Sublime indeed is the thought that Christian charity brings to our minds. We reach up to God, and God reaches down to us, and in divine love we are made sharers of the Divinity. All things we love in God, and because we love them in God we seek to realize in our use of them and relations with them the harmony of the divine will. Of its very nature charity is not quiescent but operative. The soul in the pursuit of the way of perfection labors tirelessly according to its state in life to bring all men to God. Were it to content itself with its own perfection, it would lose the very thing it seeks. How can we love God and not love with God? How can we find God without searching in love for the things which God loves? Certainly one of the fruits of the spiritual life is peace, but this peace postulates our conforming our wills with the divine will. All the noble aspirations of the heart of man, aspirations which so often seem unrealizable in our condition of human weakness, are answered in our seeking to be ever more and more perfect in the spiritual life.

Men are talking much these days about realism, and they tell us that in life idealism must yield to compromise. Yet in every circumstance in life we can be sons of God in supernatural union with Him. This fact is the very basis of true Christian realism. We must not and dare not be defeatists. What human nature can never do can be done in the supernatural power of divine grace. It is therefore opportune in these times to give us this translation of this classical work of the spiritual life because it strengthens us in our effort to work out more perfectly our vocation of sons of God. We can build a better world. Human weakness is not an impassable barrier. The Savior died on the cross for us and rose to glorious life. With the graces of Redemption we are strong enough to labor for the realization of God's plan and on our way to heavan to love with an operative love all those whom we meet on our pilgrimage of life.

We hope that pious souls will read this book, ponder over its pages, and gain new strength from it. It is a challenge to Christians to arise and labor unceasingly for the kingdom of Christ—wherein there is peace and true progress.

Samuel Cardinal Stritch
Archbishop of Chicago
## CONTENTS

**C. Relations Between the Infused Moral Virtues and the Acquired Moral Virtues** ........ 62

### ARTICLE IV

**THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST** ........ 66

A. The Teaching of Scripture ........ 66
B. Tradition ........ 66
C. The Gifts of the Holy Ghost According to St. Thomas ........ 70

### APPENDIX

**THE SUPERHUMAN MODE OF THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST** ........ 78

A. In What Sense Can the Gifts Have Two Modes, That on Earth and That of Heaven? ........ 79
B. Whether the Superhuman Mode of the Gifts Can Be Latent ........ 81
C. Are There Degrees in Detachment from Creatures? ........ 82
D. Are the Passive Purifications Necessary to Eliminate Moral Defects? ........ 84

### ARTICLE V

**ACTUAL GRACE AND ITS DISSERS FORMS** ........ 88

A. The Necessity of Actual Grace ........ 88
B. The Different Actual Graces ........ 90
C. Fidelity to Grace ........ 93

**IV. THE BLESSED TRINITY PRESENT IN US, UNCREATED SOURCE OF OUR INTERIOR LIFE** ........ 97

A. The Testimony of Scripture ........ 97
B. The Testimony of Tradition ........ 99
C. The Theological Explanation of This Mystery ........ 101
D. Spiritual Consequences of This Doctrine ........ 105
E. Our Duties Toward the Divine Guest ........ 106

**V. THE INFLUENCE OF CHRIST THE REDEEMER ON HIS MYSTICAL BODY** ........ 109

A. How the Savior Communicates to Us the Graces Which He Formerly Merited for Us ........ 109
B. The Sanctifying Influence of the Savior Through the Eucharist ........ 112
C. Progressive Incarnation in Christ and Sanctity ........ 117

**VI. THE INFLUENCE OF MARY MEDIATRIX** ........ 119

A. The Meaning of Universal Mediation ........ 120
B. Mary Mediatrix by Her Cooperation in the Sacrifice of the Cross ........ 122
C. Mary Obtains and Distributes All Graces ........ 126

**VII. THE GROWTH OF THE LIFE OF GRACE BY MERIT, PRAYER, AND THE SACRAMENTS** ........ 129

A. Why the Life of Grace and Charity Should Grow in Us until Death ........ 129
B. The Increase of Charity by Our Merits ........ 133
C. The Increase of the Life of Grace Through Prayer ........ 138
D. The Increase of the Life of Grace Through the Sacraments ........ 141

**VIII. THE TRUE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION** ........ 144

A. Erroneous or Incomplete Ideas of Perfection ........ 144
B. The Essence of Perfection According to St. Paul’s Interpretation of the Gospel ........ 149
C. Some Exact Theological Statements on the Nature of Perfection ........ 153
D. The Superiority of Charity to the Knowledge of God in This Life ........ 155
E. The Love of Charity Cannot Be Absolutely Continuous on Earth as It Will Be in Heaven ........ 159

**IX. THE GRANDEUR OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION AND THE BEATITUDES** ........ 163

A. The Beatitudes of the Deliverance from Sin ........ 165
B. The Beatitudes of the Active Life of the Christian ........ 168
C. The Beatitudes of Contemplation and Union with God ........ 169

**X. PERFECTION AND HEROIC VIRTUE** ........ 174

A. Does Perfection Necessarily Require Great Charity? ........ 174
B. Does Perfection Require the Heroic Practice of the Virtues? ........ 179

**XI. FULL CHRISTIAN PERFECTION AND THE PASSIVE PURIFICATIONS** ........ 183

A. Acts of the Other Virtues Required for Perfection ........ 183
CONTENTS

B. The Purifications Required for the Full Perfection of Christian Life .................. 186
C. Full Christian Perfection and Contemplation .............................................. 193

XII. PERFECTION AND THE PRECEPT OF THE LOVE OF GOD ..................... 196
A. Is the First Precept Without Limit? ....................................................... 196
B. The Duty of Advancing on the Way to Eternity ...................................... 202

XIII. PERFECTION AND THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS .............................. 206
A. The Three Evangelical Counsels and the Wounds of the Soul .................. 206
B. The Three Evangelical Counsels and the Restoration of Original Harmony .... 210

XIV. THE SPECIAL OBLIGATION OF THE PRIEST AND THE RELIGIOUS TO TEND TO PERFECTION ................................................................. 214
A. The Nature of the Special Obligation for Religious .................................. 214
B. The Special Obligation of the Priest to Tend to Perfection ....................... 218
C. The Ideal of Episcopal Perfection According to St. Isidore ....................... 223

XV. THE THREE AGES OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE ACCORDING TO THE FATHERS AND THE GREAT SPIRITUAL WRITERS ................................. 225
A. Statement of the Problem ........................................................................... 225
B. The Testimony of Scripture ........................................................................ 228
C. The Testimony of Tradition ........................................................................ 230
D. The Three Ages of the Spiritual Life and Those of the Corporeal Life ....... 238

XVI. SPIRITUAL READING OF SCRIPTURE, OF THE WORKS AND LIVES OF THE SAINTS ................................................................. 247
A. Holy Scripture and the Life of the Soul ................................................... 247
B. The Spiritual Works of the Saints ............................................................... 249
C. The Lives of the Saints .............................................................................. 252
D. Dispositions for Profitable Spiritual Reading ............................................. 253

XVII. SPIRITUAL DIRECTION ........................................................................ 256
A. The Necessity of Direction ........................................................................ 256
B. The Direction of Beginners ........................................................................ 258
C. The Direction of Proficients and the Perfect ............................................. 260
D. The Qualities of the Director and the Duties of the One Being Directed ...... 261

PART II THE PURIFICATION OF THE SOUL IN BEGINNERS

CHAPTER XVIII. THE SPIRITUAL AGE OF BEGINNERS ............................................. 267
A. Self-Knowledge and Knowledge of God .................................................. 267
B. The Love of God in Its Early Stages ........................................................ 268
C. The Generosity Required in Beginners .................................................... 271

CHAPTER XIX. PRACTICAL NATURALISM AND MORPTIFICATION ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL ................................................................. 275
A. Practical Naturalism: of Action and of Inaction ....................................... 275
B. Mortification According to the Gospel ...................................................... 281

CHAPTER XX. MORTIFICATION ACCORDING TO ST. PAUL AND THE REASONS FOR ITS NECESSITY ................................................................. 285
A. The Consequences of Original Sin ............................................................ 286
B. The Consequences of Our Personal Sins ................................................ 290
C. The Infinite Elevation of Our Supernatural End Demands a Special Mortification or Abnegation ................................................................. 294
D. The Necessity of Initiating Jesus Crucified ............................................. 295

CHAPTER XXI. SINS TO BE AVOIDED; THEIR ROOTS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES ................................................................. 299
A. The Roots of the Capital Sins ................................................................... 299
B. The Consequences of the Seven Capital Sins ......................................... 302
C. The Examination of Conscience ............................................................... 304
D. Sins of Ignorance, Frailty, and Malice .................................................... 307
   1. Sins of Ignorance ................................................................................. 307
   2. Sins of Frailty .................................................................................... 309
   3. The Sin of Malice .............................................................................. 310

CHAPTER XXII. THE PREDOMINANT FAULT ..................................................... 314
A. Definition of the Predominant Fault ....................................................... 314
B. How to Recognize the Predominant Fault ............................................. 316
C. How to Combat the Predominant Fault ................................................ 318
D. Note ...................................................................................................... 320

CHAPTER XXIII. PASSIONS TO BE REGULATED ............................................. 323
A. The Passions from the Psychological Point of View .................................. 323
B. Passion from the Moral Point of View .................................................... 325
C. The Passions from the Ascetical Point of View ....................................... 326
CHAPTER XXIV. THE ACTIVE PURIFICATION OF THE SENSES OR OF THE SENSIBLE APPETITES

A. The Principles to be Applied .................................. 332
B. The Mortification of Sensuality ................................ 334
C. The Mortification of the Irascible Appetite .................. 338

CHAPTER XXV. THE ACTIVE PURIFICATION OF THE IMAGINATION AND THE MEMORY

A. The Active Purification of the Imagination .................. 342
B. The Active Purification of the Memory ...................... 345

CHAPTER XXVI. THE ACTIVE PURIFICATION OF THE INTELLECT

A. The Necessity of This Purification: the Defects of Our Intellect ........................................... 353
B. The Principle of the Active Purification of the Intellect ........................................... 359

CHAPTER XXVII. THE ACTIVE PURIFICATION OF THE WILL

A. The Principal Defect of the Will: Self-Love ................. 366
B. The Purification of the Will by Progress in the Love of God ........................................... 372
C. The Spirit of Detachment ........................................ 374

CHAPTER XXVIII. THE HEALING OF PRIDE

A. The True Nature of Pride ....................................... 379
B. The Different Forms of Pride ................................... 381
C. The Defects Born of Pride ...................................... 384
D. The Remedy for Pride ........................................... 385

CHAPTER XXIX. THE HEALING OF SPIRITUAL SLOTH, OR ACEDIA

A. The Nature of Spiritual Sloth, or Acedia .................... 389
B. The Gravity of Spiritual Sloth and Its Results ............ 393
C. The Cure for Spiritual Sloth ................................... 395

CHAPTER XXX. SACRAMENTAL CONFESSION

A. Preparation for Confession ..................................... 397
B. The Confession Itself .......................................... 400
C. The Fruits of Confession ...................................... 402

CHAPTER XXXI. ASSISTANCE AT MASS, THE SOURCE OF SANCTIFICATION

A. The Oblation Ever Living in the Heart of Christ .......... 406
B. The Effects of the Sacrifice of the Mass and Our Interior Dispositions ..................................... 409
C. How to Unite Ourselves to the Eucharistic Sacrifice .... 411

CHAPTER XXXII. HOLY COMMUNION

A. The Eucharist, the Living Bread Come Down from Heaven ........................................... 414
B. Conditions of a Good Communion ............................. 417
C. The Conditions of a Fervent Communion .................... 417
D. Examination of Conscience: Communions without Thanksgiving ........................................... 421

CHAPTER XXXIII. THE PRAYER OF PETITION

A. The Necessity of a Strong Belief in the Efficacy of Prayer ........................................... 428
B. The Source of the Efficacy of Prayer ........................ 430
C. The Particular Petitions We Should Make ................. 435

CHAPTER XXXIV. LITURGICAL PRAYER

A. Deformed Psalmsody ........................................... 437
B. Contemplative Chant ........................................... 439

CHAPTER XXXV. THE MENTAL PRAYER OF BEGINNERS: ITS PROGRESSIVE SIMPLIFICATION

A. The Nature of Mental Prayer; Our Attitude Toward Methods ........................................... 444
B. The Essential Acts of Prayer ................................... 446
C. The Prayer of Simplicity ...................................... 451

CHAPTER XXXVI. HOW TO ATTAIN TO THE LIFE OF PRAYER AND PERSEVERE IN IT

A. How to Attain to This Life .................................... 454
B. How to Persevere in the Life of Prayer ...................... 456

CHAPTER XXXVII. RETARDED SOULS

A. The Neglect of Little Things .................................. 461
B. The Refusal of Sacrifices Asked ............................... 463
C. The Tendency to Derision ...................................... 464
D. The Unhappy Results of This State ......................... 465
E. The Inclination to Egoism that Remains in Us ............ 468
F. How to Bring About the Predominance of the Other Inclination Which Is in the Image of God .... 469

BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................................. 471
INDEX ......................................................... 487
SOME TERMS USED IN THIS BOOK ............................... 495
Bibliography

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St. Bridget (1302-73). Revelations, particularly those on the passion of our Lord.
Jean de Castel. De adhaerendo Deo, for a long time attributed to Albert the Great; De homine increato, 1410.
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In the modern period, spirituality often takes a more active form and tends to radiate more beyond the cloister, into the world; new schools appear, while the older schools continue to show the value of the traditional teaching.

Benedictine and Cistercian Spirituality

Louis Blosius (1506–66). Institutio spiritualis, an excellent treatise, which contains the substance of his other works: Oeuvres spirituelles (translation by the Benedictines of Saint-Paul de Wisques). Blosius wrote a defense of Tauler, whom he explains in a way that makes his teaching more accessible.


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Lisieux, the Little Flower of Jesus*; a new and complete translation
of *L’histoire d’une âme* (New York: Kenedy, 1924).
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1932); *Vie d’amour de saint Jean de la Croix* (Paris: Desclée de
Brouwer, 1934); *Madame Acrarie* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer,
1926).
Gabriel of St. Magdalen. *La Mística Teresiana* (Fiesole, 1934); *S. Gio-
vanni della Croce* (Florence, 1936); *Santa Teresa di Gessi, Maestra
di vita spirituale* (Milan, 1935); *Dict. de spiritualité*, art.
“Carmes: École mystique thériaïenne.”
Since 1911 *Les études carmélitaines* has been publishing interesting
works on mystical theology and religious psychology in order to make
the teaching of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross better understood.
See especially the articles by Father Louis of the Trinity, Father Bruno,
and Father Gabriel of St. Magdalen. See also those of Jacques Maritain
on St. John of the Cross. These articles have been reproduced in his
beautiful book, *The Degrees of Knowledge* (English translation by

Carmelites of the Old Observance

John of St. Samson (d. 1636), a lay brother who was raised to lofty
contemplation. *Œuvres spirituelles* (2 vols., 1658); cf. *La vie
Florence, 1924.

Salesian School

St. Francis de Sales (1567–1622). *Œuvres* published by the Visitati-
on of Annecy, 1892. St. Francis de Sales shows that union with God
is accessible in all states of life. The *Introduction to a Devout Life
(1608)* describes the purgative way and the beginning of the
illuminative. The *Treatise on the Love of God* (1616) deals
particularly with the unitive way. His *Spiritual Conferences*,
written for the Visitandines, are valuable to all religious souls.

Letters.
Mère de Chaugy. *Mémoires sur la vie et les vertus de sainte Jeanne
1918); *La vie intérieure simplifiée* (a work written by a Carthus-
ian).

French School of the Seventeenth Century.
The spirituality of this school, founded by Cardinal Bérulle, springs
from the dogma of the Incarnation and of our incorporation in Christ,
with whom, by abnegation and the virtues, we glorify God living in us.
Cardinal Bérulle (1576–1629), founder of the Oratory in France.
*Œuvres complètes* (ed. 1672; ed. 1856); his principal work is the
Discours de l’état et des grandes de Jésus.
The following works were published in New York by Benziger: *The Way of Salvation and Perfection* (1886); *The Great Means of Salvation and Perfection: Prayer* (1886); *The Holy Eucharist* (1885); *Dignity and Duties of the Priest, or Selva* (1888); *The True Spouse of Christ* (1888); *The Holy Mass* (1889); *The Passion and the Death of Jesus Christ* (1892). See also the new edition of his ascetical works in the course of publication at Rome.

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Cardinal Mercier. La vie intérieure, appel aux âmes sacerdotaux. 1919.


A. Tanqueray. The Spiritual Life (English translation by Herman Brandes, S.S. Philadelphia: Reilly, 1910). This work, which is excellent in certain respects, places the passive purification of the senses very late in the spiritual life, that is, after the entrance into the unitive way, whereas for St. John of the Cross it marks the entrance into the illuminative way.


Index

Abnegation, 174-78; see also Mortification
Acceleration of charity; see Virtues
Acedia; see Sloth
Activity, necessity of subordination of natural, 467
Acts, necessity of sanctifying all, 469
Acts, imperfect (remissi); definition of, 135; not proper to the perfect, 160; and problem of the increase of charity by, 133 ff.
Acts, meritorious; definition of, 133; problem of increase of charity by, 133 ff.
Acts, result of perfect, 136 ff.
Ages of the spiritual life, three
age of beginners: characteristics of, 243 f., 270 f.; direction of, 228 ff.; generosity required in, 271-74; humility in, 274; imagination in mortification of, 342 f.; intellect and personal judgment in, 353-64; love of God in, 268-71; magnanimity in, 273 f.; memory in, 345-51; prayer of, 444-51; self-knowledge and knowledge of God in, 267 f.; the senses in, 275-84, 332-41; sensible consolations in, 269; spiritual pride of, 267 f.; state of, 240 f.
age of the perfect; characteristics of, 244 ff.
age of proficients; characteristics of, 244; imperfections of, 241
characters of, 226 f., 243-45
comparison with ages of corporeal life, 238 f., 244
differences and transition between the, 239-46
distinction between: preserved by St. Thomas Aquinas, 237 f.
division made by Scaramelli and his followers, 16, 227
problem of, 225, 238
reasons for divergence in divisions of, 227 f.

Ages of the spiritual life (continued)
in spiritual life of the apostles, 229 f.
synopsis of, 245
traditional division of, 14 f., 225 ff.; testimony of Greek fathers to, 230-31; testimony of Latin fathers and great spiritual writers to, 235-38
 Aim of this work, 8 f.
 Ambition; see Pride
Americanism, 257-77
Appetites, passions and the, 49; see also Mortification, Purification
Aridity (sensible) in divine trials, 350 f.
Arrogance; see Pride
Attraction, law of universal, 131 f.
Austerities, attitude of Church toward, 332 note
Austerity of flagellants, Jansenists, Montanists, 280
Beatitude, 30-33, 156
Beatitudes
of the active life of the Christian: of the merciful, 118 f.; of those that hunger and thirst after justice, 168 of contemplation and union with God; of the clean of heart, 169 f.; of the peacemakers, 170 f.; of those that suffer persecution, 177 f.
definition of, 172
definition of the deliverance from sin, 165; of the meek, 156 f.; of the poor in spirit, 165; of those that mourn, 167
grandeur of Christian perfection shown by, 163-73
order of, 156
relations of: to gifts of the Holy Ghost and the three ages, 106-13
Beginners; see Ages of the spiritual life
Blessed Trinity; see Trinity, Blessed
Blessed Virgin; see Mary
Boasting; see Pride
Casuistry, definition of, 101; see also Theology
Charity; see Theological
INDEX

Christ
exemplar of evangelical counsels, 210 f.
humanity of: instrument through which graces are communicated to souls, 206-12
influence on His mystical body, 195 ff.; see also Mortification
mystical body as Mediator, 210 f.
necesstity of imitating the crucified, 207 f.; see also Mortification
our Mediator and conversation with God, 47
our sanctity and progressive incorporation in, 117 f.
principle of the Sacrifice of the Mass, 409 ff.
result of consideration of humanity of, 118
result of hypostatic union on humanity of, 210 f.
sanctifying influence of, 109-18
through the Eucharist, 112-17
Church, marks of sanctity of, 211
Communion: conditions of a fervent, 417-20; conditions of a good, 417; consumption of gift of self, 115; each Communion should be substantially more fervent, 143; 410 f.; effects of, 115-17; fruits of, 420; source of sanctification, 414 f.; thanksgiving after, 421-27
Consupcisciples, three, 209 f.; 301; see also Self-love
Confession: contrition, 400 ff.; fruits of, 402-5; how to make, 401 f.; preparation for, 397 ff
Conscience, examination of, 304-7: based on sins opposed to virtues, 321; based on virtues, 312; on self-abnegation, 377; time required for, 398
Consolations in prayer: in beginners, 259, detachment from, 375 f.; distinguished from divine lights, 359 note; and spiritual gluttony, 337
Contemplation, infused and the beatitudes, 169-73
desire for, 87
of God: in mirror of mysteries of salvation, 450; in mirror of sensible things, 450; in obscurity of faith, 450; morally necessary for full perfection, 194 in normal way of sanctity, 193 ff.
pride removed by, 451
and superhuman mode of gifts, 225
Contention; see Pride
Contrition, sadness of, 405; see also Confession
Counsel; see Gifts of the Holy Ghost
Counsels, evangelical: Christ, exemplar of, 210 f.; general obligation of, 206; moral maladies opposed to, 208; nature of, 212 f.; and restoration of original harmony, 210-13; special obligation of priests and religious to observe, 206; spirit of, 206; and theological virtues, 213; useful but not indispensable means for perfection, 184; and wounds of the soul, 206-10
Criticism of superiority; see Pride
Curiosity, definition of, 354 f.; see also Pride

INDEX

Excellence, inordinate love of one’s; see Pride
Faith; see Theological Fault, predominant: definition and description of, 314 f.; examination of, 314 f.; how to combat, 318 f.; how to recognize, 316 f.
Fear; see Gifts of the Holy Ghost
Fidelity to grace; see Grace
Forgottenness of God, 345 ff.
Fortitude; see Gifts of the Holy Ghost, Virtues, moral
Friendship: danger of particular, 336; frivolous, 336 note; true and supernatural, 336 f.
Gaze: first intellectual, 363 note; first supernatural, 363 f.
Gifts of the Holy Ghost in ascetical life, 81 f.
and the beatitudes, 77 note connected with charity, 77 grow together, 77 f.
habitable dispositions, 71 f.; necessary to salvation, 73-78, 179 purpose of, 85
according to St. Thomas, 70-71
specifically distinct from virtues, 73
superhuman mode of, 78-82
synoptic table of gifts and corresponding virtues, 76
teaching of Scripture on, 66 f.
teaching of tradition on, 67-70
two modes of, 79 f.
Glory: definition of, 341; proximate perfect disposition to receive, 38 f.
Gluttony; see Sin, capital
Gluttony, spiritual; see Consolations
Grace actual: divine motion and various forms of, 90 f.; necessity of, 88 f.; offered for duty of present moment, 91 f.; see also Motion, divine efficacious grace to pray offered to every man, 433 f.; see also Prayer fidelity to, 93-96 life of: develops under form of infused virtues and gifts, 51 f.
mystery of, 97 note
operating: activity under, 93; definition of, 92
prevention, 91
sanctifying, 91
growth of, 139-43;
Grace (continued)
value of, 19 f.; see also Progress, spiritual state of: seed of eternal life, 19, 34-37
Happiness, true and lasting: definition of, 164; end of the beatitudes, 164; means to obtain, 164-73
Harmony original: restored by Christ, 210
triple: before original sin, 209; disturbed by sin, 209 f.; see also Sin, original
Heaven, union of enjoyment of, 30-33
Holy Ghost: moves souls according to their habitual dilucidity, 117; soul of mystical body, 107 f.
Hope; see Theological Humility: in beginners, 274; false, 379; necessary for mental prayer, 454; seven degrees of, 177 f.
Hypocrisy; see Pride
Ignorance: invincible, 308; vincible, 307 f.; see also Sin
Imagination; see Purification, active
Imperfection: definition of, 333; 399 note; distinguished from sins of frailty, 340 note; 399-400; reasons for avoiding, 334
Inclination: characteristics of evil, 468 f.; characteristics of good, 469; see also Egoism
Indwelling of the Blessed Trinity; see Trinity, Blessed
Inspirations, need of special, 85 f.
Insult; see Justice
Intellect defects of: curiosity, 354 f.; dullness of mind, 357 f.; spiritual blindness, 356 f.; spiritual pride, 355 f.
and natural knowledge of God, 50
object of, 49
superior to will, 155 f.
and supernatural knowledge of God, 50
Intellectualism, evil, 467
Intention, purity of: necessary for mental prayer, 454; value of, 468
Jansenism: austerity of, 180; false supernaturalism of, 180; pessimism of, 180
Joy, foolish; see Pride
Justice; vices opposed to, 464 f.; see Virtues, moral
Knowledge; see Gifts of the Holy Ghost
Levy of mind; see Pride
Levity of spirit; see Tepidity
Liberty, unbridled; see Pride
Life ...
Love
Love of God: more perfect than knowledge of God, 447; not in golden mean, 200 f.
Lyng; see Tepidity
Magnanimity in beginners, 273 f.
Man: resemblance to angel, 49 f.; St. Paul on the inward, 44
Martyrdom, sign of charity, 146
Mary, Blessed Virgin
Mediator: ascending mediation of, 122-126, descending mediation of, 156-158; influence of, 119, new Eve, 124 f.; universal, 121
progress of charity in, 152
queen of martyrs, 123 f.
Mass
assistance at, source of sanctification, 400-401
different ways of assisting at, 411 f.
effects of: relating to God, 409; relating to men, 409 f.
source of: elevation of, 407 f.
Mean, golden; see Love of God
Mean, happy: in moral virtues, 64 f.; see Virtues, moral
Mediation, meaning of universal, 120
Mediocrity, 201 and not: not possible for God, 457
Meekness, 339 f.
Memory; see Purification, active
Merits, restoration of lost, 147, 403
Method: deductive, 12; descriptive, 11; union of descriptive and deductive, 12 f.
Missions, divine, 106
Modernism, 375-378
Mortification
spirited of, 294 f.
perdition of fallen, 314-320 according to St. Paul, 285 of sensuality, 344-348 spirit of, 284
Motion, divine: modes of, 90 f.; table of different modes of, 91
Mourning against neighbor's reputation, 464; see Justice
Mystical body: Holy Ghost, soul of, 107 f.; sanctifying influence of Christ on, 107-108
Naturalism, answer to practical, 208
Oblation, Christ's interior, 407 f.
One thing necessary: nature of, 3 f.; present status of, 7-8
Organism, spiritual: expressed in table of virtues and gifts, 21
Parable, reason for Christ's use of, 343
Passion
antenced, 309; see Sin of frailty classification according to St. Thomas, 374 consequent, 309 defined, 323 from three points of view: ascetical, 325-331; moral, 325 f.; psychological, 331 f.
Peace: fruit of purification of will, 376 f.; true, 172 f.
Penance, end of virtue of, 185 Penance, sacrament of; see Confession Perfection
austerity and, 445 basis of special obligation of priest to tend to, 218 ff. and charity, 140 ff.; according to Suarez, 274 f., 185 note in charity, according to St. Thomas, 154, 156 f.
consists secondarily and instrumentally
Perfection (continued)
in observance of the counsels, 198 f.; useful means to attain, 184 duty of all to advance in, 202-203 erroneous ideas of: fortunate, barbarians' idea of, 145 ff.; wisdom, Greek philosophers' notion of, 147 ff.
error of quietists in regard to, 183 note essence of: according to St. Paul, 149-153
ful: attainable on earth only in transforming union, 192 note; belongs to mystical order, 172; infused contemplation morally necessary for, 194; never reached without perfect prayer, 172 ideal of episcopal, 233 f.
in increasingly generous fulfillment of supreme precept, 199 lofiness of, 186 f.
means to attain, 186 nature of, possible on earth, 159 obligation to tend to: of priest, 218-23; of religious, 214-215 a plentitude of, 185 prayer to advance in, 377 progress in; and confession, 404 requirements for: acts of virtues which are of precept, 183-186; great charity, 175-179; heroic practice of virtues, 170-172; passive purifications, 193; spirit of the counsels, 207 Perseverance, final, 140 Possibility; see Jansenism Piety; see Gifts of the Holy Ghost
Prayer
advance in perfection, 377 difference between prayer of petition and merit, 138 f.; note efficacy of: necessity of belief in, 428 f.; source of, 430-35 and final perseverance, 140 petitions we should make, 435 f.: for temporal goods, 435 qualities of fruitful, 139
Prayer, liturgical
contemplative chant, 439-431 deformed psalmody, 437 ff.
distinctions in, 438 f.
means of union with God, 437 mutual relations of mental prayer and, 442 f.
Prayer, mental
affecting, 440-53 attitude toward methods, 445 f.
Prayer, mental (continued)
culminating point of, 450 definition according to St. Teresa, 444-445
dependence on grace of God, 454 essential acts of: charity, 449 ff.; faith, 448; hope, 449; humility, 448 how to persevere in, 450-456 mortification necessary for, 454 f.
movements of contemplation: circular, 450; spirital, 450; straight, 450
nature of, 445 necessarily necessary for some, 457 f.
preparation (immediate), 455; prepration (remote): frequent prayer during day, 455 f.; grace, 454; humility, 454; mortification, 454 f.; silence in soul, 455
purity of intention necessary for, 454 of simplicity according to Bossuet, 451 f.
Precept, first: obliges all in a general way, 197 f.; without limit, 196-203 Precipitation: causes of, 320; cure for, 320; definition of, 328; effects of, 320
Presumption; see Pride
Pride
definition of: according to St. Augustine, 380 f.; according to St. Thomas, 380
of life: definition of, 301; introduced by sin, 209 f.; necessity of mortification of, 301; root of four capital sins, 302; sins may spring from, 301 f.
nature of, 379 f.
opposed to humility, 381 remedy for, 385-388
St. Catherine of Siena on results of, 381 St. Gregory on degrees of, 381 Pride, defects born of: presumption, 382, 385; vainglory, 385 f.
Pride, forms of, 381-382
Priest and Divine Office, 213; obligation to tend to perfection, 218-236; sanctity becoming to, 220 Problem, religious: relations of man with death, 6 f.
Progress: in religious life, 377; summary of spiritual, 247; synonym table of, 245 Punishment (temporal), the Mass and universal, 474
Purgatory, 38 f.: of sufferings necessary for illumination, 457 f.
INDEX

Tenacity in judgment, 363

Teapidity
causes of: levity of spirit, 464; lying, 464; neglect of little things, 461 ff.; refusal of sacrifices asked, 461 f.; spiritual sloth, 464; tendency to derision, 464 f.
definition of, 463 f.
loss of zeal in, 463 remedy for, 467 f.

result of, 465-468

Thanksgiving: see Communion

Theological virtue of charity
activity of: in the perfect, 158 note, 160 f.

bond of perfection, 159
definition of, 56
degrees of, 226, 244
should grow until death, 159
growth of: and life of grace, 132-48; by merit, 135-38; through prayer, 138 f.; through sacraments, 141 f.
high degree of: and perfection, 163
law of acceleration, 131 f.
love of: cannot be continual on earth, 159 f.
God attained immediately by, 177
necessity of high degree of: for perfection, 164
notable increase of: and divine missions, 156
perfection of: deliberate sin and voluntary imperfections excluded by, 159 f.
genesis of generous act of, 114 f.
summary of progress of, 147
superior to knowledge of God on earth, 155-58
true: all the virtues implied by, 157
weak: (remissa) act of: and increase of grace, 115 f.

Theological virtue of faith
acquired moral: under direction of natural reason, 57; in state of mortal sin, 58 f.; in state of solid virtue, 58; in state of unstable dispositions, 58 f. false, 58
heroes: conditions necessary for, 180
infused moral: necessity of, 59-61; object of, 57; produced by God, 57 moral: differences between acquired and infused, 60 f.; happy mean of, 64 f.; object of, 57, 57; relations between infused and acquired, 62-66

three religious: connection with theological virtues, 218
Vision (immediate) of God surpasses natural capacity of created intellect, 33 f.; see also Life, eternal

Teapidity:

INDEX

Tenacity in judgment, 363

Teapidity
causes of: levity of spirit, 464; lying, 464; neglect of little things, 461 ff.; refusal of sacrifices asked, 461 f.; spiritual sloth, 464; tendency to derision, 464 f.
definition of, 463 f.
loss of zeal in, 463 remedy for, 467 f.

result of, 465-468

Thanksgiving: see Communion

Theological virtue of charity
activity of: in the perfect, 158 note, 160 f.

bond of perfection, 159
definition of, 56
degrees of, 226, 244
should grow until death, 159
growth of: and life of grace, 132-48; by merit, 135-38; through prayer, 138 f.; through sacraments, 141 f.
high degree of: and perfection, 163
law of acceleration, 131 f.
love of: cannot be continual on earth, 159 f.
God attained immediately by, 177
necessity of high degree of: for perfection, 164
notable increase of: and divine missions, 156
perfection of: deliberate sin and voluntary imperfections excluded by, 159 f.
genesis of generous act of, 114 f.
summary of progress of, 147
superior to knowledge of God on earth, 155-58
true: all the virtues implied by, 157
weak: (remissa) act of: and increase of grace, 115 f.

Theological virtue of faith
acquired moral: under direction of natural reason, 57; in state of mortal sin, 58 f.; in state of solid virtue, 58; in state of unstable dispositions, 58 f. false, 58
heroes: conditions necessary for, 180
infused moral: necessity of, 59-61; object of, 57; produced by God, 57 moral: differences between acquired and infused, 60 f.; happy mean of, 64 f.; object of, 57, 57; relations between infused and acquired, 62-66

three religious: connection with theological virtues, 218
Vision (immediate) of God surpasses natural capacity of created intellect, 33 f.; see also Life, eternal
Some Terms Used in This Book
(Added by the Publisher to the 1989 printing.)

SENSIBLE, SENSITIVE—of the senses. These terms are used in reference either to the senses proper (external or internal, including the imagination) or to those movements of the appetites known as passions or emotions.

JUSTICE—1. the state of (Sanctifying) Grace. 2. the moral virtue by which one gives what is due to God, oneself and one's neighbor. (It is in the first sense that the term is usually used in the theology of the spiritual life.)

JUSTIFICATION, SANCTIFICATION—entering the state of grace. Sanctification also refers to the increment of Sanctifying Grace in the soul.

SUPERNATURAL—divine; pertaining to God or to Sanctifying Grace, which is divine life in the soul. Sanctifying Grace is described as “living water” in the Scriptures. By Sanctifying Grace the three Divine Persons dwell in the soul. The following accompany Sanctifying Grace and are likewise supernatural: the three Theological Virtues—Faith, Hope, and Charity; the four infused moral virtues: prudence, justice, temperance, fortitude (these four virtues can also exist on the natural level); the seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost. All these supernatural gifts except Faith and Hope are lost by mortal sin; they are all regained through sacramental absolution.

THE JUST—a person in the state of Sanctifying Grace.

THE SINNER—a person in the state of mortal sin.

CHARITY—1) the supernatural virtue by which one loves God for His own sake and one’s neighbor as oneself for the love of God; this virtue is infused into the soul in Baptism and also in absolution after sacramental confession of mortal sin. Charity is the highest virtue; it vivifies, “informs,” or “forms the soul of” every other supernatural virtue. 2) acts of love of God or neighbor as defined above. A person in the state of mortal sin cannot exercise the virtue of Charity because he has lost Charity along with Sanctifying Grace. He can only perform acts of natural love of God and neighbor; these are not meritorious for salvation and heavenly reward, though God in His mercy may look upon them as a plea for the gifts of true repentance and return to Sanctifying Grace.

FAITH—the supernatural virtue by which one believes, on the word of God, all the truths He has revealed. This virtue is infused into the soul along with Sanctifying Grace. A person in the state of grace has living faith, because his faith is “informed” by Charity; a person in the state of mortal sin may still have faith, but it will be only dead faith.
HOPE—the supernatural virtue by which one trusts in God's promises to give him eternal life and the means to obtain it. This virtue is infused into the soul along with Sanctifying Grace.

SANCTITY—the possessing of a high degree of Sanctifying Grace, and living by the supernatural virtues, especially Faith, Hope and, above all, Charity.

MYSTICAL—pertaining to the higher levels of sanctity, in which the soul's supernatural acts are carried out in a divine mode, in intimate dependence upon the seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost. Christians who have not attained to this degree of sanctity perform their supernatural actions in a more human mode; in them the seven Gifts are relatively dormant. Mystical prayer is called contemplation. Phenomena such as visions and revelations, though often found in mystics, are not of the essence of the mystical life.

CONTEMPLATION—the higher of the two forms of mental prayer (the lower being meditation). Contemplation is an infused loving knowledge of God. In contemplation, reasoning and discourse are left behind and the mind and will are fixed on God in a wordless act of love, resulting in close union with Him. Contemplation is also called mystical or infused prayer. It is a special gift of God and cannot be acquired by one's own efforts, even aided by actual grace. Nevertheless, one can and should prepare for this gift by humble and persevering efforts at meditation and by the practice of the virtues.

MEDITATION—the lower of the two forms of mental prayer. In meditation one employs his intellect and will in reflections, affections and holy resolutions.

GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST, THE SEVEN—Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, Counsel, Piety, Fortitude, Fear (of the Lord). These Gifts are infused dispositions which make a man promptly docile to divine inspirations. They have traditionally been compared to the sails of a ship, enabling the ship to be moved by the wind—which represents the inspirations of the Holy Ghost.

CHARISMS, OR GRACES GRATIS DATAE ("FREELY GIVEN")—extraordinary spiritual gifts of God such as the gifts of miracles, prophecy and tongues. These are gifts given chiefly for the good of souls other than the recipients; graces gratis datae are greatly inferior to Sanctifying Grace and the virtue of Charity. The seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost are not graces gratis datae; rather, they are in the normal way of sanctity.

ACTUAL GRACE—a supernatural help of God which enlightens the mind and strengthens the will to do good and to avoid evil. Actual grace is a transient gift; it does not remain in the soul.
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Christian Perfection and Contemplation, according to St. Thomas Aquinas and St. John of the Cross (1923)


The Love of God and the Cross of Jesus (1929)

*The One God (1938)

Our Savior and His Love for Us (1933)

Predestination (1936)

The Three Ages of the Interior Life: Prelude of Eternal Life (1938)

The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life (1938)

*The Trinity and God the Creator (1943)

*Christ the Savior (1945)

The Priesthood and Perfection (1946)

Reality: A Synthesis of Thomistic Thought (1946)

Life Everlasting (1947)

*Grace (1947)

The Priest in Union with Christ (1948)

The Mother of the Saviour and Our Interior Life (1948)

*The Theological Virtues—Vol. 1: Faith (1948)

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Last Writings (spiritual retreats, 1969)

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Saint Thomas et le néomolinisme (booklet, 1917)

De Revelatione per ecclesiam catholicam proposita (1918)

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*De Eucharistia: Accedunt de Paenitentia quaestiones dogmaticae (1942)

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Verite et immutabilitie du dogme (booklet, 1947)

De virtutibus theologicos (1948)

*Commentaries on St. Thomas Aquinas' Summa Theologica.

About the Author

Father Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. (1877-1964) was a philosopher and theologian of great wisdom, learning and holiness, one of the greatest theologians of the 20th century. Born in Auch, France, as a young man he studied medicine at the University of Bordeaux before entering the Dominican Order in 1897. He completed his ecclesiastical studies under the direction of A. Gardeil. From 1909 until 1960 he taught fundamental, dogmatic and spiritual theology at what is now called the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (the Angelicum) in Rome, and he served during the latter part of his career as a consultor to the Holy Office and other Roman congregations. Beginning around age 27 he wrote more than 500 books and articles, many of which have been translated from the original French or Latin into other languages.

Father Garrigou-Lagrange was a zealous proponent of the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas as expounded by the classical commentators of the Dominican school — Cajetan (Tommaso di Vio), Bânez, John of St. Thomas and Charles Billuart. He combined a great respect for the past with an understanding and appreciation of the intellectual and spiritual needs of his own time. His principal theses are set forth systematically in his La Synthese thomiste (Reality: A Synthesis of Thomistic Thought). In philosophy his first outstanding work was Le sens commun, la philosophie de l'être et les formules dogmatiques suivi d'une étude sur la valeur de la critique moderniste des preuves thomistes...
de l'existence de Dieu (1909), a work written against Modernism and its conception of the evolution of dogma. There he reaffirmed the validity of the philosophy of being, of moderate realism, and of Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics, which is simply the development of elementary and primordial ideas by natural intelligence. Then turning to dogmatic formulas, which he did not wish to tie to any philosophical system, he showed their rational value and stability. Knowledge of dogma and of dogmatic expressions and formulas can progress, but the dogma remains always immutable in itself.

Father Garrigou-Lagrange's most important philosophical work was God—His Existence and His Nature: A Thomistic Solution of Certain Agnostic Antinomies; in this work he laid great stress on the Thomistic doctrine concerning the identity of essence and existence in God and the real distinction of essence and existence in the creature.

The major part of Father Garrigou-Lagrange's work, however, was theological. His classic work entitled De revelatione ab eclesia proposita (1918, rev. ed. 1932) presented apologetics as a theological rather than a philosophical science, as a rational defense of divine revelation made by reason under positive direction by faith. He endeavored to protect the notion of faith as an essentially supernatural gift that transcends by far the elaborations of human thought and cannot be the fruit of a rational syllogism, which can lead the mind no further than to the judgment of credibility; at the same time he strove to avoid the pitfall of a fideism that would ignore reason and human study. Father Garrigou-Lagrange's masterly commentary (7 vol.) on the Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas Aquinas is a comprehensive development and treatment of the truths of faith according to the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas.

It is probably for his theology of the spiritual life that Father Garrigou-Lagrange is most well-known; in spiritual theology the principal points of his doctrine were established in the light of Thomistic teaching. Adopting the position of Father John Arinstero, O.P., he insisted vigorously on the universal call to holiness, and therefore to infused contemplation and to the mystical life as the normal ways of holiness or Christian perfection. Among his most fundamental works in this field are Christian Perfection and Contemplation; Les Trois conversions et les trois voies (The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life); The Love of God and the Cross of Jesus; The Three Ages of the Interior Life; De sanctificatione sacerdotum secundum eisgentias temporis nostri (The Priesthood and Perfection); and De unione sacerdotis cum Christo Sacerdoti et Victimae (The Priest in Union with Christ). He also wrote a book entitled Men Françoise de Jésù, fondatrice de la Compagnie de la Vierge, as well as numerous articles for La Vie Spirituelle and Angelicum.

Other books of Father Garrigou-Lagrange which have been translated into English (in addition to those whose titles are given above in English) include: Christ the Saviour; The Theological Virtues—vol. 1: Faith; Grace; Life Everlasting; The One God; Our Saviour and His Love for Us; Predestination; Providence; The Trinity and God the Creator; The Mother of the Saviour and Our Interior Life; Beatitude (moral theology, on human acts and habits), and his retreat conferences, published posthumously as The Last Writings of Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange.

The publishers of this present work look forward to publishing other works of Father Garrigou-Lagrange, in accord with the response received by this one.

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