rational beings takes place spontaneously, at a call, so that it may rightly be termed convocation. You

see then how great is the difference between a convocation and a congregation, between a church and a synagogue.

If, therefore, you feel that you are stirred by a desire for external delights, and your thoughts are continually engrossed in them, let it be your concern to coerce these thoughts and direct them inwards, so that you may build out of them in the meantime at least a synagogue. For when you collect your wandering mind and set your heart on the sole desire for eternal truths, you make but a synagogue out of that inner home of yours. Nevertheless, when the throng of your thoughts and desires, attracted by the taste of inner sweetness, has learned to rush voluntarily at the bidding of reason and to remain fixed in the inmost recesses of the mind, it is certainly worthy of the name of church. Let us, then, learn to love the inner good alone and frequently to meditate upon it; we will thus, beyond doubt, build such churches as are dear to Benjamin.

Chapter 85 *How sweet and pleasing it is to be the frequent recipient of the grace of contemplation*

Since Benjamin gladly abides in assemblies of this kind and wonderfully delights in them, being unable to contain himself for joy, he is borne above himself and in ecstasy of mind raised to the highest regions. For, had he not found delightful rest in contemplation, this would not have been written about him, "*Benjamin, the best beloved of the Lord, shall dwell confidently in him: as in a bride-chamber shall he abide all the day long, and between his shoulders shall he rest.*" ¹⁴¹ Can you think of a reason why Benjamin should abide all the daylong in a bridal chamber and rest there uninterruptedly, so much so that not even at a fixed time does he wish to leave it? "We know that the bridegroom and the bride are accustomed to linger in that chamber together, to be absorbed in loving compliance with each other, in fondling embraces and reciprocal affection. Therefore, whoever the beloved of our Benjamin may be, she stands out, if I am not wrong, as a choice of unparalleled excellence and singular beauty; as for him, he is never able to spurn her companionship and will refuse to be free from her embraces even for a time.

If we take the following to be the utterance of Benjamin, we cannot have the least doubt as to the great beauty of his beloved, "*I said to wisdom: You are my sister, and I called prudence my friend.*" ¹⁴² He then tells you that he cannot disdain the beauty of his dearly loved, whom he calls sister and friend, because of his pure and ardent affection for her, "*When I go into my house, I shall repose myself with her; for her conversation has no bitterness,*

nor her company any tediousness but joy and gladness, and there is great delight in her friendship." ¹⁴³ Let each say what he likes; as for me, I find no other reason why he should be inwardly so bound as not even to be able discreetly to withdraw from her. But I do know this above all that whoever burns with the desire for such a friend, the more intimately he knows her, the more deeply he is in love, and the more frequently he enjoys her embrace, the more he burns with a vehement desire. In addition, if indeed their close communion occurs repeatedly, the desire does not lessen but grows until the glowing passion is kindled into flame. It is not surprising, then, why our Benjamin abides all the daylong in a bridal chamber, as it were, enjoys the charm of the bride and, while resting between her shoulders, finds unceasing delight in her love.

Think how often ecstasy of mind comes over him, how frequently in a state of rapture he is lifted out of himself, astounded by the beauty of the bride and held in suspense and admiration. How often become fulfilled the words, which we read of him: *Benjamin, a youth, in ecstasy of mind.*

See how the various testimonies of the Scriptures fall in with one another. The meaning, which the prophet attributes to Rachel's death, the evangelist sees in the fall of the disciples to the ground, while the psalmist reveals it in Benjamin's ecstasy of mind.

Chapter 86 *The two kinds of contemplation*

From Rachel's death, however, and Benjamin's rapture, we can consistently infer that there are two unlike kinds of contemplation. We must agree that, if there are two kinds of contemplation, they are above reason and they both pertain to Benjamin. The one is above reason but not beyond it; the other is both above and beyond reason. Thus, things relating to the first kind of contemplation are above reason, but not contrary to it; they cannot be searched into or refuted by reason, yet reason admits of their existence. However, those of the other kind are, as we say, both above and beyond reason; consequently, all human understanding seems to disagree with them. Such is the teaching we believe in about the oneness of the Trinity, and many other dogmas relating to the body of Christ, which we accept on the undoubted authority of faith. For no human reason will concede the existence of three persons in one single substance or admit that the same body can exist in different places at the same time. All reasoning seems to be indisputably opposed to assertions of this kind.

Therefore, these are the two kinds of contemplation: the one finds its expression in the death of Rachel; the other is embodied in the ecstasy of Benjamin. Contemplation of the first kind occurs when Benjamin causes the death of his mother, whereby he rises above reason of the second, when, lifted out of himself and inspired by divine revelation, he transcends the limits of human understanding.

Not only in case of Benjamin but in matters concerned with all his brothers as well we should carefully observe and consider how Scripture, referring in its countless passages to the same thing, at one time extends, at another limits or even alters its signification. It determines in many ways the varying meaning of those passages by alluding now to a place, now to an act, or to some other circumstance. The sense is determined by the place, as it were, when Benjamin is said to have arrived in Egypt; by action, when Joseph and Benjamin, rush to embrace each other and join in kisses.

Chapter 87 *How contemplation ends before meditation and meditation rises to contemplation*

What else does the arrival of Benjamin in Egypt denote but the diversion of the mind from the contemplation of things eternal to the contemplation of things temporal? What does it mean but the moving of the rays of intelligence from the light of eternity, as if from the top of the world, into the darkness of mutability? It is a weighing, amid a great confusion of things succeeding each other, of the reasons of the divine judgment and going deep into them. In addition, how is the meeting of Joseph and Benjamin and their mutual affection to be interpreted? Is it not that meditation and contemplation often meet face to face, with the assent of reason?

For if we consider these events from a general angle, by Joseph we can understand the grace of meditation, by Benjamin the grace of contemplation. To put it more appropriately and with greater precision, pure intelligence is signified by Benjamin, true wisdom by Joseph. Benjamin symbolizes that kind of contemplation, which deals with things invisible, Joseph that kind of meditation, which shapes man's character. As comprehension of the invisible pertains to pure intelligence, so circumspection of moral conduct belongs in the domain of true wisdom. We call intelligence pure when imagination does not interfere with it; and we speak of wisdom as being true to distinguish it from worldly wisdom. True wisdom is concerned with obtaining, multiplying, and preserving the true good of man; worldly wisdom strives for

transitory possessions. Accordingly, in a reference to worldly wisdom, "*the children of this age are called wiser than the children of light.*"¹⁴⁴

Thus, whenever Joseph throws his arms around Benjamin's neck, meditation ends before contemplation. When Benjamin meets his brother, as the latter rushes to embrace him, the mind from its fervor in meditation rises to contemplation. When Benjamin and Joseph join in kisses, divine revelation and human reasoning power agree together in mutual acceptance of truth.

You see how Holy Scripture, referring to the same thing, alternates its meaning, but in each case adds something, so as not to deviate from the sense of the whole. Therefore, in the death of Rachel, contemplation rises above reason; in the entry of Benjamin into Egypt, contemplation descends to imagination; and in the mutual embrace of the two brothers, human reason glorifies divine revelation.

The End of This Work

Benjamin Major/ On the Grace of Contemplation

Book One - Chapter 1 *Concerning contemplation and its praise*

If we may have leave, by the gift of his inspiration who has the key of knowledge, we should like, by our small commentary, to unlock the mystical ark of Moses, at least to some extent. Moreover, if in this treasury of divine secrets and storehouse of the sciences there is still anything, which our poor efforts may disclose to the advantages of others, we shall not be slow to display it in public, and produce it for common use. Much has already been usefully said concerning this matter, but there yet remains much, which may fruitfully be added. Before our time the doctors have spoken regarding what this tabernacle signifies mystically, according to the allegorical sense, namely, in what way it signifies Christ, and minds more acute than mine have thoroughly investigated it.

Now let us not suppose that we shall be guilty of rashness if we write something on the moral sense of the text. Indeed, in order that the methodical study of this matter may be more attractive to us and that it may excite our desire more strongly to wonder, let us meditate on what that great man among the prophets felt about it who calls it an 'ark of sanctification'. "Arise oh Lord into your rest: you and the ark of your sanctification." ¹⁴⁵ Let us see whether this ark, which is called sanctifying, is named after the thing itself. We should note carefully and keep deep in our memory that this thing whatever it may be, is called the ark of your sanctification, for you whom our doctor taught, saying: "*You shall be holy for I am holy.*" ¹⁴⁶ You, therefore, who are sanctifying yourselves, today, tomorrow, and on the third day, ¹⁴⁷ do not neglect to notice what is meant when it is called the ark of sanctification. If we rightly believe Moses, we know that whoever shall touch it shall be made holy. ¹⁴⁸ If this is indeed so, everybody will truly seek to touch it, if the power of holiness goes forth from it. Oh that one among you might be found like the man of Ramathaim, robed in glorious vestments as befits the high priest, might be worthy to enter the Holy of Holies so as not only to see, but also to touch that which is called the ark of sanctification and to be cleansed of all his uncleanness. However, what should I say of him to whom perhaps, the key of knowledge may be given by "Him who opens no man shuts", that he may see what there is within the ark of sanctification? For I think there is something precious enclosed in that ark. I would greatly like to know what this ark is which sanctifies those who come to it and so is truly called an ark

of sanctification. I do not doubt but that it is that which overcomes evil. ¹⁴⁹ For I know surely that from the beginning, whoever is made whole is healed by wisdom. Additionally, this is certain that no man can please God unless wisdom is with him.

Would any man doubt that sanctification includes the cleansing of a man from his uncleanness and the purgation of his mind from all malice and wickedness? For a man is defiled by these things. He is purified by wisdom ¹⁵⁰ overtakes malice with strength and triumphs over it until 'reaching from end to end mightily, she orders sweetly'. ¹⁵¹ And to be thus purged is, I think, to be sanctified. When the Lord was about to teach Moses how to construct the tabernacle, he first instructed him about building the ark so that he might understand thereby that all other things were to be constructed in relation to the ark. I am sure that no one would hesitate to say that the ark was the chief and principal shrine among all those objects that the tabernacle of the covenant contained. It will easily occur to anyone who asks what grace can be signified by that shrine which excels all others, unless perhaps he happens to doubt that Mary chose the best part. ¹⁵² Yet what is that best part that Mary chose but to wait and taste how sweet the Lord is? ¹⁵³ For while Martha, as the Scripture said, was occupied in serving, Mary sat at the Lord's feet and heard His word. For thus the highest wisdom of God hidden in the flesh, which she could perceive by the eye of the flesh, she understood by hearing and saw by understanding, and in this way, sitting and listening, she was occupied in contemplation of the highest truths. This is that part which shall never be taken away from the elect and the perfect.

This is the work, which will never come to an end in time or eternity. For the contemplation of truth begins in this life but is carried on perpetually in the next. By the contemplation of truth, man is instructed into righteousness and prepared for glory. See, therefore, how true it is that the grace of contemplation is to be understood by that shrine, which for its dignity is distinguished among all others in God's tabernacle. Oh most special grace, most especially exalted, by which we are sanctified in this present world, and beautified in that which is to come! If then by the ark of sanctification the grace of contemplation is rightly to be understood that grace should indeed be sought, since he who receives it is not only cleansed but also sanctified. Truly nothing else so purifies the heart of all worldly affection, nothing inflames the soul more with heavenly love!

It is this, which sanctifies, so that a man may be made clean and hold the world in contempt by diligent contemplation of the truth and maybe sanctified by the love of God.

Chapter 2 *How useful is this grace and how favored are those who make progress therein*

This very thing, which David calls, the ark of sanctification is called by Moses, the ark of the covenant. But why an "ark?" Why 'the ark of the covenant'? And not any man's ark but the Lord's? We know that precious things, gold, silver, and precious stones are generally deposited in an ark.¹⁵⁴ If we refer upon the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, we shall quickly discover what the container of this kind of treasure is. What is this ark fit for this purpose, but the intelligence of man? For this ark is fashioned and gilded by divine workmanship when the human intelligence is promoted to the grace of contemplation by divine inspiration and revelation. Yet when we attain to this grace in this life, what do we receive but the pledge of that future fulfillment where we may perpetually enjoy everlasting contemplation? We receive this grace as a token of the divine promise, as a pledge of divine love or as the bond of a covenant and memorial of mutual charity. Do you not see how perfectly the ark of the covenant of the Lord is named, when in it and by it, such grace is typified? How willingly should a man gird himself to any kind of labor if he desires, or thinks himself fit to receive, a token of such great love. I do not doubt that there are among you some who, like a Hebrew slave would gladly serve six years for this grace, so that in the seventh year he might go forth a freeman, without price and from then on be able to give himself freely to the contemplation of truth. Truly, if there be found among you one who is a Jacob or who may be thought worthy of such a name, a strong man and powerful in battle, a mighty wrestler, an over-thrower of vices so that he may overcome some by strength and supplant others by cunning, such a man will gladly serve seven years and seven more for such a grace, inasmuch as he will think the days to be few for the greatness of his love, so long as he may come to the embrace of Rachel, though late in time.

He who would attain to that embrace must needs serve for Rachel seven years and seven more that he may learn to be at rest, not only from evil works but also from idle thoughts. For many, even if they know how to be still physically, are yet so quite unable to be quiet in mind, not knowing how to make Sabbath on the Sabbath, and so they are not able to do what the Psalmist teaches: "*Be still and know that I am God.*"¹⁵⁵ They are still in the body but their hearts wander about everywhere, nor shall they deserve to see how sweet the Lord is, how good is the God of Israel to those who are right in heart.¹⁵⁶ what is more, because of this "their adversaries mocked at their Sabbaths."¹⁵⁷ But the true Jacob never ceases to labor until he comes to the

goal of his desires, serving in the household of the true Laban, he who is truly shining white,¹⁵⁸ because glorified, whom the Father glorified in himself with the glory, which he had before the world was;¹⁵⁹ he whom it benefitted to suffer and so to enter into his glory, that he might endue the form of a servant with the brilliance of glory and be truly shining, made whiter than snow, crowned with honor and glory and be made fair among the children of men, yes even in the sight of the angels and be such as the angels desire to look upon.¹⁶⁰ Do you see how great is this grace for which he works with long-suffering and desire, which is acquired by so much travail and possessed with such great joy? In many places of his Scriptures, Moses treats of this same grace in symbolic terms, but here he discusses it more fully in a mystical description, dividing it into different species.

Chapter 3 *Regarding the properties of contemplation and of how it differ from meditation or thinking*¹⁶¹

In order that we may more easily understand and rightly judge those things, which are to be said about contemplation, we ought first to seek to determine or to define what it is and how it differs from thinking or meditation. For we must realize that we may regard one and the same object in one way by thinking, examine it in another way by meditation, and wonder at it in yet another by contemplation. Although at times, these three may agree in studying the same object, they differ greatly in method. Thought¹⁶² and meditation may approach one and the same matter in different ways and contemplation in yet a third and widely divergent manner.

Thinking, slow-footed, wanders here and there along bypaths, not caring where they lead. Meditation with great mental industry plods along the steep and laborious road keeping the end in view. Contemplation on a free wing, circles around with great nimbleness wherever the impulse takes it.

Thinking crawls along, meditation marches and sometimes runs, contemplation flies around and when it wills, it hovers upon the height.

Thinking is without labor and bears no fruit. Meditation labors and has its fruit. Contemplation abides untoiling and fruitful roams about, meditation investigates, contemplation wonders.

Thinking arises from the imagination, meditation from the reason, and contemplation from the intelligence.

Behold these three, imagination, reason, and intelligence. Intelligence takes the highest place, imagination the lowest, reason lies between them. Everything which comes under the view of the lower sense, comes necessarily also under the view of the higher sense.

Hence, it follows that everything, which is grasped by the imagination, is also, together with much that is above it, grasped by the reason. So also, all that the imagination and reason include, together with those things, which they cannot include, fall under the view of the intelligence. Behold then how wide is the extent of the ray of contemplation, for it embraces all things.

In addition, it is right that one and the same thing, may by one man, be considered thoughtfully, by another meditatively, by another contemplatively, yet not by a different road, but by a different movement. Thinking moves from one another rambling aimlessly. Meditation is persevering intent on one thing only. Contemplation sheds the light of a single ray upon innumerable objects. The depth of the mind is a given expanse and immensity by the intelligence and the point of the contemplating soul is sharpened that it may become capable of understanding many things, and acute to penetrate subtleties.

Contemplation can never exist without some degree of liveliness in the intelligence, for as it is the work of the intelligence, which fastens the eye of the mind upon material things, so by that same power, from that one intuition of material things the eye is dilated to comprehend innumerable objects. Therefore whenever the soul of the contemplative is enlarged to take in lower things, as often as it is raised to the heights and sharpened to penetrate inscrutable things, or with marvelous nimbleness carried away by innumerable interests, almost without respite, so often you may be quite sure that this is the work of the power of the intelligence. This is said on account of those who think that these lower powers are unworthy of the regard of the intelligence, or of being considered in any way to belong to intelligence, or of being considered in any way to contemplation. However, in a special and strict sense, contemplation is so called when it treats of sublime things where the soul makes use of the pure intelligence. Nevertheless, contemplation always deals with *things*, either manifested according to their nature or known intimately by study or clear by revelation.¹⁶³

Chapter 4 *Definition of contemplation, meditation and thinking*

It seems that they may be defined thus: Contemplation is a free and clear vision of the mind fixed upon the manifestation of the clear wisdom in suspended wonder. On the other hand, indeed as it appeared to a distinguished theologian of our times who defined it thusly:

*"Contemplation is the clear and free glance of the soul bearing intently upon objects of perception, to its furthest limits."*¹⁶⁴

Meditation however, is an industrious attention of the concentrated diligently upon the investigation of some object. Put another way, meditation is the careful look of the soul zealously occupied in the search of truth. While thinking is the careless glance of the soul prone to restless wandering. It will thus be seen that all three have this in common and it is almost of their essence, that they are the sight of the soul. Where nothing is discerned by the mind they cannot be thus named or declared to exist. It is common to contemplation as to meditation that they are occupied with useful things, and engaged chiefly and intensively in the study of wisdom or knowledge. Yet, in this, they differ greatly from thinking, which is accustomed at all times to relax in vain and frivolous considerations, throwing off the bridle of discretion to interfere or rush headlong into everything. Contemplation and thinking have this in common that by free motion and according to spontaneous impulse, they move here and there and are not hindered by any obstacle or difficulty from following their course. In this they differ greatly from meditation which is always intent, however laborious the effort and not withstanding difficulties of the mind, to grasp hard things, to break through obstacles and penetrate hidden things. Yet it often happens that in the wanderings of our thinking, the soul meets with something, which it passionately desires to know and presses on strongly towards it. However, if the mind satisfying its desire applies itself with zeal to this kind of investigation, it already exceeds the bounds of thinking-by-thinking, and thought passes over into meditation. The same thing happens in the case of meditation. For when a truth has been long sought, and is at last discovered, the mind usually receives it greedily, wonders at it with exultation and for a long time rests therein in wonder. Moreover, this already shows meditation exceeding its bounds and passing over into contemplation, for it is the property of contemplation to adhere with wonder to the object, which brings it joy.

Now in this it differs from both meditation and thinking. For thought, as we have said, always moves about here and there with uncertain steps, but meditation always tends to its proceeding deliberately.

Chapter 5 *How the mode of contemplation operates in many ways* ¹⁶⁵

Although that clear ray of contemplation is always hovering over some object in the greatness of wonder, nevertheless it does not operate in one way or uniformly. For the liveliness of the intelligence in the soul of the contemplative sometimes comes and goes with and goes with wonderful quickness, sometimes it circles around, sometimes it draws itself into a point and remains motionless. If we consider the nature of this thing rightly, we can see examples of it daily in the birds of heaven. You see some now rising up on high, now sinking down to earth and often repeating these modes of ascent and descent. You see others moving off to the right and left, coming down on this side or the other and a little ahead or hardly moving at all, and often repeating the same movements of their flight with great perseverance. You see some pushing forward with great haste. Yet soon and equally rapidly, they return to the rear and often repeat this performance and continue and prolong their advance and retreat frequently and at length. You may also watch others moving in a circle and see how often they do this or make similar circles, some a little wider, some narrower, but always returning to the same point. You may see others who with beating and vibrating wings hold themselves suspended a long time in one and the same place, and though moving; maintain themselves motionless by their activity. Moreover, they do not depart at all from the place where they are resting but stay there a long time, as if by performing and persevering in this work, they might seem to exclaim and say: "It is good for us to be here." ¹⁶⁶

According to this example of suggested similes, we may vary the flight of our contemplation in many ways, and it may take different forms according to the differences in men and their occupations. ¹⁶⁷ It may rise from lower to higher or fall from higher to lower. It may move from the part to the whole or from the part by the nimbleness of its reflections and derive its reasons on that which it seeks to know major, from the major or the minor premises. It moves around, now in one direction, now in the opposite, and draws its knowledge of contrary things from the science of opposites, and is accustomed to vary the process of its reasonings according to the various kinds of opposites. Sometimes it runs forward and immediately returns back, when it apprehends the manner or essence of everything either by its effects or by causes together with the things, which have gone before or follow. Sometimes our speculation leads us thus round and about when we consider

what each thing has in common with others; or in defining any particular thing, the reason is drawn and applied now to similar things, now to things having likenesses with it or accidents in common. However, the fixed attention of our thought remains almost motionless in one place when the gaze of the contemplative gladly attaches itself to one being of a thing, or to distinguishing or admiring its qualities. Lest our words may seem to savor of human philosophy or to depart from the even tenor of Catholic doctrine let us say, perhaps more conveniently, that all these things, ascending and descending, going and coming, removing now here now there, or in a circle and yet cleaving, to one thing means nothing but that the soul by that nimbleness of mind may be satisfied in its appreciation of new things, by all these activities. ¹⁶⁸

Behold, truly, as we have said above, that the matter of our contemplation always depends upon and is a matter of our contemplation always depends upon and is developed by some one thing, while the soul of contemplation gladly dwells on the beholding of his happiness, while he always endeavors to return to it or to hold himself motionless in it for a long time. Harken to an example of that manner of contemplation, which is accustomed to go back and forth:

"And living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightening." ¹⁶⁹

Take as an example of that kind in which the soul is caught up in separate things, running diverse ways with great rapidity:

"The righteous shall shine and shall run to and fro among the reeds." ¹⁷⁰

He who moves upwards and back again is signified in a few words in the psalms:

"They mount up to the heavens as they go down again to the depths." ¹⁷¹

With regard to that way of contemplation, which is led round about the voice of the prophet, admonishes you:

"Lift up your eyes round about and see." ¹⁷²

So also, the ray of contemplation that is fixed unmoving in one place as it were, which any Habakkuk may experience in himself:

"The sun and moon stood still in their habitation." 173

This then is contemplation as we have taught it, limiting it, and defining it. We must now divide it into its species, and therefore let us see what are the types of contemplation.

Chapter 6 *There are six kinds of contemplation divided from each other and subdivided*

- a) The first lies in the imagination and is according to the imagination only.
- b) The second is in the imagination but according to the reason.
- c) The third is in the reason according to the imagination.
- d) The fourth is the reason according to the reason.
- e) The fifth is reason according to reason.
- f) The sixth is both above reason and contrary to it.

So two are concerned with imagination, two with the reason, and two with intelligence.

Our contemplation certainly takes place in the imagination when the form of these visible things and their image is made an object of thought, so that our attention is held in amazement, and amazement asserts the attention. And these physical things, which we absorb by physical sense, are manifold: so great, so various, so fair and lovely. And in all things, we reverence with wonder the power of that super essential creativity of God, his wisdom and bounty; we wonder and venerate. However, our contemplation takes place in the imagination and is given shape by imagination only, when we neither seek nor examine anything by reason, but the mind freely moves this way and that to whatever kind of observation our sense of wonder attracts it.

The second kind of contemplation is that which exists in the imagination but is given shape and proceeds by the power of reason. This takes place when

we seek and find the reason for those things, which arise in the imagination and which we have already said, belong to the first kind of contemplation; and when we have found these reasons and considered them we regard them with wonder. In the former case it is the things themselves, in the manner and use; it is these, which we explore, and wonder at. So that this kind of contemplation takes place in the imagination but according to the power of the reason, for it develops by reasoning upon that which is found in the imagination. Moreover, although this manner of contemplation seems to consist in some way in the reason in as much as it seeks the reason of visible things, yet it should rightly be attributed to the imagination when follow it up by reasoning about these things.

The third kind of contemplation, we said, is that which is formed in the reason but according to the imagination. We make use of this kind of contemplation when we are lifted up by the likeness of visible things. This speculation has its basis in the reason because it follows up only those things, which go beyond the imagination by design or investigation, for it only aims at invisible things, and especially those that are grasped by the reason. However, it is said to be formed according to the imagination because in this speculation of visible things provides an illustration or similitude by which the mind is assisted in its enquiry into invisible things. In addition, it is correctly asserted that this contemplation exists in the reason but according to the imagination for although it proceeds by reasoning, all its reasons and arguments are founded and based first in the imagination, and it draws its reasons and assertions from the properties of things that can be imagined.

The fourth kind of contemplation is that which is formed in the reason and according to the reason. And this happens when having set aside all use of the imagination, the soul reaches out to those things only which the imagination does not know, but which the mind puts together by reasoning or understands through the reason. We follow this kind of speculation when we consider those invisible aspects of our ego, which we know by our own experience and understand by our intelligence

In addition, we rise from this consideration to the highest contemplation of celestial spirits and of the good things of the mind. This contemplation exists in the reason, for having put aside material things; it aims solely at the things of the mind. What is more, this contemplation will appear to begin from and take as a basis, those invisible things of ours, which the human soul knows by experience and understands by common intelligence. Yet, nevertheless, this contemplation may be rightly ascribed to the reason, for these invisible things of our nature are grasped by the reason and therein do not exceed the category

of reasoning. For this contemplation proceeds according to reason alone for it deduces by reasoning from invisible things, such facts as it cannot know by experience.

In this contemplation, the human soul first makes use of the pure intelligence and having cast away all use of the imagination, this intelligence of the imagination, this intelligence of ours in this operation seems to understand itself by itself for the first time. For indeed it seems that in these earlier kinds of contemplation this intelligence was not absent but was present implicitly, in meditation by the reason or sometimes by the imagination.

Here it is used almost as an instrument and functions like a mirror, for here it works by itself, and the contemplation is direct. Here the intelligence stoops as far as it may, for by its nature it cannot be found in any lower category.

The fifth kind of contemplation we said above reason but not contrary to it. We ascend this watchtower of contemplation by lifting up the mind, when we know by divine revelation what we cannot fully understand by any human reason, and what we are not capable of investing thoroughly by any human reasoning. For example, such things as we believe concerning the nature of the Godhead and the simple essence and which we prove by the authority of the sacred Scriptures. Therefore, our contemplation truly arises up above reason when the human soul discerns by an exaltation of the mind, that which transcends the limits of human capacity. Yet, it is to be reckoned as being above reason but not contrary to it., when the human reason by the point of intelligence but rather acquiesces readily in it and confirms it by its witness.¹⁷⁴

The sixth kind of contemplation concerns the things, which exists above the reason and seem to be beyond it or even contrary to it. In this supreme speculation, most honorable of all contemplations the soul truly rejoices and dances when it come to know and consider by the radiation of divine light, those things, which all human reason protests. Such are almost all things concerning the Persons of the Trinity, which we are commanded to believe. For when the human reason is referred to about these things, it can do nothing but contradict them.

Chapter 7 *What things are common and to which category they belong*

Of these, two things exist in the imagination for they concern sensible things only. Two in the reason for they deal only with things intelligible. And two exist in the intelligence for they concern only the objects of the pure intelligence. I call 'sensible' those things, which are visible and can be perceived by the bodily senses. I call 'Intelligible' those invisible things which can nevertheless, be grasped by the reason. I call in this place, 'intellectible', those invisible things, which are incomprehensible to the human reason.

Of these six kinds of contemplation, the four lower kinds are concerned chiefly with created things and the two higher kinds with uncreated and divine things. . . .

Commentary Note:

Richard continues to explain these subdivisions in scholastic terms of his period. A great deal is derived from Hugh's *Sacramentis*, Book I, chap. 10, § 2.¹⁷⁵ The point he makes clearly is that contemplation as such, may be of any object and that only the last two concern the direct contemplation of God in His mysteries and in Himself. This argument was new in his day. He shows that the power of the intellect (or as we should call it, the intellectual intuition, as distinct from the intelligence, which functions in the reason) is the only faculty which can attain to the vision of God. However, he affirms that "a man must be familiar with all six kinds of contemplation if he desires to attain to the height of knowledge." He says that any man may be happy if he attains to one of the 'three pairs of wings'. Yet the first two kinds of contemplation deal only with earthly things and man cannot reach even the contemplation of rational things while preoccupied with material things, which hold him down.

Hence, mortification of the body and discipline of desires are necessary to prepare for that forgetfulness of material considerations, which is the preliminary to the second *pair of wings*, the study of invisible things. He illustrates these four pairs of wings from the sails of a boat and later from Ezekiel's creatures.

Thereafter, (Chapter Eleven) he applies the first four kinds of contemplation to the "material but mystical ark of Moses." "It seems to me that Moses speaks of these six kinds of contemplation in a mystical description when he ordered the material yet mystical ark to be made

according to the instructions of God. The first concerns the construction of the ark, the second its gilding, the third is the crown over the ark and by the fourth, we understand the propitiatory. The fifth and sixth are of the two cherubim."

The follow at great length, two books on the first four kinds of contemplation. It is the last two books, which concern those who are interested in mystical contemplation. "The last two types of contemplation are expressed by the angelic figures. And it is right that this *factura operis* should take the shape of angelic and not human form, for it is necessary to represent this kind of contemplation by a symbol, for its subject exceeds all human reasoning."

The first four can be attained by human effort but in the last two "everything depends on grace and they are altogether far distant and removed from human industry, except in the degree that a man receives grace from heaven and clothes himself with the habit of the angelic likeness."¹⁷⁶

In chapter twelve, the last of Book 1, Richard says that he has sufficiently indicated the whole argument of his work and the manner in which the details of the ark of Moses may say symbolically to confirm his theories. "Perhaps this may be sufficient for learned minds concerning the things that should be said of the ark of Moses or the grace of contemplation. Yet, as we are at leisure and speak to leisurely people, we should not be lazy ourselves because others are lazier,¹⁷⁷ but repeat the argument with additions where necessary. So after the fashion of contemplatives let us treat of contemplation in a contemplative manner nor examine in a mere transitory way, a subject which is so joyful and wonderful."

Since books 2 & 3 deal with the rational kinds of contemplation and appertain to what we should now call psychology, we must pass over to Books 4 and 5 which deal with the mystical modes of knowing, with mystical theology proper and which are those most frequently discussed by Richard's successors in this field.

Book Four

Chapter 1 *Regarding the fifth and sixth kinds of contemplation*

We come now to the treatment of the fifth and sixth kind of contemplation, which Moses seems to indicate in his mystical description by these words: "You shall make also two cherubim of beaten gold on the two sides of the oracle. Let one cherub be on the one side, and the other on the other. Let them cover both sides of the propitiatory, spreading their wings, and covering the oracle; and let them look one towards the other, their faces being turned towards the propitiatory."¹⁷⁸ We must certainly pay great attention to this description and take the rule for our teaching from the comparison, which is suggested, and according to its form, we must likewise hew out the shape of our work. I think something great and outstanding is suggested to us in this undertaking which is expressed in such a shape, which is called by such a name and which reproduces the angelic form." He says: "You shall make two cherubim of beaten gold."

Truly that which is to be presented to us in angelic form must be something great, excellent and beyond earthly knowledge, indeed something more than human. Certainly, the cherubim are called "fullness of knowledge",¹⁷⁹ and the interpretation of this word seems to suggest or promise something great and belonging to secret knowledge. Now we almost notice that it is not any kind of angel, which we call Cherubim, but only the highest, those most closely related to God. The shape of this image therefore stimulates us to something beyond this world, yes even super celestial, and invites our intelligence by this suggestion, to the contemplation of the highest and most divine things.

We agree therefore that what appertains to these two last types of contemplation is above man and exceeds the mode of human thinking or human capacity. Therefore, it was necessary in making a likeness to represent it not by a human figure, but by an angelic one. For if the matter of these speculations did not exceed the narrow limits of human reason it would be necessary to use as our model for shaping the work the likeness of a human form rather than that of an angel.¹⁸⁰ We must rise above ourselves and ascend by contemplation to those things, which are above reason if we desire to describe the night of our intelligence after the fashion of the angelic likeness. So let us examine what are those things above reason, which transcend the manner of human reasoning.

Chapter 2 That the things which belong to these last kinds of contemplation transcend the human reason

Since it is clear that some things are inferior to the reasoning here are others which are above reason. In addition, between them, midway, lie things, which are certainly open to reason; things we perceive by the bodily senses. The things we investigate by the reason belong to the reason only. Above the reason are those things we are taught by revelation and which are proved only by authority. We learn the meaning of white and black, hot and cold, sweet and bitter by the bodily sense, we do not prove them by reasoning. True and false, just and unjust, useful and useless, these we discern by reason and not by any bodily sense. That God is of one substance in three persons, is not taught us by any bodily sense, nor can we be convinced of it by any human reasoning. However, these things and others are taught us by revelation and our conviction and belief in some other things rests only on authority. Bodily things are below reason, but divine things are above it. Above reason, assuredly, is that which no bodily sense may attain to, nor any human reasoning penetrate. We say a thing is above reason when we believe it truly, nevertheless we cannot prove it by experience nor understand it by our intellect. Yet among the divine things there are many to which the human reason can readily assent, which it does not contradict, but receives them as true and acknowledges them to be settled, though it cannot prove them by experience nor understand them fully by the intellect. For indeed some of these things, which are said to be above the reason, transcend the narrowness of our capacity by the greatness of their incomprehensibility. Therefore, in these things that our limited sight cannot attain to, the angelic eminence stimulates the free flight of our contemplation. In addition, if we are to fashion in ourselves the form of the angelic likeness we must constantly and with all speed keep our soul raised in wonder at these things and accustom the wings of our contemplation to the sublime flight of angels.

Chapter 3 That those things, which are above reason may be divided into two classes and which things belong to

The divine command orders us to make two cherubim and so we *K* instructed to seek two kinds of contemplation in the things above reason. Let us scrutinize these things above reason and we shall find we can distinguish them into two kinds. Some are above reason but not contrary to it, others are both beyond and contrary to reason. But first we must issue a warning, that in these high and heavenly matters, when we state that anything is contrary to reason, we wish it to be understood of the human not of the divine reason. For whatever can be said to exist in that high and divine Being, endures by the highest and unchangeable reason. Nevertheless, many things, which we believe of the divine Being without doubting, seem very repugnant to our reason if we were to consult it, and all human reasoning protests against them. For what human reason can hold the Son to be co-eternal with the Father and equal to Him in all things, from Whom He has his being, life, and intelligence? So that among these things, which are above reason there are many of this kind, which if they are examined by human standards would seem to be altogether against reason. We say that those things are beyond reason, which we cannot prove by any experience nor are able to investigate fully by any reasoning. However, those things are contrary to reason, which seem to go against the pattern of things and to contradict our assumptions. In the first case, there is no experience and arguments fail. In the latter both the pattern and the reasonings are contradictory. In the first case, we often prove a thing by authority, confirm it by arguments, and convince by analogies, yet our intelligence does not fully understand even when the thing is proved and we are persuaded. For, as we have said, we are not able to prove it sufficiently by any kind of experiment or any clear example taken from those things, which we can know by experience.

However, we are persuaded of the second kind, sometimes by miracles sometimes by authority, or they are taught by revelation. Unbelievers are often persuaded by a multitude of miracles, the faithful believe constantly on the authority of the Scriptures but knowledge is given to the prophetic man by a multitude of diverse revelations. Indeed these are of such a nature that they cannot be proved to others (unless by the help of faith), even by those who learnt them by revelation. The proof of these is better attested by miracles than examples, by authority than by arguments, by revelation than by reasoning. The first kind superior in that no human reason is adequate to investigate them without the help of divine revelations or authenticated witnesses.

Yet, to the faithful mind when it is supported by such help, many reasons suggest themselves from every side, many arguments present themselves to help her in her investigations or to confirm what she has found or to support the opinion set forth by her assertions. Therefore, I think that such statements belong to the category called above reason but not to that called contrary to reason. For these latter are of such a nature that when they are proved and believed by miracle or authority, if in addition human reason be consulted about them and we are disposed to agree with its counsels, the reason which initially had accepted these things as settled by faith immediately begins to be shaken.

Moreover, always in the investigation, discussion and assertion of these things, the human reason achieve nothing unless it is mingled with and supported by faith. So that these things are rightly—we speak as men—said to be, not only above reason but also contrary to it. Now the first kind is rightly attributed to the fifth kind of contemplation and the latter belong to the sixth.

Chapter 4 *The imagination is altogether alien to the things which belong to this kind of contemplation*

“...In these twin contemplations the imagination or fantasy should have no part. For whatever view the heights of the last two classes afford, it is far from including anything belonging to physical likeness. If indeed any material fantasy is accustomed to cloud rather than to help, in the fourth kind of contemplation, how much more should these more sublime experiences be free from such things; should not even be mentioned together. Let the imagination, therefore, give way for a time, give way, and almost vanish. There is nothing in it, which is able to help this work. What place has the imagination do if reason fails? What place has the imagination where there is 'no variableness nor shadow of turning...'”¹⁸¹

Chapter 5 *How great is the supereminence of these last contemplations*

It is east to gather how excellent this last kind of contemplation is from the fact that all considerations and perceptions, which it includes, are directed from all sides, upon the highest divine things. Let anyone who is able; consider how high human wisdom has climbed when it has deserved to be raised to this degree of contemplation. What was begun in the way of perfection in the first two degrees of contemplation is here, in these last two, brought to the fullest consummation. . . .”

If you have been raised to this contemplation of divine things you will not be able to find anything further to which you must ascend. Certainly, there is nothing beyond God and therefore knowledge cannot come up higher nor go further. If the cherubim are called the fullness of knowledge, see how rightly this pinnacle of our endeavor is called *cherubim*, in which the highest degrees of all knowledge are figuratively expressed. You can certainly grow daily in the knowledge of God and you may be raised higher and higher in this sublime flight day by day.

However, beyond this watchtower of contemplation you shall find none that is higher. It is one thing, in this kind of sight to run about here and there, to widen one's learning by the knowledge of God, but it is to another to desire to seek other and higher things, which in no wise will you be able to do. There is nothing beyond God, nor can there be, nor can it be conceived. There is nothing higher to which wisdom may ascend nor does it possess any power to ascend further. For the perfection of knowledge is to know God and the fullness of this knowledge is the fullness of glory, the perfection of grace

and eternity of life. "For this", He says, "is eternal life, to know You the true God, Jesus Christ whom You have sent."¹⁸² Therefore, to know Him, Who is true God, is the end and consummation of everything.

These last contemplations will advance us little by little to this fullness of knowledge, and at last, they do lead us there. The perfection of this fullness begins in this life but will be consummated in the next. Therefore, the image of this work by which we are initiated into the fullness of knowledge is rightly called Cherubim.

Chapter 6 *How laborious and difficult it is to obtain the grace of this last kind of contemplation*

Let us now consider what is meant, when we are told to make these last objects of beaten work. For beaten work is produced by striking and it is gradually shaped into its planned form by frequent blows and much hammering. I think that this work is more in need of inward compunction than deep enquiry, of sighs rather than theories, of heartfelt groans rather than a wealth of arguments. For we know that the depths of the heart is better purged, the purity of the mind restored, clouds of obscurity cleared away, the heart's serenity more quickly and more completely brought about by true contrition of heart, by deep inward spiritual sorrow, than by any other means.

Yet what is said in the Scripture? "*Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.*"¹⁸³ Therefore, let him who desires to see God and is anxious to come to the contemplation of divine things, be eager for purity of heart. Oh what great intentness and diligence are necessary for this skilled learning and learned skill, before the soul is fully cleansed from the stain of earthly love and is truly consumed by the fire of love; before the gold of its intelligence is refined to that purity whereby it is made fit and worthy for the honor of this undertaking. Without doubt or contradiction, it is not easy or a light thing to induce the human soul with the angelic form and to transcend the earthly, no the human state and to receive wings-and raise oneself to the heights.

Oh, how often it is necessary to cast ones gold into the fire, draw it out again, and turn it now one way now another, hammering it on every side with frequent blows, until the angelic form is hewn out and the cherubim produced. How much prudence and foresight is needed in shaping the mat for this work. By this our conception of the love and fear of God must be tempered,

lest the soul, softened by too great reliance on divine forgiveness melts into weakness, or by an unbalanced conception of the divine severity, grows hard by despair and so gradually, by tepidity becomes quite different of bringing to an end the work it has undertaken. Oh, with what prudent caution and frequent reproof must we watch over and persevere, lest any digression of the mind or wandering thought impair the awareness of discretion, nor let it pass without contradiction and stern punishment. Nevertheless, how should anyone describe truly what skill and carefulness are needful so that one may assimilate into himself that likeness of the winged creatures and the human soul be transfigured into their image. Truly, it is initially necessary that he become accustomed to walk in heavenly places with heavenly inhabitants and he must never descend to earthly business or the care of outward things (except under the obligation of obedience and the service of charity), before he dares to attempt those angelic flights into the high and se places of the incomprehensible Divinity.

Chapter 7 *How it is vain for man to strive for these rapture, contemplation unless he be assisted by divine revelations*

Hence, I think, it is easy to understand how great is the prerogative of this last and supreme undertaking, which exceeds others mentioned before. By its purposeful striving it, aim the highest archangelic eminence of the angelic hierarchy. Consider I beseech you, how excellent it is when, by this effort of imitation, one achieves in oneself a likeness to that order of beings, which adheres immediately to the highest light, and sees it face to face, without mirror or darkness.¹⁸⁴ How wonderful that the human intelligence should daily be striving towards the contemplative ecstasy of those supernatural beings and that sometimes even, by the pleasure of the divine goodwill, it is raised to behold the wonders of the majesty of God. Who is fit for this? What craftsman will be found fit for this work unless divine grace precedes and follows him? For it is one thing to make the ark and another to fashion the cherubim. We may know how to paint the ark, clothe it with gold, encircle it with a crown, and cover it over; we may experience these things daily and they are not unfamiliar to our senses. However, who has seen the cherubim or could see them? In addition, how can I fashion a form that I am not fit to see? I think Moses himself would not have been able to produce this if he had not previously been taught by revelation. Therefore, this is the meaning of what he was told: "*Look and make all things according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mount.*"¹⁸⁵

First, then, Moses is led into the mountain, initially he is shown via revelation, before he is able to understand what he needs to know for the making of this thing. It is necessary therefore that a man should rise up to the high places of his heart in ecstasy by the Lord's revelation what it is he

should desire and work for and to what state of exaltation he must prepare and accustom his soul. For if he be once admitted to that flowing light of glory of the angelic heights and be found worthy to enter and behold the divine rays, with what deep secret desires, with what deep sighing and unspeakable groaning will such a man press on? How carefully will he remember and joyfully wonder at and consider the light he has seen, turning it over with a longing mind, sighing for it, contemplating it until at last, he be transformed "*into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*" ¹⁸⁶

By the Lord's Spirit, he says, not by his own. The best way of working in the business, if a man wishes to fashion the cherubim and produce them of beaten gold, is, as we have said before, by mourning and lamenting. For this beating out of an object can only mean the receiving from God's goodness, by great contrition of heart, that which a man cannot obtain by himself. For let no one suppose that this work, of which we speak now, and the previous works are similar, or think that they differ little from each other, because they are formed from the same matter and are both of gold. For truly, if any metal might be found more precious than gold, the angelic form should certainly be worked in it. For if the greatness of its worth be less in the material, it is counted all the greater in the form.

So we order cherubim to be produced and images to be made, but not after the likeness of man or of any kind of angel, but after that of the highest spirits, so that the eminence of these latter contemplations may shine forth the better from their symbolic shadow.

Chapter 8 See Note

Note: (The eighth chapter deals with the use of symbols in the fifth kind of contemplation and the absence of all symbolic interpretation in the sixth kind, and Richard illustrates from the position of the cherubim and other texts, but nothing of importance is added to the previous argument.)

Chapter 9 *That by the last two contemplations a man's self love and self approbation is moderated*

It is a great thing in every way that these two kinds of contemplation strengthen us against evil and help us towards virtue. Hence, this is added about them: "*Let them cover both sides of the propitiatory, spreading their wings and covering the oracle.*" ¹⁸⁷ When we cover anything, it is generally done in two ways. Sometimes it is for concealment, sometimes for protection, as often when we place an umbrella over us to shade us from the sun, tempering both its heat and the brilliance of its light. ¹⁸⁸

If, therefore, in these two kinds of contemplation we receive grace divinely, and if we persevere in them according to the grace divinely, and if we persevere in them according to the grace given. I think they will be to us a shade from the heat of the day and a refuge, and a hiding place from the wind and the rain. I desire that by very great effort and desire, we might be carried away to a sight of them and in our wonder beyond ourselves in great abstraction of mind, so that for a time our mind might not be conscious of itself, lying numbed and amazed at the sight of the cherubim, so that with the angels it might dare to say: "*Whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knows.*" ¹⁸⁹

Behold how deeply a man lies hid below the wings of the cherubim while, for a time, he is unconscious of himself. Now if this overshadowing cannot draw away attention of the mind into this kind of ecstasy, it should at least, as indeed it always does, cloud over the golden brilliance of the mercy seat and temper it to our sight. The brilliance of our mercy seat is certainly shrouded by the overshadowing from above, when whatever seems to shine within ourselves is disdained in comparison of a greater and more excellent light.

The shining of our mercy seat signifies the dignity of the spiritual nature, and the wings stretched out above, symbolize the excellence of the divine majesty. Is it to be wondered at if this overshadowing of our mercy seat, every side is to be covered? For, as we have said, whatever is perceived in us, whether like or unlike the divine things, is obscure by comparison with them. For the shadowing, tempers not only the light but also the heat and makes both more tolerable. In addition, it often happens, as we all experience, that we do not know how to keep ourselves from self-esteem in our graces or to be moderate in our love.

The effect of intent contemplation of divine things and deep wonder is to repress in us both excess and superfluity. I think that nobody, nobody at all I say, among rational beings, is free from that love of his own excellence or can restrict his opinion of himself to the true and legitimate proportions of justice, unless he is really able to despise himself in comparison with the things of which we have spoken.

Therefore, the cherubim are rightly said to cover both sides of the mercy seat, because nothing at all is to be found in us that is not unlike the highest and divine things in character or incomparable in degree.¹⁹⁰

Chapter 10 *With what great eagerness of mind spiritual men should pursue these last kinds of contemplation*

Certainly, these cherubim cover the sides of the mercy adequately if they expand their wings sufficiently and continuously. To stretch out one's wings widely and constantly is that not to seek divine contemplation in every place and at all times and to pursue that search and desire everywhere? Truly when birds want to fly, they unfold their wings. So truly, we almost must extend the wings of our hearts by desire and await the time of the divine showing at every hour and moment, so that at any time the wind of divine inspiration may blow away the clouds upon our minds, and reveal the rays of the true sun when all the darkness of the cloud is removed.

Immediately, then the mind shakes out the wings of her contemplation, lifts herself and flies upwards and fixing her gaze upon that light off eternity that radiates from above, with the power of a flying eagle she passes through and transcends the clouds of Earthly wordiness. I should say that a man fulfils the Lord's precept and sermon and stands upright with outstretched wings, who, having received the grace of this kind of contemplation always seeks, as far as he is able, to show himself alert and ready for this flight. So that when the moment of the divine pleasure comes and the wind of aspiring grace blows, he who is to be admitted to the divine secrets may be found ready.

Now we must not only raise our minds to that which we may have in this life so consider that vision of divine contemplation which we may have in this life but also consider that vision of divine contemplation which we hope for in the world to come, and hold with strong desire to this hope. For this type of grace is given to us for this purpose, for this, I say, is this understanding of eternal things infused into us that we may know what we are to look for in our unwearied search and to long for with desire. Otherwise, it is in vain that

we grow in the riches of divine knowledge unless by them the fire of love is increased in us. For love arising from knowledge and knowledge coming from love must always grow in us, each ministering to the increase of the other by mutual growth, love and knowledge developing in turn. Therefore the perfect soul wholly given to the contemplation of the highest things, must at all times await with great desire the end of her pilgrimage and the going forth from this prison, that she may deserve to "see face to face what now she sees in a mirror and darkly."¹⁹¹

Therefore, it is with Abraham sitting at the door of his tent and with Elijah standing at the opening of his cave: both ready to go forth, both intent on the coming of the Lord.¹⁹² One and the other both stand ready, one in the cave, one in the tent, yet both on the one standing, the other sitting. You will note, I think, that one of them thought the troubles of this life a weariness, the other a warfare and the same pilgrimage of life seemed to me a prison house, to the other an expedition.

There are men who see themselves as it were in a cave and hold their flesh to be a prison and bear the troubles of this life unwillingly. Others make their bodies into tents as it were, and gird themselves for the Lord's warfare and patiently bear their life serving Him and His interests. One lives impatiently the other patiently, while one fears for himself, the other attends to the Lord's advantage. So one stands in great travail but the other feels his labor and is altogether unconcerned about it, awaits the coming of the Lord. Both are found in the doorway and almost on the threshold. However, let us be silent concerning those who take their ease in their tents, not to say their palaces, lying in delights with their friends. Yet of the other two each one awaits the coming of the Lord; the one who sits on the threshold bearing patiently the hardships of his service was longing in suspense for the Lord's coming and he who stood at the door, waiting for the hour of his visitation labored impatiently for the desire he hoped for.

Will you listen as to how miserable was his life who stood at the door of his cave? "Oh Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my father." Yet, how is it that the same man, standing in this suspense, covered his face when the Lord was passing by?¹⁹³ Perhaps at the Lord's presence he recognized his own imperfection better and was ashamed that his weakness be seen.

Nevertheless, you wished to see what you feared to see! How many there are who think of themselves as being ready and yet at the moment of visitation tremble with fear, where before there was no fear, and now are afraid to take that step outwards, which before they desired so anxiously.

Chapter 11 *How after great laboring for their desire some are raised above themselves by the visitation of grace and some are not* ¹⁹⁴

Behold one who stands waiting and neither leaves his threshold nor goes to meet the Lord. Yet he looks forth from his cave but with his face covered; he heard the voice of the passer-by as He passed, and the man who was longing for rest came to know by God's showing what he was now bound to do. However, the other at the Lord's coming, leaps forth from his tent and runs to meet him who comes with uncovered face. He brings him in and receives the Lord's promise according to his wish and desire. He presses the Lord of Hosts with questions, receives foreknowledge of future things, and enters into that secret place of divine judgments. What is this waiting in one's house for the passing of the Lord, but wisely to understand, by the things, which happen to us by divine action, the government of divine providence and to have the grace of co-operating with it. While the earthquake follows the strong wind, the fire the earthquake, the still small voice, the fire, the presence of the Lord passing by is perceived. For while the mind is often fundamentally shaken by great and wonderful upheavals, and is sometimes depressed by too much fear, and sometimes burnt up by excessive pain or confused by shame, at other times, beyond hope and expectation, the soul is composed to a state of great tranquility and even security, and perhaps un-intently, it considers the work of visiting grace and perceives more clearly that this is taking place by the divine ordering.

We have God present but as it were passing by, when we are not yet able to abide in the contemplation of this light for light for a long time together. However, to hear the warning voice of the Lord or His instrument is to know by His inspiration what His will and perfect pleasure is. But he who is taken out of himself by ecstasy, goes forth as if from the tent to meet the lord as he comes, and sees him as it were face to face, contemplating the light of the highest wisdom without any veil or shadow of images; indeed not in a glass or darkly but as I have said, in actual fact.

A man draws the inward vision outwards when by much reflection and close examination, he apprehends or even makes intelligible to himself what he has seen in ecstasy, and then by the evidence of reason and illustrated by similes brings it forth for the understanding of all.

Truly the calf, by which the Lord is fed is killed, ¹⁹⁵ when the mind of man strengthened by these progressive steps cuts off something from the pleasures of his own will, which he had earlier cherished and gladly

obeyed; when he foregoes something of his occupations and customs in the hope that he may attend more perfectly to divine contemplation and please the divine mercy better. We feed the Lord when, having sacrificed ourselves in the pursuit of virtue and fulfilled that intention of a stricter life, we nourish and increase the favor of his love for us. "*Behold*" He said, "*I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him.*" ¹⁹⁶ For truly we eat with the Lord amongst us, when we gladly use for his work and devote to his good pleasure, those things by which we increase his favor towards us and our confidence in him. Moreover, through this increase of confidence it comes to pass that suddenly the mind is filled with that long desired and greatly hoped-for grace, far transcending our hope and expectation.

We follow the Lord as He goes forth when we attend diligently to that understanding, which was divinely taught, wondering at the light of divinity, which we thus know, we are raised above ourselves to contemplate higher things, and following in the footsteps of revealing grace, we accompany the Lord in his passing by. Now after this going forth, to stand with the Lord who stands, is by contemplation to gaze upon that revealed light for a long time, in that state of exaltation.

The man who abides by the standing Lord is he who in this high exaltation of the mind transcends all the hazardous states of human mutability, all the uncertainty of wavering, and his eyes fixed upon that light of eternity takes into himself the likeness of the image he beholds. "*But we all*", says the Apostle, "*beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.*" ¹⁹⁷ In this exaltation of the mind, the human intelligence often enters into that abyss of divine judgments and is instructed in knowledge of the future, as we have said.

Chapter 12 *How some of those things which are perceived in ecstasy be interpreted/or the common understanding and others not*

We must take note that we being placed as it were outside draw the vision of the Lord inwards and at other times we go forth with him as he goes. For what is known of the Lord's light in ecstasy is sometimes afterwards understood by the mind when it is sobered. Additionally, often we are led into ecstasy by that which we turn over in our mind's ordinary state, because of the greatness of our wonder. Again, it should be remarked that sometimes being as it were outside, we bring inside that which we have seen of the Lord, and sometimes we do not, for we do not read that Abraham brought back the Lord at the second going forth. For the nature of some things are beyond the human intelligence and cannot be investigated by human reason and yet as we have said before, they are not contrary to reason.

When, therefore, we learn something of this kind in alienation of the mind, we bring back the vision with us from outside if, with the co-operation of reason, we afterwards understand that which we learnt by revelation. However, in the case of those things which are above reason and contrary to it, when they are learned by revelation and as it were in ecstasy (because no human understanding or capacity is able to grasp them) we have that vision we have known, almost outside ourselves, and only retain some sort of memory of it.

What does the Scriptures say? "*The Lord went His way, as soon as He had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.*" ¹⁹⁸

The Lord departed and Abraham turned back: when the grace of revelation is withdrawn, the intellectual faculty is brought back to its ordinary state. At Abraham's first going out, with great difficulty, he compelled him whom he had seen to enter into his tent. At his second going forth, having seen and conferred with him at length, he did not bring him back. We bring the external vision into ourselves, when having been rapt to a perception of the Godhead, we later assimilate it as it were to our own thoughts, by reasoning. However, the external vision is not brought in when, the more the truth revealed in contemplation is sifted by human reasoning, the more it appears to be contrary to all human judgments. ¹⁹⁹

In this kind of contemplation before the soul comes back to normal, the Lord withdraws and removes far off and shows the greatness of His incomprehensibility by the remoteness of the vision. These are the two kinds of reality, which are learnt by divine revelation in the twofold vision, and seem to refer to the cherubim of which we spoke. This truly is the most worthy material from which the angelic form and the winged animals are made. We shape the cherubim for ourselves from material when the secret things of our faith which we have either learned by revelation or received from theologians, become the habitual subjects of our contemplation and we learn to withdraw our soul in wonder and to feed and humble inflame it exceedingly with the desire of divine things.

Also, after the example of Abraham and Elijah we must learn to await the coming of the Lord in that going forth from our habitation, and as if on the threshold. We must, according to the divine teaching, spread out the wings of our cherubim and at the coming of revealing grace, hasten to meet Him with the swift step of desire.

Note: Chapters Thirteen and Fourteen continue the theme that every contemplative soul must be prepared and never delay to receive grace and that but few souls are always ready for this grace. They are also a protest against lukewarm religious who put off conversion. They do not appear very important and are therefore omitted. The style of the work is now much more like a homily.

Chapter 15 *How arduous and difficult it is for any perfect soul wholly itself into itself and to rest in the desire for God only*

I am not saying that a delay of a year or a month or even a day, but any delay, however short, displeases impatient desire. For hope deferred grieves the soul. For the beloved of a true friend and the friend of one truly beloved, should as we have said above, always be prompt and prepared to receive the friend who knocks, without giving offence by delay, and should come to meet him who calls, with all alacrity, for indeed it is a strange kind of love that does not welcome the spouse nor admit the friend. Therefore, first see to it that you are ready to throw out the crowds of noisy people when he begins to knock at the door. Otherwise, what will you say when that kind of crowd is found with you at such a time? What can you say, I ask? Simply wait, wait, and keep waiting! Waiting and still waiting for you to throw out the crowds of strangers and put those friends of yours outside the door.

All thoughts whether vain or evil they are to be considered extraneous, for none of them are of any use to us. For we keep some about like household servants and use them for our service and convenience. For indeed singular love,²⁰⁰ loves solitude, seeks a lonely place; and it is necessary to cast out the whole crowd, not only the thoughts but also the affections, so that we may cling to the embraces of our beloved with greater freedom and thus with greater joy. How great is the delay in our expectation of this very thing? How often we have to say: "Wait, and go on waiting!" a little here and a little there? A little in one place, a little in another; a little in the garden, a little in the hall, a little in the chamber, until sometimes after long waiting, after great weariness he may enter into the cell and reach the most intimate secret place.²⁰¹ A little in the garden, while the noisy company is being dispersed: a little in the hall, while the chamber is prepared, a little in the chamber, while the bed is arranged. Additionally, the beloved is expected to wait in all these places for a little while, just a little here and there! He is heard from the garden and seen in the hall, kissed in the chamber and embraced in the bed.

He is heard by our memory, seen by the intelligence, kissed by the affections, embraced in all willingness. Heard by remembering, seen by wonder, kissed by love, embraced by delight. Alternatively, if you prefer, heard by revelation, seen by contemplation, kissed by devotion, held close for the inflowing of his sweetness. He is heard by revelation until his voice weakens somewhat, the tumult of shouting dies down and only his voice is heard; until that noisy crowd disappeared and he remains alone with the beloved only, and she, alone, contemplates him only. He is seen by contemplation, until at the sight of this unexpected vision and in wonder at his beauty the soul grows warm, burns more and more and more, and at last is wholly enflamed until she is altogether reformed unto true purity and inward beauty. . . .²⁰²

Chapter 16 *That it is almost impossible for any soul to pour herself out of herself and to rise above herself completely*

Yet, however quick such a soul may be at this time, to receive him who comes, I do not know if she is equally ready and prompt to go forth and meet him who calls. I fear that even now she may be saying to the beloved: "Wait, and wait on! Wait and keep waiting; a little here, a little there!" I think it is less easy to follow him who calls, than to receive him who comes. It is one thing to go in with him, another to go out to him. In the first the soul turns inward into herself and with her beloved enters into the inmost recesses of the heart. In the latter, she is led out of herself and raised to the highest contemplation. What is this entering in, but a complete gathering of oneself into one self?

Therefore, the entering of the soul into the chamber with her beloved and remaining alone with him alone in the enjoyment of sweetness is nothing but a forgetting of all external things, delighting above all and most intimately in his love. She sees herself alone with the beloved, when having forgotten all outward things; she directs her desire away from herself, into the love of her beloved. In the same way her affections are enflamed by the things she perceives in her heart and the thought of both the good and the evil she has done causes her to break into thanksgiving and then offer sacrifices of deep devotion both for the graces received and for the pardon granted. The beloved is brought into the inmost and best place when he is loved with deep affection and above everything.

Consider what it is in your life that you have loved most clearly, desired most anxiously; what made you most glad and pleased you above all things. Then consider whether you feel that violence of affection and fullness of pleasure when you burn with desire for the greatest Lover and when you rest in His love? Can a man believe that he has reached the inner-most depths of the affections, if the point of intimate love penetrates the emotions of his soul and moves it more sluggishly than it was accustomed to be penetrated and stirred, in former times, by external affections. However, if you perceive at once that the same or even a stronger violence of love reigns in you in divine things as that which you experienced in other things, consider further whether you can take pleasure or be comforted by any other thing. Truly if we can be comforted or derive gladness from any outward thing whatever, I venture to assert that our beloved does not yet occupy the ultimate depth of passionate love. Bestir yourself; hasten to draw him into inner most secret recess of your heart, whoever you may be.

Will anyone deny that the intensity of the highest and most unique love, in the inmost recesses, which the heart knows or may reach, can suffer loss, if the affections have fastened themselves on any alien pleasure? Truly if you seek or enjoy any kind of alien consolation, you cannot love God with singular devotion although you may love him greatly. He is not yet brought into the inmost room nor set in the best place. Therefore, if you make no effort to bring him into your inmost being, how can I believe that you will desire or be able to follow him to His sublime abiding place? Let this be a certain sign to you, oh soul, whoever you are, that you love your beloved less or will be less beloved of him, if you are not yet called to these ecstasies, or if, being called, you are not yet worthy to follow. How can you love or be loved perfectly if, in your desire for the highest things, you are not rapt away to supernal heights and do not pass over by ecstasy into those upward strivings? Would you know how the sublime height of divine revelations may be the clear indication of divine love? "*Now I do not call you servants*", he said, "*but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known to you.*" ²⁰³

Attend to this also, that the manner of the divine revelation depends upon the greatness of divine love: "*Eat, oh friends; drink, yes drink abundantly, oh beloved.*" ²⁰⁴ Behold, those who are friends, dear ones eat, and the best beloved drink, and not only drink but also are inebriated. ²⁰⁵ Truly those who eat, as they chew their food digest what they delight in, but not without an interval or some trouble. In addition, those who drink absorb what they thirst for with great rapidity and ease. Also, do not those men eat, who, albeit with great studies and long meditation, attain with difficulty the delights of truth? Moreover, in a way they drink, who with great ease and joy they draw that which they ardently desire from divine revelations because of the sweetness of truth. The beloved eat, but the best beloved drink, for the degree of manifestation is dispensed according to the measure of love. Ecstasy of mind is brought about by inebriation and the infusion of supernal revelation leads only those who are greatly beloved into ecstasy. The prophet meant to signify this kind of inebriation when he said: "*They shall be inebriated with the plenty of your house and you shall make them drink of the torrent of your pleasure.*" ²⁰⁶

If, therefore, we desire to be inebriated in this way and to enjoy this ecstatic contemplation, let us try to love our God deeply and greatly, and at all times to long with great desire for the joy of contemplation and this will be as the stretching out of wings in the image of our cherubim. Behold with what great labor we have sweated and how much circumlocution we have used about

this, so that our cherubim might expand its wings widely enough and overshadow our mercy seat as appropriately.

Chapters 18-20 Note:

[Richard gives examples of some of the theological difficulties, which fall under consideration of the fifth kind of contemplation, such as the problems concerning the unity and essence and the power and goodness of God, which though beyond the grasp of reason are not contrary to it. In Chapter Eighteen, he deals with questions concerning the Persons of the Blessed Trinity, which are both beyond reason and seem contrary to it.

In the nineteenth chapter, he examines cases where these questions overlap.

In the twentieth, he shows how the subjects of both these kinds of contemplations are related to the fourth kind of contemplation, which deals with things of the mind that are created and here he shows by similitudes that the mysteries can be partly understood from natural phenomena.]

For we recognize that the rational creature is made in the image of the Creator and therefore we rightly and freely seek in that nature, the reason of that likeness and we plan the method of our investigation from this. From that nature, I say, whose state we certainly believe bears the traces of the divine image impressed most strongly upon it, and quite manifestly expressed through it. For what is meant when the cherubim turn their faces to the propitiatory but that in our speculation about and enquiry into divine things we should pay attention to the rational creature, and from likenesses we perceive go on higher towards the understanding of the Divinity. Now if you wonder how God, the maker of all things, produced from likeness we perceive from nothing at the beginning of the world, so many varied species of things according to His will. Consider how easy it is for the human soul at any time to reproduce the shape of any kind of original creature, as often as he wills independent of pre-existing matter and as it were from nothing. Therefore, that which seemed incredible, initially, will begin to be less marvelous. Where you will begin to discover this very remarkable thing, namely that God Who is the supreme Truth, has reserved to Himself the truth of things, but has conceded to His image of things at any time... ²⁰⁷

Chapter 21 *That the frequent use of these three last contemplations is always accompanied by frequent divine revelations* ²⁰⁸

We should not neglect nor to pass over without careful reflection what was promised by the divine voice when it said to Moses: "*I will speak to you from above the mercy seat, that is, from between the two cherubim.*" ²⁰⁹ Consider how great a thing it is that a man may at any time or in any necessity think about God, or turn to him in any need when he should seek and receive the divine counsel; and you will be able to understand how necessary and useful it is to be familiar with these last three kinds of contemplation..... The mind rose up as it were, above the mercy seat moves between the two cherubim when the contemplative soul transcending both the material and the spiritual creation in a sublime beholding, is held poised in wonder at the excellency of the Unity and the Trinity. It is almost as if we were to set up a mirror above the mercy seat for this wonder, when, by examining the rational creature and considering the divine image, we are promoted higher to the knowledge of the divinity. We move about the between mercy seat and the two cherubim when by the use of all three kinds of contemplation we make more perfect progress in each. We should, therefore, exercise ourselves freely in these three kinds of contemplation and by the mirror and image of the high Trinity and Unity to penetrate more deeply to the beholding of the glory of the same Trinity and Unity.

If we willingly turn over in our minds what we know of the worth of the rational creature, and of the honor and splendor of the Creator, and frequently consider and marvel at this, we shall become worthy the appropriate contemplation to know these things through the divine showing; things which we were in no way able to be understood before. This is what is promised to you when it is said: "*I will speak to you from there*" Recognize, therefore, how useful it is to ponder often over the mysteries of our faith and keep them frequently in mind, seeing that by this exercise we shall be able to obtain the divine showing frequently. But if we are not able to see in ecstasy that which we believe, concerning the Trinity of Persons, or to grasp it by the pure and penetrating intelligence, let us nevertheless hold by faith that which we receive by Catholic tradition, and labor to consider it frequently, so that by our effort we may deserve the abundance of divine showings. I think the consolation of divine showings will not be merely transitory for those who frequently and willingly look into the hidden things of the divine mysteries by the eye of faith. How much more familiar will it be to those who contemplating assiduously by the eye of the intelligence and seeing them often in ecstasy are still not able to satisfy their desire.

This is because he who holds the office of Moses and receives the care of souls, whose duty it is by divine command to lead forth the people of God from the house of bondage and bring them through the wilderness and into the promised land, should move around as in free flight, among the three kinds of contemplation, that he may always be found more worthy. For it is his office to be rightly instructed by the oracles of God, as often as is necessary, in those things of which both he and his people are ignorant and be made sure in all uncertainties. If, therefore, you would know by divine inspiration what; is the pleasing and perfect will of God, be ever prompt and ready for these three types of contemplation. By the merit of this exercise, you may perhaps deserve to test the truth of this promise: "From there I will speak to you."

Chapter 22 *That in my kind of contemplation a man may pass into ecstasy*

Although it is usual and almost a characteristic of the two last contemplations to see by ecstasy, and on the other hand it is the homely and almost ordinary habit of the first four kinds to function without any ecstasy of mind, yet all kinds of contemplation may and sometimes are experienced in both ways. For among the things, which are the subjects of the first four types of contemplation, some may be known by divine revelation and these may be discerned by the eye of contemplation in ecstasy. Moreover, with regard to the subjects of the last two kinds, we are accustomed to reflect upon them, according to our knowledge ability, in an ordinary state of mind, as well as to see them in contemplation. Yet, since those things, which belong to the last kinds, transcend the clear sight of the human mind when it considers them after the usual manner of the soul, therefore this same human mind goes out from itself and enters into ecstasy in order that it may discern something in them more sharply and clearly. It is, therefore, thought fitting to give mystical expression to those things by the symbol of an angelic form rather than a human likeness.

We deduce from the mystical example of Moses that ecstasy can be experienced in all these kinds of contemplation. Also, that they may be exercised without any kind of ecstasy is seen by the typical work of Bezaleel. ²¹⁰ This was so that Moses might see the ark and the two cherubim by divine revelation; he ascended the mount and entered into the cloud. Now we read that Bezaleel neither sought nor approached the mount in order to achieve and perceive that mystical work. For what is this climbing up into the mount, but a rising up into the high place of the heart, according to the prophet's

saying? For thus truly the cloud covers the mount; when the memory of external things slips away from the mind.

Moses remained on this mountain for six days and on the seventh, he was called from the midst of the cloud, to speak the Lord. For six days as we have said, we transact our business and on the seventh, we rest. For six days, we wait in the mount while with great labor and mental effort we accustom ourselves to abide for a long time in this high state. Now, at last, we come to the seventh day when this laborious uplifting of the mind is changed into delight, and the mind rises up with effort. We reach, as it were, the seventh day when, in that high state, the soul is at last established in the greatest tranquility, so that it not only discards all care and anxiety, but almost passes beyond the bounds of human suffering.

Now it is admitted to speak with the Lord, at his bidding, when by divine inspiration and revelation it is plunged into the abyss of divine judgments. Moses enters the cloud when the human mind absorbed by the immensity of divine light, falls asleep in complete forgetfulness of itself. So that you may well wonder and you should rightly wonder how the cloud agrees with the fire and the fire with the cloud; the cloud of unknowing with the cloud²¹¹ of the enlightened intelligence; unknowing and the forgetting of things known and experienced, with the revelation and understanding of things previously unknown and not experienced thus far. For at one and the same time the human intelligence is illuminated with regard to divine things and darkened in respect of human things. This peace of the uplifted soul, this darkness, and illumination is described by the Psalmist in a few words when he says: "*In peace in the selfsame, I will sleep and I will rest.*"²¹² Truly, the soul finds peace when it is lead beyond itself and in no way feels the troubles of human suffering. She sleeps in this peace when she is lulled into the greatest tranquility and all her former grave reflections are lost in a forgetting. For he who sleeps has no knowledge at all of the things around him or even of himself. So that ecstasy of the mind is rightly expressed by the word 'sleep'. For in ecstasy of the mind is absent from its usual surroundings, engrossed as it were in sleep it moves in the contemplation of divine things, far from human concerns. Then also the soul 'sleeps in the selfsame', when it rests in him by contemplation and wonder, to whom it is one and the same thing, to be everything that is, who alone can truthfully say: "*I am who am.*"²¹³ However, that which Moses describes as the seventh day, David more plainly calls 'peace.' Also, what the former means by entering into the cloud, the latter calls as a falling asleep. Moreover, the thing which this man describes

as 'resting in the selfsame', is the same which the other speaks of as being called 'going up and staying with the Lord.'

After the example of Moses one who goes up into the top of the mount enters into the midst of the cloud, sees and contemplates by God's revelation, the ark and the cherubim and the cherubim and is carried away into sublime experience by that raising and ecstasy of mind. This man advances by divine inspiration through six types of contemplation, which we have described. For Moses was told: "*See that you make all things after the pattern that was shown to you in the mount.*"²¹⁴

if all these things were shown to him upon the mount of God, then it was not only the cherubim but also the ark. This is what I was saying above: that the things belonging to any kind of contemplation may by the showing of God, be seen in ecstasy. Yet, nevertheless, it may be inferred in the case of Bezaleel that some of these works may be and are generally known in contemplation, without any ecstasy. For what I ask, does this building of the ark mean? Also, what of the gilding, encircling it with a crown, covering it with the mercy seat, adding the cherubim? Unless it be that anyone acquiring the art of these kinds of contemplation little by little, by much study and labor learns and practices them one after the other and at last in some way brings the work to an end and finally is perfect in all these things.

However, let me be silent about the ark. What shall I say about the cherubim? We do not read that Bezaleel went up into the mountain or entered the cloud in order to shape them or to see what form they were to have. Hence, it is clearly to be understood that these two last kinds of contemplation whose characteristic is, that they are experienced in ecstasy, may nevertheless be limited to lower modes of human understanding. Every kind of contemplation may at time be made in both ways, that is, sometimes in ecstasy and sometimes without any ecstasy.

Chapter 23 *That some have the gift of ecstasy gratuitously and possess it almost as if it were acquired by virtue.*

Concerning those who in their contemplation are taken beyond themselves and carried away even to ecstasy, there are some who wait for it and receive it only at the call of divine grace and others acquire it by great effort of the soul, yet with the cooperation of grace.

The first have this gift as it were gratuitously in the case of him who cannot have it when or as he wills again those who get it without any effort of their own but merely await the hour when grace calls them, may be said to have it unpredictably. However, those who are supposed to have the fruit of this kind of grace by virtuous effort, are able to enjoy it generally, when they, so desire. We have an example in Moses, of the second in Aaron the priest. This is because it was solely by the grace of God's revelation that Moses deserved to see the ark in the cloud on the mount; for he could see it at will. Now Aaron had, in virtue of his office, the power to enter the Holy of Holies and beyond the veil to look upon the ark of God, whenever he required to do so or when there was a reason for it.

It is sufficiently dear that the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle of the covenant enshrined the innermost and most secret place. Therefore, as we understand the top of the mountain to signify the apex of the mind, so by the Holy of Holies we understand the innermost part of the human mind. Still, undoubtedly in the human soul, the apex is the same as the inmost part and the deepest place is one with the highest; and we mean the same thing by the top of the mountain as by the mercy seat in tabernacle of the covenant.

What is the approach to the top of the mountain or to the tabernacle, but to ascend into the highest, the most intimate and deepest part of the mind, and having found it, to hold it? For by the first tabernacle, which we all know, we understand the common state of the soul, by the second we mean that which only a few know as yet, and as by ecstasy. The first is chiefly the sphere of the rational sense, the second of the intellectual sense.

In the first state, we contemplate the invisible things of human nature, in the latter the invisible things of the divine world. However, these two states, (one known to all men, the other only to a few), are divided and shut off from each other by a veil of forgetting. When in the contemplation of divine things we are carried away by ecstasy above ourselves, or into ourselves, we forget immediately both external things outside ourselves, and all things within ourselves. Moreover, when we return to ourselves from that sublime state, the things, which we saw when we were beyond ourselves, cannot be recalled to memory with that truth and clarity with which we perceived them before. now although we may remember something of this experience and see as through a veil or as from within a cloud, we are not able to understand or remember the manner of our seeing, nor the nature of the vision.

So wondrously remembering we do not remember, and not remember; seeing we do not discern, beholding we do perceive, and our effort does not penetrate. You see truly, that the human mind whether it enters into the inmost sanctuary of secret things or goes forth from it outwards, you see, I tell you, that in both cases the veil of forgetting covers it.

Thus, to enter into the cloud or to pass beyond the veil is the same thing. However, although what Moses and Aaron did concern the same thing, it was different in the way each of them did it. For at that time the former depended only upon the good pleasure of another, while the latter had undertaken it in virtue of his office and exercised it as it were, at will. However, so that Aaron might be fit and able to enter beyond the veil when it was his duty or his wish, he had acquired and possessed a pontifical habit and adornment proper to that office. Surely, this is a symbol of gaining the merits of virtue, by which he might have the use of this grace at will? ²¹⁵ He who would penetrate beyond the veil needed, according to the divine command to enter, clothed not only in the pontifical habit, but also enveloped by the cloud of aromatic smoke. So that at the of his entering he might be fervent, breathing out heavenly desires as it were with the rising of the aromatic smoke; so that he might come to despise altogether, as being nothing, all the adornments of the inner man which might have pleased him.

Perhaps the same thing was meant when Moses left the crowds at the foot of the mountain and when Aaron before entering the tabernacle, put off his common habit; the same thing too, when Moses ascended the mount with the elders of the people of Israel and when Aaron entered into the inner tabernacle robed in pontifical garments. Nor perhaps is there any difference when the first, having left the elders ascending the mount, reached the summit with Joshua alone, and when Aaron betook himself with aromatic incense into the Holy of Holies.

Yet again, in the same may be signified when Moses entered into the cloud and Aaron went in beyond the veil, with this difference only between them, according to the mystical tradition, that one, solely by the divine calling and the determination, entered into that secret communication of the divine revelation.

Chapter 1 How we make progress in the grace of contemplation by three modes (or states of mind)

We make progress in the grace of contemplation by three ways: sometimes by grace alone, sometimes through effort added to grace, sometimes through the teaching of others. We have types and examples of these three in Moses, Bezaleel, and Aaron. Moses first saw the ark in the mountain and in the cloud, without any labor on his part and solely by the revelation of God. Bezaleel by his own labor, made such an ark as he could imagine, Aaron was accustomed to see the ark already made by the labor of others. We see the ark of God without any human effort, after the fashion of Moses when we receive the ray of contemplation solely by God's showing. Yet afterwards as in the case of Bezaleel, we make progress in contemplation by our own work, when we acquire skill in using the same grace by our own effort and activity. It's then we attain to seeing the ark of God as by the work of others, when we grow accustomed to the use of this grace as it is taught us by others. Now we do not wish what we say concerning our labor and effort to be understood as if we could do anything at all without the co-operation of grace, for every effort of ours is made by grace alone. Now it is one thing to receive the grace of contemplation from God, another to acquire this kind of divine gift by our own effort and co-operation. Therefore, we obtain this grace by three methods, sometimes by divine inspiration or by our own effort, or by the teaching of others.

However, we should note this, there are some who are advanced to this grace by their own effort and without any instruction or teaching of others, yet they are never carried away into ecstasy in their contemplations. However, some attain to the same grace under the influence the teaching of others, more than by the penetration of their own minds, and yet they often come to ecstasy in their contemplation. This explains why we read that Bezaleel constructed the ark, but did not enter into it.

No doubt, Aaron entered according to custom, into the ark, which was already formed by another's work, and placed within the veil. So now in this treatise we take up the office of Bezaleel, undertaking to give you instruction in the study of contemplation and as it were toiling in the building of the ark.

You will far outrun me in this grace if, helped by what you hear, you are able to pass on within the veil; if what we labor at in the forecourt, and understand and define according to the common use, you may perceive in ecstasy and see as it were within the veil.

However, we must note that some when they return to themselves according to the normal state of the soul after ecstasy, cannot in any way understand or remember what they have perceived in that state. This is the case of Nebuchadnezzar who had a vision in a dream, but rising from sleep could not recall to mind what he had seen in his dream.²¹⁷ Some men are easily able to reflect upon what they saw in ecstasy. Others strain painfully to do so. Thus, it was with King Pharaoh who had a vision in a dream and remembered it.²¹⁸ On the other hand, King Nebuchadnezzar having forgotten his dream recovered it only by great effort.

Moses also who was shown the ark of God by revelation on the mount, afterwards came to know it familiarly in the valley and saw it often. Others, too, although they rarely and unexpectedly attain to ecstasy in their contemplations, at length begin to experience it more frequently. This is as when eventually entered freely into the ark behind the veil, which at first he saw in the cloud only, at the call and revelation of God. There are many secret things in all this, which cannot and should not be discussed separately.

Chapter 2 *In what ways all contemplation occurs, namely by the widening, the raising and the abstraction or ecstasy of the mind* ²¹⁹

It seems to me that the character of contemplation varies in three ways. Sometimes it effects an enlarging of the mind, sometimes a raising, and sometimes an abstraction of the mind. The enlarging of the mind is when the gaze of the soul expands widely and is intensely sharpened, but this in no way goes beyond the limit of human effort.

The raising of the mind is when the activity of the intelligence, divinely illuminated, transcends the limits of human effort but does not go over into ecstasy, so that what it sees is above its powers, but the soul does not withdraw from its accustomed ways of knowing. The alienation of the mind (or ecstasy) is when the memory of things present withdraws from the mind and it moves by a transfiguration divinely fashioned, into a strange state of soul unattainable by human effort. These three modes of contemplation are experienced by divine grace, the middle one by a mingling of both, namely, human industry and divine grace.

a) In the first degree, we build the ark as it were, by our own labor when we acquire the art of contemplation by our own effort and zeal.

b) In the second degree, just as the ark is lifted on to the shoulders of the bearers and follows in the traces of the preceding cloud, so by our assiduous efforts and the grace of revelation co-operating and as it were going before, the ray of contemplation broadens.

c) In the third degree, the ark is placed in the Holy of Holies and set as it were, inside the veil; so the point of the contemplative's understanding is drawn into the inmost depths of the mind and is secluded from memory of external things by the veil of forgetting and abstraction.

To the first degree belongs the construction of the ark, to the second its carrying out, to the third its placing and enshrining behind the veil.

We rightly understand concerning the first, what the Lord said to Abraham: *"Lift up now your eyes, and look from the place where you are now northward and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land, which you see, to you I will give it."*²²⁰ Of the second, we rightly understand what was written about Moses: *"Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountains of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah that is over against Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan."*²²¹ To the third belongs the transfiguration of the Lord, when he led witnesses up into the high mountain and was overshadowed by a cloud of light and as we have said, Moses appeared to the Lord in the midst.²²²

In the first case, Abraham was not commanded to ascend the mountain, nor do we read that the Lord showed him anything, but he was instructed to raise his eyes from the place where he was and to look around upon the land he was to receive. There is no mention of ascent or of showing in those passages where the exaltation and uplifting of the mind or the explanation of divine revelation are described. We lift up our eyes from that place where we are accustomed to be, when we do not forsake the common and customary state of our soul in the beholdings of our contemplation. The place in which for the time we stand by our intelligence, is the mode of intelligence, is the mode of our understanding faculty. We consider the fullness of the inheritance we are to receive, when, with the eyes of contemplation, we foresee long before how wide the sphere of perfection will be to which we may attain some day, as we progress in devotion.

There is nothing indicated in these words of the Scripture which would appear to go beyond human effort, so that it may appropriately be interpreted of the first degree of contemplation. However, as to Moses' ascent of the mountain, commanded by God, Who showed him the land of promise, see how remarkably this seems to point to the second degree of contemplation. What is this ascent to the mountaintop but a heavenward raising of the human mind above the level possible to human powers? In addition, God's showing of the promised land is the infused illumination in the depths of desire. To behold the land of promise by divine showing is to know the fullness of future rewards through the revelation of divine light and to persevere in this kind of contemplation.

It seems that Moses ascends into the mountain by human effort, but God's showing of the land of promise is of divine grace. Hence, this witness of Scripture proves itself to be concerned with the second degree, which we have mentioned. However, we can sufficiently see from what is said above, that Moses' access to God in the midst of the cloud on the mountain, applies to the third degree or mode of contemplation. For this approach by a divine calling, and this entering into the cloud, does not mean that going forth of the mind out of itself and the mind from its memory of surrounding thing?

This is shown when Christ's disciples were overshadowed by a cloud of light. One and the same cloud overshadowed by shining and enlightened by shadowing, for it illuminated divine things and clouded over human things. All contemplation happens in these three ways, by enlarging the mind, by raising the mind, by abstracting the mind. *"Lift up your eyes and see"*,²²³ that refers to the kind of contemplation, which enlarges the mind. *"Who are these that fly as a cloud?"*²²⁴ This describes the raising of the mind. *"I said in my excess: every man is a liar."*²²⁵ This concerns the alienation or abstraction of the mind.

Chapter 3 *Regarding the enlarging of the mind and by what ways it usually developed*

This mode of contemplation, which is an enlarging of the mind, can be developed in three ways: by art, by exercise, by attention.

We attain the art of doing something when we learn how to be done either from good masters or by investigation. The exercise is when we put into practice what we have learned of the art, and make ourselves quick and effective in carrying out this practice. Attention is when we reflect with effort

or- we have carried out with great diligence. First, therefore, acquire the art of any subject, second we must put it into practice, thirdly we must reflect with great alertness on what we have learned and practiced.

By these three degrees, as we have stated, the depth of the mind is widened and made more apt for any kind of learning or skill. Certainly the more widely and the more firmly anything is learnt so much the more richly will the mind be enlarged to take in wider and deeper things. Nevertheless, it is also a fact that any knowledge acquired by learning is strengthened, enlarged, and developed by use and practice.

Again, how is it that in any single subject of study in which we are both instructed and exercised our insight becomes somewhat finer and more perceptive, unless it be that the extension and awareness of mind grows according to our degree of attention? ²²⁶

Chapter 4 *Concerning the raising up of the mind and by what steps its ascent is made.*

Nevertheless, this manner of contemplation, which occurs by the raising of the mind, is developed by three stages. When the human intelligence is divinely inspired and illuminated by that divine light, it is sometimes raised above its own knowledge, sometimes, also above its own effort and sometimes also above its own nature.

The soul is raised above its own knowledge, when it knows by divine showing something that belongs to its own sphere, in a way that exceeds its own knowledge or intellectual powers. It is raised above the power of mental effort, when it is divinely illuminated about that for which no knowledge of its own could suffice, neither what it possesses now, nor what might possibly acquire by its own effort. The capacity of the mind is enlarged beyond nature, when the human intelligence filled by divine inspiration transcends the limits not of any individual soul, but of human capacity and effort generally.

The mind of the contemplative is lifted up above its knowledge when it experiences what is said: "*Man shall come to a deep heart and God shall be exalted.*" ²²⁷

God is exalted in the sight of the uplifted soul, when by divine revelation He shows it something of the excellence of the divine majesty, which appears greatly to surpass the mode of any knowledge it had previously. This is because the excellence of that divinity which cannot in itself increase our knowledge, increase daily and appears more sublime in our contemplative experience.

The exalted mind is carried away beyond the effort of the mind when it is fulfilled: "He spread his wings and has taken them and carried them on his shoulders." ²²⁸ It is certainly not in the power of human industry to take one's way through the air.

Yet, where we cannot go we may be carried, supported by wings. It is therefore evident that to travel by air is beyond human power but not beyond human nature. The contemplative soul ascends beyond her own powers, when the divine condescension manifesting its secrets, and as by the spreading and raising of wings, carries the soul to that peak of super-eminent knowledge, whither she could never go by her own efforts.

Nevertheless, this uplifting of the mind certainly transcends the mode of human nature; as when the prophet sighed and said: "*Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?*" ²²⁹ That which the Lord promised by Isaiah refers to the thing: "*They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles.*" ²³⁰ It is truly beyond human nature to possess wings and fly on high at one's own will. However, to receive this gift of wings, almost contrary to nature, this is surely like the possession strengthened by exercise, of a marvelous ability for contemplation, so that you may when you will, ²³¹ penetrate on the wing of clear sight into the difficult regions of secret knowledge, impenetrable to mere human effort.

Truly, we begin to be winged creatures, when having received the gift of grace divinely; we transcend the bounds of our state, by the flight of our contemplation. For every type of prophecy, unless it is received in ecstasy, belongs to this third degree of uplifting. Is it not a thing beyond human nature to see past things, which do not exist now, or to see future things, which are not yet? So also to see present things, which are not present to the sense, to see the secrets of another's heart, thing not subject to any sense; to have knowledge of divine things which are above the sense sphere? We must now seek the causes of ecstasy in the human mind and by what degrees it develops.

Chapter 5 *That ecstasy of the human mind can have three causes*

We have, I think, to relate ecstasy of the human mind to three causes. This is because it comes to pass that sometimes through greatness of devotion, or great wonder, or exceeding exultation, the mind cannot possess itself in any way, and being lifted up above itself, passes into ecstasy. The human mind is raised above itself by the greatness of its devotion, when it is kindled with such fire of heavenly desire that the flame of inner love flares up beyond human bearing. In addition, the soul melted like wax is released from its former state, and vaporized as smoke, ascends upwards, and is breathed forth to the heavens.

The human soul is led up above herself by wonder, when radiant with infused heavenly light and lost in wonder at the supreme beauty of God; she is torn from the foundation of her being. Like flashing lightning, the deeper she is cast down in self-deception in the face of the beauty she sees, so much the higher and more rapidly she rebounds in her desire for the highest, and carried away above herself, she is lifted up to the heavens.

The mind of man is abstracted from itself by excess of joy and exaltation, when its inmost self, drunk with the abundance of interior sweetness, indeed wholly inebriated, forgets altogether what it is and what it will be, and is brought to this going forth of ecstasy by the greatness of its religious fervor, and in this condition of wonderful happiness, is suddenly transformed into a heavenly state.

Therefore if we have not yet experienced this kind of ecstasy, what should we feel about ourselves but that we are not loved and do not love in this degree? Whoever you are, if you loved fully and perfectly perhaps the perfection of your love, the urge of your burning desire would carry you away into this kind of ecstasy, which we have partly described above. Again, if you were truly worthy of divine love, if you showed yourself fit for so great an honor, perhaps he would enlighten the eyes of your intelligence so greatly with the effulgence of his light and inebriate the desire of your heart with such a taste of his intimate sweetness, that thereby he would carry you up above yourself and lift you up to divine things by ecstasy.

We shall, I think, find in the Song of Songs these three anagogical modes of ecstasy in the same order as we have placed them here, described mystically. We may rightly understand as referring to the first, the passage: "*Who is she that goes up by the desert, as a pillar of smoke of aromatic spices of myrrh*

and frankincense, and of all the powders of the perfumer?" ²³² As referring to the second, we may rightly understand the words of the same Canticle, much further on: "*Who is she that comes forth as the morning rising?"* ²³³ Moreover, we may relate the words that we read at the end, to the third cause. "*Who is she that comes up from the desert flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?"* ²³⁴

Chapter 6 *How the first mode of going forth arises from the greatness of devotion* ²³⁵

Would you like to know more clearly how we may conveniently relate the first of these to the first kind of ecstasy? The first cause of the soul's ecstasy, as we have said, is the restlessness of its desire and the greatness of its devotion. For smoke always up from a fire. ²³⁶ Who would deny that spiritual love is a therefore this heavenly lifting up of the soul arising from fervor of love, may unless I err, be compared to smoke. However, we understand by this kind of smoke, the desire of a devout mind. Like smoke the soul ascends to celestial things when by fervent love driving her on to this, her desire carries her away beyond herself. We all know that a spiral of smoke is graceful and upright. Therefore, if your ascent is to be like a spiral let it be restless, let it be your only desire, arising from a right intention. If by myrrh, we understand contrition of heart, by frankincense devotion of heart, by the common dust of spices the fullness of all virtues, and behold how all these things bear out this one interpretation, which anyone may easily understand for himself. For this is clear that if anyone is full of charity he cannot lack the marks of other virtues. For if we believe the Apostle, charity is the highest of the virtues.

Indeed, we must note this that a holy soul truly rises up like smoke in the desert by whatever it finds in itself; whether by the good things or the bad in her affections, she is further enflamed in her desires for the heavenly Bridegroom. However, I think that as far as merit is concerned, this uplifting of the mind, which, with the help of grace, arises from the intention, the personal intention, is greater than that which is caused only by a heavenly showing or any divine inspiration. But it is necessary for the soul to begin with this kind of ascent and as it were to rise up first in the desert, if it is to become worthy of any other kind of progress.

Nevertheless, is she is to become a spiral of smoke, although she must begin to do so in the desert, she must ascend beyond this desert. Unless it be lifted above itself the mind will not be carried away into ecstasy, unless it desert

itself altogether, and make a desert by deserting, and by that deserting in the likeness of smoke spirals fade upward more and more towards the heavens.

Chapter 7 *Regarding the first mode of ecstasy when it is caused by the burning of fervent desire alone*

This kind of ecstasy sometimes takes place through the burning of violent desire, sometimes by this burning accompanied by a divine showing. Why should this spiritual and incorporeal fire of divine love not have the same power in spiritual things which material fire has over bodily things? We know how this material fire affects a small quantity of liquid poured into a vessel. This is because first the liquid moves away from the bottom, it is thrown about here and there, now up, now down and gradually it rises up. At last, from having been a small quantity it fills the vessel to the brim and with violence empties itself from inside, pours out and is ejected in a stream.

So also is the human soul, enflamed with divine love, often become heated and agitated within itself and against itself; it boils and bubbles, grows indignant, despises and condemns itself, gazing upwards striving after celestial things. When it has burned for a lengthy period in this heat, and has been greatly thrown about, repelled from below by its contempt for low things and attracted upwards by its desire for high ones, it often happens that by the driving of the Spirit, it is impelled by desire out of itself and ejected above itself.

Then forgetting itself altogether, it is raised up into ecstasy, and is altogether carried away by rapture. In this way the ardor of heavenly desire when it kindles the human soul fiercely with divine love, raises it fervently above itself. In addition, as we can show by the previous example, any aromatic powder of spices thrown into the fire, in so far as it is not consumed by the devouring flame, is transmuted by the violence of the heat into a thin and smoking exhalation, rising upward. I beseech you to consider this. when nature is examined and the Scriptures questioned, they agree together in one and the same conclusion. Ecstasy of the mind divinely enflamed, can and does arise solely from the heat of fervent desire, as we have said above.²³⁷

Chapter 8 *That the first mode of ecstasy sometimes arises through the burning devotion together with a divine showing*

Sometimes this form of ecstasy arises when the desire of the ardent soul and some marvel of divine showing occur together, and we can illustrate this from Abraham's first giving forth of which we spoke of before. "*And the Lord appeared to him in the vale of Mambre and he was sitting at the door of his tent, in the heat of the day; and when he had lifted up his eyes there appeared unto him three men standing near him, and as soon as he saw them, he ran to meet them from the door of his tent.*"²³⁸ If by this tent, we understand the dwelling place of the human intelligence, the exit from it cannot be anything else but the ecstasy of the human mind. This is because we are led out of ourselves in two ways. Sometimes we go out from ourselves but descend below ourselves and at other times, we are raised out of and above ourselves.

In the first case, we are made servants to worldly things, in the latter we are brought back to things above this world. What is more, as the going forth is twofold, so is the return. We do, as it were, return to the place of our usual life from both goings forth, when after worldly business or rather after the vision of heavenly contemplation, we bring back the eyes of our mind of the consideration of our behavior and examine our inward being, analyzing earnestly and thoughtfully what sort of persons we are. Concerning the first return to ourselves, we correctly interpret what is said in the prodigal son with the Gospel, who returning to himself said: "*How many hired servants of my Father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger.*"²³⁹ Nevertheless, of the second return, we interpret what we read elsewhere of the Apostle Peter: "*And when Peter had come to himself, he said, 'Now I know of a surety that the Lord has sent his angel', etc.*"²⁴⁰

Behold of each it is written that he returned to himself. Yet why, unless first each apparently had gone out of himself? For one was led far from himself into a strange country and the other by angelic guidance was raised into ecstasy beyond the common state of the human powers. In the first, we descend into the depths, in the second we are raised on high. In the first, we go away far from God. In the second, we come near to him! What then is this going forth by which the soul meets the Lord, unless it be the ecstasy of the mind in which, carried away above itself it is raised up to secrets of divine contemplation? If we seek the cause of this going forth, we shall speedily find it. For the vision that appears outwardly certainly draws a man to outward things. However, the cause of the divine appearance is hinted at

secretly in the fact that the Lord is said to have appeared to Abraham when in the heat of the day, he was sitting at the door of his tent. Behold truly, the heat of the day was intense when the Lord appeared to him. In addition, what else is the heat of the day but the burning of ardent desire? Therefore that love which loves the darkness, I say, the love that hates the light, must not be called the heat of the day. For we know that: *"Every man that does evil hates the light, but he that does truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are manifested in God."*²⁴¹

Is the heat of the day anything else but an ardent love of truth, the desire for the true and highest good? So that the Patriarch might be said at that time, to be burning with heat such as drove him away from his servants and caused him to sit at ease in the door of his tent, in such circumstances that sitting thusly, he must necessarily see him who approached; and not doubt he discerned the breath of the divine wind which he hoped for, to temper the heat of his desire.

You will notice, I think, how that heat, which was already burning him moved him to the place where he could see the three whom he correctly thought were to be worshipped. Perhaps if he had been attending to his servants and stayed in the inner part of the tent, he would not have not seen those worshipful persons, and had he not seen them, perhaps he would not have gone forth at that time. Therefore, two things combine and provide an occasion for his going forth, the abundance of fervor and the newness of the vision. The human mind often experiences something like this, for while it is burning ardently with the name of heavenly desire, it is granted the sight of some divine manifestation by which it may be strengthened in its ecstatic contemplation.

Chapter 9 *The second mode of ecstasy is caused the greatness of wonder*

We have raised up to now, that ecstasy which arises from the greatness of devotion. Now we shall speak of that which customarily arises from the greatness of wonder. We all know that wonder begins when we perceive something, which we had not hoped for, which is beyond our conceptions.

The newness and unexpectedness of the vision brings about wonder of mind as when we see something, which we can hardly believe. Therefore, this kind of stupefaction is fittingly described in the words: *"Who is she that comes forth as the morning rising?"*²⁴² What is the dawn but a new light mingled with the darkness? Further, what is the source of wonder but from a sight both unexpected and almost incredible? For this wonder consists of sudden light mixed with darkness, the light of vision mingled with remnants of incredulity and with the darkness of uncertainty, so that in a wonderful way the mind sees without a doubt what she scarcely dares to believe.

However, the more we wonder at the newness of the thing, the more earnestly we observe it; and the more carefully we consider it the more fully we come to know it. For attention grows by wonder and knowledge by attention. The mind therefore rises up like the dawn, for from wonder at the vision it passes to the increase of knowledge. In the same way, the dawn rises gradually and spreads as it rises and as it spreads, it grows lighter until in a wonderful way, it fades into the day. By its growth and increase, it comes to its own death. The source of its increase becomes the cause of its decrease, until at last it ceases to exist at all. Thus, even thus, the human intelligence flushed with divine light, is suspend; in contemplation of intellectible²⁴³ things and enlarged as it wonders upon them.

The more it is led to higher and still more wonderful things, the wider and greater its capacity becomes. Also the further it is removed from lower things, the purer it is found to be and the more sublime in respect of sublime things. Yet while the human mind, in this kind of uplifting, ever progresses towards higher things, while thus growing it at last transcends the limits of human capacity, finally its very nature fails altogether and being transformed into this supernatural state, goes out from itself above itself. And as the morning light passes away as it grows, not indeed ceasing to be light, but ceasing from being morning light, so that the dawn is no longer dawning; so the human intelligence comes, by the greatness of its extension, to be not itself, not indeed, failing to be intelligence but ceasing to be human, when in a wonderful way, and by an incomprehensible exchange it becomes more

than human, when: "*beholding the glory of the Lord we are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by Spirit of the Lord.*"²⁴⁴ You will see from this, I think, how appropriately the kind of ecstasy arising from the greatness of wonder mystically denoted in the description, which says: "*Who is she that comes forth as the morning rising.*"²⁴⁵

Chapter 10 *How the second mode of ecstasy beginning with wonder ends in a most fervent desire for devotion*

Let us note that the first mode of ecstasy of which we have spoken above, arises from devotion, but on the contrary this second mode that we are now discussing, does not so much begin with devotion but rather ends with it. In the former case the soul is brought to the contemplation of truth by its great desire for truth; in the latter, by the revelation of truth and its contemplation, the soul is kindled with devotion. See whether perhaps the Scripture does not hint at this mystically, when to the words quoted above, it adds the following: "*Fair as the moon, bright as the sun.*"²⁴⁶

Let nobody expect or asks of me for a full exposition of these or other words, which we have quoted or shall quote, except in as far as the nature of the present discussion requires evidence of the truth. Both the dawn and the moon posses light, but not heat, but the sun has both abundantly. This is because what is lighter than the sun or hotter? You see therefore that this ascent of the mind described here, the end of which may be declared to the sun, you see, I say, that its end is not any devotion but in the highest devotion possible; yet it takes its beginning solely from the brightness and illumination of truth. For whereas in the former case, by the great devotion of its fervor, the soul may deserve to be raised frequently to the contemplation of the highest truth, so, in the second case, from its wondering and spellbound contemplation of the truth, the soul is gradually advanced to and at last set on fire with the devotion.

Let us therefore consider the greatness of light and heat in this ball of the sun and from there deduce the progressive ascent in this mode of mental uplifting, and the fulfillment of progress which begins as it were, with the dawn and eventually assimilates the likeness of the sun into it; being.

Chapter 11 *How the second mode of ecstasy sometimes begins with wonder and continues in the same way*

We do not say that in this second mode of ecstasy, the manner of human progress always and everywhere leads to the same end. Let us see from outward things what we should think about inward things. For if you place a glass of water in sun's ray you will see this water reflect the brightness of light from itself to things above it and refract the light without the heat.²⁴⁷ So also, many receive rays of divine revelation but not all are moved equally to the same power of love. For so that the Author of all good things may commend the gifts of his grace to us, He shows different effects arising from the same cause, either where the persons or the times differ.

Consider from this example, I implore you, whoever reads or hears this ray of divine showing and eternal light effects in us, in what way it raises the human intelligence above itself by the infusion of its illumination. Pay attention how the formula of this example suggested to you, demonstrates the kind of mental ecstasy of which we have been talking, having similar characteristics. For what is water but human thought always running downward to low places unless it be held back by the firm control of an obstacle. Water gathered together in a vessel is thought, intent on meditation and arrested by its intentness.

The gathering of the waters is the meditation of the heart. Just as the ray of the sun pours itself into the water, so the divine showing passes into the meditation. But as the water receives the ray of heavenly light and its shining into itself and, as we have said, throws it upwards, it wonderfully raises that ray of light as it were, above itself whether it could not in any way have penetrated by itself. Although the difference between the water and the light be so great, yet it impresses on the ray of light which it gives out from itself; a fragment of its likeness, so that trembling itself, it makes the light to tremble and when it is still; the purer the water the purer the light, the wider the expanse of water, the wider the expanse of light.

According to this simile the showing of eternal light, inaccessible to man, illuminates his heart and raises the human intelligence above itself, truly above all human ways. There that ray of the intelligence being infused with divine light, rebounds in wonder and springs back from the depths to the heights where no natural intuition, no effort of skill or human reasoning is able to climb. In addition, the more deeply the splendor of divine brightness penetrates the mind of a man, shaking him by the greatness of his wonder

and raising him to ecstasy, the higher it springs up into the most sublime recess of divine secrets.

Moreover, this certainly must be admitted that the more fully and perfectly the soul is able to compose itself in inward tranquility, the more firmly and tenaciously it will cleave to this uplifting of the highest light in contemplation. Moreover, without a doubt, the purer its innocence, the wider its charity, the more capable it will prove to be, for the contemplation of things transcending this Earth and the Heavens.

Chapter 12 *That in the second mode of ecstasy a divine showing sometimes happens in our meditation*

Let us note that the splendor of that divine showing some times occurs after our meditation and sometimes it forestalls a natural kind of meditation. Sometimes it helps the seeker, sometimes rouses the indolent, or wakens the sleeper. Hence, it is that the Queen of the South plies King Solomon with questions and putting riddles to him learning all that she asked.²⁴⁸

Hence, it is that the angel, coming with light, to Peter bound in chains, shook him free from his languishing sleep.²⁴⁹ For what does the Scriptures say of the Queen of the South who came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, but that Solomon told her all the words that she asked him? Who is this Queen of the South, this inhabitant and lady of the warm regions, filled with desire of seeing Solomon? Who is this queen, I say, but any holy soul, strong in mastering the senses and appetites of the flesh and the thoughts and affections of the mind, fervent with love for the highest King, the true Solomon, and burning with desire see him. This queen seeks the King of all wisdom. asking of riddles and frequent questioning, when any devoted soul, relying on divine help, works hard in her study and search for truth.

She hears that which she seeks when she comes to know the things which her own efforts cannot teach her, by a divine showing, in the midst other prayers and sighings. Let us see what the divine word in this place tells us of this queen, when it adds: "*And when the Queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon, the house which he had built, the meat of his table, the apartments of his servants, the order of his ministers and their apparel, and the holocausts which he offered in the house of the Lord; she had no longer any spirit in her.*"²⁵⁰

He said, "*seeing.*" She is described as seeing, while before she was represented as suggesting and questioning. See therefore, what she saw and understand what she understood. It says, "*When the Queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon etc.*"²⁵¹ Behold how much and what great things are taught to a devout and painstaking soul by the gift of divine showing. Consider what great, what marvelous things she shall know by celestial showing and when she has beheld them a long time and marveled exceedingly, she will come at last, through the greatness of her wonder, to the failing of her powers. This is the order, which she proceeds or comes at last to her end. First, she seeks and hears, then sees and understands, lastly she is numbed faints. She asks what she is to learn, she contemplates what must be admired, she marvels so that her mental powers and she transcends them. The first is the work of meditation, the second of contemplation, and the third of ecstasy. By these excessive degrees, the human soul is raised up. Having set out by meditation she is raised up to contemplation, contemplation she comes to wonder, by wonder to ecstasy of mind. You already see by a clear example that by the force of wonder a man falls into ecstasy. For what else happened to her when 'no spirit was left in her' but an ecstasy of mind? How is it caused by the greatness other amazement? Moreover, I ask, in what way could that Queen be without spirit unless her spirit was abstracted from herself? However, in this place I remember what another says of himself: "*I, John*", he says, "*was in the Spirit.*"²⁵² Here John bears witness that he was in the Spirit and there the Queen of the South says that there was no spirit in her! So what? Was he in the spirit? Was she without spirit? Moreover, who is able to interpret this?²⁵³

Chapter 13 *How in the second mode of ecstasy, the divine showing sometimes precedes our meditation*

Let us consider the contingency in which sometimes the divine showing precedes the work of our meditation, when the human soul suddenly cast down by the violence of temptation below the common state of human freedom, is raised by the divine showing not only to its accustomed and stable condition but also beyond the limits of human capacity. For often, after many signs of its progress, the mind of man is attacked by insistent and importunate temptations, fiercely shaken and cast down from the sublime height of its security and tranquility, lest it should miserably and foolishly glory in its own fortitude under a continuous sequence of struggles. This is shown when Peter, the chief of the Apostles, after numberless victories and extraordinary miracles, was held, bound, and imprisoned.

However, by the visitation of the angel he was delivered by a miracle as great as was the cruelty with which he was tormented by those ministers or cruelty. . . .!

Note: The rest of the chapter is an elaboration of theme of God's mercy in visiting the soul cast down by temptation or aridity and a sudden influx of light and love raising it thus through wonder to ecstasy.

Chapter 14 *That the third mode of ecstasy may be caused by the intensity of gladness* ²⁵⁴

It now remains to be shown in the third place, how the human mind may fall into ecstasy and transcend itself through intensity of joy and exultation. This kind of going forth seems to be sufficiently well expressed in those very words, which we quoted from Song of Songs, in the second mode. "*Who is she.*" says the Scripture, "*that comes up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?*" ²⁵⁵

If we correctly interpret the desert as being the human heart, what is this rising from the desert, but the passing of the human mind into ecstasy? The human soul rises up from the desert when it passes beyond itself by ecstasy of the mind, when leaving itself altogether and passing up into the heavens, by contemplation and devotion it is immersed in divine things. Nevertheless, the cause of this ascension is allied to and follows upon what is 'flowing with delights.' For what is 'flowing with delights' but to abound in the fullness of spiritual joys? What is 'flowing with delights' but an abundance of true sweetness and infused gladness given from above?

False riches can never produce the abundance of these delights as true joy does; indeed, they would not be false if they could really show true delight in its abundance. . . . For even unbelievers may enjoy these external and fallacious riches but they cannot possess joy in any way. . . . Therefore as often as you lack inward and true delight, even if you abound in outward riches you may truly sing with the prophet: "*For I am poor and needy*" ²⁵⁶. . . . Therefore, there is no other source from which we may have and possess this flowing of delights and abundance of true joys but that deep joyfulness of the soul, filled with sweetness by the gift of God. It does not say 'having delights' but 'flowing with delights'.

So that it is not every experience of these delights, but only that fullness thereof which creates and perfects the ascent made from the desert. It is manifest that however much we progress, we cannot have these delights continually in this mere earthly life. Therefore, when the soul lacks this kind of overflow she is not able to rise up to this ascent of which we speak, for she must be 'flowing with delights' for this ascent. I think too, that it is one thing to ascend while flowing with delight and another to flow or abound while ascending, and yet another for the abundance to be the cause of the flowing. The abundance of delights therefore, is the cause of the ascent when, by that infusion of divine sweetness, the holy soul does not understand what she feels in her inmost heart, inasmuch as the greatness of her exultation and joy casts her out of herself and ravishes her above herself. Thus indeed the ardent and immense happiness, as it grows beyond human measure bears a man away above himself, and raising him up beyond human things, supports him in divine regions. We may see daily an example of this in the life of animals. Sometimes in their play, they leap up and their bodies remain for a short time in the air. So often fish, playing in the water rise up above the water and go beyond the bounds of their native dwelling place, supporting themselves for a short time in the void. So also the holy soul, when by the inward excitement of its fervor it is cut off from itself, when it is moved by ecstasy of mind to rise up above itself, when it is carried away altogether and rests in a celestial world, when it is wholly immersed in angelic visions, seems to have transcended the limitations of its native powers. . . . if we have correctly understand contemplative men by the mountains²⁵⁷ and speculative men by the hills, see how correctly the mountains are said to rejoice like rams and the hills like the lambs. This is because sometimes contemplation and speculation are used as equivalent terms and thus often the true meaning of Scripture is obscured and confused. However, we define speculation aptly and expressly when we say that we see through a glass (*speculum*) but contemplation is when we see the truth in its purity, without any hindrance or veil of shadows. So the hills rejoice like the lambs when that exalted rite of solemn and secret movements lifts them up beyond themselves that they may be worthy to see the hidden mysteries of heaven as in a glass and darkly.

Now the mountains rejoice like rams when the higher spirits in the exultation of their ecstasy contemplate in the purity and simplicity of truth that which the lower spirits can hardly behold even in a glass and darkly.²⁵⁸

Chapter 15 *That any ecstasy of the mind transcends the limits of human effort or merit*

Let nobody presume upon his own powers for such exaltation or uplifting of the heart or ascribe it to his own merits. For it is certain that this comes not from human deserving but is a divine gift. So that the soul, however she may be, who is described as ascending from the desert, is said to lean upon her beloved.

She leans when she is moved by his strength and not by her own power. In addition, I, say, to rely upon her beloved, means that she does not presume at all upon her own strength in this matter. As far as I can see, She is right in not counting at all upon her own effort, nor her own abilities, especially in that place where she comes up from the desert, nor even in the desert, when she goes through it. Moreover, this beloved of hers knows it well and therefore leads her on in a cloud by day and all night by the light of fire.²⁵⁹

How indeed could she bear the burden and heat of the day, but under the shadow of him whom her so loves? And what safe place would she find from the fears of the night, especially in that region of terror and vast solitude, unless he sent forth his light and his truth? Moreover she would have nothing whereby to temper the heat of desire unless the power of the Most High overshadowed her. Again, she would be without enlightenment in the darkness of her ignorance, unless she saw light in his light. And this is the meaning of what she says to him: "*For you light my lamp oh Lord, 'Oh my God, enlighten my darkness.'*"²⁶⁰ Therefore, the beloved by the gift of her beloved and the generosity of her bridegroom receives two remedies for the two chief evils, the cooling cloud for the concupiscence of the flesh and the light of revelation for the ignorance of the mind. How often a man knows the way of truth but does not take it, being drawn away and enticed by his desire, and so he has a day of knowledge but not the cloud of cooling grace. And how many have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge, and these perhaps feel no heat of desire and for a time breathe quietly in the coolness of the night. Moreover, these men seem to have the night but do not have the fire of illuminating grace. Therefore, it is good to hope in the Lord and not presume upon oneself. How blessed are they to whom he is as a covering by day and as the light of stars by night, spreading the cloud over them for protection and sending the fire to lighten them by night. But then "*it is not of him that wills nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.*"²⁶¹ The beloved knows this and therefore leans on the beloved, for rightly is it written of her: "*Who is she that comes up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?*"²⁶²

Chapter 16 *How in the third mode of ecstasy everything depends upon the divine gift*

Although this beloved of her bridegroom always and everywhere needs help from her beloved so that she cannot do anything without him, nevertheless she relies most firmly upon the co-operation of her own to do so, and especially in the place from which she comes up from the desert, and at the time she is flowing with delights. . . . Consider then the state of those who in delights of this kind, rejoice in having in their own power; the soul cannot be comforted at all without them nor can she acquire them by her effort or any foresight. All comfort and gladness depends upon the will and good pleasure of another. Therefore, she is right to lean upon the strength of him on whose generosity she can truly count for all that she hopes, desires, and loves. Oh how often in this state she hears the words of the prophet changed for her into the Word of the Lord: "*Command, command again: command, command again; expect, expect again; expect, expect again; a little here a little there.*"²⁶³ Therefore, she is compelled to expect and go on expecting while her desire is often deferred greatly and for long, while she can neither have her delights at will nor refrain her from these desires. From this, I think, it will appear how far everything that is done or felt in this ecstasy of mind transcends human categories.

Chapter 17 *How a man who has arrived at this third degree may help himself*²⁶⁴

Nevertheless, when one who has arrived at this grace and feels it to be taken away from him more than is usual; there is something, which he should do to help himself by some means to regain it, and to dispose his soul suitably for this end, as far as lies in him. In this case, the soul must recover its exultation of heart by its own meditations and recall the gifts of the divine goodness to the eye of memory, and by such recollection move itself to deep and devout thanksgiving. Finally, from the center of the heart it must allow that inward organ of spiritual harmonies to break out into divine praises. When by efforts of this kind the inmost feeling of the heart is released in full devotion, in the splendor of divine praise, I might put what follows thusly: it is as if an air hole were opened through which a breath of heavenly sweetness and an abundance of divine comfort are poured into the small vessel of our heart. This is when Elisha the prophet having been asked for the Word of God and feeling that he had not the spirit of prophecy at that time, had a minstrel brought to him. When he had

come and played, immediately Elisha drank in the spirit of prophecy and immediately opened his mouth in words of prophecy.²⁶⁵

Perhaps someone will ask what is meant in this story by the prophet of the Lord asking for a minstrel, or by his receiving the spirit of prophecy when he sang? However, we have experienced commonly that music is accustomed to refresh a hard heart and bring back its joys to memory. Moreover, certainly the more passionately any man's love affects his soul, the more deeply his feelings are touched by the harmonies that he hears, and the deeper the feeling, the more effectively is he renewed in his desires. What we should then feel about that prophet is that the exterior harmony brought back to his memory that interior and spiritual harmony and the melody he heard called his soul back and raised it to its usual happiness. In addition, why should we not feel about spiritual and true delights what we daily experience in bodily and vain pleasures? For everyone knows how the mere memory of carnal pleasures transports the mind to carnal pleasure. Why should not, therefore, spiritual delight have the same or even greater effect upon spiritual men. For the melody which the prophet heard was in some sort a scale by which he rose up to his customary joys and that which is usually the cause of downfall in carnal men, caused him to go up higher. Let any man think how deeply and intimately he has been touched by the memory of that super-natural sweetness, at the voice of a singer, how it has ravished him beyond himself and restored the prophetic spirit or feeling to the soul of the prophet.²⁶⁶

Chapter 18 *What may greatly help in the renewal of this grace*

And now, you oh soul, whoever you are, who are used to flow with an abundance of delights and often to come up from the desert leaning upon your beloved and to be raised suddenly and unexpectedly to these contemplative ecstasies, even to inconceivable raptures of joy, being almost carried away to prophetic understanding and revelations by divine inspiration, learn from the example of the prophet what you should do, so that in necessity you may have a means at hand by which to restore its customary joys to your soul. It may be useful for you too, in such a case, to have a minstrel and to listen to a singer.

Now to conclude briefly, what we mean, what is this minstrel but the heart's exultation in God? This is the kind of minstrel he desired us to have at hand, when the psalmist said: "*Be glad in the Lord and rejoice you righteous: and glory all you that are right of heart.*"²⁶⁷ ...

By psalmody and praise, we prepare the way of the Lord by which he promises to come to us and to reveal to us something of His wondrous mysteries. Therefore, he also says to us in another place: "Sing unto the Lord, sing praises to His name; make a way for him who ascends upon the West."²⁶⁸

Now what does this ascent upon the west mean? Common use is accustomed to call that region of the world where the sun goes down and daily the light fades away, the "*occasum*", the setting. What should we more appropriately connect with this setting than the failing of the human intelligence? For the sun of the intelligence hastens to its setting and hides the rays of its knowledge, and the light of the earth may be said to turn into the darkness of the night and withdraw all things from human sight, when the human spirit falls into ecstasy and dies to ordinary sense and being carried away out of itself knows nothing at all of what is happening around itself.

What do we mean by the Lord's ascent, when we consider it? It is the increase of the fruits of our knowledge by the showing of His greatness. The more He reveals the sublime heights of His greatness, the higher he is exalted in the sight of our intelligence. So he ascends truly towards the West when he ravishes a man above himself, when he takes away the memory of all man knew by ordinary methods and shows him in ecstasy of something of the majestic greatness which he could never had understood in the common state of this life or within man's ordinary capacities.

Let us, therefore, endeavor with great alacrity of mind to rejoice in the Lord; let us stir ourselves to sing to Him with heart-felt devotion, giving him something, which he may use in his ascent towards the West. If we do this, we are offering a fitting song and we hear the singer in the right way. The spiritual soul will be touched to the heart at the sound of the song and moved spiritually by the rushing inflow of the spirit.

As the intellectual senses are opened, the grace of prophecy will be renewed. At this psalmody and spiritual harmony the contemplative soul accustomed to spiritual experiences will begin to dance and make gestures in the greatness of her joy and leap up as if it were towards spiritual being and be raised up, above the Earth and all earthly things and pass over wholly in ecstasy of the contemplation of heavenly things. This then, is what we have said, may be a help to renewal of the mind and is often profitable for the return of lost grace.

We have discussed the usual causes of mental ecstasy, now we may add something about the degrees through which it develops. It proceeds towards, sometimes from the bodily sense, sometimes above the imagination and sometimes beyond the reason. Who would dare to deny the kind that is above the bodily sense and that, which is above the imagination when the authority of the Apostle testifies convincingly to that which is above the reason? "*I know a man*" he says, "*whether in the body or out of the body, God knows, such a one caught up to the third heaven.*"²⁶⁹ See how he had passed beyond human reason by ecstasy of mind, for he was utterly unable to discern what was going around him. However, the full explanation of this passage is better left to more learned men rather than that we should presume to discuss matters so greatly beyond us. We shall be better instructed in this by the skill of those who are led to the fullness of this knowledge, not so much by the teaching of others as by their own experience.

To that summary of our subject, which we drew up with succinct brevity in our first book, we have now added a continuation planned on a wider scale and, as we said before, we have been speaking in a leisurely way, to men at leisure.

The End of this Text

Section 1²⁷¹

§1. "*I am wounded by love. Love urges me to speak of love.*"²⁷² Gladly I give myself up to the service of love and it is sweet and altogether lovely to speak about love. This is a joyful subject and very fruitful; one that will not weary the writer or fatigue the reader. For that which savors of charity pleases the heart's taster beyond measure. "*If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be condemned.*"²⁷³

§2. Great is the power of love, wonderful the virtue of charity. It has many degrees and the difference between them is great. And who shall distinguish between them, or be able to number them? For there is affection for mankind, for the group, for kindred, family and the brotherhood and so forth and many more kind in this world. Yet above all these degrees there is that ardent burning love which penetrates the heart, inflames the affection and transfixes the soul itself to the very core, so that she may truly say: "*I am wounded by love.*"

§3. Let us consider what this surpassing quality of Christ's love is, which transcends extinguishes affection for parents, or love of children, wife and beyond all that converts a man to the hating of his own soul. Oh vehemence of love! Oh you violence of charity! Oh you excellent and surpassing charity of Christ! Brethren, this is what we suppose, this is what we wish to speak about, namely the passion of charity, the supremacy of perfect zeal. You know already that it is one thing to speak of this charity another of its fulfillment. One to speak about it, another to make known its passion.

§4. I consider the works of passionate love and I find out what the power of perfect zeal is. Behold! I see some men wounded, others bound, languishing, fainting, and all for love. Charity wounds, charity binds, makes a man sick, causes him to faint. Which of these is not powerful, not passionate? These are the four steps of passionate love, which we are soon to consider. You must attend earnestly, brethren, to that charity which you so greatly desire to have, learn from her, long for her whom you seek so passionately. Would you hear about passionate charity? "*You have wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse: you have wounded my heart with one of your eyes, with one hair of your neck.*"²⁷⁴

§5. Would you hear of binding love? "*I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love.*" ²⁷⁵ And of languishing love? "*Daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, tell him that I am sick with love.*" ²⁷⁶ Would you hear of the swoon of love and what causes it? "*My soul fainted for your salvation but I have greatly hoped in your word!*" ²⁷⁷ For love causes swooning and sickness: love re-chains and love wounds. Yet, what are these cords of Adam our first parent but the gifts of God? What, I say, are these chains of charity but the blessings of God? Blessings of nature, of grace and of glory. By these bonds, He puts Adam under obligation for kindness and makes him debtor to goodwill. He founded nature, conferred grace and promised glory. Here is the triple cord: the gifts of creation, the blessings of redemption, the reward of glory. In addition, we know that a threefold cord is hard to break—yet it was broken! From everlasting man has broken the yoke and burst the chains. Nevertheless, the Lord with a strong hand multiplied his bonds of love upon us to fasten us more tightly to himself, to entangle us further. He granted us his benefits, he bore our ills for us, that he might make us debtors for both, for the good things he gave us, for the bad things he bore for us. By the cords of this kind of charity, he took captivity captive, and generously gave gifts unto men and willingly suffered evil things for men. Oh how far from strong is he who cannot be held back by such bonds of charity. Oh how far from free is he whom the laws of this captivity cannot restrain.

§6. Now let us return to that degree of love, which we first mentioned and called "wounded love". Do you not feel as if sometimes you were shot through the heart when the fiery dart of this love penetrates the inmost mind of man, pierces his affections so that he can in no way contain or hide the burning of his desire. He burns with desire, his affections are stirred, he is in fever and gasps, sighing deeply and drawing long breaths. These are certain signs of a wounded soul, groans and sighs, a pale and averted face. However, this degree sometimes affords some respite and allows for the cares and anxieties of necessary business. After the manner of feverish men who are troubled by this illness, sometimes they burn more fiercely, and then by attending to their affairs they feel some relief. Now after a short interval they burn again, greater heat supervenes and the broken spirit is once more set on fire and burns more fiercely. Thus the fever of love often waning but always returning more acutely, gradually weakens the spirit, wears down, and exhausts the strength until it completely conquers the soul and lays it low. It occupies the soul wholly with thoughts about itself, engrosses, and controls it wholly so that it cannot tear itself away or consider anything else and so it passes from the first to the second degree.

§7. This is because we said the first degree was wounding love and the second binding love. For the soul is surely and undoubtedly bound when it cannot forget this one thing or think about anything else. Whatever it does or says it is always turning this over in its mind and keeping it continually in memory. It dreams of love when sleeping and waking it thinks of it all the time. It is easy, I think, to understand how this degree, which does not allow man's mind to be quiet even for an hour, surpasses the former. For often wounding is less than binding. Everyone knows how often it happens that a soldier hit and wounded in battle, flees from the hand of the pursuer and escapes, although wounded. Yet, afterwards, in the thick of the fighting, wounded soldier falls and having fallen is taken prisoner he is brought to trial, imprisoned, chained, bound, and so held captive in every way. Which of these is the worse and more troublesome fate, I ask? Is it not more tolerable to escape though wounded rather than to be held captive?

§8. However, this degree unlike the first is not subject to intermittent relief, but burns up the soul with continual heat as in a state of acute fever. Continually the soul is kindled with the fire of its desires and prevented from resting, day or night. And so like one who lies in his bed, or is bound by a chain and cannot move away from the place where he has been fastened, so he is absorbed by this second degree of passionate love, whatever he does, wherever he turns, he cannot tear himself away from this one deep preoccupation with the object of his anxiety. Therefore, we are able and we ought to repel the urge towards evil desires in the first degree, not so much by resistance as by turning away, not reluctantly, but by flight. If we are careful always to busy ourselves with useful and sober occupations and meditations, with foresight, this is flight and we fulfill what written: "*Flee from fornication.*" ²⁷⁸

Section 2 Insatiable Love

§9. In the first degree the passion may be avoided, it cannot be overcome; in the second, it cannot in any way be overcome either by opposition or avoided by flight. Harken to the captive who moans and despairs of flight: "*Flight has failed me and there is no one that has regard my soul.*" ²⁷⁹ However, we often see those who cannot take flight but are able to ransom themselves. When we are unable to resist temptation either by virtue or to turn it away by foresight, we should ransom ourselves by works of mercy and tear ourselves free from this yoke of bondage. These are the true and personal riches, of which it is written: "*The ransom of a man's life are his riches.*" ²⁸⁰ Nevertheless, when love has grown beyond this second degree of strength, to what further point can it reach? How can this passion become more

passionate if it cannot be avoided nor turned back? If it is altogether insuperable and inseparable, how can its vehemence become more vehement? If it cannot be overcome by any other feeling, it is supreme and if it abides inseparably, it is everlasting. What passion can be more violent if it is at its height and last forever? Now it is one thing to be supreme and another to be the only one; just as it is one thing to be the first and another to admit no fellowship. We may be first, have many companions with us, and yet take the highest place among them. Behold then what great opportunities remain for love to grow so that when it is highest it may also be unique.²⁸¹

§10. Love rises up to the third degree of passion when it excludes every other love, when it loves nothing but the one, for the sake of the one. In this third degree of passionate love, nothing can give any satisfaction but the one thing and nothing is known but *the* one. The soul loves one and is devoted to one; it clings to one, sighs for him, is kindled by him, and rests in him. In him alone is it re-created and satisfied. There is neither sweetness nor taste except for him only. Whatever offers itself beyond this, whatever may by chance present itself, is quickly rejected and immediately despised, if it does not foster this love nor serve this desire. Who can worthily describe the tyranny of this state? How it extinguishes every desire and excludes every activity, how violently it represses every effort which does not appear to further its desires! Whatever a man does or suffers seems altogether useless and intolerable unless it concurs with or leads to the one end of his desire. When he can enjoy what he loves, he thinks he has everything. Without it, he is disgusted by everything and all things are foul. If he cannot enjoy it, he grows weak in body and faint at heart. He does not accept advice nor acknowledge reason, he will not take to himself any form of consolation.

§11. In this second degree, a man can attend to outward business in action but not in thought, for he cannot in any way forget what he loves. In this degree, the mind is wasting away and sick with excessive love and as it cannot meditate on anything else, so it cannot work on outward things. The first degree involved the thoughts, the second destroys action. The first restricts thinking, the later weakens activity. In the former our hands and feet are still free, and like a feverish patient, we can stretch and throw them about here and there, for we can and must move them according to the dictates of discretion, and exercise them in good deeds. Yet, in this degree, excess of love makes hands and feet nerveless as in illness, so that henceforth the mind can scarcely act with any freedom. In this state, the mind remains almost motionless and never exerts itself to think or do anything unless it is drawn by its desire or impelled by its affection.

§12. In the first degree, as we have said, when stirred by evil desires it can escape by the exercise of caution, in the second degree, when flight is altogether impossible, it may still ransom itself by good works. While in this degree what help can there be, what kind of remedy is possible for those who cannot reflect on what is necessary, nor do what might be useful? Listen to him who is sick in body and soul; to him who is weak in body and troubled at heart: "*My heart is troubled, my strength has left me.*"²⁸² I can find no other remedy in this state of misery but to look to the divine clemency and implore His mercy. If you are sick, if your hands and feet are not free, you still have your tongue and can move your lips. If there is no way of escape left which you can actively pursue, call upon Him who is able to do all things.

§13. You will see I think, how that power of love increases when by exercise it grows to the vehemence of this third degree; indeed it is strange that anything remains by which it can still grow. In the first degree, love pierces the affections, in the second it binds the thoughts; in the third, it destroys action. The whole of man is in these and what can he have beyond this? If, therefore, everything, which belongs to a man, is made captive what more can be done to him? If this power of love possesses everything, if the greatness of love absorbs everything how can it increase still more? If it has obtained everything, there is nothing left to be claimed. Yet, what shall we say when everything is obtained and that is still not enough to satisfy love? What, I ask, what shall we say if everything is in its power and yet that is not enough to satisfy its desire? Truly, the things that are impossible to man are incomparably more than those, which are possible. Both things therefore may be desired, what man can do and what he cannot. before how infinitely he is able to extend his desire in himself, even after he has reached the third degree.

§14. Therefore, the fourth degree of passionate love is that in which nothing at all can satisfy the desire of the passionate soul. This degree in that it has once passed beyond the bounds of human power, is unlike others, unlimited in its expansion, for it always finds something, which it can still desire. Whatever it may or whatever may be done to it, does not satisfy the desire of the ardent soul. It thirsts and drinks but the draft does not quench the thirst and the more it drinks the more it thirsts. When the thirst and hunger of a greedy or an insatiable soul is indulged willfully and at will, it is not slaked but stimulated. In this state, the eye is not satisfied by seeing nor the ear filled with hearing, whether the soul speaks to one not seen or looks upon one not present. However, who is able to explain this highest degree of passion worthily and who can even adequately conceive its surpassing greatness. What is there, I ask, that could penetrate a man's heart more

deeply, crucify it more cruelly, agitate it more wildly? What could be more troublesome, more bitter to a man than not to be able to lessen his thirst by restraint nor extinguish it by drunkenness? A wondrous, a miserable gluttony, which cannot be reduced by any means nor stilled by any satisfaction. An incurable and wholly desperate sickness, in which a remedy is forever being sought and never found, in which indeed, whatever is considered remedial to health turns into an increase of the raging sickness.

§15. This is the degree, which brings about complete decline and despair of recovery. In addition, the patient is like a man desperately ill with his limbs as it were half dead and there is nothing more he can do, or hope for from the help of another. All the care of doctors has been withdrawn from him, he is left to himself, his breath comes in gasps, and he draws nearer to death at every moment. Now he draws his last breath and neither heeds nor is aware of what is going on around him or is being done to him. Therefore, it is indeed with him who suffocates with the heat of his burning desire, whatever happens to him he can find no remedy nor receive any consolation. When, therefore, any kind of comfort is offered to him it does not touch his soul, which like one already dead feels nothing of what is going on around. When it is a case of evil desires, and the mind is violently drawn into such a state, nothing can be done except that others should pray for him so that the Lord, seeing their faith, may perhaps restore his life and give him back to his mother. For the Lord is able to raise up sons to Abraham from stones and whenever He wills, He brings men down into hell and raises them up again. In this state, love often turns into a kind of madness unless its impetus is restrained by great prudence and an equally great steadiness.

§16. There are often outbursts of temper between lovers in this state, they work up quarrels, and when there are no causes for enmity, they seek false and often quite unlikely ones. In this state, love often turns into hatred since nothing can satisfy the lovers' mutual desire. Hence arises what we have often seen in some people, namely that the more ardently they seem to love one another at first, the more they persecute each other afterwards with passionate hatred. Indeed, and this is even more astounding, at one and the same time they hate and yet do not cease to burn with desire for each other, and love in such a way that they do not desist from persecuting each other by hatred.

Loving thus they hate, and hating they love and strange to tell, hatred grows miserably by desire and desire by hatred. They endure fire and hail at the same time, since neither the heat of desire can dissolve the ice of hatred, nor can the hail of dislike extinguish the fire of passionate desire. Beyond

measure, indeed contrary to nature, this fire burns more fiercely in water, for the conflagration of love flares up more strongly by the mutual conflict of opposites than it could by mutual peace.

Section 3 The incessant contemplation of love

§17. So now, we have, four degrees of violence in the passion of love, and we have discussed them above. The first degree of violence is when the mind cannot resist its desires; the second when it cannot forget them; and third is when nothing else pleases it; the fourth and last when even this love cannot satisfy it. In the first love is insuperable, in the second inseparable, in the third singular, in the fourth insatiable.²⁸³ Love is insuperable when it will not yield to any other feeling; inseparable when it never leaves the memory; singular when it will have no companion; insatiable when it cannot be satisfied. Moreover, although different things may be noticed about each degree, we should especially note the excellence of love in the first degree, its passion in the second, its violence in the third, and its surpassing greatness in the fourth. For how excellent is that love that exceeds all other affection. How great is the vehemence of love that will not allow the mind to be still. How violent that love which expels every other affection violently. How surpassing the zeal that is not satisfied by anything.

§18. These four degrees are not grouped in divine love as they are in human, and the degrees of spiritual desires are altogether different from those of the desires of the flesh. In spiritual desires the greater degree of love, the better; in fleshly desires the greater, the worse. In love of God, the highest is supreme, in human affections that which is highest in degree, is worst of all. Indeed, in human affections, the first degree may be good but the second is certainly bad, the third worse, and the fourth worst of all. We know that among human affections conjugal love must take the first place and therefore in wedded life, that degree of love, which generally dominates all other affections seems to be good. For the mutual affection of intimate love draws closer the bonds of peace between those who are pledged to each other, and makes that indissoluble, life-long association, pleasant and happy. Therefore, the first degree in human affections is good, but the second is certainly bad. For when it fastens the mind indissolubly by not allowing it to move over to other concerns it often takes away a man's attention and his foresight from providing and disposing things suitably. But the third degree of love which excludes every other affection is not only bad, but begins to be bitter, when it is impossible to enjoy one's desire according to one's desire and one cannot be consoled by any other thing. The fourth degree is worst of all, as we have said. What can be worse than that which makes a soul not only bad but

miserable also? Indeed, what is more miserable than always to be plagued by desire for a thing, the fruit of which can never satisfy? We showed above how in this degree the mind burns constantly with heat and frost and the hatred cannot be extinguished by desire, nor the desire hatred. What else can this be but a symbol of future damnation, where one passes forever from the heat of the fires to the cold of snow and from the cold of snow to the heat of fires. So this last degree of love belonging to human desires is worst of all but in spiritual affections it is highest of all. For in the former whatever may be done to the human soul cannot satisfy it, but in the latter whatever the soul can do for God cannot satisfy its desire.

§21. In the first, the mind is always anxious of what will happen to itself, not what it may do. In the second, the mind feels greater anxiety about what it will do about what it will do than what can be done to it. Therefore, in the realm of heavenly desires the greater the affection and the higher the degree, so much the better and the more precious is the love. Oh how precious is that first degree of the love of God when it is insuperable. More precious still the second when the ardent affection begins to be inseparable; but much better again when the soul cannot be pleased by any other thing but much better again when the soul cannot be pleased by any other thing but God...²⁸⁴

§23. In the first degree, God is loved with the heart, the soul and the mind but not wholly by any one of these. In the second, He is loved with all the heart; in the third with all the soul; in the fourth with all the strength. Love of the heart is a love arising from deliberate consideration; love of the soul is love arising from the affection; deliberation belongs to the heart but desire belongs to the soul. . . . To love with the heart is to love by judgment and deliberation, to love with the soul is to love because of desire and affection. The first is with effort, the second according to desire. To love with one's whole heart, soul and all one's strength is to concentrate all one's efforts, desires, and powers upon this one thing.

§24. We often are drawn to love a thing through our affection yet we renounce it because of reason. Also, we often love many things through considered opinion, which we care very little for in the realm of feeling. Therefore, where fleshly desires are concerned we often love first with the soul, rather than the heart. "in spiritual things, however, we always love first by deliberation rather than affection. We never love spiritual things through the desires, unless with much labor, our hearts are kindled with good feelings for them. If therefore we want to love God with all our soul, we must first try to love Him with all our heart. If we wish to love with all our desire, let all our thoughts be on this, all our deliberation and all our meditation.

Yet, because we never love with all our soul unless we first love with all our heart, so also we never love with all our strength unless we first love with all our soul. However, if we have an affection for something, which we do not love for God's sake, the adulterous affection immediately breaks the constancy of the highest charity and diminishes its strength in proportion as it draws or drives the soul to extraneous desires. . . .²⁸⁵

Section 4 The inseparability from love

§28. Let us go deeper and speak more openly. In the first degree, the soul thirsts for God, in the second she thirsts to go to God, in the third she thirsts to be in God, in the fourth she thirsts in God's way. She thirsts for God when she desires to experience what that spiritual sweetness is that inebriates the mind of man, when she begins to taste and see how sweet the Lord is. She thirsts when she desires to be raised above herself by the grace of contemplation and to see the Lord in all His beauty that she may truly say: "For I have seen the Lord face to face and my life is preserved."²⁸⁶ She thirsts in God, when in ecstasy she desires to pass over into God altogether, so that having entirely forgotten herself she may truly say: "*Whether in the body I cannot tell.*"²⁸⁷ She thirsts in God's way when, by her own will I do not mean in temporal matters only but also in spiritual things, the soul reserves nothing for her own will but commits all things to God, never thinking about herself but about the things of Jesus Christ, so that she may say: "*I came not to do my own will but the will of the Father which is in heaven.*"²⁸⁸

§29. In the first degree, God enters into the soul and she turns inward into herself. In the second, she ascends above herself and is lifted up to God. In the third the soul, lifted up to God passes over altogether into Him. In the fourth, the soul goes forth on God's behalf and descends below herself. In the first, she enters into herself, in the second she goes forth from herself. In the first, she reaches her own life, in the third she reaches God. In the first, she goes forth on her behalf, in the fourth she goes forth because of her neighbor. In the first, she enters in by meditation, in the second she ascends by contemplation, in the third she is led into jubilation, in the fourth she goes out by compassion.

§30. In the first degree, a spiritual feeling sweeter than honey enters into her soul and inebriates her with its sweetness, so that she has milk and honey on her tongue and her lips distil the honeycomb.²⁸⁹ Those who have felt this will give forth a memorial of abundant sweetness,²⁹⁰ for the mouth speaks out of the abundance of the heart. This is the first consolation, which they who

renounce the world receive at first, and it generally confirms them in their good intention. This is the heavenly food, which is accustomed to refresh those who go forth from Egypt and feed them in wilderness; this is the hidden manna, which no man knows who has not received it. This is that spiritual sweetness and inward delight, which is the milk and food of those who are as newborn babes and which brings them gradually to the strength of full-grown men.

§31. In this same state, the soul is led by God into the wilderness where it is fed with milk so that it may be inebriated with inward sweetness. Harken what is said of this state when the Lord speaks by the prophet: *"Therefore",* he says, *"I will feed her with milk and will lead her into the wilderness and will speak to her heart."*²⁹¹ First, we must leave Egypt behind; first, we must cross the Red Sea. First, the Egyptians must perish in the waves; first, we must suffer famine in the land of Egypt before we can receive this spiritual nourishment and heavenly food. He who desires that food of heavenly solitude let him abandon Egypt in both body and heart, and altogether set aside the love of the world. Let him cross the Red Sea, let him try to drive all sadness and bitterness out of his heart, if he desires to be filled with inward sweetness. First, the Egyptians must be swallowed up. Let perverse ways perish lest the angelic citizens disdain an ignoble companion. First the foods of Egypt must fail and carnal pleasures be held in abomination before we may experience the nature of those inner and eternal pleasures. Truly the more fully the love of God overcomes any other affection, the more often and more abundantly it refreshes the soul with inward gladness. In this state, the mind sucks honey from the stone and oil from the hardest rock.²⁹² In this state, the mountain shall distill sweetness and the hills flow with milk and honey. In this state, the Lord often visits the hungry and thirsty soul; often He fills her with inward delight and makes her drink with the sweetness of His Spirit. In this state, the Lord often descends from heaven and visits him who sits in darkness and the shadow of death. Often the glory of the Lord abides over the tabernacle of the covenant.

§32. Nevertheless, He reveals his presence but without showing His face. He infuses his sweetness but does not show his fair beauty. His loveliness is felt but his form is not discerned. Even now, the clouds and darkness are round about him and his throne is in the pillar of the cloud.²⁹³ Gentle and soothing is that which is felt but altogether dark, what is seen. For he does not yet appear in the light and though he is seen in the fire, the fire is a burning rather than an illumination. For He kindles the affection but not yet illuminate the intellect. He inflames the desire but does not yet enlighten the intelligence. In this state, the soul can feel her beloved but she cannot see

Him. In addition, if she does see him it is as one sees by night. She sees as it were in a cloud, she sees him at last in a mirror and darkly, not yet face to face. Hence, it is written: *"Make your face to shine upon your servant."*²⁹⁴

§33. And so it often happens that in this first degree-while the mind is being frequently visited, refreshed and inebriated, sometimes this is to give her greater courage. At times it begins to be bolder and to ask for higher things, so much so that it dares to say: *"If I have found grace in your eyes show me now yourself."*²⁹⁵ Nevertheless, it does not receive immediately what it asks, nor according to its desire, though it may ask with deep desire. We must indeed ask earnestly, seek diligently, knock loudly, and continue perseveringly in all these things, if we would obtain what we desire. Do you not think that he who said: *"How long oh Lord, will you forget me unto the end? How long do You turn away your face from me?"*²⁹⁶ I must have labored greatly and have been almost fainting and ready to give up hope? However, knowing that he who asks receives, who seeks finds, and that the door is opened to him that knocks, repeatedly he is given confidence, his strength is renewed, and he says: *"My face has sought You, Your face oh Lord, will I seek."*²⁹⁷

§34. When the mind therefore goes forward to the grace of contemplation with great effort and ardent desire, it moves as it were into the second degree of love, where it deserves to look, by divine showing, upon that love, which the eye cannot see nor the ear hear nor shall it enter the heart of man, so that it may truly say: *"But to reveal them by His spirit."*²⁹⁸ Did not he who saw the angels ascending and descending and God leaning on the ladder, deserve to receive that grace? Where it is written: *"I have seen the Lord face to face and my life is preserved."*²⁹⁹ He who received this grace almost habitually, said; *"Send forth Your light and Your truth: they have led me and brought me unto Your tabernacles."*³⁰⁰ . . . Another prophet says: *"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles, and they shall fly and not faint."*³⁰¹

§35. In this degree of contemplation, they are borne up above the clouds on the wings of their souls and they fly away to the heavens, not only the first heaven, but also to the second heaven; so that they may indeed say: *"Our conversation is in heaven."*³⁰² Truly, who can express worthily how great is the joy of this vision? When this joy has once been experienced and tasted it cannot become a weariness when present nor be forgotten when absent. When the soul comes down from this life and returns herself she brings with her the remainder of her thoughts to refresh herself with, indeed she celebrates a holy day, as the Scripture said: *"And the remainder of the*

thoughts shall keep the holy day to you.”³⁰³ Consider therefore how solemn of the vision must be if a feast can be made of what is left over. Moreover, what will the happiness of the vision be if there is such delight in remembering it?

§37. Therefore, the showing of the divine light in this state and the wonder of the revelation arising from it, together with the perennial memory thereof bind the soul indissolubly so that she is not able to forget the happiness of her experience. Also, as in the earlier degree, the delight which she has tasted satisfies the soul and transfixes the affections, so in this degree, the brightness she has looked upon binds the thoughts that she may neither forget it nor think about anything else. In the second degree, as has been said, in the heaven of heavens, that inaccessible light may be seen but not reached, for if it could be reached it would not be inaccessible, as the Apostle said: “*The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.*”³⁰⁴ Nevertheless, the Apostle glories in that he was rapt away to that region of eternal light: “*I know a man in Christ, whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knows; such an one was caught up to the third heaven.*”³⁰⁵

§38. Therefore the third degree of love is when the mind of man is ravished into the abyss of divine light so that the soul, having forgotten all outward things is altogether unaware of itself and passes out completely into its God and fulfills what is written, “*Yes those also who do not believe, shall dwell in the Lord God.*”³⁰⁶ In this state, it is wholly subdued, the host of carnal desires are deeply asleep, and there is silence in heaven as it were for half an hour. In addition, any suffering that is left is absorbed in glory. In this state, while the soul is abstracted from itself, ravished into that secret place of divine refuge, when it is surrounded on every side by the divine fire of love, pierced to the core, set alight all about, then it sheds its very self altogether and puts on that divine life, and being wholly conformed to the beauty it has seen, passes wholly into that glory.³⁰⁷

§39. Consider the difference between iron and iron: between cold and hot iron, such is the difference between souls, the tepid soul, and that kindled by divine fire.³⁰⁸ When the iron is first cast into the fire, it certainly appears to be as dark as it is cold. However, after having been a time in the flame of the fire it grows warm and gradually changes its dark color. It visibly begins to glow, and little by little draws the likeness of fire into itself until at last it liquefies entirely and ceases altogether itself, changing into another kind of thing. So also, the soul absorbed in the consuming fire in the furnace of the divine love, surrounded by the glowing body of eternal desires, initially

kindles then grows red hot, at last liquefies completely and is altogether changed from its first state.

§40. Would you hear of those glowing already in the fire and beginning to burn with the heat of inward desires? “*Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while he opened the Scriptures to us?*”³⁰⁹ And are these souls not beginning to glow by the surrounding flame of divinity and the glory they have seen, and being conformed to the divine light they pass over into another glory, beholding the glory of the Lord openly and are transformed in the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.³¹⁰ Hear, now the soul enkindled and melted by the fire of the divine word! “*My soul melted when my beloved spoke.*”³¹¹ As soon as she is admitted to that inner secret of the divine mystery, through the greatness of her wonder and the abundance of joy, she is wholly dissolved in herself or rather into Him, Who speaks, when she begins to hear words that it is not lawful for man to utter and to understand the strange and hidden things of God. In this state she who cleaves to the Lord as one spirit with Him.

§41. In this state, as we have said, the soul is altogether melted into him whom she loves and is herself fainting away. Hence, she says: “*Stay me with flowers, compass me about with apples because I languish with love.*”³¹² Just as we see that there is nothing hard or firm in liquids or liquefied solids, but they yield to all hard and rigid objects, so too we see that sick men have no personal strength or natural power and they depend on the will of others for assistance in everything. Similarly, those who have reached the third degree of love, do nothing according to their own will, they leave nothing at their own desire, but commit all things to the providence of God. Every wish or desire of theirs hangs upon God's sign and awaits the divine good pleasure. In addition, as the first degree wounds the affection and the second binds the thoughts, so the third hinders action, so that a man cannot be occupied about anything unless the poor of the divine will draws or drives him. When in this way the soul has been reduced in the divine fire, softened to the very core, and entirely melted, nothing is wanting except that she should be shown what is God's goodwill, all pleasing, and perfect, even the form of the perfect virtue, to which she must be conformed. For just as the metal workers, when the metals are melted and the molds set out, shape any form according to their will and produce any vessel according to the manner and mould that has been planned, so the soul applies herself in this degree, to be readily at the beck and call of the divine will, indeed she adapts herself with spontaneous desire to every demand of God and adjusts her own will, as the divine good pleasure requires. Moreover, as liquefied metal runs down easily wherever a passage is opened, so the soul humbles herself spontaneously to be obedient

in this way, and freely bows herself in all acts of humility according to the order of divine providence. In this state the image of the will of Christ is set before the soul so that these words come to her: *"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of men and was found in the habit of man; He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."*³¹³

§43. This is the form of the humility of Christ to which every man must conform himself, who desires to attain to the highest degree of perfect charity. *"For greater love has no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends."*³¹⁴

§44. Those who are able to lay down their lives for their friends have reached the highest peak of charity and are already placed in the fourth degree of charity. They can fulfill the Apostle's bidding: *"You therefore be followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and has given Himself for an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling Savior."*³¹⁵ Therefore, in the third degree the soul is glorified, in the fourth she is humbled for God's sake. In the third she is conformed to the divine light, in the fourth she is conformed to the humility of Christ. Now although in the third she is in a way almost in the likeness of God, nevertheless, in the fourth she begins to empty herself, taking the form of a servant and begins to be found in fashion as a man. In the third degree, she is as it were put to death in God, in the fourth she is raised in Christ. He that is in the fourth degree may truly say: *"I live, yet not I, Christ lives in me."*³¹⁶ Such a man begins to live in newness of life and for the rest, *"to him to live is Christ and to die is gain."*³¹⁷ He is truly in a strait between two desires, to be dissolved and be with Christ, which is far better, but to remain in the flesh is necessary for our sakes.³¹⁸ The charity of Christ compels him.

§45. Such a man becomes a new creature, for old things are passed away and to all things are made new. For in the third degree he is put to death, in the fourth as it were, he rises from the dead, now he dies no more, death has no more dominion over him, for in that he lives he lives unto God.³¹⁹ Therefore, in this fourth degree, the soul is made in some way mortal and impassible. How can it be mortal if it cannot die? Additionally, how can it die if it cannot be separated from Him who is life? We know who said this: *"I am the way, the truth and the life."*³²⁰ How then can a man die who cannot be separated from Him? *"For I am sure"*, he said, *"that neither death nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor thing to come, nor might*

*nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus."*³²¹ Besides, does a man not seem in some degree, impassible, who does not feel the misfortunate that he bears, who rejoices in injuries, and whatever pain he counts it to be glory? This according to the saying of Apostle Paul: *"Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may dwell in me."*³²² He, who takes pleasure in sufferings and contumely for Christ, also seems to be impossible. *"Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake."*³²³

§46. He who is in this degree can say confidently: *"I can do all things in Him who strengthens me."*³²⁴ in that he knows how to be filled and how to be hungry to abound and to hunger to abound and to suffer poverty. In this degree of charity, *"he bears all things, hopes all things, and endures all things."*³²⁵ In this degree is long-suffering and is kind, is not ambitious seek not her own, does not render evil for evil nor curse for a curse; but rather blesses. He who ascends to this degree of charity is truly in the state of love that can say: *"I am made all things to all men that I might save all."*³²⁶ In addition, such a man then desires to be made anathema from Christ for his brethren's sake. What shall we say then? In this degree of love, the soul of man might seem to be mad, in that it will not suffer his zeal to be kept within bounds or measure. Is it not complete madness to reject true life, to accuse the highest wisdom, to resist omnipotence? Further, if a man desires to be separated from Christ for his brethren's sake, is that not a rejection of true life? Just as who says: *"Either forgive them their sin or blot me out of the book that You have written!"*³²⁷ He who says to the Lord: *"Far be it from you to do this thing to slay the just with the wicked, and for the just to be in like case as the wicked: shall not the Lord judge of all the earth do right?"*³²⁸ Is he not accusing the Lord and trying to teach wisdom? . . . Did not this man attempt to resist the Almighty when after the judgment of God had gone forth when the savage conflagration had begun to rage, man stood up to the roaring fire and placed himself as an intermediary between those who were afraid and those who were afraid and those who were dying and compelled an end to the calamity.

§47 Consider to what boldness of presumption the perfection of charity can raise up the mind of man: behold how it induces him to presume beyond the power of a man! That which he hopes of God, what he does for God, in God and effects with God are more than mere human. How utterly wondrous and amazing! The more he rises up in boldness, the more descends in humility. Just as the goal to which he ascends by confidence is above man, so is the point to which he descends by patience, beyond man. Therefore, as we have

said, in the first degree, the soul returns to itself; in the second, it ascends to God; in the second, it ascends to God; in the third passes out into God; in the fourth it descends below itself. In the first and second it is raised; in the third and fourth it is transfigured. In the first, it ascends to itself; in the second, it transcends itself; in the third, it is conformed to the glory of Christ, in the fourth it is conformed to the humility of Christ. Again, in the first, it is led back; in the second, it is transferred; in the third, it is transformed; in the fourth, it is resurrected.

The End of this Text

Mystical Notes on the Psalms

Psalm 30

"In peace in the selfsame I will sleep and I will rest." ³²⁹

This is that peace by which and in which the soul falls asleep, by which it loses its memory of all external things for a time; by which it comes to forget itself and having risen up beyond itself at last passes wholly into God. What is that peace but that inward reality and full joy, a certain effluence of spiritual delights, a truly wonderful and ineffable plenitude of heavenly desires? Indeed the truth and fullness of that peace is obtained only when every desire is completely engulfed in that interior sweetness. Yet while the soul pants with burning desire for what it does not yet possess, it has a kind of peace, yet that peace is troubled by anxiety for its desires, for unless our joy is full it does not reconcile our desires to true peace. Moreover, in this corruptible life the human soul cannot have perfect joy, for it cannot contain perfect joy within the narrow space of its limited existence. However, it can have full joy for it can have as much as it can apprehend. The human mind can enjoy its peace fully and truly, when it is altogether relaxed into that divine sweetness which it feels inwardly. Yet if this peace is to be full, it must consist in two things, contemplation of the truth and in the fullness of inward delights. It begins with one and is perfected by the other. First, the friend of the heavenly bridegroom and the bride of the true friend, kindled with desire for the beloved and waiting in suspense for his coming, should look and see who he is whom her soul loves. This I say is the first step. The second is that she should rush into the arms and embrace him according to her constant request: "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth", so that by His kisses she may draw sweetness from the sweet and delight from him who is full of delights. For His lips distill the honeycomb and His breath is sweeter than honey. For His beauty and sweetness are perfect. Beauty for the sight, sweetness for the taste. Thus far, what has been seen was external, now what is tasted begins to be inward: taste is better than sight. We incorporate into ourselves what we taste and are made, as it were, one with it. Therefore, most certainly, when we receive an infusion of the divine spirit we are in a measure, united with it. "*He that is joined unto the Lord.*" says the Apostle, "*is one spirit.*" ³³⁰ This then is that true and full sweetness, infused by God, this is the highest and unique delight, which alone can satisfy the desire of the heart, and succeed in stilling its greediness. This only restrains the weariness of our desires; this only settles the soul in true peace, for it finds nothing else to desire. What further thing could it wish for, beyond this,

which it cannot grasp? Let us now see by what degrees this peace grows. The first is the long waiting for its desire; considering ³³¹ follows waiting, contemplation follows considering, wonder comes after contemplation, exultation succeeds wonder, and sweetness follows exultation. Waiting is thus: the bride of Christ after long laboring in her desires begins at last, to be made sure by an interior movement, of the coming of him whom her soul loves, while daily she is told: "*Expect and expect again, here a little, a little there.*" ³³² For he that is to come shall come. He will come and will not tarry. In this waiting the soul begins frequently to look around here and there and to seek with great diligence from what direction He shall come whom she awaits; whether from the East or the West or from the mountains of the desert. For behold He comes suddenly and swiftly, yes, God comes from the South and the Holy One from Mount Pharan. He rejoices like a giant to run His course. He comes suddenly and swiftly, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. He hastens to meet His beloved, crying out to her and saying: "*Turn away your eyes from me, for they have made me flee away.*" ³³³

This is how considering follows upon waiting and contemplation upon considering. For contemplation is when the soul at last begins to see what she has yearned for in her long waiting and has asked for often and deliberately. However, at that point where the soul begins to contemplate, she also begins to wonder.

Is it strange if she wonders at the beauty of him who is most beautiful among the children of men? Certainly the clearer her contemplation the more insistent her wonder, and the more she wonders so much the more eagerly and attentively does she contemplate. So that the degree of wonder grows out of the quality of the contemplation, and the zeal for contemplation increases with the increase of the wonder.

Yet, how great will the joyous vision of that highest beauty be, and even in the smallest degree, that clearer contemplation of the luminous countenance of the divine glory? In addition, what will be our joy, resting continually in our wonder for it? For that great and strong mutual joy, of which we have spoken, is born from this joyful sight. For contemplation, follows wonder and wonder is succeeded by exultation. For by this exaltation the soul is imbued with a marvelous and immense sweetness, which no sense can appreciate nor any words explain. For when that heavenly bridegroom is united to his bride in the embraces of love and bends down to her kiss, the soul is immediately filled at his touch with this heavenly sweetness: a thing

which anyone can feel but which cannot be explained by any elaboration of words.

...But as above, so in this development of interior sweetness we may distinguish some degrees of progress. For initially, the inward sweetness begins to be felt and from it arises a great eagerness to enjoy it, after eagerness comes satiety, then inebriation follows satiety, and security comes after inebriation and is succeeded by tranquility. . . .

When in the world we daily see many who *are* merry amidst wrangling and scandal and rejoice in dangers and losses, what shall we think of such men but that they are drunk? What should I call such ecstasy of mind but some sort of spiritual inebriation? The first step is to shrink from the varied but vain pleasures of the world. The second that we should despise its calamities. The first is brought about by spiritual contentment or abundance, the second by spiritual inebriation. This abundance leads to inebriation as is proved by its results. By this inebriation the soul develops such great steadfastness and derives such great confidence in God's protection that she dares to say with the Apostle: "*I am certain that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come... nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" ³³⁴

This is that established and steady security which is followed by true and complete tranquility of mind. For what can dis-tranquility of him who is not disquieted by the goad of desire, nor agitated by the prick of fear? However, this tranquility is that peace which we have sought so long with many words and even now, hardly attained by all these steps. This is that peace in which the soul falls asleep, the peace that carries the mind away into inward things, the peace that snatches the memory away from all outward things, which transcends the point of the wits, deflects the light of reason, fills the desire of the heart, and absorbs the intelligence. John calls this quietude '*silence*', the Psalmist calls it a '*sleep*'.³³⁵ The Apostle calls it "*the peace of God that passes all understanding.*" ³³⁶ Oh how truly is it '*silence*', how TRULY may we call it a sleep if it passes all understanding! What can we fitly say of that which does pass understanding? "*There was a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.*" ³³⁷

We have heard how it may truly be called a silence yet how can it also be a sleep? Consider what physical sleep to the outward man; the same is done by this sleep to the inward man. Sleep of the body overcomes the bodily, senses, and takes away the use of the eyes and ears and the other senses

and members. As the senses of the body are lulled by the physical sleep, so this sleep of the inward man overcomes all the senses of the mind. It absorbs at the same time, the thought, imagination, reason, memory and intelligence, so that what the Apostle says, actually takes place, that it "*passes all understanding*." The soul enjoys this sleep in the embrace of the true spouse when she rests in his bosom. Hence it is written: "*His left hand is under my head and his right hand shall embrace me*."³³⁸ The Psalmist had already conceived a firm hope of this quietude in a like resting place, when with such great confidence he sang: "*In peace in the self same I will sleep and I will rest*."³³⁹

Psalm 28

In tempio ejus omnia dicent gloria. Col. 506, C.

In his temple, all shall speak his glory.

A treatise to the Novices. A passage on contemplation. Speaking of the Church in the heavens as a temple and the Church on earth as a tent, he says that man cannot reach the temple unless he is raised by contemplation.

Yet men cannot attain to the temple unless they are raised up in contemplation. However, when they are admitted within, through the greatness of their wonder they cannot cease from praising the Creator and fulfill what is written: "*And in His temple all shall speak of his glory*."³⁴⁰ For all who lift themselves up to contemplate this, while they are within they do not cease from giving praise. Hence, also when they return to themselves, they say: "*Oh how great is the multitude of your sweetness, Oh Lord, which you have hidden from them that fear You*."³⁴¹ "*The remainder of the thoughts shall keep holiday unto You*."³⁴²

Let everyone who is able reflect what and how great is the celebration of the solemnity which they who are within carry out, when even the 'remainder of the thoughts', which, when they return to themselves they draw from the idea and memory of the sweetness they have tasted, so celebrates a holy day to the Lord their God. For if by the temple of God, we understand the heart of men, we shall soon find who are those who give thanks to God in this temple. For the thoughts of the mind and the affections of the heart are the inhabitants of this temple.

For "*the thought of man shall give praise unto you*."³⁴³ For it rarely happens that all the inhabitants of this temple come together in such a way, that gathered into one in his temple, they may all together speak of his glory without the intervention of any foreign thought which might disturb or lessen the joys of that solemn feast. That this may sometimes happen, he who is taught by experience rather than by reading knows well. It comes to pass sometimes, that the mind faithful in a few things, entering into the joy other Lord, is inebriated with the flood of delights and being altogether absorbed in rejoicing, forgets not only all external things but herself also. She is wholly gathered together within herself and is raised above herself and fully absorbed by the full tide of spiritual happiness and now by this happy experience makes proof of the truth of that passage, which says: "*Blessed is the people that knows jubilation*"³⁴⁴ and then what is fulfilled, which is said: "*And in His temple all shall speak of His glory*."³⁴⁵

Psalm 103

Montes exultaverunt ut arietes, et colles sicut agni ovium. Col. 340, D

The mountains they skipped like rams, the hills like the lambs of the flock.

In connection with this text, Richard mentions the triple hierarchy of angels, described by Denis the Areopagite and his interpretation reflects Denis' teaching.

The whole company of celestial spirits are, as we know divided into nine orders which are grouped into three hierarchies; so that three belong to each, namely cherubim, seraphim and thrones are assigned to the first; dominions, virtues and principalities to the second; powers, archangels and angels to the third.³⁴⁶ As we have said above, by rams, among animals of their kind we understand the chief and highest hierarchy of the heavenly orders; by sheep the medium class; by the lambs of the flock, the lowest. The highest (order) is that which is immediately joined to God and which illuminates the others and is itself illuminated only by the hierarchy, which creates all things and by none other. The middle hierarchy is that which is illuminated and illuminates. The lowest grade is that which has nothing lower to illuminate and is only illuminated by higher powers. We have already heard what we should think about this kind of flock or about their different degrees, but we are seeking the meaning of spiritual and super celestial among the spiritual and super celestial flocks.

Yet, what is this 'leap' which each in their own order makes, but a going up beyond themselves and an ascent by contemplation to the orders that are above them? When the orders of the highest hierarchy ascend above themselves by contemplation, they find nothing else but the substance, which creates all other substances. Therefore, to leap upward is for them as it were, to see the greatness of that highest being in itself, without any mirror ... Two ways are found of contemplating this greatness. For sometimes, they see in a mirror and sometimes without a mirror and perceive how wonderful and altogether incomprehensible it is, either in itself or in the subject creature.

To discern the divine power or wonderful wisdom in themselves is, for them, merely to walk upon the plain. Nevertheless, to contemplate the great things of the same power or wisdom reflected in the lower orders and to wonder at that contemplation, this is for them a descent, not a leap upward. From this, we must plainly deduce that rams leaping in exultation, means only to see without a mirror and to rise up to the pure and simple Godhead. However, the middle orders of the hierarchy like the lowest, when they rise above themselves, can also make use of a mirror, for they find above themselves orders of a higher dignity, through whom they can rise up sufficiently to the wonder of the divine wisdom and power. These also are accustomed to use simple contemplation, but for them it is a flight rather than a leap upward. For he who leaps does not move far from the place where he is standing, but what happens in a flight is very different as we know. Because those orders of spirits who are typified by rams make use in their leaping—as I might say of nothing more than simple contemplation, and because the other orders which are described as lambs and sheep, never in their leaping, use anything but speculation, therefore the Psalmist rightly says: "*The mountains skipped like rams: and the hills like the lambs of the flock.*" By the mountains, as we have stated above, we understand contemplative men and by the hills, speculative men. So that when the mountains rejoice like rams it means that contemplative men attain in ecstasy that highest truth, laid bare in open vision and seen as it were, face to face. Yet when the hills exult in the way of sheep or lambs, this is nothing more than that speculative men rise up by ecstasy in wonder at the same truth, through speculation. . . .

Psalm 113 ³⁴⁷

from Col. 337, C.

Speculative men are those who examine heavenly things, who see the invisible things of God in a mirror and darkly. ³⁴⁸ They are called speculative because they cannot see except through a mirror and darkly. But we must understand by the term 'contemplative' those to whom it is given to see face to face, who contemplating the unveiled face of the glory of God see truth uncovered in its simplicity, without a mirror or darkness. Those who attend to heavenly things are either 'mountains or hills'. However, the speculative can in no way transcend the clouds of bodily likenesses for they cannot see the highest truth in its purity. However, contemplative dwelling upon the mountains, transcending by the height of their intelligence the clouds of allegories and figures, attain to that tranquil and serene mountain peak of the upper regions.

From De Exterminatione Mali/ From *The Extermination of Evil*

Part 2, Chapter 11, col. 1098 C.

On the things, which appertain to meditation or contemplation; of what value the understanding of such things is for advance in virtue.

...Nor do we deny that there are some things concerning the nature of the future life—indeed, there are many and great things which we can both seek to investigate and find by reasoning and analyze by discussion. For the invisible things of God are known and understood by the things that are made. Therefore, we must never neglect those things that may be found by investigation, just as we must not intrude by our own power, upon things, which transcend our intelligence and human reasoning. The former are known by reason, the latter are above reason. We must diligently enquire into the former by close examination, but for the latter, we must wait for the divine showing with humility. The former belong to meditation, the latter to contemplation. The soul will never be fully enflamed with desire for the eternal riches, unless it has given thoughtful consideration to their nature and number. And just as it will never deserve to be raised to contemplate them without great desire, so truly it will not be perfectly enflamed with desire of eternal things without strenuous effort. . . .

What belongs to meditation and what belongs to contemplation

... First, we must seek and find out by trial the method of making our meditation, and afterwards we must turn it to contemplation so that we may be able to practice it quickly and at will. Contemplation belongs to the carrying forth of the Ark, just as meditation does to the exploration.³⁴⁹ Contemplation has one purpose, meditation another. The work of meditation is to seek out hidden things that of contemplation to wonder at clear truths. So then, meditation is the careful investigation of hidden truth and contemplation the joyful wondering at transparent truth. However, hidden things do become manifest, either through our meditation or by divine showing. Therefore where Therefore, where we have the presence of the grace of revelation we do not need the service of meditation. However, where divine revelation is lacking, the human mind, quite naturally, necessarily has recourse to the work of meditation and turns to the services of investigation. However, whatever the human mind may come to know of moral teaching by the investigation of meditation, these fruits must be dwelt upon in contemplation, and the soul strengthened in its certainty of those things and in its desire. Yet when the findings of meditation are submitted to contemplation this is a symbol of the Ark being carried up along a road previously explored, so that the company of virtues may safely follow without fear of going astray. A man arrives in meditation at the knowledge of what he should usefully do. Yet the effect of contemplation is to root the discovered truth more firmly in the memory and to enflame the desire more keenly. Therefore, my meditation we are taught the good and in contemplation, we are confirmed in it. This is the reason, I think, why we further our spiritual course both by the investigations of meditation and by the carrying forth of our intellectual Ark. ...

Concerning the quiet of contemplation

The twelfth stone, the last of all we may find, I think, at the lord's sepulcher. It is called, as we said above, the quiet stone of contemplation.³⁵⁰ Joseph of Arimathea hewed himself a tomb out of this kind of stone but Jesus lay in it, dead and at rest. For that rest, which prudence seeks for itself in meditation and describes by definitions, wisdom discovers in contemplation and lays on by experience. True prudence seeks and always should seek, the peace, which Christ taught, that she be not troubled or afraid. She always enquires where such peace may be found and strives to defend her own security, but she always finds something in the past to sorrow for, something in the present to attack, and something to watch against or fear in the future. Therefore, the soul may seek this peace eagerly with prudence and search it with subtle meditations but she will never find it except through wisdom and the grace of contemplation. But when the soul begins to go forth from herself by the pure intelligence, and to enter wholly into that brightness of incorporeal light, she begins to experience from what these secret places have revealed to her, some inward sweetness and by it to build up her intelligence and transmute it into wisdom. Thus, in this ecstasy of mind, she will find that peace which is neither troubled nor afraid and she will gain that silence which is in heaven for the space of an half-hour, so that no tumult of conflicting thoughts shall disturb the spirit of contemplation and it shall find nothing to desire or ask for, no worry to decide, no hatreds to combat.

He who is buried under this stone is laid out in perfect peace for he is wholly recollected and enclosed in the Tranquility of contemplation. Nor does this stone merely support the head, as Jacob's did, or like the last one we mentioned,³⁵¹ lie under the feet, but it is adjusted to the whole body and applied to it. For this stone surrounds and encloses the whole body and encompasses it about on all sides, so that peace which passes all understanding may absorb the whole of the human understanding to its depths and by a wondrous transfiguration, may change the purer part of the soul into a divine state. The body lies there in the Lord's tomb without feeling or movement; neither the senses nor the imagination function and all the lower powers of the soul are for the time deprived of their activity.

This stone tomb (unlike the stone bed of the patriarch Jacob), does not cover a living body albeit sleeping, nor will it hold an un-mortified dead body. To sleep is one thing, to pass away another. It is one thing to recollect one's spirit wholly within oneself, another to rise up and leave

oneself behind. It is one thing to control the appetites, to cut out the care of external things from the heart, another to arrive at complete forgetfulness of oneself. For it is necessary before one is able to go into that hidden place of inner quietness, the sanctuary of the highest tranquility, it is necessary, I say, that this most grave and truly wonderful thing take place, not the dissolution of body and soul, which is the type of that more wonderful and glorious separation, which must be suffered, but the division of the soul and the spirit. This, according to the Apostle, is worked in us by the living and powerful word of God, shaper and more penetrating than any two-edged sword and piercing even to the ling asunder of soul and spirit.³⁵²

What can any creature perceive more marvelous than this separation where that which is essentially one and individual is led and that which is single and without parts is divided and disjoined within itself? Nor is there in one man an essence, which is spirit and something else, which is soul, but rather he is one and the same substance of one single nature. Nor must we understand a twofold substance by these two words, but when we distinguish between the twin powers of the same essence, the higher is called spirit, the lower soul. In tills division the soul and that, which is animal remains below, but the spirit and that which is spiritual flies upwards. That which is of the body and subject to corruption, perishes and as a dead body falls back into itself and below its nature. That which is subtle and purified ascends upward like a breath of air, rises above and transcends itself. Oh, that high quiet, that sublime peace where all usual movement loses its mobility, where any movement made, is through the divine power and passes into God.

This breath of the spirit commended into the Father's hands, needs no ladder like that of the dreamer Jacob, to reach the third heaven. What ladder is of service to him whom the Father takes the hand to ravish him to the secrets of the third heaven and to glorify him, so that he may say: *"Your right hand has held me up... you held me with your right hand and guided me in your will and received me in your glory."*³⁵³

The same spirit needs no ladder nor requires to be supported in the subtilty of his ascent by the shadow of any material images, there where he shall see face to face and not in a glass darkly. Truly I lie if the same is not asserted of themselves, by those who share this experience, for they say: *"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by t:he Lord."*³⁵⁴

Now you may see and understand, as I think, what is effected and gained by that division of the soul and the spirit, of which we spoke. The spirit is separated from the lower things that it may be sublimated to the higher. For he who cleaves to the Lord is one spirit. This is a happy division, a separation to be hoped for, when that which is subject to pain and corruptible dies for a time to its own passions, so that suffering, nothing corrupt may be felt; while that which is spiritual and subtle may be raised up to the beholding of the divine glory and transformed into the same image. Therefore, the lower part is composed posed into perfect peace and tranquility and the higher raised to glory and exultation. . . . (The example of Moses on the mount is here drawn out much in the same way as we have seen elsewhere.)

Moses came forth from that divine conversation with shinning and glorified countenance showing what power and strength he had derived from that companionship with him who grants power and strength to his people, even God, the blessed Lord. Thus too, the spirit comes back and returns to him who has been long in ecstasy and that which he had laid by the suffering and corruptible body he now takes up again as it were impassible, immortal and incorruptible compare with its former state, and rises up in newness of life. Can you conceive of a man making merry at injuries offered to him, not blushing when shame is inflicted and rejoicing in tribulation? For thus a man walks in newness of life, thus in a measure, he shows himself to be impassible and proves himself master of his passion. Behold the progress of those who lie under this ^{stone}! Many things might be said on this subject if it were proper in this place and if they were not too lengthy for a moderate digression....

A Chapter Sermon

(*Sermones Centum*, No. 5, P.L. 177; col. 911)

Sermon 5. For the Lord's Advent

Be ready Israel, to meet the Lord, for He comes. Beloved brethren, just as everything is holy, so a place, in as much as it is a place, is holy; and so too a time is holy, in as much as it is a time. Nevertheless, we say in relation to different places, 'this place is good or bad' and of different times, 'this time is good or evil'. However, it is not because of the place or time that we say either of these things, but because of the circumstances of place or time. Therefore as one place is described as less sacred because of some sin committed there and another more holy because of the operation of grace in that place, so also one period of time may be called less holy because some wickedness took place then, and another more holy because of the practice of religion in that period. Nevertheless, in as far as time is time, all time is holy and every place, as such, is holy. Now brethren, it is almost the time of our Lord's Advent during which we must prepare ourselves for a spiritual feast. This is the time when God comes as a Man to man to redeem men, to free and justify and beatify them; redeeming them from guilt, freeing them from punishment, justifying them by grace, beatifying them by glory. In such a holy time as this, we should exercise ourselves more strenuously in virtue, so that we may deserve to be more abundantly visited by His grace. Certainly if the king were to condescend to visit us and to make his dwelling place with us, we should diligently prepare ourselves and all that is ours to receive him.

Therefore brethren, let us, who perhaps are occupied in working outside in servile works, take pains to enter into the house of our heart, to open its windows, to examine what is seemly or unseemly in it, to bring the spiders' webs down, to clean out the yard with brooms and throw out the dirt and dust, and when it is cleaned, to cover the floor with fresh-gathered rushes, scented herbs and sweet-smelling flowers. Let us adorn the walls with colored curtains, put on our holiday garments, prepare a solemn banquet, and then joyfully go to meet Him with happy songs: If we were busy outside our real selves with servile works, that is, intent upon sin, let us come back to our own hearts, as the Prophet teaches us saying: "*Return you transgressors to the heart.*"³⁵⁵ The windows of this house are the spiritual senses, by which divine knowledge shines in upon us and illuminates the recesses of our mind. Let us open these windows and look around carefully so as to see what is good or evil in the place; let us keep the good things and throw out the bad.

Those thin spiders' webs, which hang high up signifying the boastfulness of the human mind. One man is exalted because of his noble descent, another because of the flower of his beauty, another because of the vigor of his strength, another because of his piled-up possessions, yet another for the display of his power, another because of the greater prerogatives of heavenly grace, which he has harvested. However, whoever indulges in pride is weaving foolish spider's webs to hang up on high.

Let us pull down those webs, brethren, by subduing boastfulness, as the Apostle teaches us saying: "*Be not high minded, but fear.*"³⁵⁶ Let us clean the yard of our hearts and throw out the dust and filth. Filth defiles and dust flies about. Therefore, filth signifies uncleanness and dust means vainglory. Let us throw out both of these by contrition of heart and confession of our lips. Then, afterwards, let us strew the pavement of our hearts with rushes by the satisfaction of penance, that nothing that has been done in our earthly and fleshly life may be seen in us, as David said: "*Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered.*"³⁵⁷ Let us have the scented herbs and sweet smelling flowers of good opinion that we may say with the Apostle: "*For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in every place.*"³⁵⁸ The many-colored curtains are the different virtues. We must stretch them out by the exercise of the virtues. Some curtains are green, others blue or yellow, some black, red or white. Green signifies faith, for as the greenness of things which the earth is just bringing forth, strikes the senses first, so faith is the first of all the virtues. First, I say, in order not in honor, for charity precedes all the other virtues in honor and without it the rest are worth nothing. Blue signifies divine hope, for it shows in itself the color of the sky and the upper airs. By the yellow colored curtains, charity is typified, because the color yellow is like a flame. The black curtain shows humility, which is always reminding itself of the blackness of its sins. Red is suffering, for it is never ashamed of the Blood of the Passion. White means purity, for it shines out always and is unstained.

Your festival garments, Brethren, represent good works. For as fine garments adorn men outwardly in the sight of men, so good works speak for and commend a good and just man. Indeed, there is nothing that we count more glorious than these garments, nothing more precious, praiseworthy, or useful. Let us have a care to put them on if we would be fine when the Lord comes!

We must prepare the food by more frequent and customary reading and meditation of the Holy Scriptures. The soul is invigorated by this food and fattened by it; it receives strength for good works and perseveres in them to perfection without falling back. Also, as we must show gladness of heart at

His- our songs, as it is written: "*Oh bless our God, you people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard.*" ³⁵⁹

So the let us take trouble to open our windows by examining the mind to pull down the spiders' webs by suppressing boastfulness, to sweep the yard by confession of sins, to strew the rushes with satisfaction of penance, to hang up and stretch the exercise of virtues, to put on precious garments by showing good works, to prepare the food by reading and meditation of Holy Scriptures, to rejoice in singing our songs of divine praise! In this way let us be prepared for the coming of our Lord, that we may be worthy to be visited by Him who lives and reigns God, world without end. Amen

Fragments

From the 'Commentary on Joel'

(P.L. 175, col., 347A)

The chamber is love, the cell is contemplation, the same soul looked at from different points of view becomes bridegroom or bride. The bride when she is united with the Word in secret love conceives in some kind of ineffable sweetness, which is shown outwardly by the breaking forth of some heavenly signs. However, the bridegroom when he is joined to Wisdom and given up to it alone engenders offspring through spiritual intercourse, by the teaching of doctrine. So that the characteristic of the bridegroom is the teaching of wisdom and the bride's prerogative is grace. Nevertheless, in time of affliction the bridegroom comes forth from which is the study of wisdom; and the bride from her chamber that is, she comes down from the privilege of contemplative grace, and they submit to the humiliations of penance for the sake of obtaining the pardon they ask. When the heavenly Bridegroom sees his bride weeping and moaning, troubled and supplicating, bearing the burden and heat of the day with others and for others, he is at once moved from his anger and has compassion on the suffering one. He is impatient of delay and is soon appeased; he forgives with the sweetness of a heavenly kiss, and gives to the people the favor his beloved asks. Hence, Moses begs for the people in the place of the spouse: "*I beseech You: this people has sinned a heinous sin, and they have made to themselves gods of gold. Either forgive them this trespass, or if you do not strike me out of the book that You have written.*" ³⁶⁰

Joel On Visions

(col. 355D)

There are three kinds of visions. The first is material, second spiritual, the third intellectual. The first is of matter and with form; the second is without matter but with form; the third is without matter or form. The first conceives elemental things, the second imagined things, the third is not circumscribed in any way whatever, it conceives God, virtues and vices.

On Dreams

De eruditione hominis interioris,/ Learning about the inner man

Chap. 19, col. 1261

"Your dream and the visions of your head upon your bed, are these:" ³⁶¹
We sleep first and then see a dream. Because as by the dream of the body the bodily sense is quieted, we rightly understand ecstasy of mind by the word 'dream'. In it, the memory of all outward things is radically cut off. To see a dream is to pass over by the mind into the secret place of divine contemplation. He who ascends by ecstasy into contemplation of sublime things sleeps and sees a dream.

On Dream and Prophecy

(Ibid., Chap. 2, col. 1233 C)

What is the seeing of dreams and the foretelling of things to come and the foreseeing of the mysteries of hidden things but to receive the grace of contemplation from heaven and by ecstasy to perceive knowledge of hidden judgments, by a divine showing?

From the Commentary on Joel

(Col. 358 C-D)

"Et erit haec, effundam spiritum meum . . . salvus erit/ And it will be these things, I will pour out my spirit." Joel 2:28-32

After these signs shown in the heavens, after the light of self- knowledge, after the smoke of true contrition, after the blood of mortification, after the fire of perfect love, there is only one thing more, the sweetness of contemplation. Therefore, he says: "*and there shall be*", and "*whoever shall call upon the name of Lord shall be saved.*" For in the green bed of contemplation to call upon the name of the Lord is indeed the longed for possession of salvation, that most longed-for union of the Bride and Bridegroom. Thus was the Bride to be saved, thus she called upon the name of God, when she said, "*Your name is as ointment poured out.*" ³⁶² The Bride received the oil, I say the oil of His name poured forth. Also, because it is

light, she was enlightened by his presence; because it is ointment, she came to be healed by his touch; because it is bread of life, she was fulfilled by his embrace. Enlightened by the knowledge of the spirit, healed from the vanities of the world, fulfilled by the kiss of the Word; and this is the invocation of the Name; this is the possession of salvation, the receiving of kisses, the communion of the bed, the union of the Word with the soul in which every man is saved. For with such light no one can be blind, with such power no one can be weak, with such salvation none can perish.

Re: Authority of Scriptures from De Eruditione Hominis Interioris/ On learning about the inner man

(Col. 1260 A)

However, because Daniel knew the mystic vision which the King was anxiously trying to remember, someone might ask us to explain more openly how one and the same thing could by the same person be both known in one way and unknown in another. However, it is one thing to understand the depth of the mysteries by the intelligence alone and another to unfold them easily as often as you wish and to be able to explain them. See how few there are who are able to penetrate the mystical sages of the Scripture without the works and expositions of others and fewer still who desire to communicate their explanation by word or writing to the notice of others. Consider therefore, that as it seems to me, the gift of mystical understanding is one thing and the gift of mystical teaching another. Some excel in one, some in the other and some are both things. . . .

The End of This Work

On the Trinity ³⁶³

Translated by Jonathan Couser

Book One - Chapter 1

That we apprehend the knowledge of things in a threefold manner: by experience, by reasoning, [and] by believing.

If we wish to ascend to the knowledge of sublime things by sagacity of mind, it is first worthwhile to know in what ways we are accustomed to apprehend the knowledge of things. Accordingly, unless I am mistaken, we apprehend the knowledge of things in a threefold manner. ^{364, 365} For we prove some things by experience, ³⁶⁶ others we gather by reasoning, ³⁶⁷ [and] we attain the certainty of still others by believing. Indeed, we apprehend the knowledge of temporal things by the experience itself; but we rise to the knowledge of eternal things sometimes by reasoning and sometimes by believing. ³⁶⁸ For some of the things which we are commanded to believe appear to be not only above reason, but also contrary to reason, unless they are discerned (*discutiantur*) by a deep and most subtle investigation or rather manifested by divine revelation. ³⁶⁹

Accordingly, in the cognizance or assertion of these things we are more accustomed to rely on faith than on reasoning, on authority rather than argumentation, according to that saying of the Prophet: *Unless you believe, you will not understand.* ³⁷⁰ However, it seems that even this saying and these words should be attended to diligently, since it is set forth to us by this authority that the understanding of these things is to be denied, not generally, but conditionally, when it is said, "*Unless you believe, you will not understand.*" ³⁷¹ Therefore, they who have trained their senses should not despair regarding the combining of such understanding, so long as they feel themselves to be firm in faith, and in their assertion proven constant in faith by all things. ³⁷²

Chapter 2 That nothing is held more firmly than what is apprehended by constant faith.

Now in these things, this is marvelous beyond measure, that however much we are truly faithful we hold nothing more certainly, nothing more constantly than that which we apprehend by faith. ³⁷³ For indeed they are revealed by the fathers and from heaven, and are confirmed by so many, so great, such marvelous signs or prodigies, so that it appears to be a great madness to doubt even a little on them. ³⁷⁴ Therefore, the innumerable miracles, which could only be produced by Providence, both produce in us faith about this kind of thing and do not permit us to doubt. Thus, in their attestation and also their confirmation we use signs for arguments and prodigies as experiences. I long that the Jews pay attention, would that the pagans give heed when we will be able to approach the Divine judgment with such a security of conscience on our part!

Will we not be able to say with all confidence to God, "Lord, if there is an error, we have been deceived by you yourself, for these things have been confirmed for us with such signs and prodigies and by such means as could only be brought about by you." Certainly, they have been handed on to us by men of the highest sanctity. Additionally, they have been proven with the highest and with authentic testimony, you yourself "*cooperating and confirming the message by the signs which followed.*" ³⁷⁵ Hence, it is certain that the perfectly faithful are more prepared to die for the faith than to deny it. For without a doubt nothing is more firmly held than that which is apprehended by constant faith. ³⁷⁶

Chapter 3 That this work deals with those things, which we are commanded to believe about eternal things.

Therefore, it is indeed necessary to enter by faith into the knowledge of those things about which it is rightly said to us: *If you have not believed, you will not understand.* ³⁷⁷ Nor should one stand at the entrance itself without moving, but always hasten toward a more profound and interior understanding and apply oneself with all zeal and the utmost diligence, so that we may have the power to advance by daily increments toward the understanding of those things, which we hold in faith. ³⁷⁸ In the full knowledge and understanding of these things, we will attain eternal life. Surely, there is the utmost usefulness in this acquisition, and the utmost joy in the contemplation of these things. They are the highest riches, they are of

eternal delight; in the taste of them is intimate sweetness, in their fruition is infinite enjoyment.³⁷⁹ And so we propose to concern ourselves in this work with those things, which we are commanded to believe by the rule of the Catholic faith, not about any whatsoever, but about the eternal ones. We intend to say nothing in this work about those things which we are commanded to believe, and which we do believe, about the sacraments of our redemption made in time. For the manner of proceeding is different in those cases.

Chapter 4 The procedure in this work: not only to adduce authorities but also to stand upon reasoning.

And so, in so far as God permits, it will be our intention in this work concerning those things, which we believe, to adduce not only credible reasons but also necessary ones,³⁸⁰ and to preserve the teaching of our faith by clarification and explanation of the truth.³⁸¹ For I believe without a doubt that although they may be hidden from our efforts for a while, there is no absence not only of probable but also of necessary arguments for the explanation of anything that has necessary being.

It is possible that all things, which begin to be in time, at the pleasure of the Maker, should be and should not be.³⁸² And so also, by the same token, their being can be not only gathered by reasoning, but also proven by experience. However, those, which are eternal, are entirely unable not to be, as they never were not, thus certainly they never will not be. Indeed they always are what they are and not otherwise; nor can they be otherwise. It appears moreover that it is entirely impossible for any necessary being to lack a necessary reason. But it is not characteristic of any soul to elicit this kind of argument from the deep and shadowy breast of nature, and publicly to draw out the arguments as from a certain secret place of wisdom.³⁸³ Many things are less worthy than this, many things less suitable, many things less learned; and what we should always have before our eyes if it is possible, we consider rarely if at all. With what application, with what zeal should we apply ourselves to this occupation, with what zeal should we desire that sight, on which depends the highest beatitude of the salvation of everyone? Moreover, I believe that I will have done no small thing if it is granted to me to assist learned minds in this occupation at least a little, and to provoke lukewarm minds to such study by my own zeal.³⁸⁴

Chapter 5 A brief foretaste concerning what is discussed in the following.

I have frequently read that there is but one God, that he is eternal, uncreated, immense, that he is omnipotent and Lord of all things, that everything which depends on him, that he is everywhere as a whole, not divided by parts. I have read about my God that he is one and triune, one in substance but three in person. All these things I have read, but whence all this should be proven, I do not remember having read. I have heard that in the true deity there is but one substance, that in the unity of the substance there are many persons, each singular person distinguished from the other by his own property.

I have read that there is a person there who is from himself, not from any other; that there is a person who is from only one person, and not from himself; and that there is there a person who is from a twin (*gemina*) person, not from only one.

I hear daily about the three that they are not three eternal beings but one eternal being, that they are not three uncreated nor three immense, but one and one immense being. I hear about the three that they are not three omnipotent beings but one omnipotent being; I hear that there are by no means three Gods but one God, nor are there three Lords but there is one Lord. I discover that the Father is not made nor begotten, that the son is not made but is begotten, that the Holy Spirit is neither made nor begotten but proceeds.³⁸⁵

All these things I frequently hear or read, but I do not recall having read whence all these things are proven. Authorities abound in all these matters, but not equally arguments; in all these things experience is lacking and arguments are rare. Therefore, I suppose that I shall have done no little thing, as I said above, if I shall be able to assist learned minds in this occupation even a little. Even if it should not be granted to me to satisfy them.³⁸⁶

Chapter 6 That universally every way of being can be comprehended under a threefold classification.

Therefore, so that it may stand on a plain, perspicuous, solid, and, as it were, immobile foundation of truth, the order of our reasoning should commence from that place whence nobody should have a basis for doubt or presume to recoil. Everything which is or can be either has being from eternity or begins to be in time, and again, everything which is or can be either has being from

itself or it has being from something other than itself. And so universally all being can be distinguished by a threefold reckoning. For the being of any existing thing will be either from eternity and by itself, or on the contrary neither from eternity nor by itself, or, immediately between these alternatives, from eternity indeed but not by itself.³⁸⁷ For that fourth [possibility], which appears to correspond to this third member as its converse, is in no sense permitted by nature itself. For nothing can be entirely by itself which is not from eternity. For anything which takes its being in time, there was a time when it was nothing, but as long as it was nothing it had (and could have had) entirely no being; when it was nothing, it neither received (nor could receive) being, whether from itself or from another. Otherwise it gave what it did not have and it made what it could not make. Therefore, learn from this how impossible it is that anything should wholly be by itself that is not from eternity.³⁸⁸ Behold, therefore, what we have said above, we now gather by manifest reason; all being is distinguished by a threefold reckoning.

Chapter 7 On that mode of being which is not from eternity and thereby is not by itself.

And so we should begin with the kind of thing, about which we can by no means doubt, and with those things which we have known by experience, to gather by reasoning what must be discerned about these things which are beyond experience.³⁸⁹ Surely, concerning that mode of being which is not from eternity and which, according to the aforesaid reckoning, is thereby certainly not from itself, we are assured by multiple and daily experiences. We see constantly that some things withdraw, others succeed them, and indeed those which were not before come forth in act. We see this constantly in human beings, and in animals, and again we prove the same by experience every day in trees and herbaceous plants. What happens in the operation of nature, we also see in the works of [human industry]. Therefore, daily experience does not permit us to escape noticing that there are innumerable things, which have not existed from eternity.

Moreover, a better argument shows itself, since whatever has not existed from eternity could not be from itself.³⁹⁰ That it could not be is openly demonstrated, for it cannot be hidden from a man of sound mind how utterly impossible it is for something to give itself a beginning of existence, in that instant when it had and could have none. Accordingly, for all those things, which take their being in time, it is certain that they have that being in common which is not from eternity, and therefore is not from themselves, as has already been said.³⁹¹ Behold, we have already spoken concerning that

mode of being about which we cannot doubt, inasmuch as it is that, which we prove by daily use.

Chapter 8 On that mode of being which is by itself, and is in itself from eternity.

But from that being which is neither from eternity nor from itself, it is gathered by reasoning also that that being which is from itself, both is something in itself and is also from eternity. For if nothing was from itself, there would not be [anything] at all, whence those things could exist which do not have their own being from themselves, nor could they have being. And so it is proven that any being from itself, thereby also is from eternity, as was already said;³⁹² otherwise there was [a time] when nothingness, and then none of the future things would be, since that which gives, or could give, to itself or another a beginning of existence was at that time altogether nothing; how false this would be³⁹³ shows itself evident, and the experience of existing things proves it.³⁹⁴ Thus from these things which we see, we gather by sound reasoning also that there are things which we do not see: from transitory things [we gather] the eternal, from the worldly [we gather] the otherworldly, from human things [we gather] the divine. "For the invisible things" of God, "through the creatures of the earth, through the things, which were made, are perceived by the understanding."³⁹⁵

Chapter 9 On that mode of being which is from eternity, though not from itself.

It seems impossible to no one that something should have been from eternity, which, however, is not from itself.³⁹⁶ It is, as it were, necessary for a cause always to precede its effect, and everything which is from another, must always succeed its principle. Certainly the ray of the sun proceeds from the sun, and draws its origin from it, and yet is coeval with the sun. In that it was, it produced the ray from itself, and was at no time without the ray. Therefore, if this corporal light has a ray coeval with it, why shouldn't that spiritual light have an inaccessible ray coeternal with it?

In created nature we read what we should think, or suppose, about uncreated nature:³⁹⁷ we see daily how in the operation of nature itself existence produces existence, and existence proceeds from existence. What therefore? Will there be no operation of nature in that superexcellent nature, or can there be nothing at all? Will that nature remain in itself entirely sterile, which gave this, our nature, the fruit of fecundity? And will that which imparted

generation to others, be without any generation and sterile?³⁹⁸ From these considerations, it appears probable that in that super-essential incommutability there is some being which is not from itself, something which will have been from eternity. Yet, on this subject, we will provide a fuller and more efficacious argument in its place.³⁹⁹

Chapter 10 That the entire intention of this work revolves around only the two modes, which are from eternity.

In this work we intend to discuss the twofold mode of being which we have said is from eternity, and the things which pertain to this consideration. For we intend for the moment to consider nothing about temporal things, that is, about those which pertain to the third mode, except insofar as their consideration proves necessary or useful to the investigation of eternal things. For just as we have from the Apostle, and as we already said above: "The invisible things" of God "through the things which were made, are perceived by the understanding."⁴⁰⁰

How many times therefore do we attain the contemplation of invisible things by the observation of visible things.⁴⁰¹ What else are we doing, as it were, but erecting a ladder by which we ascend in mind to the things, which are above us? Hence it is that the process of all our reasoning begins from these things, which we know by experience. Therefore, we intentionally speak in this work about eternal things, but occasionally about temporal things. For our intention in this our work revolves entirely around those two modes of being which are from eternity.

Chapter 11 Concerning the highest substance, which is from itself, both in that it is from eternity, and without any beginning.⁴⁰²

Now therefore we must examine further that being which is from itself, whether, as was already said,⁴⁰³ it is established that its being is from eternity. However that is most certain, and hence, as I believe, no one can doubt it, since with such a multitude of existing things, and such multiple gradations of difference, there must be something highest. But we call the highest that than which nothing is greater and nothing is better.⁴⁰⁴ Without a doubt, however, a rational nature is better than an irrational nature. And so it is necessary that some rational substance would be the highest of all. But it has been established that what holds the highest place in this universe of things cannot receive what it itself is from its inferior.

Therefore some substance must exist which both holds the highest place and is from itself. For, just as we have said and proven already,⁴⁰⁵ if nothing had been from itself, nothing would have been from eternity, and there would be neither origin of things, nor succession of things.

And so the evidence of the experience of things convinces [us] that there must be some substance from itself. For if nothing were from itself, none of the things which take their origin from elsewhere, and cannot be from themselves would be at all. And so that substance which is not from itself relates — it relates, I say, to that being which is from eternity without beginning.

Chapter 12 Again, that only substance is from itself, from which also all other things are, and which has from itself all that it has.

What has been said about the highest substance can be proved by further reasoning. Moreover it is most certain that in the whole universe of things nothing can be unless it has either the possibility of being from itself, or receives being from another; for what cannot be does not exist at all.⁴⁰⁶ Therefore, it is necessary, in order for something to exist, that it receive the capacity to be from the potency of being. And so everything that subsists in the universe of things receives being from the potency of being. But if all things are from that same potency, then indeed that potency is only from itself and has nothing unless from itself.⁴⁰⁷ If all things are from that potency, then [so is] every essence, every potency, every wisdom. If every being is from that [potency], that [potency] is the highest essence. If every capacity is from that [potency], it is the most potent. If every wisdom is from that [potency], it is highest wisdom. For it is impossible to give more than is had. Indeed, wisdom can be given by its possessor all at once, and can be entirely retained by the giver.

However, you cannot at all impart more wisdom than you have. And so there must have been a highest wisdom from which all wisdom took its origin. But where there is no rational substance, wisdom cannot inhere at all; for wisdom can inhere only in a rational substance. And so the highest of all is also a rational substance, in which the highest wisdom inheres.⁴⁰⁸ It is, I say, the highest of all, from which every essence is, namely every rational and irrational nature. And so, the potency of being is not other than the highest substance. Therefore the potency of being is only from itself, and indeed the highest substance can only be from itself, which isn't anything other than itself. And so it is established, indeed, that everything which is from the highest substance. But if all things are from this substance, then nothing is

from itself besides that substance alone. And if every being exists from that substance, then beyond a doubt, that substance has every capacity, every possession that it has from itself. Therefore this substance is rightly called primordial, from which everything that is assigned its principle and origin.

Chapter 13 That the highest substance is the same thing as potency itself, the same as wisdom itself; wherefore any of these is also the same as the other.

Now let us consider what has already been said, that the highest substance is the most powerful. But this is most certain, since that which it is to be powerful belongs to it from potency itself, that which it is to be wise comes from wisdom itself. Moreover, it has been proven that all that it has, it has only from itself. Therefore, in order that it should have from itself only what it has from potency itself and from wisdom itself, it is necessary that these things should not be anything other than [substance] itself. Otherwise what cannot be powerful or wise without potency or wisdom, which it has from these things themselves, would not have [these qualities] as much from themselves as from elsewhere. Moreover, since each of them is the same as the highest substance, it follows that any of them is the same as the other.⁴⁰⁹

Chapter 14⁴¹⁰ That the highest substance can have neither an equal, nor a superior.

Moreover, at this point we should now pay very close attention, for if substance is highest potency in itself, then it cannot itself be any [other] diverse substance. Otherwise, diverse substances would be one and the one would be diverse, which is entirely impossible.

Now, perhaps you say to this: "what if some [other] diverse substance could have the highest power, although it could not be the highest potency? Wouldn't they be equally powerful, if they both held the highest power?"⁴¹¹ Without doubt or hesitation I affirm that, if one of them can have the highest potency, and it cannot be the highest power, then it is not equally powerful as that which can be both.⁴¹² For partly to be able and partly not to be able to do what is possible to the other as a whole is not to enjoy the plenitude of potency itself, but only to participate in it. Moreover, it is much greater and more excellent to have plenitude of something than to obtain it by participation. From these things, therefore, we gather clearly that the primordial substance cannot have an equal, just as it was evident from the above that it cannot have a superior.

Chapter 15 That it is impossible for the highest substance of its proper nature to have a partner.

And so it seems that, presiding over all and having no equal or superior naturally inheres in primordial substance. For what inheres substantially, without a doubt also inheres naturally. For since primordial substance itself is entirely the same as the highest potency, that it is most highly capable inheres naturally in it, and it cannot have an equal or more powerful partner. Let us see, therefore, if at least it could have an inferior partner in its proper nature. Yet how, I ask, will any substance you please be able to be inferior to the primordial essence, if [that would mean that] it naturally had something in common with that, which could not have an equal or superior? According to this anyone will be the other, indeed any one will be superior and inferior to itself, and greater and lesser than itself. It is therefore impossible for primordial substance to have a partner in its proper nature.⁴¹³

Chapter 16 That the highest substance is the same as divinity itself, and that there is no God unless he is substantially one.

According to the discussion above, we already hold as certain that everything that comes from the highest and sole substance, and that the highest substance has all that it has from itself. But if all things come from itself, therefore it also is divinity itself. But if it gave that [divinity] to another, and it didn't retain it itself, then what we have shown cannot have a superior has a superior. And so it is established that it simultaneously has and has retained [divinity]. Moreover God is he who has deity, and also he has what it is to be God from deity. But if the highest substance has what it is to be God from divinity itself, which has nothing except from itself, then surely deity itself is nothing other than the highest substance.⁴¹⁴

Therefore, he could not give substance to any other, not I say in such a way that it would have deity, but so that it would be deity itself. Otherwise, what is impossible would have an equal. From this we gather that true divinity is in unity of substance, and that true unity of substance is in divinity itself. And so there is no God unless he is substantially one.

Chapter 17 Again, that there is no God except one; that from himself everything that is, is; that he has all that he has only from himself; and the same thing is potency itself which is wisdom itself.

Hear now how easily we can prove that there is no god except one. Since it has nothing except from itself, it is established that divinity itself is not anything other than itself, lest we be convinced that what it has from divinity, it has from anything other than itself. And so divinity itself will be either incommunicable, or common to some things. But if it is incommunicable, it follows that there is no god but one. However if it were common with some things, it will certainly be common also to that substance which is not other than divinity itself. But one substance cannot be common to many substances; otherwise one and the same substance would be many, and many would be one; which is so false that reason does not permit its concealment. But if it is said to be common to many persons, according to that which has been said, it will certainly be common to them and to that substance which is nothing other than divinity itself.⁴¹⁵ According to this certainly there will be one divinity in many persons, but only one substance. Therefore whether we say there is only one or many persons in the one divinity, nevertheless there will be no god unless he is substantially one. And so the one and only god is from himself, and thereby from eternity. And according to what has been proven about the highest substance, which is nothing other than itself, all that is, is from itself, all that it has it has from itself, and the same thing itself is what potency itself is, and what wisdom itself is.

Chapter 18 That it is entirely impossible even for God himself to define a better than God.

And so if the wisdom of God and the potency of God are one and the same in all things, no perfection, no consummation is comprehended by one, that is not comprehended by the other in the same measure of integrity. And thus nothing is greater, nothing is in any way better in his knowing than in his capacity, and thereby in his being, since his capacity is not something other than his being. Therefore whatever is apprehended or defined by his wisdom as best and highest, all this along with the same plenitude of integrity is comprehended by his potency, for the whole is included in his essence.⁴¹⁶ For as to the summit of perfection, if he attains something by understanding, which he could not apprehend by efficacy, then without a doubt he would extend more magnificently by wisdom than by power, and one and the same substance would be both greater than itself and lesser than itself. For if the substance of God, since it is nothing other than his wisdom or potency, were

to extend itself further by wisdom than by potency (if it could have extended itself further by the former than by the latter), then certainly the one and the same substance would be greater by wisdom in comparison to its potency, and the same thing would be lesser by its potency in comparison to its wisdom. Therefore, nothing greater or better than God either can be defined by God himself or attained by the understanding.

Chapter 19 If God himself cannot attain something better than God by understanding, so much the less can human thought.

And so if the divine knowledge can grasp nothing more perfect than God by understanding, how much less can human knowledge think of anything greater or better than God! For what human thought might grasp by understanding, could not escape the divine understanding. It is a kind of madness to believe that a human being, who cannot by any investigation attain to that which God is, should be able to ascend in thought beyond that which God is. And so human thought is the more perfect and the better insofar as it approaches more closely to that which is God, though it doesn't reach that far.

Chapter 20 For investigators and those disputing about God it is customary to use a maxim and, as it were, a common concept of the soul.

It seems to happen almost as an endowment of nature that practically everybody, both the erudite and those less erudite, are accustomed to hold this almost as a rule. That is, they judge that whatever is best should unhesitatingly be attributed to God. What the exercise of reason does not teach them about this perspicuous rule, their devotion persuades them without the uncertainty of doubt. Hence it is that even those who do not know that it can be proven, unhesitatingly affirm that God is himself immense, eternal, incommutable, most wise, omnipotent. And so it is a maxim for the erudite, it is almost universally as a common conception of the soul, to attribute to God whatever human estimation most highly attains.⁴¹⁷ Even the greatest teachers everywhere begin their disputations with this solid certainty and as it were intimate foundation of truth when they intend to discuss the divine properties most highly and most reverently.

Chapter 21 That God is thus the most powerful in such a way that He is also omnipotent.

That God the most powerful exists as the most powerful is established sufficiently from the above. But it can be asked further: How it is that he is called most powerful, whether because nobody is superior to Him in potency, or whether He is the most powerful such that He can do all things and is truly omnipotent. But if we deny omnipotence, then we are already convinced that we are able to think of something greater than God.⁴¹⁸ For it is greater to have omnipotence than any power whatever which lacks something of the plenitude of omnipotence. And that which is easy for man to understand, cannot hide divine wisdom. And so, if God understands anything by plenitude of potency which he cannot have, there will be something greater in his knowledge than in his capacity, neither of which is anything other than his own being. Therefore, according to what we have just argued, one and the same thing will be both greater than itself and lesser than itself — than which nothing is more impossible. Hence, therefore, without a doubt we gather that God can do all things whatsoever the capacity [for which] is a potency.

For we are said to be capable of many things which it is much better not to have been capable of than to be capable of. We are able to decline, we are able to die, we are able to be destroyed and to return to nothingness. Concerning whatever is of this kind, it is entirely greater not to be able [to do] each of these than to be able [to do them]. For these are indicators of infirmity rather than signs of majesty. And so God can do all those things, and certainly only those, whose capacity is some potency, as we have already said. Therefore, we call him omnipotent the more correctly and rightly by withdrawing from his potency all arguments of infirmity.⁴¹⁹

Chapter 22 That the wisdom of God is so high that it is perfect in everything.

What has been said already concerning the divine potency, can be asked about the divine wisdom using similar reasoning. Is it called the highest [wisdom], because no other can be greater than it? Or is it so truly the highest that it is perfect in everything?⁴²⁰ But [the answer is] most certainly established because where omnipotence is, the plenitude of wisdom cannot be absent. For if from the plenitude of wisdom there was lacking something of perfection in God which he could not have, without any ambiguity he would not be omnipotent. And concerning the wisdom of God it is established that concerning the perfection of all knowledge and prudence

whatsoever, nothing is lacking in him the addition of which would make him greater or better. We should note how from the consideration of divine wisdom the plenitude of potency itself is discovered. Again, from the consideration of omnipotence the plenitude of wisdom is shown and proven.

Chapter 23 What is said about the wisdom of God is confirmed by different reasoning.

But what we have already said about the plenitude of divine wisdom, we can prove further by another reason. Indeed this is certain since whoever is wise, either is so by a plenitude of wisdom in itself, or by participation in wisdom. But already we have established that wisdom itself is the same as divine substance. Who, therefore, unless he is mad, would say that the substance of God would partly have wisdom and partly not have it, and he is himself not worthy of the plenitude [of wisdom]? Or that he might not have the force to have the plenitude of wisdom itself? Therefore just as the substance of God cannot fail to be complete, so it cannot lack the plenitude of wisdom.

Chapter 24 What was said above concerning the plenitude of divine potency is confirmed by the same reason.

What was said above concerning omnipotence is confirmed by similar reasoning. For just as any wise being is wise either by the plenitude of wisdom, or by participation in the same, so also to be sure any powerful being is so by the plenitude of potency or by participation in the same. However, it is impossible for anything to participate in itself. Therefore because God is omnipotent, he cannot be [so] by participation in potency, since the plenitude of potency is not anything other than God himself. And so it is established that he is powerful by the plenitude of potency. But where there is a plenitude of potencies, no capacity can be absent. Therefore the inherence of every capacity follows from having omnipotence and being truly omnipotent.

Chapter 25 That there can be only one omnipotent being, and that it follows that there is only one God.

Moreover it is impossible that there are many omnipotent beings. For he who is truly omnipotent will be able to easily bring about that any of the others could do nothing; otherwise he will not be truly omnipotent. See how powerful they are, who can easily be made powerless! See how easily we are

convinced that the nature of things itself does not bear but one omnipotent being! Moreover, we gather that God is omnipotent by clear reason, and hence we cannot doubt it. Therefore, just as there cannot be but one omnipotent being, there cannot be but one god. And so, since true divinity remains in unity of substance and unity of substance is in true divinity, what we believe and what we have said above is established. See how much we have already said concerning the unity of divinity; it now is imperative that we should say something about the singularity of its nature.

The End of Book One

Quotations from Richard's Works I

Selected and translated by S. V. YANKOWSKI

Plura sunt quae debemus diligere quam quae audeamus sperare.
There are more things to love than we would dare to hope for.

Quis est qui ipsa saltern peccata ignorantiae possit in hac vita plene deserere, perfecte devitare?
Where is the man who might in this life be rid -at least of the sin of ignorance and avoid it altogether?

Multorum est seipsos reprehendere de perverse opere vel prava voluntate; pauci sunt qui seipsos diiudicent de inordinata cogitatione.
Many reprehend their own perverse action or vicious desire, few find fault with their own inordinate thinking.

Studium sapientiae si non proficit, citius deficit.
The craving for wisdom is not on the increase, it decreases rapidly.

Non est bona gloriatio ambulare in magnis, et in mirabilibus super se, quo possit quasi de sua gloriari virtute.
Walking among the great, among men admirable and superior to oneself, is not a title to glory; priding oneself on that account might well mean glorying, as it were, in one's own virtues.

Hypocrisis est illud crimen pessimum et prae caeteris abominandum quia Deo prae omnibus odiosum.
Hypocrisy is that worst and most abominable crime because more detestable to God than all the others.

Est enim gaudium unus de principalibus affectibus. *For joy is one of the essential emotions.*

Quotations from Richard's Works II

Selected and translated by Ezra POUND

Incipit quaedam familiaritas inter Deum et animam fieri.
A certain familiarity begins to sprout between God and the soul.

Felicem cui datum est dispersiones cordis in unum colligere.

Happy who can gather the heart's fragmentations into unity.

Amare videre est. To love is to perceive.

Oportet earn tarn gratuito quam debito amore abundare.

There should be abundance of gratuitous love, as well as what is merely owed.

Anima formosa est aut deformis ex voluntate sua. The soul is beautiful or deformed from its own will.

Plenitudo legis est charitas; legem continet et prophetas ... dilapsa reformans, consumpta restaurans, implere non cessat; nomen difficultatis ignorat.

The plenitude of the law is charity; it contains the law and the prophets . . . Remaking what has fallen, restoring what is worn away, it ceases not to fill; it ignores the word difficulty.

Qui secundum quod cor dictat, verba componit. Who composes words, as the heart dictates.

Bona voluntatis per quam in nobis divinae similitudinis imago reperietur.

The good things of will, through which an image of the divine likeness will be found in us.

Nisi bona intentio, mens moritur. Without good intention, the mind dies.

Posse, sapientia, bonitas vel charitas. Trinitatis imago.

The being able, the wisdom, the goodness or charity. Image of Trinity.

In avibus intellige studia spiritualia, in animalibus exercitia corporalia.

Watch birds to understand how spiritual things move, animals to understand physical motion.

Ne simplicitas nostra sit frigida. Our simplicity should not be frigid.

Ignis quidquid in nobis est. There is a certain fire within us.

OVID: ... est Deus in nobis, agitante calescemus illo.

Cum hie Spiritus spiritum rationalem intrat, ipsius affectum divino amore inflamat, et ad proprietatis suae similitudinem transformat, ut auctori suo amorem quern debet exhibeat.

When this Spirit enters the rational spirit, it inflames it with its own divine ardor and transforms its qualities into its own likeness, so that it shows forth the love of its author, as is fitting.

THE END of THIS WORK

END NOTES:

¹ Ps. 68:27. **Note:** Interestingly, G. Zinn cites Ps. 67:28?

² Wisd. 7:29.

³ Ibid. 8:1-2.

⁴ Ibid. 7:10.

⁵ **Compare:** Both Zinn and Kirchberger have gift, Yankowski here has good. Zinn cites: Cf. Ja. 1:17.

⁶ Ibid. 1:1.

⁷ **Note:** Ro. 1:20. As per both Kirchberger and Yankowski, Zinn is mute.

⁸ Ps. 13:5.

⁹ Ibid. 19:9.

¹⁰ De. 6:5. **Note:** Zinn adds Mt. 22:37,9.

¹¹ 1 Jn. 2:15.

¹² Ps. 110:10.

¹³ Ge. 29:32.

¹⁴ Ps. 51:17.

¹⁵ Mt. 5:4.

¹⁶ Ps. 94:19. **Note:** Only Kirchberger cites.

¹⁷ Ge. 29:34.

¹⁸ **Note:** Kirchberger notates: The interpretation of Jerome is 'confession or praise' and the sense of acknowledgement is included in that of confession. Cf. the Middle English translations.

¹⁹ Ps. 109:30.

²⁰ Ibid. 33:1.

²¹ **Note:** Yankowski cites Jo. 5; not so.

²² Pr. 18:17.

²³ Ge. 30:1.

²⁴ **Note:** Kirchberger suggest to read Benjamin Major, 1,6 for further development of this issue.

²⁵ **Note:** Kirchberger notates: *mystice accipienda*

²⁶ **Note:** Kirchberger notates: *simpliciter intelligenda*.

²⁷ **Note:** Zinn cites Micha 2:1, Yankowski incorrectly, Mich. 1.

²⁸ **Note:** Wisd. 1:5. Kirchberger suggest to also read Micah 2:1.

²⁹ Ge. 49:16.

³⁰ **Note:** This term, is used similarly, later, by Walter Hilton in his *Stairway to Perfection*. See "Contemplative Series", Vol. 1.

³¹ 1 Tm. 6:16.

³² Ge. 49:21.

³³ Kirchberger suggest to read Benjamin Major, 5, Ch 14.

³⁴ SS. 1:2.

³⁵ Ibid 2:5.

³⁶ Ibid. 4:11.

³⁷ Ibid 4:2.

³⁸ Ibid. 7:4-5.

³⁹ **Compare: Note:** Surprisingly only Zinn cites Ge. 49:21.

⁴⁰ Ge. 30:11,13.

⁴¹ Ibid. 30:13.

⁴² Ac 5:41.

⁴³ Ro. 12:12.

⁴⁴ Eccl. 30:8.

⁴⁵ Ja. 1:12.

⁴⁶ Ge. 30:15-6.

⁴⁷ Ibid.. 49:19.

⁴⁸ Mt. 5:10.

⁴⁹ Lk. 6:37.

⁵⁰ Mt. 5:7.

⁵¹ Mt. 5:4. **Note:** Surprisingly no one cites.

⁵² Ge. 49:20. **Note:** Ibid.

⁵³ Ps. 119:14.

⁵⁴ Ge 49:20.

⁵⁵ Lk. 15:7.

⁵⁶ Ps. 112:3.

⁵⁷ 2 Co. 1:12.

⁵⁸ Ph. 4:7.

⁵⁹ Ps. 31:19-20.

⁶⁰ Ps. 4:6.

⁶¹ Ibid. verse 7.

⁶² Mt. 25:21.

⁶³ Ph. 4:4.

⁶⁴ **Compare:** Ps. 32:11. These last two Scripture are not in Kirchberger's translation.

⁶⁵ Lk. 6:25.

⁶⁶ Mt. 10:28.

⁶⁷ **Compare:** Ps. 34:8., is what Richard is citing, although Yankowski cites 1 Pt. 2:3.

⁶⁸ Ps. 64:9

⁶⁹ 2 Co. 12:3.

⁷⁰ Ps. 64:9.

⁷¹ **Compare:** Mt. 5:4. Kirchberger does not cite.

⁷² Ps. 37:3. See also, "Imitation of Christ" Bk. 1, Ch 25. See Catholic Classics Series, Vol. 4.

⁷³ Ge. 49:14-5.

⁷⁴ Isa. 64:6.

⁷⁵ Ro. 8:18.

⁷⁶ Ps. 73:23.

⁷⁷ Ibid. 44:22.

⁷⁸ Ibid.. 37:11.

⁷⁹ Ps. 143:10. **Note:** Augustine has commented on this Psalm. This is important since this was an Augustinian community.

⁸⁰ Ps. 4:4.

⁸¹ Ibid.139:22.

⁸² Ps. 118:128. Vulgate.

⁸³ Ibid.. 69:9.

⁸⁴ Ibid. 119:139.

⁸⁵ 1 Ki. 19:9.

⁸⁶ Nu. 25:10-3.

⁸⁷ Ex. 32:27-8.

⁸⁸ Ge. 49:13.

⁸⁹ 2 Tm. 2:17.

⁹⁰ Ge. 30:20.

⁹¹ **Compare:** Ps. 119:104. **Note:** Zinn cites: Ps. 118:128 Vulgate.

⁹² 1 Jn. 1:8.

⁹³ Mt. 11:29.

⁹⁴ **Note:** This is Priscianus Caesariensis, the celebrated Latin grammarian, lived about A.D. 500, i.e. somewhat before Justinian. This is shown by the facts that he addressed to Anastasius, emperor of the East (491-518), a laudatory poem, and that the MSS., of his Institutiones grammaticae contain a subscription to the effect that the work was

copied (526, 527) by Flavius Theodorus, a clerk in the imperial secretariat. The *Institutiones Grammaticae* is a systematic exposition of Latin grammar.

⁹⁵ 1 Cor. 4:7.

⁹⁶ Ge. 49:15.

⁹⁷ Ibid. 34:6. **Note:** the whole chapter, however, is dedicated to this issue. Zinn concurs.

⁹⁸ Ibid. 34:25.

⁹⁹ Ge. 49:5-6.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ge. 49:7.

¹⁰² Mt. 5:16.

¹⁰³ Ibid. verses 3-4.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.. 49:4.

¹⁰⁵ Ro. 1:20.

¹⁰⁶ Ge. 49:4.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. verses 3-4.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.. 49:3.

¹⁰⁹ **Compare:** Only Zinn cites Ge. 49:7.

¹¹⁰ **Compare:** Pr. 16:32., Zinn cites Wisd. 6:1, cf.

¹¹¹ **Compare:** Ibid. 21:28. Only Yankowski cites.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ge. 49:22.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. 37:10.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. 37:2.

¹¹⁶ **Note:** Interestingly, no one cites this, Augustine states in his commentary of Psalms Ch. 64:11. See Exposition of Psalms 53-75. 1849, John H. Parker, pg. 239. Bonaventure in "Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit." quotes this also.

¹¹⁷ Ro. 1:20.

¹¹⁸ Ge. 1:27.

¹¹⁹ 2 Co. 5:7.

¹²⁰ 1 Co. 13:12.

¹²¹ Ps. 4:6.

¹²² Pr. 13:12.

¹²³ 2 Co. 12:2.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ **Note:** Walter Hilton OSA, will assert the same in his *Stairway to Paradise*, see "Contemplative Series", Vol. 1.

¹²⁶ Ps. 64:7-8.

¹²⁷ Ps. 24:3.

¹²⁸ **Compare:** Mt. 17:4, Mk. 9:5, Lk. 9:33. Zinn cites only Mt 17:4.

¹²⁹ Ps. 15:1.

¹³⁰ Ibid. 24:3.

¹³¹ Ibid. 15:1.

¹³² Ps. 43:3-4.

¹³³ Jn. 14:6.

¹³⁴ Mt. 17:1.

¹³⁵ **Note:** Kirchberger states, This clause is a part of the inscription, above the entry of Aristotle's school.

¹³⁶ Jn. 3:12.

¹³⁷ **Compare:** Mt. 3:17, Mk. 1:11. Zinn only cites: Mt. 3:17.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ps. 68:25.

¹⁴⁰ Ps. 68:27. **Note:** See all "Cell of Knowledge" *Great Christian Mystical Writings*, Vol. 3.

¹⁴¹ De. 33:12. Vulgate.

¹⁴² Pr. 7:4.

¹⁴³ Wisd. 8:18

¹⁴⁴ Lk. 16:8.

¹⁴⁵ **Note:** 'Ark of your strength'; Ps. 132:8, This reading being the basis of Richard's argument is retained throughout.

¹⁴⁶ Le 11:44, Vulgate

¹⁴⁷ **Compare:** Kirchberger cites here Exodus 19:10-11. Vulgate, Zinn is mute.

¹⁴⁸ **Compare:** Here Zinn cites Ex 29:37, Vulgate, while Kirchberger is mute.

¹⁴⁹ Wisd. 7:30, Vulgate

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. 9:18-9, Vulgate.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. 7:1.

¹⁵² Lk. 10:42, Vulgate.

¹⁵³ Ps. 34:8.

¹⁵⁴ **Note:** Kirchberer notes: A play on the word 'arca', which means a safe, or chest.

¹⁵⁵ Ps. 46:10.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. 73:1.

¹⁵⁷ La.1:7.

¹⁵⁸ **Note:** Laban = white in Jerome's Etymologies and the Gloss.

¹⁵⁹ Jn. 17:5.

¹⁶⁰ **Note:** Kirchberer notes: Adaptations of various texts. Lk. 24:26; Ps. 51:7;45:3; 1 Pt. 1:13.

¹⁶¹ **Compare:** Kirchberger makes two notes regarding the MS., of the next three chapters, while Zinn is mute.

¹⁶² **Note:** Kirchberer notes: Richard uses *cogitatio*, for a vague kind of thinking, in contrast to sustained thought, which he calls meditation.

¹⁶³ **Note:** Kirchberer notes: In Bk. 3, Ch. 9 col. 118D-119A, Richard says that the eye of the intelligence is the sense by which we see invisible things; not in the manner of the reasoning faculty by which we investigate hidden and absent things, such as causes by their effects etc., but like the eye of the physical sense by which we can see bodily things materially, as being present though invisible. In this way, the power of the intelligence sees invisible things invisibly, and as being present.

¹⁶⁴ **Note:** Kirchberer notes: Hugh of Saint-Victor is the source of this definition and indeed of the differentiation of thought, meditation and contemplation; cf. *Homilies on Ecclesiastes*, 1A (P.L. 175, 117A).

¹⁶⁵ **Note:** Kirchberer notes: For the source of this chapter, cf. Pseudo-Denys. *Divine Names*, Ch. 4, Section 9. See "Philosopher's Palate Series", Vol. 1.

¹⁶⁶ **Compare:** Kirchberer cites Lk. 9:53, Zinn cites Mt. 17:4.

¹⁶⁷ **Note:** Kirchberger notes: These movements, straight, spiral, circular are drawn from the three modes of contemplation, conceptual and abstract; dialectic and discursive contemplative (P.G. 3, col. 143-145) *Divine Names*, Ch. 4, 9. See "Philosopher's Palate Series", Vol. 1.

¹⁶⁸ **Note:** A repletion of these details as explained above, #150,151 & 153, have been re-expounded.

¹⁶⁹ Ez. 1:14.

¹⁷⁰ Wisdom 3:7, Vulgate.

¹⁷¹ Ps. 107:26.

¹⁷² Is. 60:4.

¹⁷³ Hb. 3:11.

¹⁷⁴ **Note:** Kirchberger notes: In book three (3) the fourth degrees shows reason's part in the knowledge of God by His effects, natural or spiritual and especially through self-knowledge, cf. Ch. 2. However, in the fifth degree, rational processes are suspended and any knowledge comes from the light given by the direct action of God.

¹⁷⁵ See "Research Essentials Series."

¹⁷⁶ **Note:** This is concurred by Walter Hilton, also an Augustinian monk, of England, as he writes in his treaties "Ladder of Perfection". See Contemplative Series, Vol. 1., Bk. 1, Chs. 5-6.

¹⁷⁷ **Note:** Kirchberger notes: This is probably a reference to the difficulties of the community. She points out that he was made prior in 1162 until his death in 1173, and attempted to make changes, which were readily met with resistance. These

¹⁷⁸ Exodus 25:18-20, Vulgate.

¹⁷⁹ **Compare:** Kirchberger cites: Gregory, *Homily in Ezekiel*, quoted in the Gloss., loc. cit., Zinn is mute.

¹⁸⁰ **Note:** Kirchberger points out: Richard uses the term "our work" here and elsewhere for the intellectual and spiritual effort to obtain contemplation. The symbol of fashioning ourselves into an image likened to that of the cherubim on the mercy seat was familiar to those who had assimilated Dionysius' ideas of man's imitation of the

nature and functioning of the Angelic Hierarchies.

¹⁸¹ **Compare:** Ja. 1:17. Zinn is mute.

¹⁸² Jn. 17:3.

¹⁸³ Mt. 5:8.

¹⁸⁴ **Compare:** Kirchberger cites Pseudo- Dionysius, *Celestial Hierarchy*, Ch. 3, sect. 2 & 3, Zinn is mute.

¹⁸⁵ **Compare:** Kirchberger cites Ex. 25:40 Vulgate, while Zinn Ex. 25:9 Vulgate. see also #207

¹⁸⁶ 2 Co. 3:18.

¹⁸⁷ Ex 25:20.

¹⁸⁸ **Note:** Zinn cites: Cf. Is. 5:5-6, Vulgate. Kirchberger is mute.

¹⁸⁹ 2 Co. 12:3.

¹⁹⁰ **Note:** Kirchberger states, This last argument reflects the Dionysian argument concerning 'dissimilarity'. The following chapter is also deeply influenced by Dionysius.

¹⁹¹ Cf. 1 Co. 13:12. **Note:** interestingly, no one cites.

¹⁹² **Compare:** Kirchberger states, Cf. Ge. 18:1 seq., and 1 Ki. 19: 9 seq., From here to chapter 17, except for a brief paragraph at the end of chapter 18, the commentary on the Ark and cherubim is abandoned in favor of other scriptural themes. It will be seen that the style is very different. Zinn only cites 3 Ki. 19:4, Vulgate.

¹⁹³ 1 Ki. 19:4 & 11 seq.

¹⁹⁴ **Note:** Kirchberger states, These chapters following still relate to the stories of Abraham, the angels and Elijah in his cave.

¹⁹⁵ **Note:** Kirchberger states, Referring to Abrahams' entertainment of the angels. Ge. 18:7.

¹⁹⁶ Re. 3:20.

¹⁹⁷ 2 Co. 3:18. Vulgate.

¹⁹⁸ Ge. 18:33.

¹⁹⁹ **Note:** Kirchberger states, Though Richard is speaking of ecstasy he maintains that when knowledge received can afterwards be recalled and analyzed it is of the fourth degree because the reason is used; if the experience cannot be reason is used; if the experience cannot be recalled, it is of the fifth degree, since reason is transcended, both as to the subject of the contemplation and its mode. Cf. also chap. 23, there Richard has something slightly different on this point.

²⁰⁰ **Note:** Kirchberger states, See Richard Rolle's use of this phrase.

²⁰¹ **Note:** Kirchberger states, The source of all this passage is Hugh's *Commentary on the Celestial Hierarchies*, Bk. 6. (P.L., CLXXV, col. 1038 C-D).

²⁰² **Note:** Kirchberger states, Richard continues to elaborate the simile of the nuptial rites to the end of the chapter.

²⁰³ Jn. 15:15.

²⁰⁴ SS.5:1.

²⁰⁵ **Note:** Kirchberger states, Cf. Walter Hilton, *Scale of Perfection*, Bk. 1, Ch 44. See "Contemplative Series", Vol. 1.

²⁰⁶ Ps. 36:8.

²⁰⁷ Ch 20, Col. 161D-162A.

²⁰⁸ **Note:** Kirchberger states, The Latin word '*revelatio*' may bear the sense of an authoritative dogmatic revealing or a simple 'showing' by God in prayer. We have therefore varied the translation of the word as far as possible according to the sense.

²⁰⁹ Ex. 25: 22.

²¹⁰ Ex. 31:2, 35:30.

²¹¹ **Note:** Kirchberger notes: P.L. text 'nube' (cloud) but perhaps it's an error for 'igne' (fire) according to the previous clause.

²¹² Psalm 4: 9, Vulgate (A.V. 4: 8). Cf. definition of ecstasy given next in Bk. 5 Ch.5.

²¹³ Ex. 3:14. Vulgate.

²¹⁴ **Compare:** Kirchberger cites Ex. 25:9, Zinn Ex. 25:40. We see this in reverse with #179.

²¹⁵ **Note:** Kirchberger states, For the interpretation of this passage cf., the late, J. Chatillon. *Trois Modes de la Contemplation chez Richard de Saint-Victor*, in *Bull. de Litt. Ecclesiastique*, 41 (1940), p. 12, n. 63.

²¹⁶ **Note:** Kirchberger states, Book 5 deals not with the kinds of contemplation, i.e. the subjects but with the three ways or modes of contemplation that is the states of mind of the contemplative. We recognize that the last chapters of Book IV lead into this psychological approach.

²¹⁷ Da. 2:1.

²¹⁸ **Note:** Kirchberger cites Ge. 41, Zinn Ge. 41:1-8, Vulgate.

²¹⁹ **Note:** A Kirchberger state, Richard, throughout this treatise uses the terms *dilatatio*, *sublevatio* and *alienation mentis*. However, for the third he uses *excessus mentis*, with the same meaning. It will be translated as "abstraction" where this is more suitable to render the shade of meaning.

²²⁰ Ge. 13:14-5.

²²¹ De. 34:1.

²²² **Compare:** Zinn cites Mt. 17:1-8; Ex. 23:16-8. Kirchberger is mute.

²²³ **Compare:** Zinn cites: Ge. 13:14, Vulgate.

²²⁴ Is. 60:8.

²²⁵ Ps. 116: 11. "In my haste."

²²⁶ **Note:** Kirchberger states, The passages from the Scripture, which follow in

illustration of the pints discussed, are omitted here and in subsequent chapters when add nothing to the argument. An example has been given in Chapter 2.

²²⁷ Ps. 63:7-8, Vulgate.

²²⁸ De. 32:11, Vulgate.

²²⁹ Ps. 55:6.

²³⁰ Is. 40:31., Vulgate.

²³¹ **Note:** Kirchberger states, Compare with this the passages in chaps, 15 & 17.

²³² SS. 3:6, Vulgate.

²³³ Ibid. 6:9, Vulgate.

²³⁴ Ibid. 8:5. Vulgate.

²³⁵ **Note:** Kirchberger states, Devotion is not an emotion. It is an act of will, the desire to serve God with alacrity out of charity.

²³⁶ **Note:** Kirchberger states, Illustration is taken from Hugh, *Homilia in Ecclesiaste*, see note # 150 above.

²³⁷ **Note:** Kirchberger states, The source of all this is from Hugh of St. Victor's *In Hierarchiam Coelestiam*, col. 1039 B-D.

²³⁸ Ge. 18:1-2, Vulgate.

²³⁹ Lk. 15:17.

²⁴⁰ Ac. 12:11.

²⁴¹ Jn. 3:20-21.

²⁴² **Compare:** Kirchberger cites SS. 5:9, Vulgate Zinn cites SS. 6:9, Vulgate. **Note:** Zinn is correct.

²⁴³ **Note:** Kirchberger states, This adjective is only used to qualify the celestial things, which cannot be known except by supernatural grace.

²⁴⁴ 2 Co. 3:18.

²⁴⁵ **Compare:** As in note #235, above, Kirchberger is mute, Zinn cites SS. 6:9, Vulgate.

²⁴⁶ SS. 6:10.

²⁴⁷ **Note:** Kirchberger states, Example and argument from Hugh, *In Hierarchiam Coelestiam* (P.L. 175; Book 7, col. 117-18; col. 1054).

²⁴⁸ 1 Ki. 10:1-3.

²⁴⁹ **Compare:** Zinn cites Acts 12:6-7, Kirchberger is mute.

²⁵⁰ 1 Ki. 10:4-5.

²⁵¹ 1 Ki. 10:3; 2 Ch. 9:3.

²⁵² Re. 1:10.

²⁵³ **Note:** Kirchberger states, The rest of this argument may well be omitted.

²⁵⁴ **Note:** Kirchberger states, In the first two causes of ecstasy, devotion and wonder, the intelligence has a great part for it receives and interprets the 'showings'. Here where gladness, joy, exultation cause the ecstasy, the intelligence is represented as wholly subordinated to feeling.

²⁵⁵ SS. 8:5.

²⁵⁶ Ps. 86:1.

²⁵⁷ This is in ref. to Ps. 114:4

²⁵⁸ **Note:** this is a chapter Kirchberger does not fully translate, Zinn, however does.

²⁵⁹ **Compare:** Kirchberger does not cite, Zinn does Ex. 13:21.

²⁶⁰ Ps. 18:26, A.V. 18:28.

²⁶¹ Ro. 9:16.

²⁶² **Compare:** Kirchberger does not cite, Zinn does SS.8:5.

²⁶³ Is. 28:10, Vulgate.

²⁶⁴ **Note:** Kirchberger states, Having said that the soul cannot merit nor acquire these joys, Richard proceeds to modify his statement.

²⁶⁵ 2 Ki. 3:13, seq.

²⁶⁶ **Compare:** Kirchberger left out the last two sentences, which make up the conclusion and point of Richard. Zinn translates.

²⁶⁷ Ps. 32:11.

²⁶⁸ **Compare:** Ps. 67:5. Zinn adds a bit of Richard's play on the Latin words here, thereby enhancing the meaning lost in English.

²⁶⁹ 2 Co. 12:2.

²⁷⁰ **Note:** Kirchberger has not completely translated this work, However, this text has been completely translated in English, See VTT Series, Vol. 2.

²⁷¹ Although the VTT Series has sectioned this treatise, I have followed that of "Les Quatres Degres de la Violente Charite", Paris 1955.

²⁷² **Compare:** VVT 2, cites SS. 2:5, however SS. 5:8 also exists.

²⁷³ SS 8:7.

²⁷⁴ SS. 4:9. Vulgate.

²⁷⁵ Ho. 11:4.

²⁷⁶ SS. 5:8.

²⁷⁷ Ps. 118:81.

²⁷⁸ 1 Co. 6:18.

²⁷⁹ Ps. 141:5. Vulgate.

²⁸⁰ Pr. 13:8.

²⁸¹ **Note:** Kirchberger points out: This is the term used by Rolle as "singular".

²⁸² Ps. 37:11.

²⁸³ **Note:** Kirchberger states, Cf. Richard Rolle, *Form of Perfect Living*, chap. 8; but Rolle has only the first three degrees

²⁸⁴ **Ibid.** Here follows a long series of Scriptural texts to support his arguments.

²⁸⁵ **Ibid.** Here follows Scriptural text elaborating the distinctions between the heart, the soul and the strength.

²⁸⁶ Ge. 32:30. The text has 'see the Law', probably in error.

²⁸⁷ 2 Co. 12:2.

²⁸⁸ Jo. 5:30.

²⁸⁹ SS. 4:11; Ecc. 24:27, Vulgate.

²⁹⁰ Ps. 145:7.

²⁹¹ Ho 2:14. Vulgate.

²⁹² De. 32:3.

²⁹³ Ecc. 24:7. Vulgate.

²⁹⁴ Ps. 119:135.

²⁹⁵ Ex. 33:13. Vulgate, approximate.

²⁹⁶ Ps. 13:1.

²⁹⁷ Ps. 27:8.

²⁹⁸ 1 Co. 2:10.

²⁹⁹ Ge. 32:30.

³⁰⁰ Ps. 43:3-4.

³⁰¹ Is. 40:31, Vulgate, not exact.

³⁰² Ph. 3:20.

³⁰³ Ps. 75:2, Vulgate.

³⁰⁴ 1 Ti. 6:15-6.

³⁰⁵ 2 Co. 12:2.

³⁰⁶ Ps. 72:19. Vulgate.

³⁰⁷ **Note:** Kirchberger states, See *Benjamin Major*, Bk. 4, Ch. 23, Bk. 5, Chs. 5 & 14.

³⁰⁸ **Kirchberger cites:** The illustration about iron in fire and the argument about liquefaction further on are drawn from Hugh, op. cit., col. 1035, 1038-9. However, the "VTT" Series, vol. 2, has additional citations. see pg 290 of that text.

³⁰⁹ Lk. 24:32.

³¹⁰ 2 Co. 3:18.

³¹¹ SS. 5:6, Vulgate.

³¹² SS. 2:5, Vulgate.

³¹³ Ph. 2:5-8.

³¹⁴ **Compare:** VTT cites jo.15:13, Kirchberger is mute.

³¹⁵ Ep. 5:1-2.

³¹⁶ Ga 2:20.

³¹⁷ Ph. 1:21.

³¹⁸ *ibid* 1:23-4.

³¹⁹ Ro. 6:9-10.

³²⁰ Jo. 14:6.

³²¹ Ro. 8:38-9. Vulgate.

³²² 2 Co. 12:9.

³²³ *Ibid.* 12:10.

³²⁴ Ph. 4:13.

³²⁵ 1 Co. 13:4-7.

³²⁶ *Ibid.* 9:22, Vulgate.

³²⁷ Ex. 32:32.

³²⁸ Ge. 18:25.

³²⁹ Ps. 4:8.

³³⁰ 1 Co. 6:17.

³³¹ **Kirchberger notes:** The word is *circumspectio* with the sense of considering or a reflective enquire; in this sense, Richard also uses meditation.

³³² Is. 28:10, Vulgate.

³³³ SS. 6:5.

³³⁴ Ro. 8:39-9.

³³⁵ Ps. 127:2.

³³⁶ Ph 4:7.

³³⁷ Re. 8:1.

³³⁸ SS. 8:3.

³³⁹ **Note:** Kirchberger does not cite, it's Ps. 4:8.

³⁴⁰ Ps. 29:9.

³⁴¹ Ps. 32:21.

³⁴² **Note:** Ps. 75:11, Vulgate, Kirchberger notates: A.V. does not correspond.

³⁴³ Ps. 75:11, Vulgate.

³⁴⁴ Ps 89:15.

³⁴⁵ **Note:** Again, Kirchberger does not cite, it's Ps. 29:9.

³⁴⁶ Cf. *Celestial Hierarchy* 2 Sect 7.

³⁴⁷ Ps. 113:4, Vulgate.

³⁴⁸ **Note:** The reference is to the text 1 Corinthians 13:12, which is a basis of Richard's mystical teaching.

³⁴⁹ **Note:** Kirchberger points out: The reference is to the text in Psalm 113:5, and to the stories of crossing the Jordan in Joshua 2 and 3. Jericho was explored by the two spies before the Jordan was crossed. The whole treatise is built on these themes.

³⁵⁰ **Note:** Kirchberger points out: The 3rd part of the treatise comments on the stones on which the priests' feet had stood when bearing the Ark over Jordan (Joshua 4:3, interpreting them as fundamental to progress in spiritual life.

³⁵¹ **Note:** Kirchberger points out, The eleventh stone was discretion, connected with Joseph and the missionary text about the Apostles. 'How beautiful are the feet of them....that bring glad tidings.' Ro. 10:15, i.e. they walk on the *stones* of the road.

³⁵² He. 4:12.

³⁵³ Ps. 18:35, 73:23.

³⁵⁴ 2 Co. 3:18.

³⁵⁵ Is. 46:8, Vulgate.

³⁵⁶ Ro. 11:20.

³⁵⁷ Ps. 32:1.

³⁵⁸ **Note:** Kirchberger points out 2 Co. 2:15, with a phrase from verse 14.

³⁵⁹ Ps. 66:8.

³⁶⁰ Ex 32:31-2.

³⁶¹ Da. 2:28.

³⁶² **Note:** Kirchberger does not cite, SS. 1:3.

³⁶³ This translation is based on the critical edition, ed. Jean Ribaillier, *Richard de Saint-Victor: De Trinitate*. Textes Philosophiques du Moyen Age VI, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin: Paris, 1958. Annotations are translated excerpts of Ribaillier's own; where English translations of works cited are well-known, I have rendered Latin titles into English: otherwise, they have been left as Ribaillier cites them. PL: Migne, Patrologia Latina. CC: Corpus Christianorum, Brepols.

³⁶⁴ Concerning a threefold mode of thought, cf. Hugh of St. Victor, *De Sac.*, I.x.2 (PL 174, 329 ff.). Elsewhere Richard distinguishes a threefold mode of thought: by faith, by reason, and by contemplation, cf. *Benj. Minor*, 74 (PL 194, 53c).

³⁶⁵ **Compare:** VTT, vol. 1, pg. 356; there are extensive notes on this. Far too great to incorporate here.

³⁶⁶ **Ibid.** Pg. 357.

³⁶⁷ **Ibid.** Pg. 357.

³⁶⁸ **Ibid.** Pg. 359

³⁶⁹ On truths which are above reason, before reason, cf. Hugh of St. Victor, *De Sac.*, 1.3.30 (PL 174, 231d-232a); Concerning a threefold mode of thought, cf. Hugh of St. Victor, *De Sac.*, I.x.2 (PL 174, 329 ff.). Elsewhere Richard distinguishes a threefold mode of thought: by faith, by reason, and by contemplation, cf. *Benj. Minor*, 74 (PL 194, 53c). Richard, *Benj. Major*, I.6, 4.3 and 17 (PL 199, 72 a-b, 136d-137, 156-157).

³⁷⁰ Isaiah 7:9 (LXX). This statement is relied on by Augustine and Anselm, to prove that understanding cannot rise to God, except by faith. Cf. Augustine, *On Faith and the Creed*

I (PL 40, 181), *On Christian Doctrine* II.12.17 (PL 34, 43), [others]; Anselm, *De Fide Trin.*, preface and II (PL 178, 261a, 263-265).

³⁷¹ **Compare:** VTT, vol. 1, Ibid, Pg. 360.

³⁷² **Compare.** Ibid.

³⁷³ **Compare.** Ibid. Pg. 360.

³⁷⁴ **Ibid.**

³⁷⁵ Mark 16:20.

³⁷⁶ **Compare** VTT cites: Cf. Bernard of Clairvaux, SCC 28.4-9. (SBOp) 1.198).

³⁷⁷ **Compare:** Is. 7:9. Couser is mute.

³⁷⁸ That we should investigate by reason truths that we hold by faith, cf. Augustine, *The Trinity*, 15.2.2 (PL 42, 1058); Anselm, *De Fide Trin.*, preface (PL 158, 261a).

³⁷⁹ **Compare:** VTT, vol. 1, Ibid, Pg. 360.

³⁸⁰ The expression "necessary reasons" appears to be inspired by Anselm; cf. *De Fide Trin.*, IV (PL 178, 272c); *Monologion*, preface and LXIV (ibid., 143a and 210c). On this expression, cf. also Robertus Milidunensis, *Sent.* I.ii.4; John of Salisbury, *Metalog.* II.13 (PL 199, 871), [others]. On the expression "probable reasons," in the present sense, cf. Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalion*, II.1 (PL 176, 752a).

³⁸¹ **Compare:** VTT: See pgs. 360-364. This one of the longest notations.

³⁸² **Compare:** VTT cites: See infra.

³⁸³ **Compare:** VTT cites: See supra, Prol.

³⁸⁴ **Compare.** Ibid. See pg 364.

³⁸⁵ **Compare:** VTT cites: See supra, Prol. 1-4; infra. 3.1.

³⁸⁶ **Compare,** Ibid. See pg. 364.

³⁸⁷ That everything can be distinguished by threefold reckoning, cf. Proclus, *In Parm.*;

Boethius, *In Porphyrium dialog.*, I (PL LXIV, 11); Scotus Erigena, *De div. nat.* I.i (PL CXXII, 441b); Achardus, *De unitate et pluralitate*, I.2.

³⁸⁸ **Compare:** Only Couser notes: On the first cause of all things, cf. Robertus Milidunensis, *Sent.* I.ii.4, (ed. R.-M. Martin, p. 271-2).

³⁸⁹ **Compare:** Only Couser notes: Cf. Augustine, *The Trinity*, XV.viii.14 (PL XLII, 1067-1068); Achardus, *De unitate et pluralitate*, I.vi.. VTT has another notation.

³⁹⁰ **Compare:** VTT cites: See supra, 1.6.

³⁹¹ **Compare** Ibid.

³⁹² **Compare** VTT. Pg. 364.

³⁹³ I.e. that something which was or would be nothing could give itself existence.

³⁹⁴ Cf. Augustine, *Confessions*, XI.iv.6

³⁹⁵ **Compare:** Romans 1:20. This statement is used by Augustine in various places, e.g.: *City of God*, VIII, 6 (CC XLVII, p.224), and XXII, 29 (CC XLVIII, p. 861); cf. also Abelard, *Theolog. Christ.* II (PL CLXXVIII, 1170D); P. Lombard, *Sententiae* I.iii.1, Quar 35-36. However, VTT cites more, see pg. 364.

³⁹⁶ Cf. Boethius, *In topica Ciceronis comment.*, II (PL LXIV, 1078d)

³⁹⁷ **Compare** VTT. Pg. 365.

³⁹⁸ On the fecundity of an uncreated nature, cf. Isaiah, 66:9; concerning this statement, cf. Abelard, *Sic et Non* XIX (PL CLXXVIII, 1379a); also Quodvultdeus, *Tract. adv. quinque haeres.*, IV.5 (PL XLII, 1106).

³⁹⁹ **Compare:** VTT cites: See infra.5.5.

⁴⁰⁰ Ro. 1:20.

⁴⁰¹ **Compare** VTT. Pg. 365.

⁴⁰² **Compare** VTT. Pg. 365.

⁴⁰³ **Compare:** VTT cites: See supra, 1.8.

⁴⁰⁴ Cf. Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, I.7 (PL XXXIV, 22); *De moribus Manich.*, XIV, 24 (PL XXXII, 1321); Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, III, prose x (PL LXIII, 765); Anselm, *Proslogion*, II-IV (PL CLVIII, 227-229); *Liber Apologet.*, X (ibid., 260b). Theodoricus Carnotensis, *Glossa super libr. Boethii de Trin.* 18-19, ed. N. Haring, A.H.D.L.M.A., XXIII, 1957, p. 271. Achardus, *De unitate et pluralitate*, I. 5.

⁴⁰⁵ **Compare:** VTT cites: See supra, 1.6,8.

⁴⁰⁶ Cf. Augustine, *The Trinity*, III.ix.16 (PL XLII, 877-878).

⁴⁰⁷ Cf. Anselm, *Monologion*, V (PL CLVIII, 150a-b).

⁴⁰⁸ Cf. Abelard, *Theolog. Christ.* V (PL CLXXVIII, 1317d); Augustine, *City of God*, VIII.5 (CC XLVII, p. 222), and *Summa Sent.*, I.6 (PL CLXXVI, 51b-c); Anselm, *Monologion*, V (PL CLVIII 150b).

⁴⁰⁹ That the attributes of divinity are the same as its substance, cf. Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalion*, VII.17 (PL XXVI, 825d); *Summa Sent.*, (Ibid., 51 d); Robertus Milidunensis, *Sent.* I.ii.5 (ed. R.-M. Martin, p. 276). Richard here opposes Gilbertum Porret., as in *In Boeth. de Trinitate* (PL LXIV, 1290b), who asserts that the form of God or the divinity by which God is, is not God self; he rests on Boethius' saying, "Being is different from that which it is."

cf. *De Hebdomadibus* (PL LXIV, 1311 b), *The Trinity*, 17 (ibid., 1253 b).

⁴¹⁰ **Note:** due to an irregularity in the publication, The VTT series. vol. 1, endnote #83, is logged to Book 2 (pp. 228-246.) See bottom half of Pg. 365. The endnotes continue until #106. Therefore, no other comparatives are made.

⁴¹¹ Against Gilbert Porret, loc. cit., who distinguishes the substance, which is, namely subsisting (*subsistentem*), and the substance by which it is, namely subsistence (*subsistentiam*).

⁴¹² That the highest substance cannot have an equal, cf. Anselm, *Monologion* IV (PL CLVIII, 148-150); cf. also Achardus, *De unitate et pluralitate*, I.3.; Abelard, *Introductio ad Theologiam*, III (PL CLXXVIII, 1089 c-d).

⁴¹³ cf. II Peter 1:4, Vulg. ("ut per haec efficiamini divinae consortes naturae...").

⁴¹⁴ That the highest substance is divinity itself, cf. Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps.* LXVIII, I.5 (CC XXXIX, p. 905); P. Lombard, *Sententiae*, I.xxxiii.2, quar. 301. Cf. also Concilium Remense, Denz., 389.

⁴¹⁵ Cf. Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps.* loc. cit.; Boethius, *The Trinity*, III (PL LXIV 1251)

⁴¹⁶ Cf. Anselm, *Proslogion*, II-IV (PL CLVIII, 227-229)

⁴¹⁷ Cf. Augustine, *Confessions*, VII.iv.6; Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, III, prose x (PL LXIII, 765); Anselm, *Monologion*, XV (PL CLVIII, 162a-164a); *Proslogion*, III (ibid., 228b-c); Hugh of St. Victor, *De Sacr.*, I.iii.12 (PL CLXXVI 220d); Bernard of Clairvaux, *De consideratione*, V.7 (PL CLXXXII, 797a); Achardus, *De unitate et pluralitate*, I.5.

⁴¹⁸ Anselm, *Monologion*, XV (PL CLVIII, 164)

⁴¹⁹ Concerning this definition of the omnipotence of God, cf. Augustine, *The Trinity*, XV.xiv.23 (PL XLVII, 1077); Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, IV, prose 2 (PL LXIII, 795); Abelard, *Theolog. Christ.*, V (PL CLXXVIII, 1326 c-d); *Sic et Non*, XXXII (ibid., 1393 c); Hugh of St. Victor, *De sacr.*, I.ii.22 (PL CLXXVI, 214b); P. Lombard, *Sententiae*, I.xlii.2, quar., 382-384.

⁴²⁰ Concerning the distinction between plenitude and participation, being and having, cf. Augustine, *The Trinity*, V.x.11 (PL XLII, 918); Anselm, *Monologion* XVI (PL CLVIII, 164 ff.); Achardus, *De unitate et pluralitate*, I.7.

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