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*Guyon, Jeanne Marie (Bouvier
"de la Motte")*

SPIRITUAL TORRENTS,

BY

Jeanne Marie

MADAME J. M. B. DE LA MOTHE GUYON.

TRANSLATED BY A. E. FORD.

With Parallel Passages

FROM

THE WRITINGS OF EMANUEL SWEDENBORG.

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PREFACE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

THE writings of Madame Guyon can be best appreciated by those who have accepted the heavenly doctrines of the New Jerusalem. If she were really one of the few, who, in the first Christian Church, reached the celestial state, it cannot but be, that the voluminous productions of her pen should throw light upon a path which is essentially the same under an imperfect as under a perfect form of Christianity.

If any of the New Church profession are disposed to look in what they read chiefly for truth of doctrine, they will take offence at this little treatise, and perhaps at the very idea of putting it forth in the interests of the New Church. But they who put doctrine below life, who believe that the first Christian Church has produced, in many cases, a higher love and charity than the New Church has yet realized, and who, in perusing the records of past excellence, can pass over the many errors which spring from a false doctrinal system, and feel themselves addressed, elevated, and strengthened by the living spirit which reigns in them, will probably draw something from this little work, which they cannot, in the same degree, find in any of the practical writings as yet extant in the New Church, save those of Swedenborg himself. The mistakes to be found in Madame Guyon are not, indeed, very likely to mislead; for who, at this day, not educated in such views, would think of looking to penances and bodily austerities as means of grace, or find it reasonable and scriptural to worship the Virgin and the Saints? The truths of life, on the other hand, taught by her and illustrated by her experience, are eternal, and cannot fail to address every prepared mind with a living energy.

Even with regard to her doctrinal errors, it may be said with truth, that they are by no means in her what they are in others. She uses, for example, the common language of those who divide the Godhead into Three Persons; yet it is plain that she had deep views, peculiar to herself, respecting the Divine Unity. Though she would have stated her creed concerning the Person of Christ in the words of the Roman Communion, nothing is more certain than that she had a living recognition of the Omnipotence of the Lord as the centre of all spiritual life, and that she referred every thing she had or expected to Him. She believed in Purgatory; yet read her little treatise on it, and you will find that the idea she entertained of it approximates closely to the vastations which the writings of the New Church describe in the world of spirits. That her invocation of the Virgin and the Saints — an example of which we have in the Preface to the Torrents — was interiorly a different thing from the superstitious practice generally known under that term, may appear from the following extract from her life: “I could no longer see the Saints nor the holy Virgin *out of God*; but I used to see them all *in Him*, without being able, except with great difficulty, to distinguish them from Him; and although I tenderly loved certain saints, as St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Magdalene, St. Theresa, all indeed who excelled in the life of the interior, I yet could not conceive of them distinctly, or invoke them *out of God*;” as well as from a passage in her Justifications, in which she resolves the invocation of saints into “union or communion” with them.

But some things commonly alleged against Madame Guyon as errors are, in the opinion of the translator, most important truths, fully sustained by the doctrines of the New Church. The charge of “mysticism,” so commonly preferred against her writings, — by which term, when used in the way of reproach, something which soars above common apprehension into the unintelligible is understood, — comes from those who know much of religion by science, and nothing or very little by perception. “Whatever the spiritual man then speaks,” says Swedenborg, “merely natural men say that they do not perceive, and likewise that it is not so; and if only mention be made of what is internal or spiritual, they either ridicule it or call it mystical.” — A. C. 5022. Her *quietism*, or *passivity*, is almost of necessity, by such minds, construed into a letting of the hands hang down, and a waiting for influx. But that she did not so understand her own language is manifest from many passages of her writings,

of which the following, from the twenty-first chapter of her "Short Method of Prayer," is one: "Some persons, when they hear the prayer of silence spoken of, suppose falsely that the soul in this state remains stupid, dead, and inactive. But it is certain that it acts here more nobly and more wisely than ever before, since it is moved of God Himself, and acts by his Spirit. St. Paul demands that we should suffer ourselves to 'be moved [led] by the Spirit of God.' Rom. viii. 14. I do not say that we must not act, but that we must act in dependence on the movements of grace. This *action* of the soul is an action full of repose. When it acts of itself, it acts with effort, and, for that reason, is more sensible of its own action; but, when it acts in dependence on the spirit of grace, its action is so free, so easy, so natural, that it appears not to act. There is, therefore, action; but action so *noble*, so *peaceable*, so tranquil, that the soul appears not to act, because it acts as it were naturally."

Her language in reference to *annihilation* has also been misunderstood to signify the eradication of *all* desire and affection. But a candid examination will find her views, considered as popular statements, in remarkable accordance with the teachings of the New Church; for, while she holds, in effect, that "all the concupiscences of the natural are to be *extirpated*" (A. C. 5647), she says nothing inconsistent with the idea that we are "not to reject the natural, but to accommodate it, that it may be in agreement [with the internal], thus to *subordinate* it."—A. C. 5247. Annihilation with her is only a recognition of the New Church truth, that man, in himself considered, or such as he is previous to regeneration, is a "nothing" [see D. P. 19], and that there is to be an entire abstinence from all that this "nothing" would suggest, either to the will or the understanding. Thus she understands by it only that entire separation from the proprium which the doctrines of the New Church teach to be the main end of the Christian religion.

So with regard to the "divine life." Some of her figures and expressions might lead one to suppose that she viewed it as a kind of absorption into Deity, like that contended for by Pantheism; but her more definite statements show that she recognizes that distinction between the creature and the Creator which Swedenborg has stated with precision, when he tells us, that man in his highest state has a proprium still, though a celestial one, from which he continues to act as of himself. Madame Guyon even states, in other terms, what

Swedenborg has declared, — "That a man, in proportion as he is more nearly conjoined to the Lord, appears to himself to be more distinctly at his own disposal, and perceives more evidently that he is the Lord's." — D. P. 42. Sufficient proof of this may be found in the Second Part of the following treatise.

But, although it is the strong conviction of the translator, that those points in Madame Guyon which have been most excepted to, and have most provoked controversy, are most in agreement with the doctrine of life of the New Church, still he does not design to recommend this or any of her works, in any other point of view than as containing *popular* statements of what, in the writings of the New Church, is stated more truly, more widely, and with scientific precision. They are a presentation in the concrete of what is given by Swedenborg in the abstract form; and so will be useful in explaining, confirming, and, through the medium of the affections, enforcing, his higher and truer developments of a Divine Truth.

It is hoped that this little work may serve to commend the New Church to the notice and examination of those as yet little acquainted with it. There is a certain class in the religious community who have learned to appreciate her writings, chiefly through the excellent life of her prepared by Professor Upham. It may be matter of surprise to such to find, from this little work, the coincidence between her and the teachings of the New Church, on the deepest subjects of the interior life. And, when they learn that Swedenborg developed the profound wisdom so conspicuous in his theological works *from the Word*, they will surely be induced to examine whether what he so solemnly affirms may not be true, viz. that the Divine Word foretells a New Church to be established after that founded by the Lord through the apostles should have come to an end; that that Church commenced in the middle of the last century; and that its doctrines, which himself was the divinely-prepared medium for making known to the world, present Christianity in its final and perfect form. Ye who seek truth! examine whether it be not developed, in a manner to satisfy at once the demands of your rational faculty and your religious affections, from its only genuine fountain, — the Word of God — in the writings of Swedenborg; and, if you discover it there, let no human regards keep you from acknowledging the fact openly to the world, that others may find where you have found.

LETTER OF THE AUTHOR

TO HER CONFESSOR :

SERVING AS A PREFACE.

HAIL ! JESUS, MARY, JOSEPH !

It is in their names, and to obey your reverence, that I begin writing what I know not myself [beforehand], endeavoring, as far as possible, to give up my mind and my pen to be moved by the impulse of God, without other motion of my own but that of the hand. But, as my infidelities, and our natural inclination to mix what is our own with what God does, may so betray me, unawares, as that I shall mix my own motes and impurities among the divine rays, I hope that our Lord will enable you to distinguish them ; and that this impurity, not being able to join itself to the Sun, will serve the better to discover Him, and display His purity to more advantage. I acknowledge, then, that all which shall turn out to be good will be from our Lord, myself having no share in it ; seeing

that, when I begin to write, I do not know what it is to be; and that, if any thoughts of this kind should enter my mind, I should consider them as distractions, and any regard I should pay to them as great infidelities. All that shall prove worthless will be my own; and, as I know that this will be submitted, my very dear Father, to your light, I write simply and without reflection, what comes into my mind, leaving to your Reverence the care of separating the vile from the precious, the human from the divine, and error from the truth.

SPIRITUAL TORRENTS.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

1. Souls touched of God are impelled to seek Him. 2, 3. But in different ways, which are explained by a comparison, and reduced to three.

1. As soon as a soul is touched of God, and its return to Him is true and sincere, He gives to it, after the first cleansing effected by confession and contrition, a certain instinct to return to Him more perfectly, so that it may be [entirely] united to Him. Then it feels that it is not created for the amusements and trifles of the world, but that it has a centre and an end,*

* It is to be observed, that so far as man acknowledges the Lord and lives according to His precepts, so far he is elevated above his proprium, which elevation is out of the light of the world into the light of heaven. Man does not know that he is thus elevated above his proprium while he lives in the world, because it is not sensibly perceived by him; but still there is such elevation, or, as it were, attraction of the interior understanding and interior will of man unto the Lord, and thence a conversion of the face of man as to his spirit unto Him. This, however, is manifested to the good man after death; for then the conversion of the face is perpetual to the Lord, and there is, as it were, an attraction unto Him as to a common centre. — A. E. 646.

whither it must endeavor to return, and out of which it can never find true repose.

2. This instinct is communicated to the soul in a very high measure, though higher with some than with others, according to the designs which God has with them; but they all have a loving impatience to be purified, and to take the ways and means necessary to return to their source and origin. They may be compared to rivers, which, after issuing from their sources, flow with a perpetual course into the sea. Some of these rivers you see moving majestically and slowly, and others more rapidly. But there are some rivers and *torrents* which run with a frightful impetuosity that nothing can check. All the burdens you might put upon them, and all the dikes you might erect to hinder their course, would serve only to redouble its violence.

3. It is thus with these souls. Some advance gently towards perfection, never arriving at the sea, or reaching it very late; being satisfied to lose themselves in some stronger and more rapid river, which hurries them along with itself to the sea. Others, of the second kind, proceed thither more decidedly and rapidly than the first. They even carry along with them to the sea a large number of smaller streams; but they are dull and sluggish in comparison with the last, who hurry on with so much impetuosity that they are fit for very few purposes. No one dares sail on them, or trust them with any merchandise, except in certain places and at certain times. They are mad, headlong streams, dashing themselves against rocks, creating

terror by their sound, and stopping for nothing. The second, on the other hand, are more agreeable and more useful. Their majesty is pleasing to behold; they are quite loaded with merchandise; and all persons venture upon them without fear or danger.

It is proposed to consider, by the help of grace, these three class of persons, under the three figures above mentioned, beginning with the first, and ending aptly with the last.*

CHAPTER II.

Of the first way, which is active and of *meditation*, 1—5. What it is, its infirmities, usages, occupations, advantages, &c., 6—9. Important *counsel*, a disregard of which is the source of almost all the disputes and difficulties which have been raised about the passive ways and of the unreasonable things laid to their charge, 10—12. Souls fitted for meditation: they should be led thereby to the affections. Advice touching dryness and want of power, 13, 14. Spiritual and interior reading, books and authors, are attacked without good reason, 15, 16. Advice touching directors, both good and bad, 17—19. Capacity and incapacity of souls. The simple more hopeful than great reasoners.

1. SOULS of the first kind are those who, after their conversion, give themselves to *meditation*, or to the works themselves of charity; they practise some outward austerities; in a word, they endeavor by degrees to purify themselves, to remove certain striking sins,

* There are three kinds of men within the church, namely, those who are in love to the Lord, those who are in charity towards their neighbor, and those who are in the affection of truth. — A. C. 3653.

and even some venial ones of a voluntary kind. They labor* according to their little strength to advance by little and little, but do so feebly and slowly.†

2. As their source is not abundant, a drought almost exhausts them. There are even places, at such times, where they are quite dried up. They do not, indeed, cease to flow from their source; but it is in so feeble a manner as scarcely to be perceived.‡ These rivers carry no merchandise, or but little; and if, for the public good, they must be made to do so, it is requisite for this purpose that art should make good the defects of nature, and find means to swell them, either by emptying into them some ponds, or by joining to them other rivers of the same kind, and thus increasing their waters; whereby, by helping one another,

* That the confirmation of truth is also signified [by “six years shall he serve”] is, because spiritual truth, which is called the truth of faith, is confirmed by labor and combat. — A. C. 8975.

† In the spiritual church which the sons of Israel represented, there are two kinds of men, — some who are in the truths of faith, and not in correspondent good of life; and some who are in the good of charity, and in correspondent truth of faith. They who are in the good of charity, and in correspondent truth of faith, are they who constitute the very church itself, and are men of the internal church. In the internal sense of the word, these are they who are called the Sons of Israel: these are of themselves free, because they are in good, for they who are led of the Lord by good are free; but they who are in the truth of faith, and not in correspondent good of life, are men of the external spiritual church. These are they who, in the internal sense of the word, are meant by Hebrew servants. — A. C. 8974.

‡ They who love truth for the sake of truth from external or natural affections, when they hear truth, also rejoice; but they do not think about a life according to it: nevertheless, it flows in from the internal, while they are ignorant of it. — A. C. 10, 683.

they may be made capable of carrying some small boats, not to the sea, but to some of those commanding rivers of which we shall speak hereafter.

3. These souls are usually but little engaged interiorly. They labor on the outside, and seldom get beyond meditation; for which reason they are not fit for great things. They do not commonly carry merchandise, that is to say, they have nothing for others; and God makes use of them, for the most part, only to convey some small boats, that is, to do some works of corporal mercy. Moreover, to derive profit from them, they must have emptied into them the ponds of sensible graces, or be united to others in the monastic life; in which case, many, of middling endowments in grace, succeed in carrying a little boat, but not to the sea itself (which is God), into which they do not enter during this life, though they do in the next.

4. It is not meant that these souls are not sanctified by this way. There is, indeed, a large number of excellent souls commonly esteemed as very virtuous, who do not go beyond it; God giving them lights* adapted to their state, which sometimes are very beautiful, and excite the admiration of ordinary Christians. Some even of these souls, towards the end of life, receive some passive lights, proportioned to the faithfulness which they have maintained in their way; † but,

* They who are of the external church are clearly in its externals, and obscurely in its internals; whereas they who are of the internal church are clearly in internals, and obscurely in externals. — A. C. 8762.

† Every man, when he is regenerating, first becomes a man of the

for the most part, they do not get out of themselves : all their graces and lights, being after a created manner, — I mean, proportioned to their capacity, — are distinguished, perceived, and accompanied with fervors ;* and the more these lights are distinguished, perceived, and accompanied with fervors, the more they attach themselves thereto, thinking there can be nothing greater in this life.

5. The most favored of these souls practise virtue with much generosity. They have a thousand holy inventions and a thousand practices for seeking God, and continuing in His presence. All, however, is done by their own proper efforts, aided and assisted by grace. Their own operation appears to exceed that of God, and that of God only concurs with their own.†

6. I believe that one who should endeavor to move these souls to a higher kind of prayer, would not suc-

external church, but afterwards a man of the internal church; they who are in the internal church are in superior intelligence and wisdom to those who are of the external church, and on that account also more interiorly in heaven. — A. C. 7840.

* They think of the Lord as of another man, and not as of God; and they think of love to Him from a certain worldly love.

† The first state [of those who are reformed and become spiritual] is, that they suppose they do good, and think truth from themselves; thus from proprium, knowing no otherwise at that time; and when it is told them that all good and all truth is from the Lord, they do not, indeed, reject it, but do not acknowledge it in heart, because they are not sensible, nor do they inwardly perceive, that any thing flows in from any other source than from themselves. Inasmuch as all who are reformed are at first in such a state, therefore they are left of the Lord in proprium; but still they are led of Him by their proprium, themselves being ignorant of it. — A. C. 2678.

ceed ; and this for several reasons. The first is, that, as they have nothing supernatural, except in proportion to their labor, if you take their labor from them, you stop the flow of their graces ; they being like pumps, which give water only in proportion as they are worked. You will even observe in these souls a great facility in reasoning,* and in availing themselves of their faculties, an activity always vigorous and strong, a desire to be always doing something further and something new towards perfecting themselves, and in their times of dryness an anxiety to throw them off, as well as their faults.†

7. These souls are greatly tossed between high and low. At one time they do wonders, at another they languish and creep ; they do not hold an even tenor of progress. Inasmuch as the main principle of wor-

* But that the Lord is good itself, and that every thing which is of love to Him and of charity towards the neighbor is good, and that every thing which asserts and confirms this is truth, they know but very obscurely ; yea, they even entertain doubts herein, and admit reasonings against it ; and so long as they are in such a state, it is impossible for the light of truth from the Lord to flow in. — A. C. 2935.

† In this verse [Gen. xxi. 14] is described of what quality in the beginning is the state of those who are reformed, viz. that they are carried away into various errors ; for it is impressed on them of the Lord to think much about eternal life, thus much about the truths of faith ; but because they do this from proprium, as was said, they must needs wander hither and thither, as in doctrine so in life, catching at that as truth which was inseminated from infancy, or which is impressed upon them by others, or which is thought of by themselves, besides that they are led away by various affections which they are ignorant of. — A. C. 2679.

ship resides with them in the faculties,* when these faculties are dried up, whether from want of labor on their part, or of correspondence on the part of God, they fall into discouragement, or else overwhelm themselves with austerities, and efforts to recover, by themselves, what they have lost. They do not possess, like these other souls, a deep peace or calm in their distractions,† but, on the contrary, are always on the alert to combat them, or to complain of them. They are commonly scrupulous, and entangled in their own ways,‡ unless they happen to be gifted with a considerable strength of mind.

✓ 8. These souls, then, should not be led to passive
✓ prayer. This would be to ruin them beyond help, by

* The good in which he [the man of the external church] is, is not from a spiritual origin, but from a natural origin. — A. C. 8977.

† In the beginning, he [the man who is regenerating] is in a state of tranquillity; but as he passes into new life, so also he passes into an untranquil state; for the evils and falsities which he had before imbibed, emerge and show themselves, and disturb him, and at length to such a degree that he is immersed in temptations and vexations from the diabolical crew, who are in the continual endeavor to destroy the state of this new life. But still he has inmosty a state of peace; for, unless this were the case, he could not engage in combat. — A. C. 3696.

‡ That the spiritual are held entangled in the scientific natural, as to the truths of faith, the case is this: the spiritual have not a perception of good and truth like the celestial, but, instead thereof, they have conscience, &c. — A. C. 2831.

They who are in the affection of truth think, inquire, and debate whether a thing be true or not true, whether it be so or not so; and when they are confirmed that it is true, or that it is so, they further think, inquire, and debate what it is: thus they stick in the very threshold, and are incapable of being admitted into wisdom, until they are void of doubt. — A. C. 2718.

taking from them their means* of advancing towards God. For, if you take from a person who is obliged to travel, but who has neither boats nor coaches nor any means of progress but walking, the use of his feet, you put it out of his power to go forward; and so, if you take from these souls their own operation,† which is their feet, they would never make any progress.

9. Here, I think, is the source of the disputes which at present take place among persons given to prayer. Those who are in the *passive* kind of prayer, knowing

* In this verse [Gen. xxi. 14] is described of what quality in the beginning is the state of those who are reformed, viz. that they are carried away into various errors; for it is impressed on them of the Lord to think much about eternal life, thus much about the truths of faith; but because they do this from proprium, as was said, they must needs wander hither and thither, as in doctrine so in life, catching at that as truth which was inseeded from infancy, or which is impressed upon them by others, or which is thought of by themselves; besides that they are led away by various affections which they are ignorant of: they are like fruits as yet unripe, whereunto form, beauty, and flavor cannot be in a moment imparted; or they are like tender shoots, which cannot in a moment put forth flower, or grow up into the ear. Nevertheless, the things which then enter, although for the most part erroneous, are yet such as may serve to promote growth; and these things afterwards, when reformation is effected, are partly separated, partly made serviceable for introducing as it were nourishments and juices into the subsequent life, partly are adapted, as far as may be, to the goods and truths afterwards implanted of the Lord, and partly serve spiritual things for ultimate plans: thus they serve as continual *means* for reformation, which means follow in perpetual connection and order. — A. C. 2679.

† Inasmuch as all who are reformed are at first in such a state, therefore they are left of the Lord in proprium; but still they are led of Him by their proprium, themselves being ignorant of it. — A. C. 2678.

the good they derive from it, would have everybody walk in it; others, on the contrary, who are in *meditation*, would confine all to their way, which would be an inexpressible loss and injury. What is to be done here? We must take the middle course, and ascertain whether souls are fit for the one way or the other.

10. The experienced director may know this by their unwillingness to continue in a state of repose and to give themselves up to be led by the Spirit of God, by a swarm of faults and failings into which they fall, almost without seeing or knowing them;* or, in case they are persons of a human discretion and prudence, by a certain dexterity in covering up their faults from themselves and others, by an attachment to their feelings, and by a large number of faults which cannot here be enumerated, but which the experienced director will know:†

Must they, then, be left all their life in reasoning? I believe, that, if they are happy enough to find them a skilful director, he will not fail to advance them much beyond this. A vast number of souls, who believe themselves fit only for meditation, would reach

* Besides that they [in the first state of reformation] are led away by various affections which they are ignorant of. — A. C. 2679.

† They who do not suffer themselves to be regenerated, but only to be reformed, do not act from affection, but from obedience. If they seem to themselves to act from the heart and from a free principle, it is for the sake of somewhat of self-glory, which makes it to be so apperceived; nor do they act truth for the sake of truth, nor good for the sake of good, but for the sake of the delight arising from that glory: thus neither do they exercise charity towards the neighbor for the sake of the neighbor, but that they may be seen and that they may be recompensed. — A. C. 8987.

the highest degree of perfection, if they only found an accomplished director. So far would a director who is in grace be from injuring, that he would help them vastly, making them walk according to the whole extent of the Divine will towards them; so that they should neither run before grace, nor be slack to follow it, but should second and correspond to it. A director of ordinary endowments in grace, on the contrary, checks the progress of souls, hinders them from advancing, and appropriates them to himself.

11. The experienced director, then, will incline these souls to deal less in reasonings, and more in affections; he will strip them gradually of their reasoning habits,* substituting good affections† in place of them; and if he sees them growing by degrees in simplicity, and finding more delight in affection than in reasoning, the latter drying up by little and little, it is a sign that there is something to be done in these souls, on behalf of spiritual life.

12. It is to be observed, however, that if the habit of reasoning should cease from weakness in the person, and these souls should feel themselves inclined, not to love, but only to be inactive from stupidity and mental indolence, they should be led to active exercise. If they cannot do it by the understanding, they should

* There are spirits who are disposed to reason on all subjects, having no perception of what is good and true; nay, the more they reason, the less perception they have. — A. C. 1385.

† The rational is not born from sciences and knowledges, but of the affection of sciences and knowledges; as may appear solely from this, that no one can possibly become rational, unless some delight or affection of sciences and knowledges influence him. — A. C. 1395.

at least by affection and the will. For souls who begin to experience spiritual dryness by grace are not more imperfect, the more they experience of it:* on the contrary, they have an instinct to pursue themselves, in order to combat themselves, and to pursue the light in order to find it again and follow it. They must, then, be assisted, and be led, not to strip themselves, but to fill the will rather than the understanding. They should not be led to seek states of repose, but to run with all their strength, according to their little ability, until it shall please God to relieve their labor of walking by some conveyance, or rather, according to my original comparison, until these feeble little streams find the river or the great estuary, which receives them into its bosom, and carries them into the sea.

13. I know not why there is such an outcry against spiritual books, and the persons who write and speak of interior ways. I maintain that they can do no harm, except to some who choose to be ruined for their own pleasure, to whom not only these things are hurtful, but every thing besides, being like spiders who change flowers into poison. To humble souls desirous of perfection, they cannot be prejudicial, seeing it is impossible that they should understand and make use

* As to what further regards desolation, it is on account of appetite; for goods and truths are received according to appetite, and the desires which are from appetite, when they are obtained, constitute what is satisfactory and happy: wherefore, in the other life, they who are in desolation are frequently refreshed, and enjoy their desires. By such vicissitudes all are perfected. — A. C. 6110.

of them, if the gift therefor is not imparted to them; for, what books soever they may read, they cannot imagine to themselves states which, inasmuch as they are supernatural, are not to be apprehended by the imagination, but only by experience.* Moreover, even if one should be willing to deceive himself, and to make use of terms he had met with in reading, the skilful director, by the questions he would put, would quickly detect the deception. Besides which, the state of a soul in any given degree implies all the consequences of that state, and perfection advances step by step with interior progress.†

It is not meant to deny that there are souls advanced in prayer, who will have faults apparently greater than those of ordinary souls; but these faults are not alike either as to nature or as to quality.

14. The second reason for saying that these books cannot do hurt, is, because they enjoin so many deaths, so many separations from the world, so many things to be conquered and destroyed, that the soul would never have strength enough for the undertaking, if its interior were not in a true state. And even if it should undertake the task, it would derive from the very practices recommended only the result which meditation yields, which is only a laboring at the destruction of self. The whole difference is, that the

* But whereas it is not known from any internal sensation or perception what good is, therefore also such things cannot come to be known; for what a man is ignorant of, this he does not understand, notwithstanding its being presented to him. — A. C. 5365.

† Perfection increases towards interior things. — A. C. Index.

soul would not act by a divine, but only by a virtuous principle, — a thing which the experienced director would soon discover.

15. For this reason a soul should never undertake to lead itself in the ways of religion, nor be afraid of having a director too much enlightened. To seek any other than such an one would be to deceive one's self, and, from mere cowardice, to limit the Spirit of God by limiting the perfection it bestows to this or that particular.

What I conclude from this is, that the most spiritual director should always be chosen. Such an one will be useful, in whatever degree the person may be ; and God will grant to you, ye who hope for nothing supernatural, by this man, so dear to Him, what He would not grant to you by yourselves.

16. But as for those directors who appropriate souls to themselves, who would fain conduct them in their own way, and not in God's ; who would put limits to His graces, and fix barriers to hinder them from advancing, — as for these directors, I say, who know but one way, and who would fain make all the world walk in it, the mischief they do to souls is remediless, because they keep them fixed, all their lives, to certain things which prevent God from communicating Himself to them without bounds.

What an account will they not have to render for these souls ? If they have not light enough to conduct them, why do they not suffer them to go to masters more advanced ? They should have charity enough to advise it themselves. We should do in

the spiritual life, it seems to me, as we do in schools. Scholars are not kept always in the same class; they are transferred to higher ones, and the teachers of the Sixth form and the Fifth do not intermeddle with the teaching of Philosophy. O human sciences! ye are of so little account, and yet so much care is taken of you! O mystical and divine science! thou art so great and so necessary, and yet thou art neglected, limited, constrained, and tortured! Oh, shall there never be a school of prayer! Alas! by seeking to make a study of it, men have spoiled all. They have endeavored to give rules and measures to the Spirit of God, which is without measure.

17. There is no soul which is not capable of prayer, and which cannot and ought not to apply itself thereto. The coarsest and dullest persons are capable of it. I know this from experience. Certain persons applied to me, who had an almost invincible incapacity for prayer, who were unwilling to give themselves thereto, and who, after having done so for a time, wished to throw it up entirely; but, as they had great confidence in me, I obliged them, by a gentle violence, to continue in spite of their repugnance and the little advantage they thought themselves reaping; for they believed themselves quite unfit for it. These persons, after persevering for several years, reached a high degree of infused prayer. They have confessed to me, of their own accord, that, if I had not been firm, they should have given all up, and have been lost. Now, if these souls had fallen in with some directors, they would have told them without hesitation, that their

having passed four and five years in praying, without being able either to meditate or to be warmed with the love of God, or becoming more perfect, was a sign that God did not call them to this kind of prayer. Poor, impotent souls! you are more fit than others to answer the designs of God; and, if you are faithful, you will succeed better than those high reasoners who rather make a study of prayer than pray.

18. I say yet further, that the poor souls who appear so impotent and incapable, are very well adapted to contemplation, provided they do not grow weary of knocking at the door, and of waiting with humble patience until it is opened to them. These great reasoners,* these understandings so fertile that they cannot remain a moment in silence before God, who appear to have an admirable facility, and a perpetual stream of words, who know so well how to give an account of their prayer and of all its parts, who can always pray as they like and with the same methods, who expatiate at will on all the subjects they take up, who are so well pleased with themselves and their own lights, who refine on the preparations and methods of prayer, will never in the least advance in it, and after ten or twenty years of such practice will be still the same. O my God! will men undertake to teach others how to testify love to love itself? Alas! when even a wretched creature is to be loved, do we set about it

* The spirits who reason much in the other life perceive little what is true and good; wherefore neither can they be admitted into the interior angelic societies, for nothing of intelligence can be communicated to them there. — A. C. 6324.

by plan and method? The most ignorant in this matter are the most skilful; and the case is the same, but in a vastly higher degree, with the Divine Love.

19. Wherefore, O prudent director! if a poor soul that has never prayed applies to you to be taught how, teach him to love God heartily; make him cast himself headlong into love,* and he will soon be conqueror. If he has a nature little adapted to love, let him do his best, and wait in patience till love itself shall make him love, in its own way, rather than yours. Simple, short, moving subjects, requiring little reasoning, are the best ones for beginners. Solid truths, read and somewhat digested at other times than those of prayer, will do as much as meditation; but make them employ the period of prayer in loving much.

* For nothing lives in the external man but affection; the reason of which is because the affection of good descends from the celestial, that is, from celestial love, which vivifies all into which it flows. — A.C. 1589.

All delight, blessedness, and happiness is solely from love; but according to the quality of the love, such is the delight, blessedness, and happiness. — A. C. 2718.

CHAPTER III.

1, 2. Of the *second* way of the soul's return to God, which is *passive*, but still a way of *light*, and of the two introductions into it. 3—6. Description of these souls, and their great advantages. 7—17. Several necessary cautions and observations touching these souls; the way of leading them; their dispositions, practices, perfections, imperfections, and trials.

1. SOULS of the second kind are like those large rivers which move with slow and stately steps. They flow with pomp and majesty. The eye distinguishes their course, which has a certain order. They are laden with merchandise, and can themselves go to the sea without emptying into other rivers. But they reach it only at a late period, their advance being grave and slow. Moreover, there are some which never enter it, losing themselves for the most part in other greater rivers, or else ending in some arm of the sea. Many of these rivers serve only to carry merchandise, with which they are heavily burdened. They can be checked by dams, and turned aside at certain places. Such are the souls who are in the *passive way of light*. Their source is very abundant. They are laden with gifts, graces, and heavenly favors. They are the admiration of their age, and very many saints who shine in the church like brilliant stars have never passed this degree.

2. These souls are of two kinds. Those of the one kind begin by the common way, and are afterwards drawn to passive contemplation by the goodness of God, who takes pity on their labor, so unfruitful,

dry, and arid ; or does it to reward their first faithfulness.

The others are taken as it were all at once. They are seized by the heart, and feel themselves loving without having become acquainted with the object of their love. For there is this difference between divine and human love, that the latter supposes a knowledge of its object, because, as it is without, the senses must be determined thereto, and the senses are determined to it only because it is communicated to them : the eyes see, and the heart loves. The case is not the same with divine love. Since God has an absolute control over the heart of man, and is its first principle and its end, there is no necessity that He should make it acquainted with Himself [beforehand]. He takes it by assault, without offering battle : the heart is unable to resist Him. This, however, does not infer that God makes use of absolute power and violence, except in some cases where He does so to display His might. He takes these souls, then, as was said, making them burn all of a sudden ; though, in common, He gives them only flashes of light, which dazzle them and carry them away.

3. Nothing is so full of light and so ardent as these souls : directors are delighted when they have them under their care. And as the labor of these souls is not thorough-going, they are early made perfect, according to the degree which they have to perfect. For as God does not exact of them a perfection so eminent as from those next to be spoken of, nor a purification so thorough, their defects are sooner removed.

4. It is not meant that the souls we are speaking of do not appear much higher than those that come next, to such as have not divine discernment. For they reach, exteriorly, a remarkable degree of perfection, God exalting their natural* capacity in an eminent degree. They have wonderful states of union with Him, God adapting Himself to their capacity,† which He exalts in a certain extraordinary manner. But still these persons are never truly annihilated, and God does not commonly take them out of their own selfhood, that they may lose themselves in Him.

5. Notwithstanding, these souls excite the admiration and astonishment of men. God gives them gifts upon gifts, graces upon graces, lights upon lights, visions, revelations, interior words, ecstasies, ravishments, &c. It appears as if He had no other care than to enrich and beautify them, and to communicate to them His secrets. All delights are for them.

* The spiritual man is not the interior rational man, but the interior natural; the interior rational man is what is called celestial; what the difference is between the spiritual and celestial man has been often told above. — A. C. 4402.

† As to what pertains to the other [arcanum], viz. that this obscure with the spiritual is illuminated by the Lord's Divine Human, it is an arcanum which cannot be explained to the apprehension, for it is an influx of the Divine which would be described; only some idea may be had of it from this, that if the Supreme Divine itself flowed into such good as has been described, defiled with so many evils and falses, it could not be received; and if it should be received in any respect, the man who had such good would feel infernal torment, and they would perish. But the Divine Human of the Lord may flow in with such persons, and illuminate such good, as the sun flows into the dense clouds which are in the morning variegated into the colors of the dawn. — A. C. 2716.

6. It is not that they do not bear great crosses and violent temptations, which are like dark shades, which only serve to exalt the splendor of their virtues ;* for these temptations are repelled with vigor, these crosses are borne with strength, — they even wish for more of them,† — they are all fire and flames, all languor, all love. They have great hearts, ready to undertake every thing. In a word, in a very little while they are prodigies and the miracles of their age. God makes use of them to do miracles, and it appears as if it were enough that they desire a thing for God to grant it to them. It seems as though He delighted to accomplish all their desires and to effectuate all their wills. They are in a high degree of mortification ; they practise great austerities, some more and some less, according to their state and degree, — for in every state there are many degrees, and some arrive at a perfection much more eminent than others. In the same way there are many different degrees.

7. The director can hurt these souls much, or help them much, because, if he does not understand their way, he will either oppose them, causing them much pain, as was the case with St. Theresa (which, however, is not the thing chiefly to be feared), or else he

* Temptations also give the quality of the apperception of good and truth, by the opposites which evil spirits then infuse ; from the opposites apperceived are procured relatives, from which all quality is ; for no one knows what good is, unless he also knows what is not good ; nor what truth is, unless he knows what is not true. — A. C. 5356.

† There are some who willingly endure to be vastated, and thereby to put off the false principles which they had brought with them out of the world. — A. C. 1107.

will admire them too much, and will let them know the esteem in which he holds them. This is the great hurt most commonly done to souls, because their minds are thus diverted to themselves, and they are made to rest in the gifts of God, instead of being made to run after God by His gifts.

The design of God in thus distributing, and even pouring out profusely, His graces to them, is to draw them to Himself; but they make a quite different use of His mercies. They rest in them, they ponder them, they look at them, they appropriate them to themselves;* and from this come vanities, self-complacencies, self-esteem, preference of one's self to others, and often the ruin and destruction of the interior.†

8. These souls are admirable as regards themselves; and sometimes, by special grace, they can greatly help others, especially if they have been sinners. But they

* In the beginning, all who are reformed suppose that good is from themselves, and thence that by the good which they do they merit salvation; for to imagine that by the good which they do they merit salvation is a sure consequence of imagining good to be from themselves, for the one coheres with the other. — A. C. 4174.

The truth which is given by the Lord is at first received as if it were not given; for man before regeneration supposes that he procures for himself truth; and so long as he supposes this, he is in spiritual theft. — A. C. 5747.

† With man about to be regenerated, the case is thus, that his first affection of truth is very impure; for there is in it an affection of use and of end for the sake of himself, for the sake of the world, for the sake of glory in heaven and the like things, which look towards himself, but not towards the community, the Lord's kingdom, and still less towards the Lord. Such an affection must needs precede: nevertheless, it is successively purified of the Lord. — A. C. 3089.

are not, for the most part, so fit to lead others as those next described. For as they are very strong in God, and in an eminent degree, they have a certain horror towards sin, and often experience aversion towards sinners, and certain antipathies which yet have something of grace in them. If they are superiors, they are without a certain motherly compassion for sinners; and as they have never themselves experienced the miseries that are told them, they are astonished, and harangue about them. They exact too high a degree of perfection from others, and do not put them in the way thereto by little and little;* and if they chance to meet with souls in the state of weakness,† they do not help them according to the degree they are in, and according to the designs of God, and they often even put them out of their right way. They find it difficult to converse with imperfect souls, preferring their own solitude and their own life to all the accommodations of charity.‡

* Their good [of those who are in doctrinals of faith], so to speak, being hard, not suffering itself to be bended, not communicative, thus not in heaven, but upon the threshold to heaven. — A. C. 3459.

† It is to be known that with those who are regenerating there is effected a turning, namely, that they are led by truth to good, and that afterwards from good they are led to truth. When this turning takes place, or when the state is changed, and becomes inverse to the foregoing, then there is mourning; for then they are let into temptation, whereby the things of the proprium are weakened and debilitated, and good is insinuated, and with good a new will-desire, and with this a new freedom, thus a new proprium. — A. C. 5773.

‡ A man whose rational is such that he is only in truth, although in the truth of faith, and not at the same time in the good of charity, is altogether of this character; he is morose, impatient, opposite to

9. One who listens to these persons without being divinely enlightened will believe that they are in the same ways with those of the last degree, and even more advanced. They make use of the same terms, such as *death, loss, annihilation, &c.*; and it is indeed true, that in their own way, they die, are annihilate, they lose themselves in God. For often their faculties are lost or suspended in prayer, and they even lose the control of them, so that they cannot avail themselves of them or operate with them; all that they have being received passively. Thus these souls are passive, but are still in light, in love, in strength. If you examine things closely and converse with them, you will see that they have very good and even admirable wills. Their desires are the greatest and loftiest possible; they carry perfection as far as it will go; they are detached; they love poverty. Notwithstanding, they are and always will be proprietary even of virtue, but in a way so delicate that only the divine eyes can discover it.*

all others, viewing every one as in the false, instantly rebuking, chastising, and punishing: he is without pity, neither does he apply himself and endeavor to bend the minds of others; for he regards every thing from truth, and nothing from good. — A. C. 1949.

* The reason that man ought not to claim any thing to himself which is from the Lord, thus ought not to claim truth and good, is, that he may be in the truth; and so far as he is in the truth, so far he is in the light in which the angels in heaven are; and so far as he is in that light, so far he is in intelligence and wisdom; and so far as he is in intelligence and wisdom, so far he is in happiness. This is the reason why man ought to acknowledge, in faith of the heart, that nothing of truth and good is from himself, but all from the Lord; and this because it is so. — A. C. 5749.

10. The greater part of the saints, whose lives are so admirable, have been led by this way. These souls are so laden with merchandise that their course is very slow. What, then, must be done with them? Will they never quit this way? No, not unless they are helped by a miracle of providence, and led by a director divinely enlightened, who shall dispose them neither to resist these graces, nor to look at them, but to go beyond them, so that they shall not stop in them for a moment. For these lookings at themselves are like dams which keep water from flowing on its way.

11. Their director should explain to them that there is a surer way for them, — that of faith; and that God gives these favors only by reason of their weakness. Their director, I repeat, should lead them on from the sensible to the supernatural, from the perceived and certain* to the very deep and very certain darkness† of faith. He should not seem to lay any stress upon all this experience. He should not make them write about it, unless the soul should be so notably advanced in its way, that, having knowledges necessary to be known, he should deem it necessary to have them put in wri-

* They who have conscience do not swear, and still less they who have a perception of good and truth, that is, celestial men: these latter do not even confirm by reasons with themselves, and amongst themselves; but only say that it is so, or that it is not so: wherefore, these are still further removed from an oath. — A. C. 2842.

† “I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and the hidden wealth of hiding places, that thou mayest know that I am Jehovah,” Isa. xlv. 3; where the treasures of darkness and the hidden wealth of hiding places denote such things as relate to heavenly wisdom or intelligence, which are hidden from the natural man. — A. C. 10,227.

ting. Even then it would be better they should not write; for it is also true [of others] that they should build nothing on these knowledges, but only on Providence. It is good to know the designs of God, and to labor for their accomplishment; but Providence alone ought to furnish the means, and lead to their execution. Here there is no room for being deceived.

It is also unprofitable to seek to determine whether these things are from God or not, inasmuch as they should be left behind. For, if they are from God, they will be brought to pass by Providence by our giving up ourselves thereto; and if they are not, we shall not be deceived if we do not stop at them.

12. These souls experience much more difficulty in entering on the way of faith than the first; and, for the most part, they do not enter on it, unless God has some extraordinary design with them, and destines them to lead others. For, as that which they have is so great and so decidedly from God that they are assured of it, and have even seen their predictions accomplished, they do not believe that there is any thing greater in the church of God; and therefore they cling to it. These persons are discreet, prudent, — they often feel too strong a zeal towards the weak and towards sinners. They would not take a false step, so carefully do they guard themselves; but what they will, they will very imperfectly and very strongly.*

* That "between me and thee, what is this" [Gen. xxiii. 15], signifies that he assented, but still willed from self, viz. to be prepared or reformed, may appear from the sense of the letter applied to the internal sense; which treats of reformation. It was said above by

O God! how many ways of spiritual appropriation are there, which appear as great virtues to souls not highly enlightened, but which appear as great faults, exceeding dangerous to those who are so!* For souls of this way regard as virtues what the others consider as subtle faults: the light to discover them is not imparted to them; and, when they are spoken to about the matter, they do not comprehend.†

13. These souls are firm in their opinions; and, as

Ephron, "The field I give thee, and the cave which is therein I give thee," verse 11; by which words was signified that they were willing to prepare themselves as to the things pertaining to the church and faith, that is, to reform themselves. That the first state of those who are reformed is such, may be seen, n. 2046; but when they are farther advanced in the knowledges of truth or of faith, then is their second state, that they assent indeed, but still will from self. — A. C. 2960.

* All have the faculty of understanding and being wise; but that one is wiser than another is because they do not in like manner ascribe to the Lord all things of intelligence and wisdom, which are all things of truth and good; they who ascribe all things to the Lord are wiser than others, since all things of truth and good which constitute wisdom flow in from heaven, that is, from the Lord there. The ascribing of all things to the Lord opens the interiors of man towards heaven, for thus it is acknowledged that nothing of good and truth is from himself; and in proportion as this is acknowledged, in the same proportion the love of self departs, and with the love of self the thick darkness from falses and evils; in the same proportion also man comes into innocence, and into love and faith to the Lord; hence conjunction with the Divine, influx thence, and illustration. — A. C. 10, 227.

† When he [the spiritual man] superadds any thing of himself and of his own thought, then, for the most part, the sensual with its fallacies, and the rational with its appearances, prevail, and effect that he can scarce acknowledge any pure truth, such as the celestial acknowledge. — A. C. 2715.

their grace is great and eminent, they are the more assured concerning them. They have rules and measures in their obediences, and [their own] prudence always accompanies them. In a word, they are strong and living in God, although they appear dead. They are indeed dead as to their own proper operation, receiving light passively; but they are not dead as to their inmost.*

14. These souls also often enjoy interior silence, a delightful peace, and certain absorptions in God, which they distinguish and describe very well; but they have not that secret desire to be nothing which belongs to the last. They desire, indeed, to be nothing by a certain perceived annihilation, a deep humility, a certain prostration under the boundless weight of the divine greatness, which is more difficult for them to bear, the more strongly they feel this weight of the divine presence. All this is an annihilation where one stops by the way without being annihilated.† They have the sentiment of annihila-

* For man in genuine humiliation divests himself of all ability to think and do any thing from himself, and lends himself altogether to the Divine. — A. C. 6866.

† Regeneration is nothing else than for the natural to be subjugated, and the spiritual to obtain the dominion; and the natural is then subjugated, when it is reduced to correspondence; and when the natural is reduced to correspondence, it then no longer resists, but acts as it is commanded, and obeys the dictates of the spiritual, in nearly the same manner as the acts of the body obey the dictates of the will, and as the speech with the countenance is according to the influx of the thought: hence it is evident that the natural ought altogether to become as nothing, in respect to willing, in order that man may become spiritual. — A. C. 5651.

tion, but not the reality ; for this sentiment still sustains the soul [in its own proper life], and is a state more satisfactory to it than any other, inasmuch as it is more sure, and they have a confident knowledge of it.*

15. Such souls, for the most part, do not come to God, except after death, with the exception of some privileged ones, whom God destines to be the lights of His church, or whom He would sanctify in a more eminent manner.† These He strips, by little and little, of all their riches. But, as there are few courageous enough, after possessing so many goods, to be willing to lose them all, there are few — fewer than can be expressed — who go beyond this degree ; the design of God being perhaps that they should not do so, and that, “ as there are many mansions in

* Hence it is that the spiritual have not love to the Lord like the celestial ; consequently neither have they humiliation, which is essential in all worship, and by which good from the Lord may flow in. — A. C. 2715.

† It was said above by Ephron : “ The field I give thee, and the cave which is therein I give it thee,” Gen. xxiii. 11 ; by which words was signified that they were willing to prepare themselves as to the things pertaining to the church and to faith, that is, to reform themselves. That the first state of those who are reformed is such, may be seen, n. 2046 ; but when they are further advanced in the knowledges of truth or of faith, then is their second state, that they assent indeed, but still will from self, and this is the state treated of in this verse ; but a third state is described presently, that they believe they are reformed by the Lord. This is the third state, which is followed by a fourth state, viz. that they perceive it to be from the Lord ; but there are few who arrive at this state in the life of the body, it being an angelic state : yet they who are regenerate come into this state in another life. — A. C. 2960.

the house of His Father," John xiv. 2, they should occupy only this lower one. This may be for want of courage on their part, or for want of enlightened directors. Those who lead them would believe, perhaps, that they had destroyed them, if they saw them falling from those eminent gifts and graces. But let us leave the causes of this among the hidden things of God's Providence.

16. Some of these souls do not enjoy these free gifts, but, instead of them, a generous, deep-seated strength, a secret love, gentle and peaceable, pervading and vigorous, which consummates their perfection and their life. Such are skilful in concealing and disguising their faults, always giving them some good color or pretext.

17. The trials * experienced by the souls I have just spoken of are also as extraordinary as their state. They come from the Devil; † and although they are

* That they who are reformed are reduced to ignorance of truth or desolation, even to grief and desperation, and that then first they receive comfort and help from the Lord, is at this day unknown, by reason that few are reformed. They who are such as to be capable of being informed, if not in the life of the body, yet in another life, are brought into this state, which in another life is well known, and is called vastation or desolation. They who are in such vastation or desolation are reduced even to desperation. — A. C. 2694.

Temptations are nothing else but the combats of evil with the angels who are attendant on man. — A. C. 741.

† Whereas it is known to few, if to any, what is the nature and manner of temptations, because few at this day undergo temptations, and they who do undergo them know no other than that it is somewhat inherent in themselves which is the subject of such suffering, it is permitted briefly to explain the matter. They are evil spirits,

extremely violent, and quite other in appearance from those which are to follow, they notwithstanding still serve them for a support. They are given up to the Devil, who exercises upon them the utmost of his malice; but they are entirely protected, despite the frightful fury of these malignant spirits.* It requires a high degree of light to discover the support concealed under a state so terrible; but experience gives one to know it.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the *third way* of souls returning to God, which is the *passive way of faith*, and of its first degree. 1—4. A brief description of this way under the figure of a torrent. 5—10. The inclination of the soul to God, its proprieties, obstacles, effects, explained under the figure of fire. 11—18. What happens to a soul called to the *passive way of faith*. Description of the *first degree* of this third way, and of the state of a soul in it. 19, 20. The repose it enjoys therein would be hurtful, did not God take it thence in order to advance it.

1. As regards souls of the *third degree*, what shall we say, except that they are like TORRENTS which have their source in high mountains? † They have

who, on such occasions, excite man's fables and evils, and stir up in his memory whatsoever he has thought or done from his infancy. This the evil spirits can effect in so cunning and malicious a manner as cannot be described. — A. C. 751.

* But the Lord by angels protects man and restrains the evil spirits from wandering out of due bounds, and bringing on man a greater inundation than he is capable of sustaining. — A. C. 741.

† Mountains denote the good of love. — A. C. Index.

Mountain denotes the Lord, hence things celestial. — *Ibid.*

their source in God Himself, and enjoy not a moment's rest until they are lost in Him. Nothing stops them, and for this reason they are not burdened with any thing. They are quite bare, and run with a rapidity which strikes fear into the boldest. These torrents run irregularly hither and thither, through all places on their way which can afford them passage. Their beds are not regular like the others, nor is their progress subject to any rule. You see them running wherever they can make their way, without stopping for any thing. They dash themselves against rocks, and fall in loud-sounding cataracts. Sometimes, in passing through grounds which are not firm, their waters become impure, by sweeping the soil along with them in their rapid course. Sometimes they are lost in depths and gulfs, and are not found again for a considerable distance; and when, at length, they make their appearance for a brief space, it is only to plunge anew into some deeper and longer gulf. These torrents delight to show themselves for a time and then disappear, and to dash themselves against the rocks. Their course is so swift that the eye does not distinguish it; there is nothing but a general roar, confused and darksome. But, at length, after falling from many steeps into gulfs, after being much beaten against the rocks, after having been again and again lost and recovered, they reach the sea, where they happily lose themselves, never to find themselves again.

2. There it is that this torrent, in the exact degree that it has been poor, mean, useless, destitute of mer-

chandise, is admirably enriched. For it is not rich by its own wealth, like other rivers which possess only a certain amount of merchandise, or certain rarities, but rich by the wealth of the sea itself. It carries on its back the largest ships; it is the sea that bears these ships, that is to say, itself, because, being lost in the sea, it has become one and the same with it.*

3. It is to be observed, however, that the river thus fallen into the sea does not lose its nature, although it is so changed and lost that it is no longer to be known. It is still what it always was; but its essence is now confounded and lost, not as to reality, but as to quality. For it so takes the quality of the ocean's water, that nothing proper to itself is any longer discernible; and the more it abyssees itself, plunges in and continues in the sea, the more it loses its own quality, and assumes the quality of the sea in its stead.†

4. For what purposes is not this poor torrent now fit? Its capacity is without limits, since it is that of the sea itself. Its riches are immense, — though it-

* The Lord removes the proprium of man, and gives from His own, and in that he dwells. — A. E. 254.

† That by destroying every substance which I have made from off the faces of the ground, is signified man's proprium, which is as it were destroyed when it is vivified or made alive, appears from what was said above concerning proprium. Man's proprium is wholly evil and false, and so long as it remains, so long man is dead; but when he undergoes temptations, then it is dispersed, that is, it is loosened and tempered by truths and goods from the Lord, and thus it is vivified, and appears as if it was not present. Its not appearing, and not being any longer hurtful, is signified by destroying, although it is never destroyed, but remains. — A. C. 731.

self has none, — since they are those of the sea itself. It is then capable of enriching the whole earth. O happy loss! Who can describe thee, or the gain which was then made by this river, useless and good for nought, despised and shunned; that headlong stream to which the smallest boat might not be trusted, because, unable to keep itself and losing itself so often, it would have swallowed it up in its own ruin? What say you to the lot of this torrent, ye great rivers flowing with so much majesty, who are the joy and admiration of the tribes who wonder at you for the vast amount of merchandise displayed upon your faces? This poor torrent, which you looked upon with scorn, or at least with compassion, which was a thing rejected by all the world, which appeared fit for nothing, — what has become of it, and for what now is it good; or, rather, for what is it not good? What is it that it lacks? You are now its servants, since you carry the wealth you have, either to unload it of its abundance, or to bring to it a new supply of wealth.

But before we speak of the happiness of a soul thus lost in God, we must begin at the source, and then proceed by degrees.

5. The soul, having its source, as was said, in God, has a continual inclination to return to Him; because, as he is its first principle, He is also its last end.*

* Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, signifies that the Lord is the self-substituting and only subsisting, from [first] principles to ultimates, from whom are all things, and consequently the all in all of heaven and the church. — A. R. 29.

Its course would be boundless, were it not interrupted or checked, or altogether stopped, by continual sin and unfaithfulness. This is the reason why man's heart is in perpetual motion, and can find no rest until it has returned to its origin and its centre, which is God ;* like fire, which, being separated from its proper sphere, is in continual agitation, never resting until it has returned thither, when, by one of the miracles of nature, though an element so active of itself that it consumes every thing by its energy, it enjoys a perfect rest.†

Ye poor souls who are seeking rest in this life, you will never find it except in God. Seek to enter again into Him ; for there all your longings and pains, all your agitations and anxieties, will be reduced to the unity of repose.

6. It is to be observed, that the nearer fire approaches its centre, the nearer it approaches a state of repose, although the speed of its return thither is perpetually increasing. But as soon as no obstacle any longer withholds it, it darts upward with an incredible velocity, increasing as it approaches its centre ; so that, though its velocity augments, its activity diminishes. It is the same with the soul : as soon as sin ceases to

* For heavenly peace flows in, when the lusts arising from the love of self and the world are taken away, inasmuch as these lusts are what take away peace ; for they infest the interiors of man, and cause him at length to place rest in restlessness, and peace in disturbance, because he delights in evils.

† No one can be gifted with this peace, but he who is led of the Lord, and is in the Lord, that is, in heaven, where the Lord is all in all. — A. C. 5662.

hold it back, it runs indefatigably to find God again; and if, which is impossible, it were exempt from sin, nothing would hinder its course, which would be so swift that it would reach its destination forthwith. Not only so, but the nearer it approached to God, the more its speed would be augmented, while at the same time this speed would become more peaceful. For the repose, or rather peace (since it is not then repose, but a peaceful coursing), would increase, so that peace would redouble its speed, and speed would increase its peace.

7. That which then causes disturbance is its sins and imperfections, which check for some time the course of this soul more or less, according to the greatness of the fault. Then the soul becomes fully aware of its activity. If, when fire is ascending again to its proper sphere, it should meet with obstacles, such as a bit of wood or of straw, it would resume its former activity, and consume this obstacle or hindrance; and the greater the resistance, the more its activity would be increased. If it were a bit of wood, it would require a longer and stronger activity to consume it; but if it were only a piece of straw, it would be consumed in a moment, and would check its course but very little. You will observe that the obstacle which the fire meets with would serve only to increase its velocity, by giving it a new ardor to overcome all obstacles in joining itself to its centre. It is also to be observed, that the more obstacles the fire should meet with, and the more considerable they were, the more they would retard its course; and if it were always finding new ones,

they would be so many objects serving to keep it attached to themselves, and to hinder it from returning to its origin. We know from experience, that, if we are always putting wood upon the fire, we shall be always keeping it under, and preventing it from mounting upwards.

8. The case is the same with souls. Their natural instincts and propensities incline them to God. Were it not for the hindrances they meet with, they would run incessantly, without ever stopping in their course. These hindrances are their sins and faults, which put obstacles in the way of their return to God in proportion as they are strong and enduring, so that, if they are sinning incessantly, they are arrested without ever reaching the goal; and if they die in sin, they have no possibility of ever reaching it, being then no longer in the way and course [of amendment], and all being terminated as regards them.* Others, dying in a lesser degree of obstruction, such as is made by venial sin, go into the fire of purgatory, that all which the fire of love did not consume in this life may then be finally consumed. Others, again, advance just so much or so little, as the obstacles which they put in their own way are stronger or weaker.

Such souls as have never committed mortal sin must, of course, advance more than others. This is true for

* The Lord never operates unless from first principles by ultimates, consequently in fulness; for He does not reform and regenerate man otherwise than by truths in ultimates, which are natural truths; and from this circumstance it is, that such as is the quality of man in the world, such he remains after his departure out of this world to eternity. — A. E. 1087.

the most part ; but still, it seems as if God takes more pleasure “in making his mercies abound where sin has most abounded,” Rom. v. 20.

I think one of the reasons for this fact, with regard to those who have not sinned, comes from their having a high opinion of their own righteousness in all the points to which it extends.* If they are virgins, they make an idol of their purity, — and so of the rest ; and this disorderly attachment, this esteem and love of their own righteousness, is an obstacle harder to be overcome than the greatest sins ; † because we cannot have so strong an attachment to sins, which are so ugly in themselves, as we have to our own righteousness ; and God, who never violates our liberty, ‡ leaves such souls to take pleasure in their own sanctity, while He delights to purge away the filth of the most miserable. And, to ensure the success of His purpose, he gives them a fire both stronger and

* If man believed, as is the truth, that all good and truth are from the Lord, and all evil and falsity from hell, he would not appropriate good to himself, and make it meritorious ; nor would he appropriate evil to himself, and make himself guilty of it. — D. P. 320.

† Man, by means of these two faculties [freedom and rationality], can be so far reformed and regenerated, as he can be led by them to acknowledge that all the truth and good which he thinks is from the Lord, and not from himself. — D. P. 87.

‡ If the freedom of willing evil, and of making it as of reason by confirmations, was taken away from the natural man, liberty and rationality would perish, and at the same time will and understanding ; and he could not be led away from evils, and be reformed ; thus not be conjoined to the Lord, and live to eternity : wherefore the Lord so guards freedom with man, as man does the pupil of his eye. — D. P. 97.

more ardent, which, by its activity, consumes these gross faults more easily than a lighter fire consumes lighter obstacles. It seems even as if God delighted to make these guilty souls the throne of His love, that He might display His power, and show how He can perfect and re-establish them, though so deformed, in their first state, and even make them fairer than those who were never polluted.

10. The souls then which have sinned, and for whom, dropping the others, I write, find in themselves a great fire, consuming in a moment all their faults and hindrances. They mount aloft with so much the more force, as that which held them back was stronger and harder to be consumed. They often find themselves impeded by notable faults, contracted from former habits;* but this fire consumes them and goes on, and this repeatedly, until it finds no more to operate on. It must be observed, that the more it goes on consuming, the more it grows, and the easier are the obstacles it meets with to be consumed; so that at last they are nothing but straws, which, far from checking its course, only make it more ardent.

This being premised and understood, it is easy to apply it, and to understand the case as it is. It will be well, therefore, to take the soul in its first state, and go on regularly, if God, who dictates these things, (which I see only as they are committed to paper), wills me to do so.

11. God, designing to make the soul His own, in

* The evils and falses which he had before imbibed emerge and come forth. — A. C. 3696.

order that He may lose it in Himself in a wonderful manner very little known to ordinary believers, begins by making it feel interiorly its estrangement from Himself.

As soon as it feels and knows its estrangement, the inclination implanted in it to return to its principle, and which was, as it were, extinguished by sin, wakes up. It then conceives a true grief for its sins, and feels, with pain and trouble, the evil which this alienation causes it.

The restless feeling thus inspired into the soul causes it to seek out the means of getting rid of this pain, and of entering into a certain repose which it sees afar off, but the sight of which serves only to redouble this restlessness, and increase its desire of pursuing and reaching it.*

12. Some of these souls, for want of being instructed that they must seek God in their interior, and there follow after Him without going out of themselves, turn themselves to meditation, and to seeking without that which they will never find except within. This meditation, for which they are commonly very little adapted (because God, who desires something else from them, does not allow them to attain any thing by this exercise), serves only to increase their desire ; for, while their wound is in the heart, they would fain apply the plaster without, and this only soothes their

* But yet, inmosty, he is in a state of peace ; for, unless he were in such a state in his inmosts, he would not engage in combat, inas-much as he has continual respect to that state, as an end, in the combats wherein he is engaged. — A. C. 3696.

disease, not heals it. They fight for a long time by help of this exercise, and their combat redoubles their impotence. And if these souls, of whom God takes care Himself, do not meet with some one who can show them that they have taken the wrong course, they only lose their time, and will continue to lose it, as long as they remain without this succor.

13. But God, all full of mercy, fails not to bring them this succor by His Providence, if it were only transitorily and for a few days. This succor is not sought by themselves, although they are well aware that something is wanting to them, without guessing at the remedy; but, by purely providential means, they find it without looking for it. For, as they are properly the true children of Providence, God sends them, without extraordinary methods, all they have need of, in a way, as it were, quite natural.

14. When, therefore, these souls are instructed by some one providentially sent to them, that they are not in the way of progress, because their wound is within, and they would apply the remedy without, — when they are instructed, I say, to turn within themselves, and seek in the inmost of their hearts what they vainly seek abroad, they discover, with an astonishment that at once delights and surprises them, that they have within themselves the treasure they were seeking afar off.* They languish with joy in their

* The Lord flows in with good through man's inmosts, and there conjoins truth: their root must be in the inmost. — A. C. 2879.

Man is little concerned at this day about the things which are transacting interiorly within him, inasmuch as external things occupy

new-found liberty. They are all astonished that prayer no longer costs them any thing, and that the more they gather in their thoughts, and go deeply within themselves, the more they experience an indispensible delight that transports and carries them away, so that they would fain never cease from this state of love and inward concentration.*

Observe, if you please, that what they experience, delicious as it appears, does not, if they are destined to have faith, detain them, but disposes them ever to hasten after that certain something with which they are not yet acquainted.† The soul is nothing any longer but ardor and love. It thinks itself already in

him wholly; and to him who is wholly occupied by external things, that is, when external things are the ends of life, internal things are of no account. Hence it is evident why those things which are transacting inwardly in man are at this day concealed and altogether unknown. Such an obscurity of intellect never existed among the ancients: their wisdom was to cultivate interior things. — A. C. 5224.

* The delights which are perceived in things extreme, or corporeal, are respectively vile; for every delight is such that it becomes viler the more it proceeds to external things, and happier the more it proceeds to things internal. Wherefore, as was said, as external things are in order unfolded or unswathed, so much the more pleasant and happy delights become — A. C. 996.

† Good, with man during regeneration, has continually a purpose of inverting the state, and of reducing it into such an order that truth may not be in the prior place, but in the posterior, as is agreeable to the state of heaven: this purpose, however, lies deeply concealed, nor is it perceived until it is effected. The case herein is as with conjugal love, which does not appear in infancy and childhood, but still lies treasured up, nor does it come forth until all and single things are so arranged that it can manifest itself; in the mean time it produces all means suitable to itself, or they are produced. — A. C. 3610.

paradise;* for what it experiences within being infinitely sweeter than all the pleasures of earth, it leaves them without regret, and would leave the whole world to enjoy, for one moment, in its inmost, what it experiences.

The soul, then, perceives that its prayer becomes almost uninterrupted. Its love increases from day to day, becoming so ardent that the soul cannot contain it. Its senses are so much concentrated, and a state of recollection so takes entire possession of it, that every thing drops from the hands. It would fain love perpetually, and meet with no interruption.

15. And as the soul, in this state, is not strong enough not to be dissipated by conversations, it shuns and fears them. It would be always in solitude, and be always enjoying the embraces of its well-beloved. It has within itself a Director who does not suffer it to take pleasure in any thing, nor to commit a fault without reproofing it, and making it sensible, by His coldness, how much the fault displeases Him.†

* After man, by the opening of his internal, is introduced into heaven, and receives light from thence, then the same affections which the angels of heaven enjoy, together with their pleasantnesses and delights, are communicated to him. — A. E. 942.

† “And all the churches shall know that I am He that searcheth the reins and hearts,” Rev. ii. 23. That hereby is signified the acknowledgment of all who are in the church, that the Lord alone knows and explores the exteriors and interiors, and the things pertaining to faith and love, appears from the signification of searching, when predicated of the Lord, as denoting that He alone knows and explores; and from the signification of the reins, as denoting the truths of faith, and their purification from falsities, concerning which we shall speak in what follows; and from the signification of hearts as denoting the goods of love. — A. E. 167.

These coldnesses of God, by reason of faults, are penances more dreadful to the soul than the heaviest chastisements. It is reprov'd for an idle look and a hasty word.* It seems as if God had no other care than to correct and reprove this soul, and that He applies Himself only to accomplish its perfection. It is astonished itself, and others also, to see that it has changed more in one month, — yea, even in a day, by this way, than in several years by the other. O God! it belongs to Thee alone to amend and purify the soul.

The soul is taught concerning all kinds of mortifications, without having ever heard them spoken of. If it is about to eat any thing gratifying to the taste, it is held back as by an invisible hand: if it goes into a garden, it can see nothing there, — it cannot even hold a flower, or look at it. It seems as if God had placed sentinels over all its senses. It dares not listen to a piece of news. It can apply to itself now those words of Scripture, that it is “surrounded with hedges and thorns,” Hosea ii. 6; for, if it would indulge itself in any liberties, it feels itself pierced to the quick.)

* “Take heed of His face,” Ex. xxiii. 21. That it signifies holy fear, appears from the signification of taking heed to a face, when it is said concerning the Lord, who is here meant by an angel, as denoting to fear, lest He be angry on account of evils, or lest He be embittered on account of prevarications. — A. C. 9306.

“Lest thou embitter Him.” That it signifies aversion from Him by falses derived from evil, appears from the signification of embittering, or inciting anger, when concerning the Lord, who, in this case, is the angel, as denoting to avert by falses derived from evil; for falses derived from evils are aversions from the Lord. — A. C. 9308.

It would fain then, especially in the beginning, consume itself with austerities. It seems as if it no longer held at all to earth, so much does it feel itself detached therefrom. Its words are nothing but fire and flames.

God has still another way of punishing this soul, after it is somewhat more advanced, which is, by making Himself felt more strongly after its fall. Then the poor soul is swallowed up in confusion. It would prefer the severest chastisement to this loving-kindness of God, following upon its fall, which makes it ready to die, and to be swallowed up with shame.

16. The soul is then so full of what it feels, that it would fain impart it to all the world. It would teach every one to love God. Its feelings towards Him are so lively, so pure, so remote from interest, that those directors, who, without being themselves experienced in these ways, should hear it speak, would believe it had reached the height of perfection. It is fertile in beautiful thoughts, which it commits to writing with admirable facility, and which are deep, lively, and intimate *feelings*; there being now no more reasonings, nothing but the strongest and most ardent love. The soul during the day feels itself seized and occupied by a divine force, which ravishes and consumes it, and holds it night and day without its knowing what it does. The eyes close of themselves, and can scarcely be opened. It would fain be blind, deaf, and dumb, that nothing might hinder its enjoyment. It is like those intoxicated persons who are so occupied and possessed with wine that they know not what they do, and are no longer their own masters. If these persons wish

to read, the book falls from their hands ; a single line is enough for them, and they can scarcely read a page in a whole day, whatever industry they may use for the purpose. It is not that they understand what they read, for they do not think upon it ; but it is that one word of God, or the approach of a book, awakens the secret instinct which animates and inflames them, so that love closes both their lips and their eyes.

17. For this reason it is that they cannot make use of vocal prayers, not being able to pronounce them. A *pater* would keep them an hour. A poor soul not used to this knows not what ails it ; for, having never seen or heard of the like, it knows not why it cannot pray. Nevertheless, it cannot resist one more mighty than itself, who carries it away. It cannot fear to do amiss, nor feels any concern of this kind ; for He who holds it thus bound does not allow it to doubt that it is Himself who does it, nor to defend itself ; for, if it should seek to exert itself for prayer, it feels that He who occupies it closes its mouth, and compels it by a sweet and lovely violence to keep silence.

This does not mean that the creature cannot resist, so as to speak by effort ; but that, besides doing itself great violence hereby, it loses that heavenly peace, and feels sensibly that a spiritual dryness supervenes. It is requisite, therefore, that the soul should suffer itself to be moved at the divine option, and not after its own way ; and if one then has a director who has no experience in these matters, and who insists upon vocal

prayer, besides inflicting on the soul great constraint, he does it an irreparable mischief.

18. The soul at this time experiences a desire of suffering so vehement, that it causes it to languish and die. It would fain make amends for the sins of every one, and satisfy God. It now begins to find it impossible to gain indulgences, and love does not allow it any desire to shorten its sufferings.

19. The soul in this state believes that it is in interior silence, because its operation is so sweet, so easy, and so tranquil, that it no longer perceives it. It believes itself to have reached the summit of perfection, and sees nothing more to be done than to enjoy the good of which it is possessed. This degree lasts for a long time, and goes on gradually increasing; and, very often, there are souls who do not get beyond it but are in it all their lives, who yet come to be saints and the admiration of all mankind.

The soul, in this degree, has certain transitory and short drynesses, which do not take it out of its degree, but which serve to advance it.

20. These souls, however, so ardent and so desirous of God, begin to rest in this state, and insensibly to lose their loving activity in running after God, contenting themselves with their enjoyment, which they believe to be God Himself. This resting and ceasing from their course would be an irreparable misfortune to them, if God, from His infinite love, did not withdraw them as speedily as possible from this state, and introduce them into the one next to be described.

But, before speaking of this, it will be well to say something about the imperfections of this degree.

CHAPTER V.

1—3. *Imperfections* of this first degree, as well interior as in relation to the exterior. 4. A mistake often made in it. 5. Mark of passiveness in this state. 6—10. Imperfections and mistakes of this degree continued. 11—14. Spiritual counsel. 15—19. Spiritual drynesses intermingled with a tender but interested love, which requires the trials and purifications of the succeeding degree.

THE soul, while in the degree I have just spoken of, can advance greatly in it, and does so, going from love to love, and from cross to cross; but it falls so often, and is so proprietary, that it may be said to go only at a tortoise pace, though it appears to itself and to others to run with unbounded speed. The torrent is here in a level country, and has not yet reached the declivity of the mountain, where it is to throw itself down and take a course destined no more to be checked.

2. The faults of the soul in this degree * are a certain esteem of itself, more hidden and more deeply rooted than it was before receiving these graces and favors from

* The spiritual church is such that it must be introduced by truth into good, and then be without perception of good, unless according to the quantity and quality which lies concealed in the affection of truth, at which time it cannot be distinguished from the delight of self-love and the love of the world, which is together in that affection, and is believed to be good. — A. C. 3325.

God,* — a certain secret undervaluing and contempt of others, whom it sees so far distant from its own way,† — a proneness to be scandalized by their faults, and a certain hardness towards sins and sinners, — a zeal like that of St. John before the coming of the Holy Spirit, who would have called down fire out of heaven upon the Samaritans, that they might be consumed,‡ — a certain confidence in its own salvation and its own virtue, so that it seems to itself incapable of sinning, — a secret pride, especially at first, so that it is troubled at faults committed openly. It would fain be impeccable: it maintains a collected or reserved bearing, perceptible to others: it claims to itself the gifts of God, and deals with them as if they were its own.§

* The spiritual, inasmuch as they have not perception like the celestial, do not know that divine truth becomes rational truth with man when he is regenerated. They say, indeed, that all good and all truth is from the Lord; but still, when these exist in their rational, they suppose them to be their own, and thus as it were from themselves; so they cannot be separated from their own proprium, which wills this. — A. C. 3394.

† When he [the spiritual man] has done any thing good, it is the delight of his life to make mention of it, and thus to prefer himself to others. — A. C. 2715.

‡ For truth without good is altogether stiff, and when it respects good as an end, that stiffness begins to soften; but good is in itself soft, and the truth which is insinuated, inasmuch as it becomes good there, also grows soft. — A. C. 7068.

§ Such is the first state of all who are reformed and become spiritual, viz. that they do not believe they are reformed of the Lord, but of themselves; that is, that every thing of the will of good and the thought of truth is from themselves: in this state, also, they are suffered of the Lord to remain for a time, because otherwise they could not be reformed. — A. C. 2946.

It forgets its own weakness and poverty in the experience it has of its own strength; so that it loses distrust of itself, and is not afraid to expose itself to occasions of sin.

Although all these faults, and many others, are to be found in persons of this degree, they do not know them,* and it even appears as if they had more humility than others, because their humility is more guarded.† But wait only, and these faults will give themselves, in due time, to be both seen and felt.‡

3. The grace they feel so strongly within being to them a testimony that they have nothing to fear, they speak rashly without a divine mission. They would fain communicate what they feel to all the world. Hereby they do some good, it is true, to others; for their words, all fire and flames, kindle the hearts of those who listen to them; but besides that they do not accomplish the good they would do if they were in that degree in which the divine order disposes the

* The same appears also from this, that the spiritual man does not know what is evil; he scarce believes any thing to be evil but what is contrary to the commandments of the decalogue, being ignorant of the evils of affection and thought, which are innumerable, and neither reflecting on them, nor calling them evils. — A. C. 2715.

† That to bend themselves denotes exterior humiliation, and is of those who are in truth, and that to bow themselves denotes interior humiliation, and is of those who are in good, see n. 5682. — A. C. 7068.

‡ It is to be observed, that man cannot be purified from evils, and thence from falsities, unless the unclean things that are in him emerge even into the thought, and are there seen, acknowledged, discerned, and rejected. — A. E. 580.

For the evils and falses which he had before imbibed, emerge and come forth and disturb him. — A. C. 3696.

soul to communicate what it has, their graces being not yet in their fulness, they give of their penury instead of giving only of their abundance, in consequence of which they grow dry themselves. If you have seen several basins of water underneath a fountain, the fountain alone giving of its fulness, and the others dispensing, the one into the other, only from the fulness which the source communicates to them, you can understand how, if the source is stopped up or diverted while the basins still continue to flow, they will be certain, having no longer any source, to be exhausted and dried up. The like happens to souls of this degree: they wish to be sending abroad their waters continually, not perceiving, until late, that the water they have is only for themselves, and that they are not in a degree suited for communication, because they are not sources themselves. They are like bottles of precious perfume left to exhale themselves, whose fragrance is so delightful that we do not take notice how rapidly they waste away.

4. It is easy, in this degree, to be deceived by taking the means for the end;* and as it lasts very long

* There are things essential, and there are things instrumental. In order that what is essential may produce an effect, it must have what is instrumental, as a means whereby to act; and as the instrumental is formed, so it acts. By instrumentals not being matters of concern, is meant that *they* should not be regarded as an end, but essentials; for so far as instrumentals are regarded as an end, so far essentials withdraw themselves and vanish. Thus if the scientific be regarded as an end, and truths are of no concern, the truths at length so vanish away that it cannot be apperceived whether they are truths: also, if truths are regarded as an end, and good is of no concern, good at length so vanishes away as not to be. — A. C. 5948.

with some souls, and there are even some that do not get beyond it, it is common to take this state, especially towards its conclusion, for a state of perfection. But this is a great mistake. There is a considerable resemblance to it, it is true; and, unless the director has passed through all the states, he will easily believe that the soul has reached the highest point, when it is really very far distant from it. What serves the more readily to persuade him, is the fact that the soul practises all the virtues with an admirable strength. It easily overcomes itself, and finds nothing hard, "because love is strong as death," Cant. iii. 6.

5. It must also be observed, that the virtues appear to have come into the heart without any trouble;* for the soul of which I am speaking does not think upon them, since it is altogether taken up with a general love, without motive or reason for loving. If you ask it what it does in prayer and during the day, it will tell you that it loves. But what motive or what rea-

* "And they filled their vessels with corn" [Gen. xlii. 25]. That it signifies scientifics, that they were gifted with good from truth, appears from the signification of filling, because gratis, as denoting to be gifted; and from the signification of vessels as being scientifics, and from the signification of corn as being good from truth, or the good of truth. — A. C. 5295.

"To bring back their silver" [Ibid]. That it signifies without any ability of theirs, appears from the signification of buying with silver, as being to procure from one's self for one's own: here, therefore, to bring back silver is to give gratis, or without any ability of theirs [or, what is the same, that nothing of aid was from them. — A. C. 5499]: as also in Isaiah, "Every one that thirsteth, go ye to the waters; and he who hath no silver, go ye, buy and eat, and go ye, buy, without silver and without price, wine and milk;" lv. 1. — 5296.

son have you for loving? Of this it knows nothing. All that it knows is, that it loves, and that it burns to suffer for what it loves. But perhaps it is the sight of what your Well-beloved has undergone, O soul! which thus moves in you a willingness to suffer? — Alas! it will say, they do not come into my thoughts. — Is it then a desire to imitate the virtues you see in Him? — About this I do not think. — What, then, is it you do? — I love. — Is it the view you have of the beauty of Him who loves you that carries away your heart? — I do not look at this beauty. — How is it with you, then? — I do not know: I only feel in the inmost recesses of my heart a deep wound; a wound so delightful, that I repose in my trouble, and find pleasure in my smart.*

6. The soul now believes that it has gained and finished all; for, though it is full of the defects I have just mentioned, and a whole host of others exceedingly dangerous, which are better felt in the following degree than they can then be expressed, it rests in the perfection it thinks it has acquired; and, stopping at the means, because it takes them for the end, it would always remain attached to them, if God did not lead this torrent (which is like a peaceful lake on the summit of a mountain) to the declivity of

* I have experienced, as also on several other occasions, though without reflection, that affections can act and be varied, to effect, without ideas of thought: thus, that there are indefinite states of affections, with their varieties and successions (which are the principles of thoughts, although the man cannot perceive those thoughts), without ideas of thought; from which may be inferred that celestial states are such from which come spiritual things. — S. D. 3127.

the mountain, that it might cast itself down, and take a course the more rapid in proportion to the depth of its fall.*

7. It seems to me that the soul in this first degree, even with the most advanced, has a certain habit of concealing its defects both from itself and from others. It invents excuses and pretexts; it never speaks them out ingenuously, not by design, but from a certain love of its own excellence, and from a certain habitual dissimulation under which it conceals itself. † It has not so much peace [as afterwards] in its miseries: ‡ on the contrary, it finds itself wonderfully cast down. It has a certain eagerness to be purified from them, which it speaks about to others. § The faults which are most visible to others are those

* Nearly similar to this is the case with the new life of a regenerate man. In the beginning he is in a state of tranquillity; but as he passes into a new life, he also passes at the same time into an untranquil state. — A. C. 3696.

† Man is accustomed from infancy to make a show of friendship, of benevolence, and of sincerity, and to conceal the thoughts of his own proper will: hence from habit he contracts a moral and civil life in externals, whatever he may be in internals. The effect of this habit is, that man scarcely knows his interiors, and also that he does not attend to them. — H. H. 492.

‡ Peace is the inmost in every delight, even in what is undelightful with the man who is in good. — A. C. 8455.

§ “Let not any one make a residue of it until morning” [Ex. xvi. 19]. That it signifies that they should not be so solicitous about acquiring it of themselves, appears from this, that the manna was given every morning, and that worms were born in the residue; by which is signified that the Lord daily provides necessaries, and that thus they ought not to be solicitous about acquiring them of themselves. — A. C. 8478.

which cause it most pain. It has a sensible taste and relish of the gifts of God. It has a secret love of itself stronger than ever; a high esteem of its extraordinary way; a secret desire to attract notice; a certain composed bearing in the exterior; a constrained and affected modesty. It is beset by a swarm of self-reflections, when it falls into some visible fault; it is too ready to judge of others; and, along with all these faults, it has a thousand proprietary attachments to its devotions; and, preferring prayer to the duties of the family, it is the cause of a thousand sins committed by those among whom it resides.*

8. This is a matter of the highest importance; for the soul, feeling itself drawn in a manner so sweet and so strong, would fain be always alone and in prayer, and it prays more than comports with its state either exterior or interior. Its exterior faults give rise to a thousand reports, lead to a thousand faults, and cause a neglect of essential obligations; its interior ones, by degrees, exhaust the strength of the soul and its power of loving, and cause it times of spiritual dryness, which, not being of the divine order, hurt it instead of doing it any good.

9. Two unhappy consequences result from this.

* With man about to be regenerated the case is thus, that his first affection of truth is very impure; for there is in it an affection of use and of end for the sake of himself, for the sake of the world, for the sake of glory in heaven, and the like things, which look towards himself, but not towards the community, the Lord's kingdom, and still less towards the Lord. Such an affection must needs precede: nevertheless, it is successively purified of the Lord. — A. C. 3089.

The first is, that the soul desires too much to be in prayer and solitude, when it has a facility therefor; the second is, that when it has thereby exhausted its loving power, inasmuch as this is by its own fault, it has not the same strength in the dryness which supervenes; it finds it difficult to continue so long in prayer, and is very apt to shorten the time assigned thereto; it seeks amusement, at times, in exterior objects; * it falls into dejection, discouragement, distress, believing that it has lost all, and does all it can to bring back again the presence and the love of God.

10. But if it were sufficiently strong to hold an equal course, and not to do more in abundance than in dryness, it would meet all demands. It is uncomplaining towards the neighbor, towards whom it practises no complaisance, thinking it a great matter to relax a little to please him. It feels a certain severity and observes an austere silence where they are out of place; whereas, on other occasions, it is apt to talk on without end concerning the things of God. A woman will have scruples about complying with her husband's wishes, about conversing with him, about

* The good of truth or spiritual good is given indeed to the man of the spiritual church; but whereas every delight of the love of self and of the world, which had before constituted their life, extinguishes that good, inasmuch as they are opposite, therefore the pure good of truth cannot long abide with that man, but is tempered from the Lord by the delights of the loves which had before been of his life: for, unless that good was so tempered, it would become undelightful to him, and would thus be loathsome. Such is celestial good at first with those who are regenerating. — A. C. 8487.

walking or partaking of some amusement with him ; but will have none whatever about talking two whole hours, unnecessarily, with devotees of one or the other sex. This is a dreadful mistake. We ought to discharge our duties, of whatever nature they may be, and whatever trouble it may cause us, even though we may think ourselves guilty of some faults in the way of doing them.* By this course we shall reap vastly more spiritual profit, not in the way we expect, but because it makes us die to ourselves. It seems even as if our Lord gave us to understand that this was pleasing to Him, by the grace He communicates to us in thus doing. I knew a person, who, in playing cards to oblige her husband, experienced a stronger and more intimate union than she ever experienced in prayer ; and this was a thing of common occurrence in all she did to gratify the wishes of her husband, notwithstanding the repugnance she might feel for it ; and if she failed in this point, in order, as she thought, to do better, she felt distinctly that she was leaving her proper estate and the order of God. This did not prevent the person I am speaking of from often committing such faults, because the attraction to an interior state and the excellence of

* By the worship of God at this day is meant principally the worship of the mouth in a temple, both morning and evening. But the worship of God does not consist essentially in this, but in a life of uses: this worship is according to the order of Heaven. The worship of the mouth is also worship, but it is altogether of no avail, unless there be worship of the life; for this latter worship is of the heart, and the former, that it may become worship, must proceed from this latter. — A. C. 7884.

prayer, which are preferred to this apparent waste of time, insensibly carry the soul away, and put it on a wrong track. And this appears as sanctity in the greater number.

11. Still, however, souls destined for faith do not commit these errors for a long time or frequently. God desires to lead them in His divine order,* and He therefore causes them to feel wherein they come short. And the difference between a soul destined for faith, and another, is, that the latter continues in these devotions without difficulty; it is like tearing out his heart to withdraw him from this tranquil love: but the other has no peace even in peace itself, until he has satisfied his duty; and when he does continue in this peaceful state, notwithstanding the instinct to leave it, it is an unfaithfulness which is sure to cause him inward pain.

12. It happens also that the soul, by means of this death and this contrariety, feels itself still more strongly attached or attracted to its interior repose. For it is peculiar to man to long more strongly for a thing in proportion as it is more difficult for him to enjoy it (at least, if he has some little firmness); and to become fixed in his desires by opposition, willing

* By living according to order is here meant to be led of the Lord by good, but to live not as yet according to order is to be led by truth; and when man is led by truth, the Lord does not appear; wherefore also man then goes in darkness, in which he does not see good; it is otherwise when man is led by good, then he sees in the light. — A. C. 8572.

yet more strongly that which is denied him.* This trouble of not being able to have repose except by halves, increases the repose of the soul, and causes that, even *in action*, it feels itself drawn so strongly, that it seems as if there were within it two souls and two conversations at one and the same time, and as if the more interior of them were vastly stronger than the exterior.† But if the soul would quit the *duties* incumbent on it for *prayer*, it no longer finds any thing, and its attraction perishes ‡

13. I do not mean *prayer* which is of obligation, and which we have prescribed to ourselves as matter

* The end of refusal, when any one accepts, is sometimes that affection may be insinuated; it is thence also increased, and thus passes from thinking well into willing well. Man is led by the Lord in spiritual life by things nearly similar to those by which man leads others in civil life: it is a customary thing in civil life to refuse, to the end that the favor may be done from affection, thus not only from thinking, but also from willing. — A. C. 4366.

† By Adam and his wife is understood the most ancient church, which was a celestial church. Spiritual things with them were altogether distinct from natural things; the former residing in their spiritual mind, and the latter in their natural mind; and hence they did not immerse any thing spiritual in their natural mind, as is the case with men who are spiritual-natural. — A. C. 617.

‡ With respect to use, the case is this, that they who are in charity that is, in love towards their neighbor, from which love is delight in pleasures, which is living delight, do not regard the enjoyment of pleasures except for the sake of use; for charity is no charity unless there be works of charity, inasmuch as charity consists in exercise or use. He who loves his neighbor as himself never perceives the delight of charity except in the exercise thereof, or in use; wherefore a life of charity is a life of uses: therefore every pleasure which is from charity receives its delight from use. — A. C. 997.

of duty; for in this we should not fail, except for reasons beyond our control. But I speak of a prayer we would fain make perpetual, where we feel ourselves carried away by a secret force drawing us within ourselves. Neither by *action* do I mean that which is at our own option, but that of absolute duty. For if a person has time, after meeting all the duties incumbent on him, let him give it to prayer; let him bestow on it, indeed, all the time he can. In this case it will be of unbounded service to him. We must take care also, not, under pretence of obligation, to impose upon ourselves non-necessary actions. Love for one's husband, for our children, for the care of the household, can easily insinuate itself under cover of what is necessary; so also a natural eagerness to finish a thing once begun. But all this will easily be discovered by a soul not inclined to flatter itself. This is not so dangerous [a mistake as the other].

14. When the state of recollection is very deep, the soul does not usually fall into the faults last mentioned; but it does into those already mentioned, of undue seclusion. When the state of dryness begins, it is more to be feared that the person will over-burden himself with occupations, by reason of the pain which the senses experience in remaining long in prayer. But one must be firm here, and be as exact as in the time of recollection. I knew a person who prayed most when prayer was most painful, hardening herself against the pain itself.

But this is hurtful to the health, because of the violent effort required for it, and the pain inflicted on the senses and the understanding, which, not being able to fix on any object, and being deprived of the sweet correspondence which formerly kept it near to God, suffers, in consequence, such dreadful torments, that the soul would rather undergo the greatest austerities than the violence it must make use of in order to remain with God without sensible support.* In this case the pain is intolerable, and nature is put by it, as it were, in a rage.† The person of whom I speak used to pass, at times, two and three hours in succession in this painful species of prayer; and, as God had given her great courage, she suffered herself to be devoured by her pain, although she felt her senses to be in a rage. She has confessed to me, that the most extraordinary austerities would have appeared a pastime to her, compared with a continuance in this state. Sometimes she actually resorted to austerities for relief, which was no small unfaithfulness. But, as the use of so much violence with persons

* To humble one's self is expressed in the original tongue by a word which signifies to afflict; and for a person to afflict himself, means, in the internal sense, to compel himself, as may appear from very many passages in the Word. Man's celestial proprium is formed in the effort of his thought; and if he does not obtain it by *compelling himself*, as it appears, he will never obtain it by not compelling himself. — A. C. 1937.

† "And she called his name Naphtali" [Gen. xxx. 8]. That this signifies the quality thereof, namely, of the temptation in which man overcomes, and also of the resistance which arises from the natural man, appears from the signification of name, and of calling a name, being quality. See n. 144, &c. — A. C. 3928.

so feeble might destroy the health of mind and body, I think it better neither to diminish nor to increase prayer on account of changes in the state of the feelings.

15. The states of dryness, so painful and distressing, of which I have just spoken, which pass among certain spiritual persons not much enlightened for terrible states, and the severest trials from God, belong only to this first degree of faith, and are often caused by exhaustion.* Nevertheless, souls who have gone through them believe that they are dead, and write and speak of them, as of the most painful passage of the spiritual life.† It is true they have no experience of the contrary; and very often the soul has not courage to go on, though this is so small a matter. For, in these pains, which are like a burning fire, the soul is left to them by God, who withdraws from it His sensible aid;‡ but still it is the senses which cause them; because, being accustomed to act, to see, to feel, and to taste, and having never experienced the like privations, and finding no place beside where

* It is the delights of his [the spiritual man's] life to be instructed in truths, and to be illustrated in such things as relate to his soul, thus to his spiritual life; wherefore, when those things fail, his spiritual life labors and suffers, whence come grief and anxiety. — A. C. 8352.

† They who have not been instructed concerning the regeneration of man, suppose that man can be regenerated without temptation, and some that he is regenerated when he has undergone one temptation; but it is to be known that without temptation no one is regenerated, and that several temptations succeed one after another. — A. C. 8403.

‡ In temptations the Lord appears as absent. — A. E. 700.

they can be nourished,* they are reduced to a frightful state of despair. †

The soul is far from not being, on these occasions, in a state of vigor; ‡ it remains firm, if it has some degree of courage. Its pain is glorious to it, neither is it of long duration; for the strength of the soul at this time is not such that it can sustain such a burden very long. It would turn backward to seek for nourishment, or else it would give over altogether.

16. For this reason, our Lord does not long delay to return: He returns sometimes before even the prayer is finished. And if he does not return at the conclusion of the prayer, He does so during the day in a still stronger manner. § It appears as if he re-

* When the good of charity is to be insinuated which makes spiritual life, then the delight of pleasures is removed, which had made natural life. When this delight is removed, then man comes into temptation; for he believes, if he be deprived of the delight of pleasures, that he is deprived of all life; for his natural life consists in that delight or good, as he calls it. — A. C. 8413.

† Spiritual temptations are commonly brought to despair. — A. C. 8351.

‡ Where man is in temptations, which are combats against evils and falses, the Lord flows in from the interior, and fights for him; which also man may know from this, that when he is in temptations he interiorly resists; for, unless he interiorly resisted, he would not conquer, but would yield. This interior resistance at the time does not come to the apperception of man, because when he is in temptations he is in obscurity from the evil and falses of evil which assault; but after temptations, with those who are in the perception of truth. — A. C. 10,686.

§ After every spiritual temptation come illustration and affection, thus pleasantness and delight; pleasantness from illustration by truth, and delight from the affection of good. — A. C. 8367.

pented of having caused suffering to the soul He loves so well, or that He desired to recompense with usury what it had endured for His sake. If the absence continues for some days, the pains are such that they are intolerable. It calls Him merciful and cruel. It asks of Him if He has wounded it only that He may slay it. But this amiable lover smiles at its pain, and returns to put on its wound a balm so sweet that it would always be feeling new wounds, that it might always enjoy the delight of a healing which restores to it, not only its first health, but a health yet more abundant.*

Hitherto we have seen nothing but the mere sports of love, to which the soul would easily become accustomed if its Friend did not change His course. Poor souls, who complain of the inconstancies of love, you know not that they are only feints, slight foretastes and specimens of what is to follow. The hours of absence seem to you days, weeks, months, and years. You are to learn, at your own cost, to become more

* That these are words of despair [“Were there no sepulchres in Egypt? Thou hast taken us to die in the wilderness,” Ex. xiv. 11] is evident. With those who are in despair, which is the last state of temptation, such things also are thought, and then they are as it were on a declivity, or as it were in the lapse to hell; but such thought there is not at all hurtful, neither is it attended to by the angels, for every man has a limited power; and when the temptation comes even to the last limit of his power, then man endures no further, but lapses. Then, however, that is, when he is in the inclination to lapse, he is elevated by the Lord, and thus liberated from despair. In this case, for the most part, he is brought into a state of hope, and thence into a clear state of consolation, and also into a state of satisfaction. — A. C. 8165.

generous, and to let your Spouse go and return without saying any thing to Him. I seem to myself to see these young brides. They are in the deepest grief, when their husband leaves them for ever so short a time. They bewail three days of absence as if He were dead, and they fight as much as they can against letting Him go. This love appears strong and great, yet it is by no means so. It is the pleasure they enjoy in seeing their spouse that they weep for. It is their own satisfaction that they seek. For if it were the pleasure of their husband, they would be as well pleased with the pleasure which He finds apart from them, in walking, in hunting, or otherwise, as with that which He enjoys with themselves. It is, therefore, an interested love, although it does not appear such to the soul; which, on the contrary, believes that it loves Him only because He is worthy to be loved. It is true, poor souls, that you love Him because He is lovely; but you love also for the pleasure which you find in this exercise of loving.*

18. Nevertheless, you are willing, you say, to suffer for Him who is your Friend. It is true you are, provided He is the witness and companion of your suffering. You wish no reward for it, you say. I grant you this; but you would have him know your suffer-

* Reward serves as a medium of conjunction with those who are not yet initiated; for they who are not yet initiated in good and its affection, that is, who are not yet fully regenerated, cannot do otherwise than think also of reward, because in doing good they do it not from the affection of good, but from the affection of somewhat blessed and happy in regard to themselves. — A. C. 3816.

ing, and accept it,—you would have him gratified therewith. Is there, then, any thing, you will ask, more natural and right than wishing that He for whom we suffer should know it, accept it, and be pleased with it? Oh, how greatly are you mistaken! Jealous love will by no means let you enjoy the pleasure you take in seeing Him pleased with your griefs. You must learn to suffer, without His exhibiting any sign, either of seeing, of accepting, or of knowing it. It is too much for you to be accepted. What pain would one not undergo on this condition? What! to know that He who loves us sees our pains, and has an infinite pleasure in them,—oh! this is the highest of pleasures to a generous heart. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the highest generosity of those who belong to the state under consideration does not go beyond this limit.

19. But to suffer without our Lover's knowing it, and when he appears to despise and turn away from what we do to please Him, and to feel nothing but aversion for what seemed to delight Him formerly; to see Him recompense with coldness and dreadful distance what we do only to please Him, and yet not cease to do it; to see Him rewarding all our endeavors only with terrible hidings of his face; to suffer ourselves to be stripped, without complaint, of all that He had formerly given as pledges of His love, and which the soul believed it had payed for by its own love, its faithfulness and its sufferings; not only to see ourselves stripped of them without complaining, but to see others enriched with our spoils, yet with-

out failing to do, as before, all that can please our Friend, absent though He be; not to cease running after Him, or if, from unfaithfulness or surprise, we stop for a moment, to redouble our speed, without fearing or looking at the precipices in our way, though we fall and fall again a thousand times, though the soul is so covered with mud and so wearied that it loses its own proper strength, to die and expire by these continual fatigues (or if, at times, its Friend turns round and looks at it, He gives it again life and prevents it from dying, so much delight does this look afford it), until, at length, its divine Friend becomes so cruel, that He suffers it to expire for want of help; — all this, I say, belongs not to this stage, but to the following one.*

It must be observed here, that the degree I have just spoken of is very long, unless God designs to advance the soul very greatly; and very many, as I have said, do not get beyond it.

* It is to be known that without temptation no one is regenerated, and that several temptations succeed one after another. — A. C. 8403.

Man, who is being regenerated, is at length so far reduced by repeated desolations and supports, that he no longer wills to be his own, but the Lord's. — A. C. 6138.

Temptations are continual despairings concerning salvation, in the beginning slight, but in process of time grievous, till at last there is doubt almost negative concerning the presence of the Divine and His aid. The spiritual life is generally brought to this extreme in temptations; for so the natural life is extinguished, inasmuch as then the inmost, in the midst of despair, is held by the Lord in combat against the falses. — A. C. 8567.

CHAPTER VI.

The second degree of the passive way of faith. 1—5. A short description of this way. 6—7. Entrance on this degree, and useless efforts to avoid it. 8—14. Gradations and progresses in this degree, in which occur various manifestations of Jesus Christ to the soul. The various uses and abuses thereof successively, whereby the soul is forwarded to the mystical death, or *third* degree of this passive way of faith.

1. THE torrent beginning to find the declivity of the mountain begins likewise *the second degree of the passive way of faith*.* The soul was so peaceful on this mountain, and enjoyed there such a state of delightful repose, that it had no thought of ever falling from it. Nevertheless, for want of declivity and descent, these waters of heaven were beginning, by the pause they thus made on the earth, to become putrid. For there is this difference between waters that do not flow nor discharge themselves and those that do, that the first, (unless they be the sea, or those great lakes which resemble it,) are spoiled, and their rest is their ruin. But when, after leaving their source, they have a ready issue, the more rapidly they run, the more pure they keep.

2. You will observe (as I have already said of this

* During the continuance of temptations, on one part are excited evils, and the falses of evils; on the other, goods, and the truths of good which appertain to man. Hence he is in a turbulent state.—A. C. 10,686.

soul), that, when God imparted to it the gift of *passive* faith, He gave it also an instinct to hasten towards Him as its centre. But unfaithful to this instinct (though it believes itself full of fidelity), the soul extinguishes it by its repose, and would be inactive without advancing, if God did not wake up this instinct by causing it to find the declivity of the mountain, where it must fall headlong almost in spite of itself. It feels itself at once to lose the calm which it believed itself in possession of for ever. Its tranquil waters begin to murmur; a tumult begins in its waves; they run and cast themselves headlong down. But whither do they run? Alas! to their own destruction [as it seems].

If they could will any thing, they would hold back, and return to their former calmness. But this is impossible: the declivity has been reached, and they must fall from one descent to another. There is as yet no consideration about abyss or loss. The water (the soul) continues visible, and is not lost in this *degree*. It is agitated, and falls headlong; wave follows wave, and, in the fall, they meet and dash against one another.

3. This water, however, meets with certain level spots in the declivity of this mountain, where it takes some little relaxation. It is pleased with the clearness of its own waters, and sees that its falls, its courses, and the dashing of its waves against the rocks, have served only to make it more pure. It finds itself delivered from its loud and stormy period, and believes that it has reached already the place of rest,—

believes this so much the more readily, because it cannot doubt, that the state through which it has just passed has served greatly to purify it. For it sees itself to be more clear, and no longer perceives the stench which certain stagnant places emitted at the top of the mountain. It has even acquired a certain propensity to fall; that is, it has gained a knowledge, in some measure, of what itself is. It has been made to see, by the trouble of its passions, or rather of its waves, that they were not destroyed, but only hushed to sleep.*

4. As, when it was on the declivity of the mountain on its way to this last spot, it believed itself on the way to destruction, and had no further hope of recovering its peace; so, now, when it no longer hears the sound of its own waves, when it sees itself flowing so gently and pleasantly over the sand, it forgets its former suffering, and believes not that it will ever return; for it sees itself to have acquired more purity, and is not afraid of becoming putrid, since it is not absolutely at rest here, but flows in the gentlest and pleasantest way imaginable.† Poor torrent! thou thinkest thou

* The tempted are in interior anxiety, even to desperation, in which they are kept more especially, for the end that they may finally be confirmed in this, that all things are of the Lord's mercy, that they are saved by Him alone, and that in themselves there is nothing but evil; in which truths they are confirmed by combats wherein they conquer. — A. C. 2334.

† That not temptations only, but also consolation is signified by Schaddai, is because all spiritual temptations are succeeded by consolation, which has been given [me] to know from experience in the other life. For when any one there suffers hardships from evil spirits,

hast found rest, and hast reached its very abode! Thou art beginning to take pleasure in thy own waters! The creatures gaze at themselves in the mirror which these waters make, and think themselves most fair. But what is thy surprise, when, in flowing along so softly over the sand, thou meetest, all unexpectedly, with a declivity yet steeper, longer, and more dangerous than the first? * Thus begins again the murmuring of the torrent, which was a moderate sound at first, but which now becomes insupportable. It makes a noise and uproar still greater than before. It has now scarcely a bed to run in, but falls from rocks to rocks, going headlong without order or reason. It frightens every one with its noise, and all are afraid to approach it.

5. Poor torrent! what wilt thou do? Thou sweepest with thee all that thou encounterest in thy mad career: thou feelest only the declivity that hurries thee forward, and believest thyself lost. No, no, fear not; thou art not lost, but the period of thy happiness is not yet attained. For this, other falls and other losses are needful. Thou art only beginning thy course.

At length this running torrent feels that it has reached again the lower part of the mountain and the

by infestations, excitations to evil, and persuasions to falses, afterwards when the evil spirits are removed, he is received by the angels, and is brought into a state of comfort, by delights conformable to his genius. — A. C. 5628.

* Temptations are continual despairings concerning salvation, in the beginning slight, but in process of time grievous. — A. C. 8567.

level country. It regains its former calmness, and even a greater one; and, after having passed long years in these alternations, it enters upon the third degree.

6. After having passed some years in this tranquil place, of which, as we have said, it thought to keep perpetual possession, — after having acquired the virtues, as it thought, in all their extent, — the soul, believing all its passions to be dead, and thinking yet more confidently to enjoy a happiness beyond all fear of loss, is all astonished to find, that, instead of going higher, or at least maintaining an equal state, it has reached, without looking for it, the declivity of the mountain. It begins, with astonishment, to experience an inclination for the things it had left. It sees this delightful calm all at once beginning to be disturbed. Distractions come in crowds. They fight together and throw each other down. The soul finds nothing but stones in its way, nothing but seasons of drought and aridity. Disgust comes into its prayers; and its passions, which it believed to be dead, but which were only laid asleep, rouse up into life.

7. It is quite astonished at this change. It would either ascend again whence it has fallen, or, at least, stop where it is. But this cannot be: it has reached the crest of the mountain, and it needs must fall. It does its best to recover from its falls; it does what it can to hold back, and stay itself on some species of devotion. It redoubles its penances. It does its best to bring back the delight of its former peace. It seeks solitude with the hope of finding it there. But

all its labor is in vain. It sees that the fault is its own. It resigns itself to suffer the humiliation which results from this, and abominates sin. It would fain adjust things, but it cannot be done. The torrent must take its course, and sweep along all that stands in its way.

The soul, seeing that it finds no further support in God, goes about to see if it can find it in the creature; but it finds none whatever, and this its unfaithfulness serves only to frighten it yet more.

8. At length, the poor soul, not knowing what to do, everywhere lamenting the loss of its Well-beloved, is all astonished to find that He presents Himself again to her. Believing that it had lost Him for ever, it is at once enraptured with the view. It esteems itself so much the more happy, because it perceives that He has brought with Him new blessings, a new purity, a greater distrust of itself.* It has no longer a desire, as at first, to stop; it runs incessantly, but quietly, gently, fearing again an interruption of its peace. It dreads to lose again its treasure, which is the more precious to it, because the loss of it was so keenly felt. It fears to displease Him, lest He should again

* When man is in temptations, the goods of love and the truths of faith are not then appropriated to him, but afterwards. For, during the continuance of temptations, on one part are excited evils and the falses of evils: on the other, goods and the truths of good appertaining to man: hence he is in a turbulent state. In this state the internal is opened; but, after temptation, he has serenity, and in that state goods and the truths of good are brought in by the Lord into the internal now open. — A. C. 10,686.

withdraw Himself. It endeavors to be more faithful to Him, and not to make an end of the means.

9. Notwithstanding, this repose carries it away, ravishes it, and makes it more neglectful. It cannot help yielding itself up to its delights, and would fain be always alone. It is still actuated by a spiritual avidity or intemperance. To drag it forth from solitude and prayer is like plucking out its very soul. It is yet more proprietary than before, that which it delights in being yet more delicate, and its taste having become more nice by the pain it has suffered. It appears to be in a new repose.

10. It goes on quietly, when suddenly it meets with a new descent more decided and longer than the first. It falls, all at once, into a new surprise; it would fain hold back, but in vain; it must fall, and run along the rocks from one to another. It is astonished to find that it is losing all relish for prayer and worship, and that it requires the greatest self-compulsion to continue in it. It finds nothing but death at every step. What formerly gave it life now brings it death.

It no longer feels any peace, but, on the contrary, a trouble and agitation deeper than ever, as well in regard to the passions, which awake with the more strength the more they appeared extinct, as with reference to crosses, which are multiplied without, whilst the soul finds itself more weak in supporting them. It arms itself with patience, it weeps, it groans, it is cast down; it complains to its Spouse that He has thus abandoned it, but its complaints are

not heard.* The more it is troubled, the more it renews its complaints. Every thing becomes death to it; it finds all good difficult, it feels a tendency to evil that hurries it away.

11. Nevertheless it cannot rest in the creature after having tasted the Creator. It runs yet more earnestly; and the stronger the rocks and other obstacles that oppose its passage, the more bent it is on redoubling its course.

It is like the *dove* sent forth from the ark, which, "not finding any spot of earth on which she could rest her foot" [Gen. viii. 9], is compelled to return. But alas! what will this poor dove do when it would return to the ark, if the good Noah will not put forth his hand to take it again? It does nothing but hover about the ark, seeking rest, but not able to find it. It moans about the ark, until the divine Noah, having pity upon her perseverance and her moanings, at length opens the door, and receives her with acceptance.

12. O method altogether admirable and loving of the Divine Goodness! He deals thus with the soul, only to make it hasten forward more rapidly. He hides Himself that He may be sought for. He flies that He may draw the soul after Him.† He lets it fall, apparently, that He may have the pleasure of

* The prayers of those who are in temptations are little heard; for the Lord wills the end, which is the salvation of man; which end He knows, but not man; and the Lord does not act for prayers against the end, which is salvation. — A. C. 8179.

† "And they said, Nay" [Ex. xix. 2]. That it signifies doubt which usually attends temptation, may appear from the refusal, and

sustaining and lifting it up. Thou who art strong and vigorous; who hast never experienced these devices of love, these apparent jealousies, these avoidings, lovely to the soul that has gone through them, but terrible to the one that is under them,—thou, I say, who knowest nothing of these dealings of the divine love, because intoxicated with the continual possession of thy Well-beloved — (or, if He hides Himself, it is for so short a time that thou canst not judge, from long and wearisome absence, of the blessedness of his presence) — thou hast never experienced thine own weakness, and the need thou hast of His aid. Whereas, these poor souls thus left destitute begin to lean no longer upon themselves, but only on their Well-beloved.* The severities of this Well-beloved have made his favors yet more desirable.

13. These souls often commit faults by reason of the weak state to which they are reduced, and because

that they nevertheless went to his house. Inasmuch as by Lot it is here treated concerning the first state of the church, which is in the good of charity, but in external worship, and whereas, before man comes to this state, he must be reformed, which reformation is effected also by a certain species of temptation, but which temptation is very light with those who are in external worship; therefore these circumstances are mentioned, which imply somewhat of temptation, viz. that the angels first said, that they would stay all night in the street, and that Lot pressed them, and thus that they turned down to him, and came to his house. — A. C. 2334.

* The tempted are in interior anxiety even to desperation, in which they are kept more especially for the end that they may finally be confirmed in this, that all things are of the Lord's mercy, that they are saved by Him alone, and that in themselves there is nothing but evil; in which truths they are confirmed by combats in which they conquer. — A. C. 2334.

their senses no longer find any supports. These faults make them so much ashamed, that they would hide themselves, were this possible, from their Well-beloved. Alas! in the dreadful confusion in which they are involved, He shows them His countenance for a moment. He reaches out to them His sceptre, like king Ahasuerus, that they may not die; but His caresses, so brief and so tender, serve only to increase their confusion at having displeased Him.

At other times he makes them feel by His severities how much their unfaithfulness displeases Him. O God! if these souls could be reduced to powder, they would gladly be so. They throw themselves into a thousand postures to repair the injury they have done to God. And if, by some trifling quicknesses of temper which they look upon as crimes, they have hurt their neighbor, what reparations do they not make for it? They carry this so far, that they believe themselves guilty therefor, as if they had done him some great wrong, and ask his pardon for it. But it is pitiful to see the state of the poor soul, when, by some fault, it has been capable of expelling its Well-beloved.* It makes use of all endeavors to amend; it does not

* This latter fear, viz. in which the good are, is called holy fear, and is of admiration respecting the divine, and also is of love. Love without holy fear is like somewhat unsavory, or like food unseasoned with salt, and consequently insipid; but love with fear is like salted food, which yet does not taste of salt. The fear of love is, lest in any manner the Lord should suffer hurt, or in any manner a neighbor; thus lest in any manner good and truth should suffer hurt, consequently lest should the holy of love and faith, and thence of worship.
—A. C. 3718.

cease to run after Him. But the more it runs, the more He flies. Or, if He stops, it is only for some moments, that it may take breath, and enjoy thereafter a little repose. But the more it advances, the more the repose becomes brief and delicate.

14. The poor soul sees well that it must needs die; for it no longer finds life in any thing; every thing becomes to it death and the cross. Prayer, reading, conversation, all is death. It no longer has a relish for any thing, neither for the practice of the virtues, nor for aiding the sick, nor for any thing else which constitutes a virtuous life. It loses all this, or rather it dies to these things; doing them with so much pain and disrelish, that they become a kind of death to it. At length, after having fought long but ineffectually,* after a long succession of sorrows and of repose, of dyings and livings, it begins to perceive how it

* The case is similar in the other life with spirits, who by truths are initiated into good, and especially into this, that all good and truth flows in from the Lord; and when they apperceive that whatever they think and will flows in, and thus that they cannot think and will from themselves, they are then repugnant to the utmost of their ability, believing that thus their own proper life would be annihilated; and so all delight would perish, for they place delight in proprium; and, moreover, if they cannot act what is good from themselves, nor believe what is true from themselves, they think that they should hang down their heads, doing nothing and thinking nothing of themselves, and should wait for influx. Thus it is permitted them to think, even to such a degree, that they almost conclude with themselves that they are not willing thence to receive good and truth, but from elsewhere, where there is not such a deprivation of proprium. Sometimes also it is given them to inquire where they may find it; but afterwards, when they know where to find it, they who are regenerating return, and from freedom choose to be led of the Lord as

has abused the mercies of God, and how much more profitable this state of death is to it than that of life. For, when it sees its Well-beloved return, and finds that the more it advances the more purely it possesses Him, and that the state which precedes enjoyment is one of purification, it gives itself up in good earnest to *death*;* submitting to all the comings and goings of its Well-beloved, and giving him full liberty to go and come as He will. It perceives then, that the endeavor to retain Him would be an act of propriety, and involve a fault. It is taught what it is capable of. It loses by small degrees its own enjoyment, and is thereby prepared for a new state.

But, before I speak of this, it must be observed, that the more the soul advances, the shorter, simpler, and purer are its enjoyments; and the longer, harder, and more anguishing are its trials; and this, until the soul has lost all [proprietary] enjoyment, never to find it again.† Then comes the third degree, which is called *loss, burial, putrefaction*. The former [the second] terminates with death, and goes no further.

to willing and thinking: they are also then informed. that they are to receive a heavenly proprium such as the angels have, and with this proprium likewise blessedness and happiness to eternity. — A. C. 5660.

* The privation of the life of truth from itself is not the extinction of truth, but is its vivification: for when truth appears to itself to have life from itself, then it has not life, except such life as in itself is not life; but when it is deprived of that, it is then gifted with real life, viz. by good from the Lord, who is life itself. — A. C. 3607.

† When, therefore, the order is to be inverted, then the former delight of pleasures expires, and becomes none, and a new [delight] from a spiritual origin is insinuated in its place. — A. C. 8413.

CHAPTER VII.

SECTION I.

1—4. *Third* degree of the passive way of faith in its beginnings, and in its progress through several particular deaths leading to total death, burial, putrefaction, and ashes. 5—8. Duration of this transit, in which one should neither advance of himself nor go back. 9—13. The stripping of the soul, and its three kinds. 14—19. First degree of this stripping, which has relation to gifts and favors, or the ornaments of the soul. Its necessity and its effects.

1. You see these dying persons, when they are thought to have breathed their last, all at once recovering new strength, and so on until they really expire. As a lamp, that has exhausted its supply of oil, darts up its flame, from time to time, in the midst of its obscurity, but only to die the sooner, so the soul shoots forth some gleams which last but a few moments. At length, it is in vain for it to fight any longer against this death. There is no more radical moisture in it: the Sun of righteousness has so dried it up, that it must of necessity expire.

2. But what else does this loving Sun aim at with His rigorous heats, but to consume the soul? And the poor soul, thus burned up, believes itself all ice, because the torment it endures does not allow it to perceive the nature of its suffering. As long as the Sun was covered with clouds, and gave His rays to be felt in a temperate manner, it felt His heat, and believed itself all on fire, though it was but slightly

warmed. But when He darts His rays perpendicularly, it feels itself all burnt and dried up, without believing that it is even receiving any warmth.

3. O gracious deception! O Love at once gentle and cruel! Hast thou lovers only to deceive them thus? Thou woundest these souls, and then, concealing Thy dart, makest them run after the author of their wound. Thou drawest them after Thee, and showest Thyself to them; and, when they would possess Thee, Thou fleest away. When Thou seest the soul reduced to extremities, and losing breath by the earnestness with which it runs, Thou showest Thyself to it for a moment, that it may recover life, but still only that it may be made to die a thousand and a thousand times more rigorously.* Rigorous Lover! Innocent Destroyer! Why dost Thou not kill at once? Wherefore give wine to the expiring soul, imparting life to it anew, only to wrest it away again? This, then, is Thy sport. Thou woundest to death; and, when Thou seest the sufferer ready to expire,

* This state [concealment or receding] is signified in the word by evening: when they are in that state, they recede from things celestial and spiritual, and recede to such as contain nothing spiritual and celestial. But this concealment or receding does not come to pass by the Lord's concealing Himself or receding, but by themselves doing so; for they can no longer be withheld from their proprium, because it is not expedient. Wherefore this state arrives when they are left to themselves or their proprium; and so far as they are thus left, or are immersed in the proprium, so far they recede from those things which are of heaven, and so far good is unperceivable to them, and truth obscure. Hence it is evident, that the Lord does not conceal Himself, but that the man, the spirit and the angel, conceals himself.
—A. C. 5964.

Thou healest his wound that Thou mayst inflict new ones. Alas! men die commonly but once, and the most cruel tormentors were wont, in persecutions, to lengthen out life indeed to the criminal; but they were satisfied when they had destroyed him once. But Thou, with less pity, takest life from us a thousand and a thousand times, and givest it anew.

4. O life, which we cannot lose without so many deaths! O death, which we cannot have but by the loss of so many lives! Thou wilt come at the end of this life. But to what purpose? Perhaps this soul, after it has been swallowed up in thy bosom, will enjoy its Well-beloved. It would be but too happy if this were so; but it must undergo another torment. It must be *buried*, undergo *putrefaction*,* and be brought to *dust*. But, perhaps, it will not suffer any more, since bodies that putrefy are past sensation. Oh! it is not so with the soul. It goes on suffering; and burial, putrefaction, and nothingness are vastly more painful than death itself. †

* The first rational is in the beginning like unripe fruit, which successively ripens, till the seeds within are deposited in it; and when it is of such an age as to begin to separate itself from the tree, then is its state full, concerning which n. 2636. But the other rational with which man is gifted of the Lord, when he is regenerated, is like the same fruit in good ground, in which there is a *decay* of those parts which encompass the seeds, and the seeds themselves shoot forth from their inmosts, and emit a root, and also a stem above ground; which stem grows into a new tree, and unfolds itself, even at length into new fruits, and afterwards into gardens and paradises according to the affections of good and of truth which are received. See Matt. xiii. 31, 32; John xii. 24. — A. C. 2657.

† In this verse [Gen. xli. 31] it is treated concerning the last state

5. This degree of *death* is exceedingly long, and lasts sometimes twenty or thirty years, unless with those souls concerning whom God has special designs. And, as I said that very few went beyond the other degrees, I now say that still fewer go beyond this.*

It is a circumstance that has astonished many persons, to see those who have lived holy lives like the angels die in terrible distress, and almost in despair of salvation. They are astonished, and know not how to account for it. The reason is, that they finished their lives in this degree of the mystical death; and, as God was pleased to hasten their progress, He redoubled their sufferings, as happened in Taulere's case.

I shall be told, in reply, that these persons were saints perfected according to their degree and in their degree. This is true; but still they had not passed the one under consideration, — a circumstance which does not interfere with their being saints. A large number have been canonized by the church who experienced this degree only on their deathbeds, and

of desolation, when there is desperation, which proximately precedes regeneration. The subject is here continued concerning the last state of desolation, which is a state of desperation, and concerning its increasing grievousness. — A. C. 5280, 5281.

* The good itself in which truth is implanted causes them not only to acknowledge, but also to believe, that reformation is from the Lord. This is the third state, which is followed by a fourth state, viz. that they perceive it to be from the Lord; but there are few who arrive at this state in the life of the body, it being an angelic state. — A. C. 2960.

many also never entered upon it. Accordingly, when I meet with persons who speak of the rapidity with which they are advancing, I cannot help saying that they are deceived. They are all perfected, no doubt, in those interior states which they do not get beyond; but as for their having passed this, it is a mistake. And this proves to be the case in the end.

6. Accordingly, those souls who are in a state of union in the first degree, which marks the beginning of that way of naked faith of which I am speaking, do wrong to adopt for themselves the rules which apply to more advanced states. The stripping of the soul must be left to God. He will do it to perfection, while the soul will second this stripping and the whole process of death without interposing any obstacle. But to do it of one's self is to spoil all, and make of a divine a common state. Thus you see some, who, from having read or heard that the soul must be stripped of all, set about it themselves, and continue always thus without progress; for, as they strip their own selves, God does not clothe them with Himself; for, it must be observed, the Divine purpose in unclothing is only to clothe upon. He impoverishes only to make rich, becoming in secret Himself the substitute for all that He takes away from the soul. This is not the case with those who act in this matter from themselves. They lose, indeed, by their faults the gifts of God; but they do not, for all that, possess God.

7. In this degree the soul cannot sufficiently suffer itself to be stripped, emptied, impoverished, killed;

and all it does to sustain itself is nothing but irreparable loss, since it is preserving a life which ought to be laid down. A person who intended to let a lamp go out without extinguishing it, need only refrain from putting oil into it, and it would then go out of itself; but if, while saying all the while that he wished to let the lamp go out, he kept putting oil in it from time to time, the lamp would never burn out. It is the same with the soul, if, in this degree, it takes ever so little of life to itself. If it solaces itself, — if it does not suffer itself to be stripped, — in a word, if it puts forth any act of life whatsoever, it will postpone its death as long, and longer, than its life lasts.*

8. Poor souls! do not fight against death, and death shall give you life. I see them in imagination like persons who are drowning. Such struggle to the utmost to reach the surface of the water, and hold by every thing they can; they cling to life as long as

* It is here in advance to be told, in a few words, how the case is with that conjunction, namely, with the conjunction of the external or natural man with the internal or spiritual. The external or natural man, from the first age of life only, neither knows that there is an internal or spiritual man: wherefore, when a man is reformed, and begins to become spiritual or internal, then the natural at first rebels; for it is taught that the natural man is to be subdued, that is, all its concupiscences to be extirpated, together with those things which confirm them. Hence, when the natural man is left to itself, it thinks that so it shall totally perish; for it does not know otherwise than that the natural is all, and is wholly ignorant that there are immense and ineffable things in the spiritual; and when the natural man thinks thus, it then draws back, and is not willing to be subjected to the spiritual. — A. C. 5647.

they have any strength, and do not drown until they are exhausted. It is thus with these souls. They fight to the utmost that they may not perish: it is only lack of strength and power from which they expire. God, desirous of promoting this death, and pitying the soul, cuts off the hands by which it keeps such strong hold, and compels it thus to fall to the bottom. It cries out with all its strength by reason of the pain it feels, but in vain. God is without pity, and it is His great mercy that He shows none to the soul at this juncture. Be co-workers with God, ye spiritual guides, in this course of His. Give no succor to this soul. And as you are not allowed to contribute any thing to its death, by plunging it, yourselves, into the water, neither is it lawful for you to stretch out a hand to hold it up. Suffer it to have no resting-place, and be inexorable to its complaints. Become brass to it, as the heavens have become; and, if you see it die, give no burial to its body. Love will give it such an one as it knows of: burial and dust will come together.

9. Crosses now follow; crosses are multiplied; and the more they are multiplied, the weaker the soul becomes to bear them, so that it seems to itself not able to carry them any longer.* What is peculiarly afflicting at this time is, that the state of pain always begins with something which appears to the soul

* When the state is changed, and becomes inverse to the foregoing, then there is mourning; for then they are let into temptation, whereby the things of the proprium are weakened and debilitated.—
A. C. 5773.

faulty in itself. It believes itself to have contributed to this evil state.*

At length the soul is reduced almost to a state of insensibility. It begins to grow accustomed to its pains, to be convinced of its impotence, of its uselessness, and to despair of itself. It consents even to the loss of all favors from on high, and it thinks that God has taken them away justly. It does not even hope ever to enjoy them again.

When it sees some gracious soul, its pain is redoubled, and it feels itself plunged into the deepest of its nothingness. It fain would imitate them; but, seeing its efforts useless, it is compelled to die and breathe its last. Then it says, in the words of Scripture, — “The thing which I greatly feared has come upon me,” Job iii. 25. What! to lose God, it says, and to lose him for ever, without hope of ever finding Him again! What! to be deprived of love for time and eternity; to be no longer able to love Him we know to be so lovely! Oh, is it not enough, Divine Lover of the soul, to repulse Thy creature, and to turn away from it, unless it also loses love, and loses it (as seems) for ever! The poor soul believes itself, indeed, to have sustained this loss; but, in truth, it never loved more strongly or more purely.

* When, therefore, ultimate truth is taken away, and so he has nothing whereby to defend himself against those who are natural, he then comes into temptations, and is accused by evil spirits, who are all merely natural, especially of false speaking against goods. Thence now are spiritual anxieties, and thence the torments which are called torments of conscience. These things appear to man as if in himself by influx and communication. — A. C. 5036.

It has indeed lost the vigor and sensible power of love, but it has not lost love itself: on the contrary, it never loved more truly. The poor soul cannot believe it, yet it is plain that the fact is so; for the soul cannot exist without love, and if it did not love God, it must needs love some other thing. But the soul in this state is far enough from taking pleasure in any thing whatever.*

10. This does not mean that the senses do not bend towards the creatures. This, in fact, now constitutes the great cause of grief to the soul, which regards the revolt of the passions, and its involuntary faults, as dreadful transgressions, which bring upon it the hatred of its spouse. It would fain wash, whiten, purify itself; but it is no sooner washed than it thinks that it falls back again into a sewer more filthy and noisome than that which it had left. It does not see that it gets muddy and falls by mere dint of running, and that love is transporting it so vehemently and drawing it after itself so swiftly, that it does not see false steps. Nevertheless, it is so much ashamed of running in this state, that it knows not what to do. It goes with garments all torn, and loses all it has in the earnestness of its course.

11. Its Spouse helps to strip it for two reasons.

* Truth is said to be not conspicuous, because truth in a state of desolation appears as if it fled away; but yet it is present, for all truth and good, which at any time have been given by the Lord to man, to a spirit, and to an angel, remain, and nothing is taken from them, but in a state of desolation they are obscured by the proprium, so as not to appear. But when a state of light returns, they are made present and conspicuous. — A. C. 6122.

The first is, that it has spotted its garments, so beautiful and magnificent, by its vain self-complacencies, and that it has appropriated to itself the gifts of God by very many reflections and regards of self-love.* The second is, because in running it would be impeded by this load: the very fear of losing so much riches would hinder it in its course.

12. Poor soul! what has become of thee? Thou wert formerly the delight of thy Spouse, and He took the utmost pleasure in adorning and beautifying thee; and now thou art so naked, so tattered, so poor, that thou wouldst not dare either to look at thyself, or to appear before Him. The men who now look at thee, after having in former times admired thee, when they see thee thus tattered, believe either that thou hast become mad, or that thou hast committed the greatest crimes, and thereby compelled thy Spouse to abandon thee. They do not perceive that this jealous Spouse, who loves this soul only for Himself, seeing that she was amusing herself with her ornaments, that she was taking a pleasure in them and indulging self-admiration on their account,† — seeing this, I say, and that she was ceasing to look at Him in order to

* With man about to be regenerated, the case is this, that his first affection of truth is very impure; for there is in it an affection of use and of end for the sake of himself, for the sake of the world, for the sake of glory in heaven and the like things, which look towards himself, but not towards the community, the Lord's kingdom, and still less towards the Lord. — A. C. 3089.

† The truth which is given by the Lord is at first received as if it were not given; for man before regeneration supposes that he procures for himself truth; and so long as he supposes this, he is in spirit-

look at herself, and that she was weakening the love she had for Him by loving herself too much, strips her, and makes all her beauty and riches vanish from before her eyes.

The soul, in the abundance of its goods, takes a pleasure in looking at itself: it sees excellences in itself which attract its love, and steal it away from its Spouse. Poor, vain thing that it is! It sees not that it is beautiful only with the beauties of its Spouse; and that, if He took them away, it would become so ugly that it would be frightful to itself. Moreover, it neglects to follow the Spouse in His courses, into the deserts and wherever He goes; it fears to spoil its complexion and to lose its jewels. O jealous Love! how well dost Thou do in thus thwarting this proud one, and taking away from it what Thou hadst given, that it may learn to know what it is, and that, being naked and stripped of all, nothing might hold it back in its course!

13. Our Lord begins then to strip this soul by little and little, to take away its ornaments, all its *gifts, graces, and favors*, which are its jewelry that encumbers it; afterwards He takes from it all its *facilities to good*, which are as its garments; and, after this, He takes from it *the beauty of its face*, which is the divine virtue it is unable to practise actively.*

ual theft. That to claim to one's self, and to attribute to self good and truth for righteousness and merit, is to take from the Lord what is His, may be seen, n. 2609, &c. — A. C. 5747.

* It is treated in what now follows concerning the internal celestial, that it reduced all things in the natural into order, under a

14. The *first* degree of its stripping consists in the taking away of *graces, gifts, and favors, and of love sensible and perceived.* It feels itself gradually stripped of them. It sees that its Spouse takes back by degrees the riches he had given it. It is at first greatly afflicted at this loss; but what most afflicts it is, not the loss of these riches, but the displeasure of its Spouse. For it believes it to be from anger that He thus takes back what he had given. It sees well the bad use it has made of them, and the self-complacency it has indulged on account of them, and is so filled with shame for it that it is ready to die with confusion.* It submits, and dares not say to Him, Wherefore dost Thou take back what Thou hadst

general [principle] to the end that conjunction might be effected of *scientifics* with the *truths* of the church, and by those truths with *spiritual good*, and by this good with the internal celestial; but because the reduction of scientifics into order under a general [principle] cannot be effected otherwise than by vastations of good and desolations of truth, and by subsequent supports, therefore both the former and the latter are treated of in what now follows in the internal sense. — A. C. 6109.

By precious stones are signified the *knowledge* of truth and good. — A. E. 294.

Garments signify the *truths* which pertain to the understanding. — A. E. 240.

Whereas good is the very essence, and truth is the existence thence, by beautiful in form is signified the *good of life.* — A. C. 4985.

* When heaven flows in, it removes the hindrances, which are evils and falses thence derived, which reside in the natural mind, or in the natural man; and these cannot be removed, except by a living acknowledgment of them by man, and grief of mind on account of them. Hence it is that in temptations man experiences anguish from the evils and falses rising up into the thought; and in proportion as

given me? For it sees itself to deserve this by the bad use it has made of them, and in deep silence it looks at Him in a way so pitiable as to manifest to Him what it suffers.*

15. Although it keeps silence, it is not so deep as afterwards. It interrupts this silence by tears and broken sighs. But it is much astonished to find, that, in looking at its Spouse, it sees Him all offended at it for weeping over the righteous inflictions whereby He has put it out of its power to abuse His benefits, and for thinking so little on the evil use it has made of them. The soul perceives at once its fault and its mistake. It strives to manifest to its Spouse that it is not concerned for the loss of His gifts, provided He is not offended. It testifies to Him that its tears and grief come from having displeased Him. The anger of its Spouse, justly offended, is so deeply felt, that it thinks no longer of the loss of all its riches, but only of that anger. It throws

he then acknowledges his sins, makes himself guilty, and supplicates deliverance, in the same proportion temptations are made serviceable to him.— A. E. 897.

* That they [Joseph's brethren] were charged with theft was that there might be effected conjunction; for man, until he is regenerated, cannot otherwise than believe so [that he procures truth for himself]. He says indeed with his mouth from doctrine, that all the truth of faith and good of charity is from the Lord; but still he does not believe this until faith is implanted in good: it is then that he first acknowledges it from the heart. That they were charged with theft to the intent that conjunction might be effected, is evident also from this, that so Joseph brought them back to himself, and for some time kept them in thought concerning that deed, and afterwards that he manifested himself to them, that is, conjoined.— A. C. 5747.

itself into a thousand postures to appease Him. Its sighs, its groans, and its tears, are the expressions of its grief.* This is yet another fault displeasing to its Friend; but, as the soul is still weak, he pretends not to notice it.

16. After having left it to weep a long time, He puts on a face as if He were appeased; Himself dries up its tears, and consoles it. O God! what joy is it to this soul to see these new bounties of love after what it has done! † He does not, however, give it back all its former riches; but the soul is not troubled at this, esteeming itself too happy in being looked at, consoled, and cherished by its Well-beloved. At first it receives His caresses with so much confusion that it dares not lift up its eyes. But as present good throws past evils into forgetfulness, it sinks and

* While man is regenerating, and conjunction is effecting of the good of the internal man with the truths of the external, a commotion takes place among truths; for then they undergo another arrangement: it is this commotion which is here [Gen. xlv. 3] meant, and which is signified by their being in consternation. The commotion which then exists manifests itself by an anxiety arising from the change of the former state, namely, from a privation of the delight which had been in that state: this commotion also manifests itself by anxiety concerning the past life in that internal good and the internal itself were discarded to what was lowest. — A. C. 5881.

† Something shall now be said concerning consolations after temptations. All who are regenerating by the Lord undergo temptations, and after temptations experience joys. When, therefore, the evils and falses of man are removed, then temptations are finished; and, these being finished, joy flows in through heaven from the Lord, and fills his natural mind. This joy is what is here understood by consolations, which all receive who undergo spiritual temptations: I speak from experience. — A. E. 897.

drowns itself in these new caresses of its Spouse, and, thinking no more on its past wretchedness, it feeds and rests on these caresses. Hereby it compels its Spouse to be displeased anew, and to strip it yet further.

17. It must be observed, that God does not take from the soul its riches except by little and little, — something at one time, something at another. The weaker the soul is, the longer is the process of stripping it; and the stronger it is, the sooner it is finished: inasmuch as God strips the latter more frequently and of more things at once. But hard as is this stripping, it is only of outside things and superfluities; that is to say, only of gifts, graces, and favors, but not of other things. This is done in succession, by reason of the soul's weakness.* This proceeding is so admirable, it is so great a love of God for the soul, that one could never believe it previous to experience. For the soul is so full of itself, so made up of self-love, that, if God did not deal with it thus, it would perish.†

* Man, when he is regenerating, which is effected by the implantation of spiritual truth and good, and then by the removal of what is evil and false, is not hastily regenerated, but slowly. The reason is because all things which the man had thought, intended, and done from infancy, have added themselves to his life; and have made it, and also have formed such a connection among themselves that one cannot be moved away unless all are moved away together with it. — A. C. 9334.

† Hence it is evident that the former life, which is of hell, must be altogether destroyed; that is, evils and falses must be removed, to the intent that new life, which is the life of heaven, may be implanted.

18. It will be asked, perhaps, — If the gifts of God are so hurtful, wherefore impart them? God gives them from His exceeding goodness, to draw the soul from sin and from attachment to the creatures, and to turn it back to Himself; * and if he did not give them, the soul would be always criminal. But these very gifts with which He graciously endows it, in order to detach it from the creature and from itself, and to win from it for Himself the love at least of gratitude, this creature is so wretched as to make use of for self-love and self-admiration, turning its attention away from the Giver to them. Self-love is so deeply rooted in the creature that these gifts have served to increase it; for it finds in itself new charms, which did not exist before; it immerses itself into itself; clings to

This cannot in any wise be done hastily; for every evil, being inrooted with its falses, has connection with all evils and their falses; and such evils and falses are innumerable, and their connection is so manifold that it cannot be comprehended, not even by the angels, but only by the Lord. Hence it is evident that the life of hell with man cannot be destroyed suddenly; for, if suddenly, he would altogether expire. — A. C. 9336.

* During the process of man's regeneration, he is kept by the Lord in a kind of mediatory good, which serves for introducing genuine goods and truths; but after these goods and truths are introduced, they are separated thence. That man may be led from the state of the old man into the state of the new, the concupiscences of the world must be put off, and the affections of heaven must be put on. Since, therefore, the states of his life are to be so much changed, it cannot be otherwise than that he should be a long time held in a sort of middle good; that is, in a good which partakes both of the affections of the world, and of the affections of heaven; and, unless he be kept in this middle good, he in no wise admits heavenly goods and truths. — A. C. 4063.

itself; appropriates to itself what was God's; and growing too familiar with Him, forgets the slavery out of which He has delivered it, and a thousand things of this kind. God, it is true, could deliver it from all this, just as He can deliver man from the huge mass of his concupiscences; but He does not do it for reasons known to Himself alone.

19. The soul, thus stripped of the divine gifts, loses something of its self-love, and begins to see that it is not as rich as it believed, and that its riches belong to its Spouse. It sees, I say, that it has made a wrong use of them, and consents that He shall keep them and take them back. It says: I will be rich with the riches of my Spouse, and, although He keeps them, we shall always be in a community of goods; He will not lose them. It becomes even glad at having lost these gifts of God, since it finds itself disencumbered, and more lightly equipped for progress: in a word, it grows accustomed, by degrees, to being stripped, and perceives that it has been good and serviceable to it. It is no longer troubled about the matter. It arranges its habits as well as may be; and, as it is fair, it is satisfied that it will still be as pleasing to its Spouse, by its agreeable qualities and by its own garments, as it was with all its ornaments.

SECTION II.

20—24. The second degree of the stripping of the soul, having reference to its habits, or its facility in practising good exteriorly, and in a sensible manner. The causes of it, which are, that it attributed that good to itself, and had complacency in it, instead of acknowledging how powerless it is and destitute, in itself, of all good.

20. While the soul is thinking only about living in peace in this state of loss, and sees clearly the good coming to it thereby, and the injury it had inflicted on itself by the bad use it had made of the gifts taken from it,* it is all astonished that its Spouse, who had given it a breathing space only by reason of its weakness, comes, with yet greater harshness, to strip from it its *garments*.

Poor soul! what wilt thou do now? The case is much worse than before; for these garments are necessary, and it is not seemly to be deprived of them. Now it is that the soul resists with all its might. It exhibits to its Spouse its reasons for not walking thus naked,—shows that this would be matter of reproach to Himself. Alas! it says, I have lost all the riches Thou didst bestow upon me, — Thy gifts, the sweetness of Thy love; but I could still perform exterior actions of virtue. I used to perform charities.

* The state is here [Gen. xxxii. 5] described as to its quality when inversion takes place, namely, when truth is made subordinate to good, that is, when they who have been in the affection of truth begin to be in the affection of good. But that such inversion and subordination take place does not appear except to those who are regenerate, and not to the regenerated except those who reflect. — A. C. 4245.

I prayed with diligence, although Thou hadst taken away Thy sensible graces; but to lose all this is what I cannot consent to. I was still dressed according to my station, and respected in the world as Thy spouse; but, if I lose my garments, this will bring reproach upon Thyself. No matter, poor soul; thou must consent to this loss. Thou dost not yet know thyself. Thou believest that thy garments are thine own, and that thou canst always make use of them.* — But I have gained them at the cost of so much care, and Thou didst give them me as a reward of the labors I underwent for Thy sake. — No matter; thou must lose them.

21. The soul, after doing its utmost to keep them, feels itself stripped of them by little and little. Every thing becomes insipid to it; it has no longer a relish for any thing; † all works of charity are attended with disgust, and it falls into a state where it has no power to perform them. ‡ It had its disgusts

* There remain after temptations several states of truth and good thence derived, to which the thoughts may be bended by the Lord. — A. C. 2334.

† “To slay all this congregation with hunger” [Gen. xvi. 13]. That it signifies, that, from a defect of delight and of good, they were expiring, appears, &c. It may be expedient briefly to say how the case herein is. When the good of charity is to be insinuated, which makes spiritual life, then the delight of pleasures is removed, which had made natural life. When this delight is removed, then man comes into temptation; for he believes, if he be deprived of the delight of pleasures, that he is deprived of all life; for his natural life consists in that delight or good, as he calls it. — A. C. 8413.

‡ Spiritual life consists in exercises according to truths, consequently in uses; for they who are in spiritual life have an appetite for and desire truths with a view to life; that is, that they may live

and its pains before, but not impotency. But now all power is taken away from it. "Flesh and heart faileth it," Ps. lxxiii. 26. It even loses "the remembrance" (ver. 6) of them for a long time, although the inclination thereto still remains; that being, as it were, the last garment which must be removed.

22. This is done very gradually, and in a painful manner; because the soul sees all the time that this has come to pass from its own fault. It no longer dares to make any objections; for what it might say would only excite the displeasure of its Spouse, whose anger is worse to it than death. It begins to know itself better, to see that it has nothing of its own, and that all belongs to its Spouse.* It begins to be distrustful of itself, and loses by degrees the love it had for itself.†

according to them, thus with a view to uses. So far, therefore, as they can imbibe truths, according to which they are to effect uses, so far they are in spiritual life, because so far in the light of intelligence and wisdom. When, therefore, truths fail, as is the case when a state of shade comes, which is signified by evening in the Word, n. 6110, then spiritual life is in distress. — A. C. 6119.

* In this chapter [Gen. xxiv.] it is treated throughout of spiritual theft, which consists in any one claiming to himself the good and truth which is from the Lord. This is a thing of so great moment, that a man after death cannot be admitted into heaven, until he acknowledges in heart that nothing of good and truth is from himself, but from the Lord, and that whatever is from himself is nothing but evil. — A. C. 5758.

† The tempted are in interior anxiety, even to desperation, in which they are kept more especially for the end that they may finally be confirmed in this, that all things are of the Lord's mercy, that they are saved by Him alone, and that in themselves there is nothing but evil, in which truths they are confirmed by combats wherein they conquer. — A. C. 2334.

But it does not yet hate itself; for, although naked, it is still fair.

It regards its Lover from time to time with a pitiable look, but says not a single word: it is cast down at His displeasure. It thinks it would be a small matter to be stripped, if it had only not displeased its Spouse, and if it had not made itself unworthy to wear His nuptial garments.

23. If it was overwhelmed at first, when its riches were taken away, it feels vastly more the shame of seeing itself naked. So much ashamed is it, that it fain would not appear before its Spouse. Notwithstanding, it must acquiesce and run, in this condition, everywhere. What! shall it not be allowed to conceal itself? No; it must appear thus in public. The world begins to think less of it. They say: Is this the soul that was the admiration of men and of angels? See how it has fallen! — Its confusion is redoubled by these words, because it knows that its Spouse has stripped it justly. It does what it can, that He may in some measure clothe it again; but He will do nothing of the kind after thus stripping it of all. This is a boundless mercy; for its garments pleased the soul while they covered it, and hindered it from seeing what it was.

24. It is very astonishing to a soul, which believed itself to be far advanced in perfection, to see itself fall thus all of a sudden. It thinks that this must be in consequence of faults which it had corrected coming back anew; but it is mistaken. It is because the soul was concealed under its garments, which hindered

it from seeing itself, as it was.* It is a dreadful thing to be in the state of a soul thus naked of the gifts and graces of God, and no one without experience of it would believe it.†

SECTION III.

25—28. Third degree of the stripping of the soul as it is led from the second to the third degree of the passive way of faith. This third kind has reference to the beauty of the soul, or its perceived acts of the divine virtues, instead of which there come faults of surprise. Consequences of this. How God hereby brings the soul to a sensible despair. 29—33. Also, to a true knowledge and hatred of itself and to true purity. 34—38. Interval and respite followed by an increased intensity of the preceding operations even to mystical death.

25. But all this would be little, if the soul were to retain its *beauty*; but the Spouse turns it into ugliness, and destroys it. Hitherto the soul has submitted to be stripped of gifts, graces, and favors, and facility for good: it has lost all good things, such as austerities, care of the poor, facility in helping the neighbor; but it has not lost the divine virtues. Nevertheless it must now lose them also, as far as the practice of them is concerned; for, as regards their reality, they are impressed on the soul more strongly than ever.

* When truth was in the first place, that is, when it seemed to itself to have dominion, then falses intermixed themselves; for truth of itself cannot see whether it be truth, but must see it from good. — A. C. 4256.

† When, therefore, the order is inverted, and good takes its prior place manifestly, that is, when it begins to have dominion over truth, then the natural man is in fear and straitness, and also enters into temptations. — A. C. 4256.

It loses virtue *as* virtue, but only to find it again in JESUS CHRIST.

This altogether humble soul becomes, as seems to itself, all proud. This soul so patient, which suffered all things so easily, and found pleasure in it, finds that it cannot endure any thing. The senses lose their orderliness, and seem as if they would rebel. It can neither mortify itself, nor guard itself from any thing by its own endeavors, as formerly; and, what is worse, this soul thus disfigured defiles itself, as it believes, every moment, and wounds itself with the creatures. It complains with the Spouse, "*The watchmen found me, and wounded me.*" — Cant. v. 7.

26. It must be said, however, that persons in this state do not commit any voluntary faults.* God shows them in general such a depth of corruption in themselves, that they would gladly say with Job, "Oh that I might hide myself in hell until the anger of God was passed!" Job xiv. 13. For it must not be thought, that, either at this time or subsequently, God suffers the soul to fall into any real sin. So much is this the case, that though it appears in its own sight as the most miserable of all creatures, yet, when called upon to make confession, it finds no faults of detail which it has committed, and only accuses itself of being full of miseries and of having sentiments contrary to its desires. It is of God's glory, that, in

* It is further to be known that the evil which enters into the thought does not hurt man, because evil is continually infused by spirits from hell, and is continually repelled by the angels; but when evil enters into the will, it then hurts. — A. C. 6204.

giving this soul to experience its corruption to the utmost, He does not suffer it to fall into sins.* What makes its grief so dreadful is, that it is, as it were, overwhelmed with the purity of God; a purity which causes it to see the smallest motes of imperfection as enormous sins, by reason of the infinite distance there is between the purity of God and the impurity of the creature, this sinful Adam. It sees that it came forth pure from the hands of God, and that it has contracted not only the sin of Adam, but also innumerable actual sins,† so that its confusion is beyond what words can express. What causes men to despise it is, not any particular fault they then observe, but only that, not seeing it do all that it used formerly to do with so much ardor and faithfulness, they infer that it has fallen. In this, however, they are greatly deceived.

This explanation may serve for what follows, and

* All temptations appear evil, by reason that they are interior anxieties and griefs, and as it were damnations; for then man is let into the state of his evils, consequently amongst evil spirits, who accuse and thus torment the conscience; but yet the angels defend, that is, the Lord by angels, who keeps the man in hope and trust, which are the powers of combat from an interior whereby he resists. — A. C. 6097.

† He who thinks from an illustrated rational may hence see and perceive that man cannot be regenerated without combat, that is, without spiritual temptations; and further that he is not regenerated by one temptation, but by several: for there are very many kinds of evil which constituted the delight of the former life, that is, the old life. All those evils cannot be subdued at once and together; for they inhere pertinaciously, inasmuch as they were rooted in the parents from many ages backwards, and hence are innate in man, and confirmed by actual evils of himself from infancy. — A. C. 8403.

for all that I may express, perhaps too strongly, and which those who have not experience in these things might take in a bad sense.

It must also be observed, that, when I speak of *corruption*, of *putrefaction*, of *defilement*, &c., I mean the destruction and consumption of the old man by the central conviction and inmost experience of the depth of impurity and propriety that there is in man, which, showing him what he is in himself without God, causes him to cry out with David, "I am a worm, and no man" Ps. xxii. 6; and with Job, "If I wash myself with snow-water and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt Thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me," Job ix. 30, 31.

27. This poor soul does not, then, commit the faults it thinks it does; for it was never, interiorly, more pure. The truth is, that, the senses and the faculties being without supports, especially the senses, they wander uncertainly. Moreover, as the course of this soul towards God redoubles in speed, and it forgets itself more and more, it is not to be wondered at that it is defiled by the muddy places through which it must needs pass; and, as all its attention is turned towards its Well-beloved (although it does not perceive this, because it is engaged in running), it does not think about itself, nor consider where it plants its steps. So true is this, that, while it believes itself the most criminal of all creatures, it yet commits not a single voluntary fault, although all its faults appear to it as such. Still it does commit many faults of

surprise. Often, indeed, it does not see its faults, except after they have been committed.

28. It cries to its Spouse to stretch out His hand for its help; but He is careful not to do it,* at least in a sensible manner, although He sustains it with an invisible hand.† The soul sometimes thinks that it is getting on better, but then is the very time when it does worst; for the design of the Spouse, in suffering it to “fall,” but yet without “hurting itself” (Ps. xxxvii. 24), is, that it may no longer rest upon itself, but may recognize its own impotence,‡ and conceive an entire despair of itself,§ so that it can say, “I

* Moreover, they who are in temptations, and not in some other active life than that of prayers, they do not know that, in case the temptations were intermitted before their full accomplishment, they would not be prepared for heaven, thus that they cannot be saved: on which account also the prayers of those who are in temptations are little heard; for the Lord wills the end, which is the salvation of man; which end He knows, but not man; and the Lord does not act for prayers against the end, which is salvation. — A. C. 8179.

† So long as temptation continues, man supposes that the Lord is absent, because he is disturbed by evil genii, and that to such a degree as sometimes to be reduced to a state of despair, in which he can scarce believe that any God exists: nevertheless the Lord is then more present than is to him credible. — A. C. 840.

‡ That man may become spiritual, it is necessary that his natural should become of no account, that is, should have no power at all of itself. — A. C. 5651.

§ There are several reasons why despair is the last of desolation and temptation, of which it is allowed to adduce only the following: by despair is produced an effectual and sensible acknowledgment that nothing of truth and good is from self, and that men are of themselves damned, but are delivered by the Lord from damnation, and that salvation flows in by truth and good. — A. C. 6144.

have lost all hope, and I shall live no longer," Job xvii. 15.

29. Now it is that the soul begins truly to *hate itself*, and to *know itself*, which it never would do, if our Lord did not make it feel what it is. All the knowledges one has of himself by light, of whatever degree they may be, have not power to make the soul truly hate itself.* "He who loveth his soul shall lose it, and he who hateth his soul shall save it," John xii. 25. This is the only experience, I repeat, which can truly give the soul to know its infinite depth of wretchedness. No other way can give a true *purity*: if it gives any, it gives it only on the surface, and not in the inmost, where the impurity, not being pressed out and so removed, remains hidden.†

* The same appears also from this, that the spiritual man does not know what is evil; he scarce believes any thing to be evil but what is contrary to the commandments of the decalogue, being ignorant of the evils of affection and thought, which are innumerable, and neither reflecting on them, nor calling them evils; moreover he regards the delights of lusts and of pleasures no otherwise than as good, and the delights of self-love he both indulges and approves and excuses, not knowing that such things affect his spirit, and determine its quality in another life. — A. C. 2715.

† The proprium of innocence is, that one knows, acknowledges, and believes, not with the mouth, but with the heart; that nothing but evil is from self, and that all good is from the Lord; consequently, that his proprium is nothing but black, namely, both the voluntary proprium which is evil, and the intellectual proprium which is false. When man is in this confession and faith from the heart, then the Lord flows in with good and truth, and insinuates into him a heavenly proprium which is bright and shining. It is impossible for any one

30. Now it is that God searches out, in the very depths of the soul, its radical impurity, which is the effect of that self-love and that propriety which God would destroy. He presses it, and so forces it out. If you take a sponge full of impurity and wash it ever so much, you will only cleanse the outside: you will not make it clean within, unless you press it, and thus squeeze out all the filth it contains. This is what God does. He presses this soul in a painful, agonizing manner, and thereby brings out what was most deeply hidden within it.

When the soul perceives the stench of this impurity, it thinks it is some new filthiness whereby it is defiled; but it is quite the contrary. This filth was there before, unseen; and it is perceived now only because it is in the process of removal.* One who has an imposthume in some part feels no disgust at it so long as it is not opened. But when the surgeon makes an incision, and squeezes out the pus, the patient complains of the stench, and is sick at the stomach. This imposthume was just as offensive while it was hidden, and much more dangerous, although there was no complaint of its offensiveness. The patient thinks he is undergoing defilement be-

to be in true humiliation, unless he be in this acknowledgment and faith from the heart; for then he is in self-annihilation, yea, in self-aversion, and thus in absence from himself, and thus in a state of receiving the divine of the Lord. — A. C. 3994.

* It is to be observed that man cannot be purified from evils, and thence from falsities, unless the unclean things which are in him emerge even into the thought, and are there seen, acknowledged, discerned, and rejected. — A. E. 580.

cause it suppurates, whereas it is the very contrary.* The external, it is true, is defiled by it for a short time, but only to the end that both the external and the internal may be purified at last. Unless God dealt thus with the soul, SELF-LOVE,† that frightful imposthume, would never be cleansed; and the more it should be covered with beautiful garments, the deeper it would go, and the more it would turn inwardly, and ruin, without suspicion of the mischief it was working, all the noble parts.

31. I say, then, that this way, so abject, so poor, so filthy, is alone able to purify thoroughly; and that, without it, we should always be filthy, although we might appear very neat. It is needful that God should show the soul what itself is, to the very bottom. This grace of faith to suffer one's self to be stripped always has to do with the most deep-seated faults, and those most hidden in self-love, with certain darling sins which nature presses to her bosom, and guards with jealous care; which others do not regard as faults; but which, on the contrary, appear to be virtues, so that, in losing them, it seems as if

* All temptations appear evil by reason that they are interior anxieties and griefs, and as it were damnations; for then man is let into the state of his evils, consequently amongst evil spirits, who accuse, and thus torment the conscience. — A. C. 6097.

† Hence may appear what is the quality of self-love, viz., that it is not only destructive of the human race, as was shown above, n. 2045, but that it is also destructive of heavenly order; and, consequently, that there is in it nothing but impurity, defilement, profaneness, and hell itself, however different the appearance may be to those who are in it. — A. C. 2057.

we were losing virtue itself.* For virtue is not truly acquired except by the opposite temptations, as it is written, "He that is not tempted, what doth he know?" Ecclus. xxxiv. 9.† The more attached we are to a virtue, the more we are exercised with regard to this same virtue. The faults of other ways are known by those in them more superficially. Those which God searches out in the inmost of such souls would pass for perfections with the others, who have, in fact, an admirable prudence, a great wisdom, a thousand proprieties which they cherish dearly. They have courage: they are great souls. But those I am speaking of no longer have any thing at all. There is with them nothing but weakness on weakness, impotence on impotence. There is not left to them the least proprietism. Others go by what is, and subsist by something great: they go from sanctity to sanctity. These go by what they have not. Accordingly

* As to what concerns mourning on account of truths derived from the proprium, which is signified by their rending their garments and offering themselves for servants (Gen. xlv. 13), it is to be known that with those who are regenerated, there is effected a turning, namely, that they are led by truth to good, and that afterwards from good they are left to truth. When this turning takes place, or when the state is changed, and becomes inverse to the foregoing, then there is mourning; for then they are let into temptation, whereby the things of the proprium are weakened or debilitated, and good is insinuated. — A. C. 5773.

† Temptations also give the quality of the apperception of good and truth by the opposites which evil spirits then infuse; from the opposites apperceived are procured relatives, from which all quality is; for no one knows what good is, unless he also knows what is not good, nor what truth is unless he knows what is not true. — A. C. 5356.

they are far removed from attaching themselves to any thing, having lost all. Being so ugly and so filthy, whereto should they attach themselves?

32. The most favored of these souls are, for the most part, the offscouring of the world: they are always thwarted. What others do is admired; but, as for them, it seems as if they spoiled every thing they undertook. They succeed in nothing, and are approved of in nothing. In a word, in spite of themselves, they must do justice on themselves, and see all happiness in their Spouse, and all misery in themselves.*

It could not be believed, except from experience, what nature left to itself is capable of.† Indeed, indeed, our own nature left to itself is worse than all the devils.‡

33. For this reason, it must not be thought that the soul, in the wretched state that has been described,

* Whatsoever comes from man, spirit and angel, as from his own or the proprium, is nothing but evil; since all good, which appertains to every one, is from the Lord. — A. C. 10,808.

He who is regenerated acknowledges and believes that the good and the truth with which he is affected is not from himself, but from the Lord; also that whatever is from himself or from his proprium is nothing but evil. — A. C. 5354.

† It has been shown me by lively experience, that a man and a spirit, yea an angel, considered in himself, that is, all his proprium, is the vilest excrement; and that, left to himself, he would breathe nothing but hatred, revenge, cruelty, and the most foul adulteries. These things are his proprium and his will. — A. C. 987.

‡ Freedom derived from the proprium is to indulge in all kinds of pleasures, &c. Such things are from freedom derived from the proprium. Hence it is evident what is man's quality when he is in that freedom, namely, that he is a devil under human form. — A. C. 5786.

is forsaken of God. It was never better sustained by Him:* it is only nature, left a little to itself, which makes all this disorder, the soul having no part in it. This poor widowed soul, running hither and thither after its Well-beloved, is not only greatly defiled, as I have said, but is wounded by the thorns it meets with. It is so fatigued that it must needs breathe its last, and die in its course without succor.

The greatest blessing the soul can receive in this way is, that God should show it no pity; and, when He would greatly promote the progress of a soul, He lets it run even to death. If he stops it for a few moments — a thing which overjoys and gives new life to the poor soul — it is by reason of its weakness, lest it should lose all spirit, and mere weariness should compel it to rest.

34. When he sees this, he casts a look upon it for a moment; and the poor soul, by this look, finds itself seized and love-stricken anew, in a way so strong, that it is beside itself, and as it were swooning with delight. It would fain say to Him: Alas! why hast Thou made me run so much? “Give me a little rest until I can swallow down my spittle,” Job vii. 19. “Oh that I might find Him alone, that I might lead Him forth” (Cant. viii. 1, 2), and might see Him face to face. But, alas! when it thinks to hold Him,

* For then [in temptations] man is let into the state of his evils, consequently among evil spirits, who accuse, and thus torment the conscience; but yet the angels defend, that is, the Lord by angels, who keeps the man in hope and trust, which are the powers of combat from an interior whereby he resists. — A. C. 6097.

He flies away again. "I sought Him," it says, "and did not find Him," Cant. iii. 1. Inasmuch as, by this look from its Spouse, the soul has become more loving, it redoubles its course to find Him. Nevertheless it was stopped so long as the look lasted. For this reason the Spouse looks at the soul as little as possible, and then only when he sees that it is losing courage. Were it only strong enough, it could go much faster without stopping. If a traveller could walk continually, without need of rest or of nourishment, he could go much faster; but he needs both the one and the other on account of his weakness; both impart new strength to him, which is given him because of his need, and because his nature would sink if he were deprived of it. It is the same in this way.

35. The soul, then, really dies here at the end of its course, because all the active force necessary for running fails it. For, although it has been hitherto in a passive state, it still had not lost its active power, although this activity was not apparent to itself: the attraction it experienced, made it run without its feel-

* Celestial men are such, that, before they put off that state [the state of the old or former natural man], they are in so *strong* a natural as to truth, that they can combat with the infernals. — A. C. 3301.

When, therefore, truths fail, as is the case when a state of shade comes, which is signified by evening in the Word, n. 6110, then spiritual life is in distress; for such things present themselves as are of shade, that is, of spiritual death, for they are not then kept in light, as heretofore, but are remitted in some part into their proprium. Hence there is presented from the shade an image of spiritual death, that is, of damnation. — A. C. 6119.

ing or knowing it. The Spouse says, "Draw us, and we will run after thee" (Cant. i. 3). It runs, indeed; but how? — By losing all. It is like the sun which is constantly hastening without reaching a state of rest.

The soul loses all, in this state, by the *mystical death*, to run beneath other skies; or rather, to speak more truly, it is like the sun which vanishes from our hemisphere, where it will be no longer visible, being hidden in the sea. This is the *sepulchre*, where the soul undergoes another kind of death, and experiences its own noisomeness, as will be stated.

36. The self-hatred of the soul in this state is such that it cannot endure itself. It cannot look upon itself except by a side-long glance. It can say nothing of itself but evil. Now it is that it is *nothing*, either before God, or before the creatures, or before itself. It thinks its Spouse has good cause to treat it thus. It thinks that it is its own noisomeness which causes Him disgust. It sees not that the case is just the other way, — that He flies only to draw it after Him, and seems to defile it only to make it pure. When the iron is put into the fire to purify it and take away its rust, it appears at first to grow black and dingy, but afterwards it is easy to see that it has been purified. He makes it experience its weakness, only that it may lose all its own proper strength, and all self-dependence; and that, despairing of all, He may carry it Himself, and it may suffer itself to be carried. For how vigorous so ever may be its progress, it still walks like a child; but when

it is in God and God carries it, although it appears to rest, its steps are boundless, because they are the steps of God Himself.

37. This soul, yet more, sees others decked with its own spoils. When it sees a holy soul, it dares not accost it; it only sees with admiration, how it is decked with all the ornaments which the Spouse has taken away from itself. But although it admires such a soul, and feels itself plunged into the very abyss of nothingness, it yet cannot desire to have them, so much does it feel itself unworthy of them. It thinks it would be profaning them to put them on one so covered with filth and impurity. It even rejoices to see, that, though itself excites sorrow in its Well-beloved, there are others who are His favorites. It is far removed from the jealousy of the first period, when it wished to have and keep Him always: on the contrary, it is glad that He does not look at it, that He may not be sickened by the sight, and that He may enjoy Himself with others, whom it esteems happy in having gained the favors of their God; for, as regards the ornaments, although it sees them decked therewith, it does not believe that *they* make them happy. If it esteems them blessed at seeing them decked therewith, it is because they are pledges of the love of its Well-beloved.

38. When it holds itself thus lowly in the presence of these souls, whom it regards as queens, it knows not the good which its nakedness, its death, and its putrefaction is destined to cause it. He makes it naked, only to be Himself its clothing. "Put on

Jesus Christ," says St. Paul, Rom. xiii. 14. He kills only to be Himself its life. "If we are dead with Jesus Christ, we shall also rise with Him." He annihilates it only to *transform* it into Himself.

This loss of virtue takes place only by degrees, like the other losses; and this apparent carrying away to evil is involuntary. For the evil which makes these souls so filthy in their own eyes is not true evil, nor dangerous: it is not evil of which they are proprietary; for, in this state, they have no proper will, nor determination to any thing whatsoever.*

What defiles them is certain instances of precipitation and quickness, which pass immediately, though not without filling them with confusion; and certain faults which are only in the sentiments. As soon as a soul sees the beauty of a certain virtue, it falls immediately, as seems to it, into the opposite vice. For example, if it loves truth, it speaks words either of precipitation or of exaggeration, and thinks itself guilty of lying every moment; though, in fact, this is not the case, as it does not speak otherwise than as it thinks. If it loves gentleness, hasty feelings

* By what enters into the mouth [Matt. xv. 11, 17—19], in the literal sense, is understood food of every kind, which, after its use in the body, goes through the belly into the draught; but, in the spiritual sense, by the things which enter into the mouth, are understood all things which enter into the thought from the memory, and also from the world, which things also correspond to food; and those things which enter into the thought, and not at the same time into the will, do not render a man unclean, for the memory and the thought thence derived pertaining to man are only as the entrance to him, since the will is properly the man. — A. E. 580.

come unexpectedly over it. It is so with all the other virtues. And the more important the virtues are, and the more the soul clings to them (because they appear more essential to it), the more they are forcibly plucked away from it, to its great pain and anguish.

SECTION IV.

9—41. Entrance of the soul on the mystic death as regards its senses, its faculties, and even its perceptible inmost. 42—45. Important observations on this state.

39. The poor soul, after having lost all, is destined, at length, to *lose itself* by an utter despair of any thing; or, rather, it is destined to die overwhelmed with horrible fatigues.* Prayer in this degree is very painful, because, as the soul is no longer able to make use of its faculties, the exercise of which is entirely taken from it, and God has withdrawn from it a certain sweet and profound calm which used to sustain it, it comes to resemble those poor children who run hither and thither seeking food, without finding any one to give it them. From this cause, prayer appears now to be entirely lost, as with those who were never accustomed to its practice; but with this difference, that the pain of losing it is felt because its value is known from previous possession, whereas

* “And the famine was upon all the faces of the land” [Gen. xli. 56]. That it signifies when the desolation was even to desperation, appears from the signification of famine, as being desolation; and from the signification of land [earth], as being the natural: upon all the faces of which when the famine is said to be, thereby is signified desperation, because then the desolation is everywhere; for the utmost and last state of desolation is desperation. — A. C. 5369.

others feel no trouble from its privation because they do not know its value. It can no longer find any support in the creatures ; and if it feels itself, at times, bent and carried towards them, it is from impetuosity, without yet finding any thing satisfying in them. Still, it often goes astray, and would fain cast itself headlong into the things it delighted in formerly ; but alas ! it finds in them so much bitterness, that it withdraws from them as quickly as possible, and there remains to it nothing but the pain of its unfaithfulness.

40. The *imagination* is thrown into utter disorder, and allows of scarcely any rest. The three faculties of the soul [the *understanding*, the *memory*, and the *will*] gradually lose their life, so that, in the end, they have none at all. This is very painful to the soul, and especially to the will, which had learned to delight in a certain secret and tranquil something which comforted the other faculties in their death and impotence.

41. This certain something which is a prop or stay, *in the inmost*, is what it costs most to surrender, and what the soul endeavors most strongly to retain ; for the more subtle it is, the more it appears divine and necessary. It would readily consent never to make use of the other two faculties, and not even of that of the will in a distinct and perceptible manner, if this favorite something might be left it. For how should a soul subsist without means, and without this, in particular, so pure, that it would seem to be the end to which every thing in religion tends, and the reward

for all its labors? What, indeed, does a soul desire, in all its labors, but to have this testimony in its inmost, that it is a child of God? All spirituality centres in this experience.

Nevertheless, it must be given up, like all the rest, and be succeeded by the dreadful experience of all the miseries we are full of. This is what truly operates *the death of the soul*; for whatever wretchedness the soul may feel, if this certain something, which makes the life of the soul, were not yielded up, it would not die; and, in like manner, if this certain something were given up without its feeling its miseries, it would have a support, and would never die. It knows and easily understands, that it must pass long and dreadful periods of darkness; that it must give up all delights, all sentiments however subtle they may be. For this reason it bears up strongly under the privation of its props and its delights — (especially is this the case with those who are enlightened and wise); but to give up a certain almost imperceptible support, and fall from weakness,* fall into wretchedness and the very dust, — to this we can never consent, because, in fact, we are not required to consent to it. This is the point where reason is lost. Then it is that mortal fears and agonies seize upon the heart, which seems endowed with life only to feel its death.†

* That man may become spiritual, it is necessary that his natural should become of no account, that is, should have no power at all of itself. — A. C. 5651.

† The external or natural man from the first age of life rules,

The loss, then, of this imperceptible support, and the experience of its wretchedness, are the two things which cause death.

42. The soul has need to be very faithful in a time so naked and so hard, lest it should suffer its senses to turn towards the creatures voluntarily, seeking voluntary comfort and refreshment: I say *voluntary*; for as regards the practice of austerities, and the turning of its regards to itself, it is incapable of them in this state. And the more such souls have been mortified, and so brought into a state which, to the unexperienced, appeared like death, the more inclination have they towards the opposite, without being aware of it themselves, like one out of his right mind who goes wandering hither and thither. And if you would hold them back too rigorously, besides its being useless, this application to the external would retard and hinder death.

43. What, then, is to be done? We must be careful to do nothing to soothe the senses in a criminal and imperfect manner; we must suffer them, and sometimes refresh them in things innocent, from charity.

neither knows that there is an internal or spiritual man; wherefore when a man is reformed and begins to become spiritual or internal from being natural or external, then the natural at first rebels; for it is taught that the natural man is to be subdued, that is, all its concupiscences to be extirpated, together with those things which confirm them. Hence, when the natural man is left to itself, it thinks that so it shall totally perish; for it does not know otherwise than that the natural is all, and is wholly ignorant that there are immense and ineffable things in the spiritual; and when the natural man thinks thus, it then draws back, and is not willing to be subjected to the spiritual. — A. C. 5647.

For as they are not capable of the operations that are going on within, to constrain and force them would be to ruin the health, and even the powers of the mind, and perhaps the interior. All this must be connived at, as we do with children, without being too severe in refusing things permitted.

44. What I am saying is applicable only to the degree under consideration. For, if the soul should proceed thus in the period when grace is strong and vigorous, it would be doing wrong. And indeed, our Lord, infinite in His mercy, Himself shows the course which ought to be pursued; for, at the beginning, He presses the poor senses so closely, that He gives them no quarter. It is enough that they desire any thing to have it snatched away from them: a look, a word, the smallest gratification, would cause boundless suffering. God acts thus, in order to deliver the senses from their imperfect operation, and make them more interior; and while he weans them outwardly, He binds them inwardly, in a way so gentle that it costs them scarcely any thing to deprive themselves of all: they even find more sweetness in this than in the possession of all things. But when they are sufficiently purified and introverted, God, desiring to draw the soul away from itself by a movement in exactly the opposite direction,* permits the senses to

* It is to be known that with those who are regenerated there is effected a turning, namely, that they are led by truth to good, and that afterwards from good they are led to truth. When this turning takes place, or when the state is changed and becomes inverse to the foregoing, then there is mourning; for then they are let into temptation, &c. — A. C. 5773.

extrovert themselves, and diffuse themselves towards the exterior. This appears to the soul a great impurity : nevertheless, the thing is then appropriate to its state, and to do otherwise would be to purify ourselves otherwise than according to the Divine will, and to incur defilement.

45. This does not hinder but that faults may be committed in this extroversion of the senses ; but the confusion redounding thence to the soul, and faithfulness in making use of it, constitute the dunghill whereon it goes more quickly through putrefaction. "All things work together for good to them who love," Rom. viii. 28. Here, accordingly, it is that we lose all the esteem of the creatures. They look on you with scorn, and say, Is not this the soul we used formerly to admire ? How is it that it has become so unsightly and ugly ? Alas ! the soul replies, "Do not look upon me, by reason that I am black ; for it is the sun that has made me thus unsightly," Cant. i. 6. And now it enters all at once into the third degree, which is that of burial and putrefaction.

CHAPTER VIII.

Third Degree of the passive way of naked faith, in its consummation.

1—4. The finished state of the soul's death. 5—7. Its burial. 8—13. Its corruption or putrefaction. 14—16. Its reduction to ashes. 17—20. Counsels as to guidance in these states, which are followed by a new life.

1. THE torrent, as we have said, has gone through all imaginable roarings and tossings. It has been

hurled against the rocks,—its whole progress being nothing but a tumbling from one rock to another; but it has all along kept in sight, and we have not yet seen it swallowed up from the view. But now it begins to lose itself in gulf after gulf. It had, up to this time, a certain steady pace, although so precipitate, confused, and broken; but now it plunges with still greater impetuosity into deep caverns. It is for a long time invisible; then we perceive it for a little, but rather by the ear than by the eye, and it makes its appearance only to dash itself into a gulf yet deeper. It falls from abyss to abyss, from precipice to precipice, until at length it falls into the abyss of the sea, where, losing all shape, it never finds itself again, having become the sea itself.

2. The soul, after many deaths of ever-increasing severity, expires at length in the arms of love, but without perceiving those very arms. It no sooner expires than it loses all action of life, however simple and subtle, all desire, inclination, choice, all interior repugnances and oppositions. The nearer it drew to death, the weaker it became; and its life, although languishing and agonizing, has still life, and there might still remain to the soul some hope, although its death was inevitable.* But now there is hope no longer. The torrent must make its plunge, and be seen no more.

* Truth of itself has not life, but from good, inasmuch as truth is only a vessel recipient of good; and in good there is life, but not in truth except what is from good. Wherefore the privation of the life of truth from itself is not the extinction of truth, but is its vivifica-

3. O God! what a case is this! Where, formerly, were precipices are now abysses. The soul falls, with a rush, into an abyss of miseries from which there is no day of deliverance. At first this abyss is not so great; but the further it advances, the more abysses it meets with, and the more dreadful it finds them, so that it goes from bad to worse; for it is to be observed, that any degree, at its commencement, partakes much of that which precedes, and, at its close, begins to feel much of that which is to follow.* It is also to be observed, that each degree includes an infinity of other degrees.

4. A man, after his death and before he is buried, is still among the living; he has still the shape of a man, although he inspires fear. The soul, in like manner, in the first of this degree, has still some resemblance to what it formerly was. There remains to it a certain secret and hidden impression of God, as there remains in a dead body a certain heat which is extinguished by degrees: The soul still attempts worship and prayer; but all this is soon taken from it. It must lose not only all prayer and every gift of God, but God Himself, in all appearance, and lose Him, not for one, two, or three years, but for ever.†

tion; for when truth appears to itself to have life from itself, then it has not life, except such life as in itself is not life; but when it is deprived of that, it is then gifted with real life, viz., by good from the Lord, who is life itself. — A. C. 3607.

* A medium, that it may be a medium, must derive somewhat from each, namely, from the internal and external; otherwise it is not a conjoining medium. — A. C. 5822.

† Arrangement is effected by removal and concealment; not that

All facility in doing good and all active virtue are taken away from it.* It remains naked and stripped of all. The world, which formerly thought so much of it, begins to be afraid of it. They still keep up an outward show of respect for it; but it is only that they may *bury* it, — hide it away in the earth, and see it no longer.

It is to be observed, that it is no visible fault which thus produces the contempt of men, but the inability to do the good, which was formerly done with so much facility. Formerly, whole days were passed in the church, or in visiting the sick poor, often contrary to duty; but now those things cannot be done any longer.†

at any time the Lord removes or conceals mercy, but when he who is regenerating is let into his own evils, then the Lord appears to him as if removed and concealed, the evils interposing themselves and effecting this; comparatively as thick clouds, which present themselves before the sun, and cause his absence and concealment. — A. C. 5696.

* In regard to this, that there is spiritual death when there is a deficiency of truth, the case is this: Spiritual life consists in exercises according to truths, consequently in uses; for they who are in spiritual life have an appetite for and desire truths with a view to life, that is, that they may live according to them, thus with a view to uses. So far, therefore, as they can imbibe truths, according to which they are to effect uses, so far they are in spiritual life, because so far in the light of intelligence and wisdom. When, therefore, truths fail, as is the case when a state of shade comes, which is signified by evening in the Word, then spiritual life is in distress; for such things present themselves as are of shade, that is, of spiritual death; for they are not then kept in light, as heretofore, but are remitted, in some part, into their proprium: hence there is presented from the shade an image of spiritual death, that is, of damnation. — A. C. 6119.

† So in David: “My father and my mother have forsaken me, and Jehovah gathereth me,” Ps. xxviii. 10; where father and

5. This poor soul will soon be given over entirely to forgetfulness. By little and little it so loses every thing, that it is entirely poor. The creatures cast it into the earth, and it is thought of no more. Every one casts dust upon it, and it is trodden under foot. Poor soul, it must needs be that thou shouldst see all this. If the body could see while they were burying it, what distress would it not feel? The soul sees all this, sees with it terror, but cannot help it. It must suffer itself to be buried, covered with earth, and crushed by all the creatures.

6. This is a state where there are excellent crosses; the more excellent, the more the soul believes itself to have deserved them. It begins accordingly to be horrified at itself. God casts it off so far that it seems as if he would abandon it for ever.* Poor soul, thou must have patience, and continue to lie in the sepulchre.

7. It continues there in peace, although with frightful horrors, because indeed it sees that there is very little likelihood of getting out of it, and that it must remain there for ever. It sees, also, that this is the fitting place for it, as it now is, and that any other would be yet more afflictive.† It shuns the creatures

mother denote good and truth, which are said to have forsaken, when man observes that of himself he is not able to do any thing good, or to know any thing true. — A. C. 3703.

* Temptations are continual despairings concerning salvation, in the beginning slight, but in process of time grievous, till at last there is doubt almost negative concerning the presence of the Divine and His aid. — A. C. 8567.

† Peace is the inmost in every delight, even in what is undelightful with the man who is in good. — A. C. 8455.

in good earnest, because it sees there is nothing more to be done on its behalf, and that they feel an aversion towards it. The world speaks ill of it, and regards it no longer except as a corpse which has lost the life of grace, and is fit for nothing but to be buried in the earth.

8. The soul bears patiently this abject state. But alas! how is even this state sweet, compared with what is to follow! How glad would it be to remain in the sepulchre, if only it need not *putrefy*! The old man corrupts by little and little. Formerly, it was tried by weakness and faintings; but now, the soul sees the depth of its corruption, which hitherto it did not know, because it was impossible for it to conceive what self-love and propriety are.* All this goes on in the inmost of the soul, without the senses having any share in it. O God! what horror is it to the soul thus to see itself putrefying!† All troubles, scorns, and contradictions of the creatures cease to affect it. It is even insensible to the privation of the sun of righteousness. It knows that that does not

* But in proportion as those loves [the love of self and the love of the world] are removed, heavenly love, flowing in from the Lord, begins to appear, yea, to shine bright in the interior man; and in the same proportion man begins to see that he is in evil and the false, yea, afterwards, that he is in the unclean and filthy, and lastly, that this was his proprium. — A. C. 2041.

† But the other rational with which man is gifted of the Lord, when he is regenerated, is like the same fruit in good ground, in which there is a *decay* of those parts which encompass the seeds; and the seeds themselves shoot forth from their inmosts, and emit a root, and also a stem above ground. — A. C. 2657.

shine in the tombs. But to feel its corruption is what it cannot bear. Great God! what would it not suffer rather? Nevertheless it must be borne, and the soul must experience to its inmost depths* what itself is. — But these, perchance, are sins, and God beholds me with horror. Yet what can be done? — I must bear it, — there is no remedy.

9. But still, if I went through this putrefaction without having God to see me, I could be well pleased. What troubles me is the aversion that I cause Him. But alas! poor, forsaken creature, what canst thou do? It ought to suffice thee that thou dost not love corruption, but bearest it; although, indeed, thou dost not even know that thou dost not will it. Thou canst not judge of this matter thyself. Others judge of it by the pain it causes thee.

10. The soul thus in corruption is so full of horror at itself, that it cannot endure itself. The pain of suffering its own stench is so great, that it is no longer concerned at any thing that can be done to it outwardly. Nothing any longer affects it. It sees itself worthy of all scorn. Others see it only with horror; but this gives it no concern, since the self-nausea it feels and its own noisomeness convince it that they are right; and, if it sees souls living in God, it believes

* The fear of love is, lest in any manner the Lord should suffer hurt, or in any manner a neighbor; thus lest in any manner good and truth should suffer hurt, consequently lest should the holy of love and faith, and thence of worship; but this fear is various, and not alike with one person as with another. — A. C. 3718.

itself unworthy to approach them. It plunges into putrefaction as into the place appropriate to it.*

11. It is not troubled that God puts it away, for it sees most plainly that it deserves this. It is even delighted that He does not look on it any longer; that He leaves it in its putrefaction, and bestows all His graces on others; that they are the objects of His affection, and that itself inspires Him only with horror.

But what it cannot make up its mind to is, that the ill odor of its corruption should ascend even to God. It fain would not sin. It matters not, says the soul, that I putrefy, that I am the sport of all the creatures, that I am in the depths of hell with all the devils,† if I do not sin. It thinks no longer about loving or not loving. It believes itself incapable of love, — love is no longer for such as itself. It has become worse than one in the more natural state, since it is in the corruption common to bodies deprived of life.

12. Well, perhaps, this corruption will last but a little while. Alas! quite otherwise. It will last

* It is impossible for any one to be in true humiliation, unless he be in this acknowledgment and faith from the heart [that nothing but evil is from self, and that all good is from the Lord]; for then he is in self-annihilation, yea, in self-aversion. — A. C. 3994.

† When man is tempted, he is also near hell. From the hells by spirits, those things flow in which occasion anxiety to man in temptations. — A. C. 8131.

In a state of desolation, when man is being regenerated, there is not damnation, but the fear of damnation. — A. C. 6140.

several years, and go on continually increasing, except towards the end, when putrefaction becomes dust, and what is ashes returns to ashes.

13. The poor torrent goes like one wild from abyss to abyss, from precipice to precipice, from corruption to corruption; all its members are attacked at the same time. It is all over with it; there is an end of all good resolutions, of all austerities. It seems as if all its senses and faculties were in confusion. Poor soul, what wilt thou do in such a plight? Thou must needs resolve to be eternally the food of worms. Thine own conscience upbraids thee with the state from which thou hast fallen. What a difference between the state of this torrent, when it was flowing pleasantly over the plain, and now when it is plunging into frightful gulfs! Yet this is its lot and its destiny.

At length, by slow degrees, the soul gets used to its corruption; it perceives it less, and it becomes natural to it, except at certain times when it exhales a stench enough to cause its death, were it not immortal. Poor torrent, wert thou not better off on the top of the mountain than now! Thou hadst then some light corruption; but now, though thou runnest rapidly and nothing checks thee, thou passest through places so dirty, so foul with sulphur, salt-petre, and every kind of filth, that thou carriest with thee their detestable stenches.*

* A state of temptation respectively to the state after it is also as the state of a pit or a prison, filthy and unclean; for when man is

14. At length the poor soul begins no longer to perceive its stench so grievously, to get accustomed to it, to continue in it quietly without hope of ever escaping from it,† and without being able to do any thing for this end; and thus its members, its flesh, its entire self, is annihilated and becomes dust. Then it is that *annihilation* ‡ begins; for, before, what

tempted, then unclean spirits are near him, and excite the evils and falses appertaining to him, and likewise detain him therein, and exaggerate even to despair: hence it is that man is then in an unclean and filthy state. This state also, when it is presented to view in the other life (all spiritual states can there be exhibited to the sight), appears as a mist exhaled from dirty places, and a stench likewise is thence perceived. Such is the appearance of the sphere which encompasses him who is in temptation, and also in vastation. — A. C. 5246.

† In this passage is described a state of desolation by the privation of truth, the last of which state is desperation. That desperation is the last of that state is, because thereby is removed the delight of self-love, and the love of the world, and in the place of it is insinuated the delight of the love of good and of truth; for desperation with those to be regenerated relates to the spiritual life, consequently to the privation of truth and good; for, when they are deprived of truth and good, they despair concerning the spiritual life. — A. C. 5279.

‡ That the case is thus [that there are alternations of heat and cold], every regenerate person may know by experience, viz., that whilst he is in things corporeal and worldly, he is then absent and remote from things internal, so that he not only thinks nothing about them, but then feels in himself, as it were, a coldness; but when things corporeal and worldly are quiescent, that then he is in faith and charity. It may also be known by experience, that these states are alternate; wherefore when things corporeal and worldly begin to overflow, and are desirous to gain dominion, then he comes into straitnesses and temptations, until he is reduced to such a state that the

stench so ever it emitted, there still remained some marks of humanity; it was an offensive corpse, but still the remains of a man. But now there is nothing but ashes. The soul no longer suffers any thing from the ill odor; it is naturalized to these things; it ceases to look at any thing, and is like a person who is no more, and who never will be any more. It does neither good nor evil.

15. Formerly, it was horrified at itself; now, it thinks no more about it. It is in the last degree of wretchedness without being affected with any horror at it. Formerly, it used to dread the Holy Communion from fear of infecting or dishonoring God; now, it seems to approach it as a matter of course. All that is of grace is done as if from nature, and there is no longer any sense either of pain or of pleasure. The only thing is, that its ashes rest in peace, without hoping ever to be any thing but ashes. While it perceived its stench, it was still aware that it was putrefying; but now, it has gone through this state, and nothing either within or without affects it any longer.

16. At length reduced to *nonentity*, there is found in its ashes a *germ of immortality*, which, preserved underneath them, will take life in due time.* But

external man does obeisance to the internal, which it never can do until it is quiescent, and, as it were, is *annihilated*. — A. C. 933.

* When the state is changed, and becomes inverse to the foregoing, then there is mourning; for then they are let into temptation, whereby the things of the proprium are weakened and debilitated, and good is

this it does not know, and it has no thought of being ever revived or resuscitated.*

17. The faithfulness of the soul in this state consists in suffering itself to be buried, crushed, made to walk, without stirring any more than a dead person; in enduring its own noisomeness in its grave; and in suffering itself to putrefy in the full extent of the Divine will, without seeking any means of avoiding the putrefaction. Some would apply balm or essences, that they might not perceive the stench of their corruption. No, no, poor souls; leave yourselves just what you are. Submit to the sense of your noisomeness. It is requisite you should know it, and should see the bottomless abyss of corruption there is within you. By applying balm, I mean seeking, by some good and virtuous means, to cover over this corruption and prevent the stench of it. Oh! do not thus; you would be doing yourselves a mischief. God bears with you; why should you not bear with yourselves? If you look closely at the matter, you will even see, that

insinuated; and with good a new will-desire, and with this a new freedom, thus a new proprium. — A. C. 5773.

* “And he said, Peace be to you, fear not” [Gen. xliii. 23]. That it signifies that it is well, let them not despair, appears from the signification of peace, as denoting to be well, of which in what follows; and from the signification of ‘fear not,’ as being not to despair; for, in the internal sense, a *change of state* is treated of, that they should no longer procure to themselves truths by their own proper ability, and by truths good, but that they should be gifted with them from the Lord; and whereas they supposed that so they should lose the proprium, thus freedom, consequently all the delight of life, they were in despair, as is evident from what goes before. — A. C. 5662.

what you do to remove this ill odor involves a kind of violence, and that it is more natural and better that you should perceive it.

18. In my opinion the Director should give very little or no relief to such a person, especially if he has tolerable strength of mind; if this should not be the case, it would be necessary to sustain him; since otherwise he might be destroyed by the inwardness of his distress. For the pain of putrefaction goes to the very marrow of the bones. Other pains are more exterior, and do not penetrate so deeply.* But as regards strong and able souls, the less they are succored, sustained, and strengthened, the sooner they are reduced to dust. Do not, therefore, show them pity; leave them in their apparent state of uncleanness, — a state which yet is most pleasing to God, — until from these ashes there is born a new life.

19. The soul reduced to nothingness ought to continue therein, without wishing, when it is dust, to get out of this state, or desiring, as formerly, to live again. It should continue as something that no longer is. Then it is that the torrent plunges into the sea, and loses itself there, never again to find itself in itself, — having become one and the same thing with the sea itself.

20. Then it is that this dead thing feels, by degrees, without feeling, that its ashes are reviving and taking

* With those who have consciences, there arises hence [from infestation and combat] a dull or still pain; but, with those who perception, an acute pain; and so much the more acute, as the perception is more interior. — A. C. 1668.

a *new life*.* But this takes place so gradually, that it appears like a dream, or a slumber in which we have had a delightful vision. There is, as it were, a worm forming itself from their ashes, and taking life by degrees. This constitutes the last degree, which is the beginning of the *divine and truly interior life*, which contains degrees without number, and in which the soul advances without limit,† in like manner as the torrent can always go further into the sea, and take more of its qualities to itself, the longer it dwells there.

* For where they [those to be regenerated] are deprived of truth and good, they despair concerning the spiritual life: hence they have delight and blessedness when they emerge out of desperation.— A. C. 5279.

† What is meant by the multiplication of truth from good is briefly to be told. When a man is in good, that is, in love towards his neighbor, then also he is in the love of truth: hence so far as he is in that good, so far he is affected with truth, for good is in truth as the soul in its body. As, therefore, good multiplies truth, so it propagates itself, and if it be the good of genuine charity, it propagates itself in truth and by truth indefinitely; for there is no end given either to good or truth, the infinite being in all and single things, because all and single things are from the infinite: nevertheless, that indefinite can never reach to the infinite, inasmuch as no proportion is given between the finite and the infinite.— A. C. 5356.

CHAPTER IX.

Fourth Degree of the passive way of faith, which is the beginning of the divine life. 1—4. Passage from the human to the divine state, and to the resurrection of the soul in God in the divine life. 5—13. Description of this life and of its properties, gradations, identity, indifference; sentiments of the soul; its being in God; its peace, &c. 14—16. Its duty of faithful correspondence. 17—19. Power and views of the soul in reference to others, to itself, to its state, to its actions, its word, and its faults. 20—21. Of the inclinations of Jesus Christ in it. 22—27. Several observations to guard against mistake as to its progress, its crosses, its exterior. — Conclusion.

1. WHEN the torrent begins to lose itself in the sea, it can be distinguished for a considerable time. Its motion is visible, until, by degrees, it loses all its proper form, and assumes that of the sea. The soul, in like manner, leaving this degree and beginning to lose itself, still preserves for a time something proper to itself, but, after a while, loses every thing of this kind. A body that has gone through decay, even to a state of ashes, is still dust and ashes; but, if any one should now swallow these ashes, there would remain nothing proper to it, since it would have become one and the same thing with the person taking them. The soul hitherto, however dead and putrefied, has retained its own proper essence, and has not lost it. It is only in this degree that it is truly taken out of itself.*

* Then he is in self-annihilation, yea, in self-aversion, and thus in absence from himself, and thus in a state of receiving the Divine of the Lord. — A. C. 3994.

All that has taken place hitherto, has taken place in the proper capacity of the creature; but now the creature is taken out of its own capacity, and receives a boundless capacity in God Himself. As the torrent, for example, when it enters the sea, loses its own essence, so that there remains no longer any thing of it, and takes that of the sea (or, rather, is taken from itself to lose itself in the sea), the soul, in like manner, parts with the human, to lose itself in the Divine, which becomes its essence and its subsistence — not essentially, but mystically.* Then the torrent possesses all the treasures of the sea; and the more poor and miserable it was, the more glorious it now is.†

2. It is in this tomb, then, that the soul begins to recover life, and light makes its appearance by insensible degrees. Then it may be said with truth, “Those who were in darkness have seen a great light, and to them that sat in the region of the shadow of death has the day arisen,” Matt. iv. 16. There is in Ezekiel a beautiful figure of this *resurrection*, where the dry

* Man’s proprium is wholly evil and false, and so long as it remains, so long man is dead; but when he undergoes temptations, then it is dispersed, that is, it is loosened and tempered by truths and goods from the Lord, and thus it is vivified, and appears as if it was not present. Its not appearing and not being any longer hurtful, is signified by destroying (Gen. vii. 4), although it is never destroyed, but remains. — A. C. 731.

† No one can have an exquisite perception of what is good, yea, of what is blessed and happy, unless he has been in a state of what is not good, not blessed, and not happy. From this he acquires a sphere of perception, and this in the degree in which he was in the opposite state. — A. C. 2694.

bones recover life again by degrees. This other passage is also applicable: "The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Lord," John v. 25.

3. Ye souls coming forth from the sepulchre, how do you feel in yourselves a germ of life springing up by insensible degrees! You are all astonished to find a secret force taking possession of you. These ashes are reviving. You find yourselves in a new country. The poor soul whose only thought was to dwell quietly in the sepulchre experiences an agreeable surprise. It knows not what to believe and to think. It supposes that the sun has shot in his rays through some chink or opening for a little season, — but soon to pass. It is yet more astonished when it feels that this secret power is taking possession yet more strongly of its entire nature, and that by degrees it is receiving a new life never again to be lost; * not that one can be perfectly assured against falling in this life, but because such a loss could not happen without the blackest unfaithfulness. But this new life is not like that formerly enjoyed; it is a "life in God," Col. iii. 3; it is perfect life. The soul "lives no longer," no longer operates by itself, but "God lives," acts, and works, Gal. ii. 20. This goes on increasing by degrees, so that the soul becomes

* The spiritual man, who is made the sixth day, when he begins to be celestial, of which it is here first treated, is the evening of the Sabbath, which was represented in the Jewish church by the sanctification of the Sabbath from the evening: the celestial man is the morning which is spoken of presently. — A. C. 86.

perfect with the perfection of God, rich with His riches, and loving with His love.

4. The soul perceives well, that all it had before, great as it appeared, had been in its own possession. But now it possesses no longer, but is possessed. It no more is ; it takes a new life only to lose it in God, or, rather, it lives only with the life of God ; * and, He being the principle of life, the soul cannot want for any thing. What gain has it not made for all its losses ! It has lost the created for the uncreated, nothingness for all things ; all is given to it, not in itself, but in God, — not to be possessed by itself, but to be possessed by God. Its riches are boundless : they are God himself. It feels its capacity † perpetually increasing, growing in breadth and extent every day. Its capacity seems to be growing boundless. ‡ All the virtues are given back to it again, but in God.

* The Divine Love is such that what is its own it wills should be another's, thus man's and angel's ; all spiritual love is such, and most so the Divine Love. — D. P. 43.

† Every one who is either damned or saved has a certain measure which is capable of being filled : the evil, or they who are damned, have a certain measure of evil and the false ; and the good, or they who are saved, have a certain measure of good and of truth. This measure with every one is filled in the other life ; but some have a greater measure, some a lesser. This measure is procured in the world by the affections which are of the love : by how much the more any one had loved evil and the false thence, so much the greater measure he had procured to himself ; and by how much the more any one had loved good and the truth thence, so much the greater is his measure. — A. C. 7984.

‡ During man's initiation into truth, and thence into good, all that he learns is obscure to him ; but when good is conjoined to him, and he thence regards truth, it then becomes clear to him, and this

5. It is to be observed, that as it was stripped by little and little, so it is enriched and revived only by degrees. The more it is lost in God, the greater becomes its capacity, — just as the torrent, the more it is lost in the sea, becomes the more enlarged and boundless, having no other limits than those of the sea itself:* it partakes then of all its qualities. The soul becomes strong, boundless, firm; it has lost all means, but it is in the end, — just as a person who should walk on the earth to cast himself into the sea would make use of walking as a means to reach the sea, and then give it up to plunge himself therein.

6. This divine life becomes altogether natural to the soul.† As the soul no longer feels itself, sees

successively more and more; for now he is no longer in doubt whether a thing be, or whether it be so, but he knows that it is, and that it is so. When man is in this state, he then begins to know innumerable things; for he now proceeds from the good and truth which he believes and perceives, as from a centre to the circumferences; and in proportion as he proceeds, in the same proportion he sees the things which are round about, and successively extends his views by a continual removal and dilatation of their boundaries. Thenceforth also he commences from every object in the space within these boundaries; and hence, as from new centres, he produces new circumferences, and so forth. Thence the light of truth from good increases immensely, and becomes as a continuous lucidity; for he is then in the light of heaven, which is from the Lord. — A. C. 3833.

* For the celestial are in truth itself, concerning which the spiritual dispute; and hence the celestial can see indefinite things appertaining to that truth, and thus, by virtue of the light, they can see, as it were, the whole heaven. — A. C. 2715.

† The more nearly man is conjoined to the Lord, the more distinctly he appears to himself as if he was his own, and the more indirectly he takes notice that he is the Lord's. — D. P. 42.

itself, knows itself, it sees nothing of God, comprehends nothing of him, distinguishes nothing of him. There is nothing more of love, of lights, or of knowledges. God no longer appears to it, as before, something distinct from itself; but it no longer knows any thing, except that GOD IS, and that itself no longer is, no longer subsists and lives, except in Him. Here prayer is action, and action is prayer; * every thing is indifferent; all is one and the same to this soul, for all alike is God to it.

7. Formerly, it was necessary to practise virtue in order to do virtuous works; † now, all distinction among actions is taken away, actions having no longer any proper virtues, but every thing being God to the soul. The meanest action is so as well as the highest, provided it be in the order of God and in the divine movement; ‡ for any thing which should be

* When man is of such a quality, then in every work which he does there is divine worship; for then he has respect to the divine in every thing; he venerates and he loves it, consequently he worships it. — A. C. 10,143.

† The good of the will consists in doing good from good, but the good of the understanding in doing good from truth. These goods appear as one to those who do good from truth, but still they differ much from each other; for to do good from good is to do it from a perception of good, which perception is given with none but the celestial; whereas, to do good from truth is to do it from science and intellect thence derived, but without perception that it is so, only because the person has been so instructed by others, or has concluded so of himself by his intellectual faculty, which may be fallacious truth. — A. C. 4169.

‡ As far, therefore, as man lives in those commandments, so far he lives in divine order; and as far as he lives in divine order, so far all things are disposed in him by the Lord, according to the

from proper choice, if it be not in this order, would not be attended with the same effect, but would cause the soul to go out from God by reason of unfaithfulness. This does not mean that the soul goes out of its degree, or of the state of being lost to itself, but only out of the divine movement, which makes all things one and all things God, not by view, application, and thought, but by state,* so that the soul is *indifferent* to being in one way or another. All is the same to it, and it gives itself up thereto, as it were, naturally.

8. This life becomes, so to speak, natural; and the soul acts, as it were, naturally.† It gives itself up to all that impels it, without being troubled about any thing; without thinking, willing, or choosing any thing.‡ It remains well-pleased, without care or concern about itself, not thinking any more about itself,§

order which is from him in the heavens, viz., both his rationals and his scientifics. — A. C. 2634.

* The human itself, and hence the angelic, is to think from the truth; and this is truth, that man does not think from himself, but that it is given him to think from the Lord, in all appearance as from himself. — D. P. 321.

† For the Lord wills to communicate to every one what is his; thus the celestial, so that it may appear to man as his own, although it is not his. — A. C. 1937.

‡ But the third or inmost degree is opened with those who immediately apply divine truths to life, and do not first reason concerning them from the memory, and thereby bring them into doubt. This is called the celestial degree. — A. E. 739.

§ When, therefore, those truths are conjoined to good, then man is regenerated; for then he no longer looks from truths at what is to be believed and what is to be done, but from good, because he is imbued with truths, and has them in himself; nor has he concern

and not distinguishing its interior in order to speak of it. The soul has nothing of all this. It has no further thought about recollection or wandering. The soul is no longer within, it is altogether in God. It is no longer necessary for it to shut itself up in its interior; it no longer thinks about finding Him there; it does not seek for Him there any more. If a person were all surrounded by the sea, within and without, below and above, if the sea were on all sides, he would have no choice of one place more than another, but need only remain as he is: even so it is with the soul.

9. Accordingly, this soul gives itself no concern to seek any thing or to do any thing. It continues as it is, and that is enough.—But what does it do?—Nothing, is the constant answer, nothing, nothing. It does all that it is made to do. It suffers all that it is made to suffer. Its peace is unchangeable, but entirely natural; it has passed, as it were, into a thing of nature.—But what difference is there between this person and a person all in the human?—The difference is, that it is God who causes it to act,* without its knowing it;† whereas, before, it was nature which about truths from any other source than what he can see from his own good, and he sees continually more and more, for they are produced thence as offsprings from their parents.—A. C. 8772.

* But they who are regenerated, because they are in good itself, they are able to perceive, from the intelligence and wisdom thence derived, what good is, and that it is from the Lord, and that it flows in through the internal man into the external, and this continually, man being altogether ignorant thereof.—A. C. 3325.

† In all these cases, the ruling principle is perpetually present [in the minutest particulars], though the man is not conscious of it. In like manner is the presence of the Lord with the celestial angels; they do not know it, still it is the Lord's presence.—A. C. 4226.

acted. It does, as appears to it, neither good nor evil; but lives satisfied, peaceable, doing in a ready and unwavering manner whatever it is made to do.

God alone is its guide; for, at the time of its giving up all things, it lost all will. The soul now no longer has any will proper to itself; and, if you should ask it what it willed, it could not tell. It can no longer exercise any choice. All desires are taken away; because, being in the all and in the centre, the heart loses all proclivity, bias, and activity, as it loses all repugnance and contrariety.* The torrent no longer has a career or movement. It is at rest, being in its end.

10. But what is the nature of the contentment with which the heart is thus pervaded? — It is the contentment of God himself, boundless, general, without knowing or understanding what satisfies it; for now, all sentiments, tastes, views, particular observations, however delicate, are taken away; nothing touches it, neither love, nor knowledge, nor intelligence. That certain something, which *formerly* occupied it without occupying it, is removed, and there is nothing left it.

* Whoever lives in good, and believes that the Lord governs the universe, and that from him alone comes all the good which is of love and charity, and all the truth which is of faith, yea, that from him comes life, thus that from him we live, move, and have our being, he is in such a state that he can be gifted with heavenly freedom, and therewith also with peace; for then he trusts only in the Lord, and counts other things of no concern, and is certain that then all things tend to his good, blessedness, and happiness to eternity. — A. C. 2892.

But this insensibility is very different from that of death, of the grave, of corruption. At that time it was a privation of life, and of inclination towards things, a disgust, a separation, an impotence as of a dying person, an insensibility as of one dead; but now it is an *elevation* above these things, which does not deprive of them, but makes them of no account. A dead person is deprived of all the functions of life, but by that impotence which death occasions, or that disgust which belongs to the dying; but if he is raised up in glory, he is all full of life, without the means of preserving that life by making use of the senses; and, being above all means by the germ of immortality he possesses, he does not feel what animates him, although he sees himself to be in life.*

11. I cannot express this better than by comparing it to death. When one dies, he feels the separation of his soul from his body. When the soul thus separates itself, there is no longer any sensation: he is without life, and death makes a separation from all. But, when the man is raised up, he feels himself revived. When he is re-animated, he experiences in his new state that God is the soul of his soul, the life of his life, in such way that He makes Himself the, as it were, natural principle of it, without the soul's feel-

* The appropriation of the life of the Lord comes from His love and mercy towards the universal human race, in that He wills to give Himself and what is His to every one, and that He actually gives so far as they receive; that is, so far as they act in the life of good and in the life of truth, as likenesses and images of him. And whereas such a divine effort proceeds continually from the Lord, therefore His life, as was said, is appropriated. — A. C. 3742.

ing or perceiving it by reason of its *unity* and its *intimateness*, if I may use the word. The soul feels that it lives, acts, walks, and performs all the functions of life, but without feeling its soul.*

12. When we have some delight in God, however subtle it may be; when we know our interior retirements, certain languors, pains, loves, desires, enjoyments, these things do not constitute the degree I am speaking of, but quite another. For, in this, God cannot be tasted, felt, seen, because he is more ourselves than ourselves, is not distinct from us.† If a person could live without eating, in great disgust for food, he would at first feel the disgust, and afterwards the impossibility of eating, but he would not feel any fulness. Here the soul has no inclination or relish for any thing. Something like this takes place, indeed, in the state of death and burial, but still there is a difference. There, the want of appetite was from disgust and impotence, but here, it is *from plenitude and*

* In all these cases the ruling principle is perpetually present [in the minutest particulars], though the man is not conscious of it. In like manner is the presence of the Lord with the celestial angels; they do not know it, still it is the Lord's presence. Consequently, when it is said that the Lord is continually to be thought of, this that I have now described is what is meant by it; not that man is to hold his thoughts perpetually and sensibly on that one theme, which may however be done on the outset [and be persisted in] until such a habit of unconscious continuity is acquired. — A. D. 4226.

† The celestial man cannot think but from perception, and the spiritual man cannot think but from conscience: the perception of the former, like conscience, is from the Lord, and it does not appear to him whence it is; but the thought of the latter is from the rational, and appears to him as from himself. — A. C. 2552.

abundance; just as, if a person could live on air, he would be full without feeling his fulness, nor how it had come to him. He would not be empty, nor unable to eat or to taste, but only free from any necessity of eating, by reason of fulness, without his knowing how the air, entering through all his pores, should so pervade him.

13. The soul, in this state, is in God as in the atmosphere proper and natural to it for the maintenance of its new life, and it no more feels Him than we feel the air which we breathe. Nevertheless, it is full, and nothing is lacking to it, and this is the reason why all desires are taken away from it.

Its *peace* is great, but not as in other states.* In the state which has been passed through, it was an inanimate peace; a certain state of burial whence there issued, at times, exhalations which disturbed it. In the state of dust it was in peace, but an unfruitful peace, as if a dead body should be in peace amid the storms of the sea and its most furious waves. It would not feel them nor be troubled about them; its dead state makes it insensible. But in the case we are considering, the soul is placed high above them, as if it were surveying the waves, and listening to their fury from the top of a mountain, without fearing their assaults; or, if you will, as if one were at the bottom of the sea, which is always tranquil, whilst

* He who is gifted with a heavenly proprium is also in tranquillity and in peace; for he trusts in the Lord, and believes that nothing of evil befalls him, and knows that concupiscences do not infest him.—A. C. 5660.

the surface was in agitation. The senses may suffer pain, but the inmost of the soul maintains its equanimity, because He who possesses it is immutable.

14. This supposes the faithfulness of the soul ; for, in whatever state it is, it may fall therefrom and relapse into itself. But here the soul makes advances almost boundless in God, and can advance incessantly ; just as, if the sea were without bottom, a person fallen into it would go deeper and deeper for ever, and, the further he descended into the ocean, the more of its beauties and treasures he would discover. Thus it is with the soul in God.*

15. But what must it do to be faithful to God? Nothing, and less than nothing. It should give itself up to be possessed, acted, moved without resistance, to continue in its natural, consistent state, awaiting the events of each moment and receiving them from Providence without augmenting or diminishing any thing ; suffering itself to be led in every thing without sight or reason, and without reflection ; being moved, as it were, by instinctive impulse, without thought about the better or more perfect way, but yielding itself up to all impulses, as it were, quite naturally ; continuing in the equal and consistent state in which God has placed it, without troubling

* In the former [the celestial] it is given to know, acknowledge, and perceive, that the affections of good are innumerable, like the societies in heaven. — A. C. 2718.

They who are in the affection of good, from perception know that it is so [that he who loves his neighbor from good, loves the Lord], and immediately see an open field of wisdom leading even to the Lord.— A. C. 2718.

itself to do any thing, but leaving to God the care of originating occasions, and of executing them; not making acts of abandonment, but continuing therein by state.

16. The soul cannot act, in ever so small a measure, without being guilty of an unfaithfulness; just as, in the state of death and putrefaction, it ought to suffer itself to putrefy without doing or desiring to do any thing. The man who is expiring perceives a disgust at all the means which might support his life; next, an inability to make use of them; lastly, he dies, and every thing becomes useless to him. In all these states, it requires great faithfulness to suffer one's self to be stripped, to quit nourishment when disgust supervenes, and to leave all things at the right time, however subtle they may be. But now the soul has all without having any thing. It has facility for all that belongs to its duty; for acting, for speaking, and for doing, — no longer in its own way, but in God's way. Faithfulness, here, does not consist in ceasing from every thing, like one dead, but in doing nothing except from the vivifying principle by which it is animated. A soul in this state has no bias for any thing, but yields itself to the will that governs it, and does nothing but occupy the state it is put into, without care or concern upon the subject.*

* They who are in the perception of the Lord's presence are in the perception that all and single things which befall them tend to their good, and that evils do not reach them; hence they are in tranquillity. — A. C. 5963.

17. The soul cannot speak about its state, since it does not see it, though it does see the actions of life which it exercises. For, although there are then many extraordinary things in its experience, they are no longer what they were in its preceding states, when the creature had some share in them (which was *being proprietary*). But now the most divine and wonderful things are, as it were, quite natural to the soul; * it does them without thinking of them; the same principle which gives life to the soul does them in it and by it. † It has, as it were, a sovereign power over evil spirits, ‡ and even over the spirits of persons with whose interests it is charged, — but all out of

* When they [truths] are in the interior man, he then no longer acts from the memory, but from the bent of his inclination; till at length the things insinuated flow spontaneously into acts, being inscribed on the interior memory; and what comes forth from this appears as if it were innate. — A. C. 3843.

† But when he [man] loses this freedom, he then receives from the Lord heavenly freedom, which is a thing altogether unknown to those who are in the freedom derived from the proprium; these latter suppose that if this freedom were to be taken away from them, there would nothing of life remain, when nevertheless their real life commences; and real delight, blessedness and happiness with wisdom, then comes, because this freedom is from the Lord. — A. C. 5786.

‡ In combats of temptations, it is permitted evil spirits to bring forth all the evil and false with man, and to combat from that ground; but when they are conquered, it is no longer allowed them to do so; for they instantly perceive in man, that good and truth is confirmed. Such is the perception of spirits, and so superior to that of men. From the very sphere of a man confirmed in truth and good, they know instantly how the case is, what answer they will receive, and other things. This appears evidently with a regenerate spiritual man; with whom evil spirits are alike present, as with an unregenerate man, but then they are subjugated and serve. — A. C. 1695.

itself. As it is no longer proprietary, it has no longer any reserve; and if it cannot say any thing about a state so sublime, it is not because it is afraid of vanity, which has no longer any existence; neither is it for want of light to express itself, as in the lower degrees. It is because that which it has, without having any thing, passes all expression by its extreme simplicity and purity.* This does not hinder but that there may occur a thousand things which are, as it were, the accidents of this state, and not of its essence, of which it can speak very well.† These accidents are, as it were, the crumbs that fall from the eternal feast which the soul begins in time. They are the sparks which give token that there is there a source of fire and flames; but to speak of their beginning and their

* Those affections do not come in the understanding under any species of ideas, but to the interior sensitive perception, under a species of delights of the will, which cannot possibly be described by words. — A. E. 826.

The reason why they [celestial angels] appear simple is because they cannot speak concerning the holy things of heaven and the church; for those things with them are not in the memory, whence all discourse comes, but in the life, and thence in the understanding; not as thought, but as the affection of good in its form, which does not descend into discourse, and, if it should descend, would not speak but only express a tone. — A. E. 829.

† Hence it is evident what love towards the neighbor is in the third heaven. As for other things which concern the moral, civil, and domestic life, these also are works which they do from affection; but they are not such works as they understand by neighbor or brother, and companion, for they derive somewhat from the world, likewise from what is useful for themselves and their own; they are the derivations and productions of the uses before mentioned, and are such things as proceed from their thought, concerning which therefore they can discourse. — A. E. 828.

end, it is neither able to do this, nor desire it, having no knowledge of them, except so far as it pleases God to give that knowledge at the moment of speaking or writing.

Does not the soul see its faults? or does it not commit any? It commits them,* and knows them better than ever; especially at the beginning of this new life. Those which it commits are much more subtle and delicate than formerly. It knows them better because it has its eyes open; but it is not concerned about them, and can do nothing to get rid of them. It is sensible, indeed, when it has been guilty of some unfaithfulness, or has committed a fault, of a certain cloud, or of the rising up of a kind of dust; but this dust falls of itself, the soul doing nothing either to make it fall, or to cleanse itself from its effects.† All such endeavors of the soul would, at

* Such progressions and derivations are perpetual with the man who is regenerated, from his infancy even to the last of his life in the world, and also afterwards, even to eternity; and yet he can never be so regenerated as that in any measure he may be said to be perfect. — A. C. 5122.

† For I have been now for four years in such a state that I have neither thought nor spoken any thing from myself; but I still see that when I seem to be, as it were, myself in thinking or speaking, yet upon inquiry there are others immediately found who have prompted it. When I spake with them, therefore, in the morning, after they had considered awhile, it was given to say that this was well, inasmuch as if there is any thing evil thought or spoken, it is not mine, but proceeds from evil spirits, wherefore it is not appropriated by me. If I should believe that it was from myself, the evil would be properly appropriated by me, and thus I should add actual evil to actual evil. On the contrary, whatever is good is from the Lord; so that as I do not attribute merit to myself from thinking, speaking, or doing good,

this time, be useless, and would even serve only to increase its impurity, so that the soul would feel the second contamination to be worse than the first. All idea of return is out of the question here, because, in saying *return*, we presuppose alienation, and if we are in God, it is only needful that we remain in Him. The case is as when there arises some little cloudiness in the middle region of the atmosphere; if the wind then blows, it moves the clouds, but does not scatter them, — rather the contrary. We must leave the sun to scatter them himself. The more subtle and delicate the clouds are, the sooner he does it.*

18. Oh, if the soul were sufficiently faithful never to regard itself, what advances would it not make! †

so neither do I commit sin therein. He, therefore, who is of such a character as to believe that the fact is as it is, that is, who is in true faith, or in the truth of faith, he is guiltless of then committing sin; and whatever evil he seems to himself to do, believing still the truth of the case to be what it is, that there are evil spirits who have been present and persuaded him to it, the evil is not thus appropriated to him. — S. D. 4228.

* There are with man clouds so large and so dense, that, were he aware of them, he would wonder how the rays of light from the Lord could ever pass through them, so that he could be regenerated. Such are the clouds abiding with the spiritual man; but with the celestial man they are not so large, because he is principled in love towards the Lord, and this love being implanted in his will part, he therefore does not receive conscience like the spiritual man, but the perception of goodness and thereby of truth from the Lord. — A. C. 1044.

† As to what concerns the heavenly proprium, it exists from the new will which is given by the Lord, and differs from man's proprium in this, that they no longer regard themselves in all and single things which they do, and in all and single things which they learn and teach; but they then regard the neighbor, the public, the church, the kingdom of the Lord, and so the Lord himself. — A. C. 5660.

Its own proper views are, as it were, little shrubs which sustain it in the sea, and hinder it from descending deeper, as long as their support lasts. If their branches are very delicate, the weight of the body breaks them down, and the soul is stopped only for a few moments; but if, by some notable unfaithfulness, the soul should look at itself voluntarily, and for a length of time, it would be stopped as long as its self-regard continued, and its loss would be very great.

19. The faults of this state are certain slight emotions or views of self, which are born and die the same moment; certain breezes of self-regard, which, passing over this tranquil sea, produce wrinkles on its surface. But these faults are dissipated by degrees, and become continually more and more subtle.

20. The soul, on leaving the tomb, finds itself — without knowing how it has come to pass, and without thinking of it — clothed with all the *inclinations of JESUS CHRIST*; and this, not by distinct* views or practices, but by state, finding them all on any occasion when they are necessary to be acted, without thought of its own; just as a person who has a treasure locked up, without thinking about it, finds it in time of need. The soul is surprised, that, without having reflected on the states of Jesus Christ nor on His inclinations, for ten, twenty, or thirty years, it yet finds them imprinted on itself by states. These inclinations of Jesus Christ are *humility, poverty, submis-*

* Thence the light of truth from good increases immensely and becomes as a *continuous* lucidity. — A. C. 3833.

sion, and His other virtues. The soul finds that every thing demanded by these virtues takes place within itself; but so easily, that it seems as if they had become natural to it.*

21. Then it is that its treasure is in God alone, from whom it draws continually and without end what is suitable to itself, without any diminution or drying up of the source.† Then it is truly *clothed with JESUS CHRIST*. It is properly He who is acting, speaking, and conversing in the soul; our Lord Jesus Christ being the principle of its movements. For this reason, the neighbor is no more a trial to it; its heart enlarges every day to contain him. It has no longer any inclination either for action or for retirement; it desires only to be what it is made to be each moment.

22. As the soul can make boundless advances in this state,‡ I leave it to those who know them by experience to describe them; the necessary light not

* Conjunction with truth, therefore, cannot take place with man until those things which he has imbibed by doctrines are insinuated from the external man into the interior. When they are in the interior man, he then no longer acts from the memory, but from the bent of his inclination, till at length the things insinuated flow spontaneously into acts, being inscribed on the interior memory, and what comes forth from this appears as if it were innate. — A. C. 3833.

† When man is in this state [when good is conjoined to him], he then begins to know innumerable things. — A. C. 3833.

‡ The apperception of truth is from good, inasmuch as the Lord is in good and gives apperception; when he thence receives truth, it then increases indefinitely; the case herein is like that of a little seed, which grows into a tree, and produces little seeds, and these next produce a garden, and so on. — A. C. 5355.

being given me as regards its higher degrees, and my soul not being sufficiently advanced in God to see them or know them. I will only say, that it is easy to see, by the length of time required for those steps which the soul must take in order to attain to God, that we do not reach it so quickly as we think for; and that the most spiritual and enlightened souls mistake the consummation of *the passive state of light and love* for the end of the one we are considering, whereas it is only the beginning of it. The reason why souls do not advance is because they do not suffer themselves to be sufficiently stripped, or because they do it too early.

23. As long as one finds delight in any given practice or prayer, it should never be left, — never, until there comes a disrelish for it, together with a certain difficulty and pain in doing it; for to wait for absolute inability is to wait for miracles. God gives such miracles only to certain souls, which have not the requisite light for this stripping, and who have no person to instruct them thereto; for which end He causes them, of His absolute power, to do what they do not know.

24. It is to be observed, that, in the *way of light and passive love*, there are drynesses, aridity, pains, wearinesses; but they are neither of the duration nor the quality of those I have described in the *way of naked faith*. Wherefore care should be taken not to mistake here. It belongs to the director to judge of all. Happy the soul which finds an experienced one.

25. It must also be observed, that what I say of

the *inclinations* of JESUS CHRIST begins as soon as the way of naked faith begins ; although the soul, throughout all its way, has no distinct views of Jesus Christ, it has yet a desire to conform itself to His states. It desires the cross, humility, poverty ; afterwards this desire disappears, and there remains a leaning or secret inclination for the same things, which grows continually deeper and deeper, acquiring simplicity, and becomes, day by day, more intimate and more hidden.

But *inclination*, bias, tendency, however delicate they may be, are terms which imply something which is not possessed, and which is without us. But now the inclinations of Jesus Christ constitute the state of the soul, are proper to it, habitual, and, as it were, natural. They are as things not different from itself, but as its own proper essence, and proper life ; Jesus Christ exercising them Himself without going out from Himself, and the soul exercising them with Him and in Him, without going out from Him ; exercising them not as something distinct, which it knows, sees, proposes, practises, but as something most natural to it. All the actions of life, such as respiration, &c., are done naturally, without thinking about them ; not by rule or measure, but according to need, — and all without special purpose on the part of the person doing them. It is the same as regards the inclinations of Jesus Christ in this degree ; and this state is continually growing, in proportion as the soul is transformed into Him, and becomes one and the same thing with Him.

26. But are there, then, no crosses in this state? As the soul is strong, with the strength of God himself, God gives it yet more crosses, and heavier ones than before; but it bears them divinely. Formerly, the cross delighted the soul, and it loved and cherished it; but now it thinks no more about it; it suffers it to come and go. The cross becomes, like every thing else, God to it, though this does not prevent suffering, but only the pain, the trouble, the deep occupation of suffering. Crosses are crosses no more; they are God; and, for this reason, they do not sanctify but divinize. In other states, the cross is virtue, and is prominent in proportion as the state is advanced; but in this, it is God to the soul, as also is every thing else; all that makes the life of the soul, all that it has from moment to moment being God to it.*

27. The exterior of these persons is quite common, and nothing extraordinary is to be seen in it. The more they advance, the more free they become, having nothing uncommon which appears externally, except to those who are capable of receiving it. Here all is seen, without seeing, in God, such as it really is.† It

* There are several kinds of temptations, which in general are celestial, spiritual, and natural, which ought not in the least to be confounded. In the case of those who are in love towards the Lord, whatever assaults this love produces an inmost torture, which is celestial temptation. In the case of those who are in love towards the neighbor or charity, whatever assaults this love produces torment of conscience, and this is spiritual temptation. — A. C. 847.

† They [the celestial] know instantly, by a certain internal animadvertence, whether a thing be good, and whether it be true; for the Lord insinuates this, inasmuch as they are conjoined to the Lord by love. — A. C. 2831.

is for this reason that this state is not subject to delusion.* There are no visions, revelations, ecstasies, ravishments, changes. All this belongs not to this state, which is quite above it all. This way is simple, pure, and naked, seeing nothing except in God, as God sees it, and by His eyes.

CONCLUSION OF THE AUTHOR IN THE FORM OF A LETTER TO
HER CONFESSOR.

It is not permitted me to go on here, there being a total blank [in my thoughts]. I believe I have drawn too much from my natural light.† You will easily distinguish such passages. I have made reflections to the effect that it was perhaps more from nature than from grace that I have been impelled to write; and I desire, indeed, here to make my confession of this, and frankly to avow that I have even committed, towards the conclusion, some faults; having retained in my memory certain lights in regard to this state, which had come to me in prayer, instead of losing

* What perception is at this day is a thing most unknown, because at this day no one is in the perception in which the ancients were, and particularly the most ancient; the latter of whom, from perception, knew whether a thing was good, and consequently whether it was true. There was an influx into their rational from the Lord, through heaven, whereby instantly, when they thought concerning any thing holy, they perceived whether it was so, or whether it was not so. — A. C. 2144.

† The state of the celestial man is, that he is in good, and from good knows all truths, and never thinks and speaks from truths concerning good, still less from scientifics concerning good. — A. C. 3301.

them.* Moreover, I have not distinguished, in the state that I am in, what is natural and what is divine, what is God and what my own. I pray God that He will show it to you.

I have not read this paper after writing it, and I have been much interrupted. When I left the sense unfinished, I read over a line or two, or a few words, in order to continue. I know not if I have done against your wishes. This has happened to me at times, but I have not read it over afterwards. I have not been careful to say every thing about the several states, or to avoid repetitions. I leave all this to your discernment, praying our Lord to enlighten you, that you may distinguish the false from the true, and what my self-love has sought to mix with His light.

* For the men of the celestial church are such, that they perceive all the truths and goods of heaven from the Lord, by influx into their interiors, whence they see goods and truths inwardly in themselves, as implanted, and have no need to learn them by a posterior way, or to treasure them up in their memory. — A. E. 739.

END OF PART FIRST.

The first part of the history is devoted to a description of the
 country and its inhabitants. The author describes the
 various tribes and nations that inhabit the region, and
 their customs and manners. He also describes the
 climate and the soil of the country, and the
 various productions of the earth.

The second part of the history is devoted to a
 description of the wars and conquests of the
 various tribes and nations. The author describes
 the various battles and sieges, and the
 various successes and failures of the
 different armies.

The third part of the history is devoted to a
 description of the commerce and trade of the
 country. The author describes the various
 commodities that are exported and
 imported, and the various markets and
 fairs that are held in the country.

The fourth part of the history is devoted to a
 description of the government and
 laws of the country. The author describes
 the various forms of government that
 have been used in the country, and
 the various laws and customs that
 have been enacted.

The fifth part of the history is devoted to a
 description of the religion and
 superstitions of the country. The
 author describes the various
 religions and sects that are
 worshipped in the country, and
 the various superstitions and
 customs that are observed.

The sixth part of the history is devoted to a
 description of the arts and
 sciences of the country. The
 author describes the various
 arts and crafts that are
 practiced in the country, and
 the various sciences and
 discoveries that have been
 made.

The seventh part of the history is devoted to a
 description of the manners and
 customs of the country. The
 author describes the various
 customs and manners that
 are observed in the country,
 and the various changes that
 have taken place in the
 manners and customs of the
 country.

The eighth part of the history is devoted to a
 description of the state of the
 country at the present time. The
 author describes the various
 changes that have taken place
 in the country since the
 time of the first part of the
 history, and the various
 improvements that have been
 made.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

More particular description of several properties of the resuscitated and divine life. 1, 2. True liberty and resuscitated life distinguished from what is not such. Job a figure of it. 3. Beginning of the apostolic life. Facility of its functions; counsel not to enter upon it from one's self; its fruits. 4. How virtue is practised in it, especially humility. 5—8. It is common in outward appearance. Its ecstatic joy. Blessedness of being lost in God, and of abandoning one's self to God. 9—11. Perfect abandonment rarely practised, which results from the prudence of our own wisdom, under pretence of the glory of God. A ray of glory escaped from the interior.

1. I HAD forgotten to say that this is the state in which true liberty* is given; not a liberty, as some think it, which deprives or exempts one from doing things. This is rather a privation than liberty; for such persons believe themselves free, because, having a disrelish for good things, they no longer practise them. The liberty I speak of is not of this nature; the soul has a facility for all things which are in the order of God and of its state, and it does them

* He who is in the heavenly proprium is in freedom itself; for to be led of the Lord is freedom, and he is led in good from good to good; hence it may be manifest that such are in blessedness and in happiness, for there is nothing which disturbs. — A. C. 5660.

the more easily, the longer and the more painfully it has been deprived of them.

I confess that I do not understand the state of resuscitation and divine life spoken of by some persons, who remain, notwithstanding, all their days in impotence and the loss of all; for, in this state, the soul is restored to true life. The actions of a man raised up from the dead are actions of life; and if the soul, after its resurrection, continues to be without life, it is, in my opinion, dead or buried, but not raised up. To be raised up, the soul ought to do the same actions it used to do before its losses, and do them without any difficulty; only doing them in God. Did not Lazarus, after his resurrection, perform all the functions of life as before? And Jesus Christ, after His resurrection, was pleased even to eat and to converse with men. This will serve as an example. Accordingly, I say of those who believe themselves to be in God, and who yet are straitened and cannot pray, that they are not raised up. For here every thing is restored to the soul a hundred fold.*

2. There is a beautiful figure of this in Job, whom I look upon as a mirror of the whole spiritual life.† You see how God strips him of his goods, which are gifts and graces; then of his children, which is strip-

* When man, by the truths of faith, is being introduced to the good of charity, he then undergoes temptations; but, when he is in the good of charity, temptations cease, for then he is in heaven.— A. C. 8968.

† That the book of Job is a book of the ancient church is evident, as has been mentioned, from the representative and figurative style in it.— A. C. 3540.

ping him of his faculties or good works, these being our children and our dearest productions; next God takes from him his health, by which is meant the loss of the virtues; then he makes him to putrefy, rendering him an object of horror, of infection, and of contempt; it seems, even, as if this holy man committed faults, and that he was deficient in resignation. He is accused by his friends of being justly punished by reason of his crimes; there remains no sound part in him. But after he has rotted on the dunghill, and there remains nothing but his bones, and he is a mere corpse, God does not give him back every thing, goods, children, health, and life.

It is the same after the resurrection; all is given back, together with an admirable facility in making use of them, without incurring defilement, without attaching one's self to them, and without appropriating them as formerly. All is done in God, divinely, using things as not using them. In this state there is true LIBERTY and true life. "If ye have been like to Jesus Christ in his death, you shall be like him in his resurrection," Rom. vi. 5. Is it being free to be under inability and restrictions? No. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John viii. 36), but free with His own liberty.

3. Here it is that the apostolic life begins. Without at all injuring one's self, nothing that God wills is hard; and, if a person is called to instruct, to preach, &c., he does it with a wonderful facility, which costs him nothing, and without its being necessary for him to prepare his discourse, since he is well able to prac-

tise what our Lord Jesus Christ says to His disciples, that "they should not think beforehand of what they should say, but that, when it was time to speak, He would give them a wisdom which no one should be able to resist," Matt. x. 19.

This is given only at a late period, and after dreadful inabilities have been endured; and, the more severe they have been, the greater the liberty. But one must not put himself in this state of himself; for, as God would not be the principle of such a state, the result would not be what was aimed at.*

Those who are in this state effect wonderful conversions, without thinking about them. It may indeed be said of this resurrection life, "that all things good are given with it," Wisdom, vii. 11.

4. In this state, the soul cannot practise virtue as virtue; it cannot even see or distinguish it. The virtues have become, as it were, habitual and natural to it, so that it practises them all without seeing or knowing them, and without being able to apply itself to them, or to make any distinction among them.†

* "And the men made a residue of it until morning" [Ex. xvi. 20.] That it signifies abuse of good divine, in that they were willing to procure it of themselves for themselves, appears from the signification of making a residue until the morning, as denoting to be solicitous about the acquirement of good of themselves (see above, n. 8478), consequently denoting abuse of Good divine; it is called abuse when what is alike exists in ultimates, but from a contrary origin. Good exists from a contrary origin when from man, not from the Lord. — A. C. 8480.

† The case is this with the iniation of truth into good, that, before truth is initiated and rightly conjoined, it is indeed with man, but is not made as of him, or as his property; but, as soon as it is initiated

When it hears some one uttering words of humility, and greatly abasing himself, it is all surprised and astonished to discover that itself does not practise the like. It starts as from a lethargy; and, if it should try to humble itself, it would be rebuked for it as for an unfaithfulness. Indeed, it would be unable to accomplish it; because the state of annihilation through which it has passed has placed it below all humility. For, in order to humble ourselves, we must first be something; what is nothing cannot abase itself below what it is; [at the same time], the state it actually is in has placed it above all humility and all virtue by a transformation into God. Thus its inability comes both from its annihilation and its elevation.*

5. For this reason, these souls are very ordinary in outward appearance, and have nothing to distinguish them from others, except that they do no evil to any one. For, as regards the exterior, it is very ordinary.† It is for this reason that they are very

in his good, then it is appropriated to him; it then vanishes out of his external memory, and passes into the internal, or, what is the same, it vanishes in his natural or external man, and passes into the rational or internal man, and puts on the man himself, and makes his human, that is, his quality as to the human. — A. C. 3108.

* Hence it is that the spiritual have not love to the Lord like the celestial; consequently, neither have they humiliation, which is essential in all worship, and by which good from the Lord may flow in; for an elated heart never receives such good, but an humble heart. — A. C. 2715.

† These are in the third heaven, and are the wisest of all. Such do those become in the world, who immediately apply to life the divine things which they hear, turning away from evils as infernal, and worshipping the Lord alone. These persons, being in

little known; a circumstance which upholds their state,* and makes them live in peace, without care or concern about any thing whatever.†

6. They have a boundless joy, though not sensibly perceived, arising from the fact that they neither fear, desire, nor wish for any thing. For which cause, nothing can either disturb their peace or lessen their joy. David experienced this, when he said, "All they who are in thee, O Lord, are like persons who are transported with joy," Ps. lxxxvi. 7. A person transported with joy no longer sees or feels or thinks about himself; and his joy, although very great, is not known to himself by reason of his transport.

7. The soul, in truth, is in a state of transport and ecstasy, unattended by any pain, because God has enlarged its capacity almost without bounds. Those ecstasies which are attended with a loss of sensation produce this effect only from the weakness of those

innocence, appear to others as infants; and, as there is nothing of pride in their speech, they also appear simple. — D. L. W. 427.

* "To seduce, if possible, even the elect" [Mark xiii. 22] signifies those who are in the life of good and truth, and thence with the Lord; these are they who in the Word are called the elect. They seldom appear in the company of those who veil profane worship under what is holy; or, if they appear, they are not known, for the Lord hides, and thus protects them. — A. C. 3900.

† When man is in such a [passive] state, he can also be gifted with peace by the Lord; for then he trusts solely in the Lord, and cares nothing for other things. Thus, if a man would live in peace, he must be in a passive state, and never in an active one, except by reaction and concurrent action, which also come from the Lord, so that the state is still a passive one. — S. D. 635.

who are the subjects of them, and yet they excite the admiration of the world. The weakness comes from this, that God drawing the soul, as it were, away from itself, to lose it in Himself, but the soul being neither pure enough nor strong enough to endure that drawing, it is necessary either that God should cease from drawing the soul, whereby the ecstasy comes to an end, or that nature should succumb and expire, as has happened many times. But here the ecstasy has place perpetually, and not for a few hours only, without violence or injury, God having purified and strengthened the subject to the degree necessary for bearing this wonderful ecstasy.

It seems to me, that ecstasy results when God goes forth from Himself; but I am afraid to affirm this for fear of saying what is erroneous. What I will say then is, that the soul drawn forth from itself experiences that an ecstasy takes place with it, but a blessed ecstasy, because it is drawn out of itself to be abysed and lost in God, leaving behind its imperfections, and its own narrow and limited qualities, that it may share in those of God himself.

8. O blessed nothingness! how glorious is thy termination! O miseries, poverties, fatigues! how are ye rewarded, and more than rewarded! O happiness which cannot be expressed! What gain, O soul! hast thou not made for all thy losses! Couldst thou have believed, when thou wast in the mud and the dust, that what caused thee so much horror was destined to procure thee happiness so great as that which thou

now enjoyest ?* If any one had told thee, thou couldst not have believed it. Learn now, by thy own experience, how good it is to trust in God, and that they who put their confidence in Him shall never be confounded.

O abandonment! what good dost thou not effect in a soul! and what advances would it not make if it only knew how to find thee at the outset.† From how many sorrows would it not be delivered, if it knew how to yield itself up to the hand of God from the first!

9. But, alas! people will not abandon themselves, and trust in God. Those who do this, and who believe that they are so well established in the principle, are abandoned only in figure, and not in reality.

* Despair is on this further account, that the satisfaction of life which is from the Lord may be made sensible; for, when they come out of that state, they are those who, being condemned to death, are liberated from prison. By desolations and temptations also, states contrary to heavenly life are perceived, and hence is impressed a sense and perception of the satisfaction and happiness of heavenly life; for the sense and perception of what is satisfactory and happy cannot come from any other source than from relation to things contrary. To the intent, therefore, that full relations may be had, desolations and temptations are brought to the utmost pitch. — A. C. 6144.

† It is to be known that the Divine Providence is universal, that is, in the most singular of all things; and that they who are in the stream of Providence are conveyed continually to felicities, whatever may be the appearance of the means; and that they are in the stream of Providence who put their trust in the Divine, and attribute all things to him; and that they are not in the stream of Providence who trust to themselves alone, and attribute all things to themselves; for they are in the opposite, inasmuch as they refuse to allow a Providence to the Divine, and claim it to themselves. It is to be known also, that, so far as any one is in the stream of Providence, so far he is in a state of peace. — A. C. 8478.

They wish to abandon themselves in one thing, and not in another. They would make terms with God, and put limits as to how far they will submit to His doings. They are willing to give themselves up, but only on such and such conditions. No; this is not abandoning ourselves; it is imagining that we do it, while we do it not. A whole and entire abandonment excepts nothing, reserves nothing, neither death nor life, nor perfection nor salvation, nor paradise nor hell.

Cast yourselves headlong, poor souls, into this state of abandonment: nothing but good will come to you from it. Walk in assurance upon this stormy sea, supported by the word of Jesus Christ, Who has promised to take care of those who shall forsake all, and abandon themselves to Him. But, if you sink with St. Peter, be assured that it is from your little faith.

If we only had faith to advance unhesitatingly, and meet all dangers without even looking at them, what good would not betide us! What fearest thou, O craven heart! Thou art afraid of losing thyself! Alas! considering how little thou art worth, what great matter is that? Yes; thou wilt lose thyself, if thou hast strength enough to abandon thyself to God, but thou wilt lose thyself in Him. I cannot repeat often enough, how blessed such a loss is. Why can I not persuade all the world to this holy ABANDONMENT? And why do preachers preach any thing beside? *

* The Lord, in order to render any one blessed and happy, wills a total submission, that is, that he should not be partly his own, and partly the Lord's; for there are then two Lords, whom man cannot serve at the same time, Matt. vi. 24. A total submission is also

10. But alas! people are so blind, that they consider this as madness, lack of prudence, something fit only for women or feeble minds, but quite unsuitable for GREAT MINDS. It is something too low for them; they must needs lead themselves with their own measure of prudence. This track is unknown to them, because they are wise and prudent to themselves; but it is revealed to the humble, who can submit to be annihilated, and who are willing to be the foot-ball of the Divine Providence, leaving to It full power to exercise and treat them as It will, making no resistance, and giving themselves no concern about what the world will say. Oh, what trouble this prudence of our own has to become nothing, both in its own eyes, by losing all esteem of itself because of its own corruption, and in those of the creatures, by being willing to be their laughing-stock!*

meant by the Lord's words in Matthew: "Whosoever loveth father and mother above me is not worthy of me, and whosoever loveth son and daughter above me is not worthy of me," x. 37. By father and mother are signified in general those things which are of man's proprium from what is hereditary, and by son and daughter those things which are of man's proprium from what is actual. — A. C. 6138.

* The enmity which is put [Gen. iii. 15] is between the love of man's proprium and the Lord, thus also between man's own prudence, and the Divine Providence of the Lord; for one's own prudence is unceasing in the exaltation of its head, and the Divine Providence is unceasing in the depression of it. If man was sensible of this, he would be enraged and exasperated against God, and would perish; but, whilst he is not sensible of it, he may be enraged and exasperated against men and against himself, and also against fortune, by which means he does not perish. Hence it is that the Lord by his Divine Providence continually leads man in freedom. — D. P. 211.

People wish, according to their own declarations, to keep a good standing that they may glorify God; but it is only to glorify themselves. To be really willing to be nothing in the eyes of God, to remain in a state of entire abandonment, and even in despair, to give ourselves to Him when we are most repulsed, to acquiesce and not to look at ourselves when we are on the brink of the abyss, — this is something very uncommon, and what constitutes perfect abandonment.

11. There flows down, at times, even in this life, into the faculties and the senses, something which is like a shedding forth of glory from within; but this is not common. It is being as Jesus Christ was in His transfiguration. This is an eminent grace, and is attended with great purity.

CHAPTER II.

1—5. Firmness, trials, elevation, exalted peace and purity of the soul become divine and abandoned by state. 6—8. All is then purely God to it. 9—12. The loss of false liberty is rewarded with liberty in God. Wonderfulness of this state, in which all is divinely sure, equal, and indifferent.

1. THE soul, after having reached a divine state, is, as I have said, an immovable rock, not to be shaken by trials or blows of any kind, except when the Lord wills that it should do something contrary to usage and common wont. If, in that case, it does not yield

at the first impulse, He inflicts on it a pain of constraint which it cannot resist ; and it is compelled, by a force which cannot be expressed, to do what He wills.

To rehearse the strange trials to which He puts these souls in a state of perfect abandonment, who resist Him in nothing, is out of the question ; neither would it be understood. All that can be said is, that He does not leave them the shadow of a thing, which can be said to be either in God or out of God.

And He so lifts them above all by the loss of all, that nothing less than God Himself, either in heaven or on earth, can stop them. Nothing can captivate them, because there is for them no wickedness in any thing whatsoever, by reason of their union with God, who, in concurring with sinners, contracts nothing of their wickedness by reason of His essential purity.

2. This is more real than can be expressed ; so that the soul participates in the purity of God, or rather, all its proper purity (which is only a gross kind of purity) having been abolished, the sole purity of God in Himself subsists in this nothingness ; but in a way so real, that the soul is in perfect ignorance of evil, and, as it were, unable to commit it.* This,

* Because it is the truth, it is to be believed that the Lord governs heaven and earth, and that none lives but the Lord. From this faith, when it is given by the Lord, it follows that a man cannot commit sin ; for he knows that spirits who believe that they live from themselves, and govern themselves, excite those things in the man, which, though in him, are not excited by himself, because he then lives in a passive state, and suffers himself to be governed [by the Lord].—S. D. 635.

however, does not hinder but that there may be a fall from this state; although such a thing scarcely ever happens, by reason of the profound annihilation the soul is in, which leaves it no propriety; and propriety alone can cause sin, for what no longer is cannot sin.

3. So much is this the case, that the souls I am speaking of find great difficulty in confessing. For, when they go to accuse themselves, they know not what to accuse or condemn, not being able to find in themselves any thing that lives, and can have willed to offend God, — and this because their will is entirely lost in God; and as God cannot will sin, so neither can they will it. If they are told to confess, they do it, because they are very humble; but they speak with the lips what is suggested to them, like a little child who should be told, You must confess this, — who says it, not knowing what he says, or whether the fact is so or not, and without reproach or remorse. For the soul, in this state, can no longer discover any thing of conscience; * all is so lost in God that there is no longer any accuser within it; it remains well pleased, without seeking to be so. But when it is said to it, You have committed such a fault, it finds nothing in itself which has done it; and, if it is said, Say that you have done it, it will say so with the lips, without grief or repentance.

4. Its peace is then so unchangeable and so steadfast, that nothing in the world or in all hell can affect

* Perception is not conscience. The celestial have perception, the spiritual have conscience. — A. C. 597.

it for a moment.* The senses still remain subject to suffering; but when they are so overwhelmed by it that they cry out, if the person is questioned, or if he examines himself, he will find nothing in himself that is suffering. In the midst of inconceivable pains, he says, I suffer nothing; not being able to say or to acknowledge that he suffers by reason of the divine state he is in, and the blessedness which he experiences in his centre or highest part.

There is, here, a separation of the two parts, the lower and the higher, so entire and perfect, that they live together like strangers that do not know each other, † and the most extraordinary pains do not prevent the perfect peace, tranquillity, joy, and unmovableness of the higher part, as the joyful and divine state of the higher does not hinder extreme suffering in the lower, — and this without mixture or confusion in any way.

5. If you would attribute any thing to a soul which is thus transformed and become God, it will refuse it at once, not being able to find in itself any thing which can be named, affirmed, or understood: it is in a perfect negation. From this arises the difference

* He who is gifted with a heavenly proprium is also in tranquillity and peace; for he trusts in the Lord, and believes that nothing of evil befalls him, and knows that concupiscences do not infest him. — A. C. 5660.

† Spiritual things with them [those of the most ancient church] were altogether distinct from natural things, the former residing in their spiritual mind, and the latter in their natural mind; and hence they did not immerse any thing spiritual in their natural mind, as is the case with men who are spiritual natural. — A. E. 617.

of the terms [applied to this state], and the use of expressions which it is difficult to explain, except to those who are in a similar condition.

This arises also from the fact, that, as the soul has lost by its annihilation all that was proper to itself, and God subsists within it, it can attribute nothing to itself, any more than it can to God, because it no longer knows any thing but Him alone, of Whom it can say nothing.

6. Thus all is God to this soul; for here the question is no longer about seeing all things in God; for to see things is to distinguish them in Him. For example: I see, in a chamber, what there is different from the chamber itself, though included in it; but if every thing were transformed into this chamber, or if every thing were taken from the chamber, I should see nothing but the chamber itself.

All creatures, *celestial, terrestrial, or pure intelligences*, — every thing disappears and vanishes, and there remains nothing but God Himself as He was before creation. The soul sees God only everywhere;* and all is God to it, not in the way of thought, view, light, † but by identity of state and

* In such a state were the most ancient people, who were celestial men; for whatever they apprehended by any sense was to them a medium of thinking concerning the things of the Lord, thus concerning the Lord and His kingdom, and hence was the delight which they derived from things worldly and terrestrial. — A. C. 3702.

† When man is in this state, he then begins to know innumerable things, &c. Thence the light of truth from good increases immensely, and becomes as a *continuous* lucidity; for he is then in the light of heaven, which is from the Lord. — A. C. 3833.

consummation of unity; and as this unity makes it God by participation,* so that it is no longer able to see itself, it also cannot see any thing [but God] anywhere. Hence such a soul would be as indifferent at being for a whole eternity with devils as with angels. Devils are to it as every thing else, and it is no longer possible for it to see a created being out of the uncreated; for the uncreated essence alone is all and in all, — all God; as well in a devil as in a saint, although in a different manner.†

7. But this is so real that it is impossible for the soul to be otherwise. Accordingly, if all creatures should join to condemn it, their censure would be a thing of less account to it than a buzzing fly. This would not be from obstinacy and firmness of will, as people think, but from the impossibility of any longer being concerned about itself, because it no longer sees

* All who are led by the Divine Providence of the Lord are elevated from proprium, and then see that every good and truth is from the Lord; yea, they also see, that that which is from the Lord in man is perpetually the Lord's, and never man's. — D. P. 316.

† In regard to the life of every one, whether man or spirit or angel, it flows in solely from the Lord, who is life itself, and diffuses Himself through the universal heaven, also through hell, thus into every individual therein, and this in an incomprehensible order and series; but the life which flows in is received by every one according to his character: good and truth is received as good and truth by the good; whereas good and truth is received as evil and false by the wicked, and is even changed into evil and the false in them. This is comparatively as the light of the sun, which diffuses itself into all objects of earth, but is received according to the quality of each object, and becomes of a beautiful color in beautiful forms, and of an ugly color in ugly forms. This is an arcanum in the world, but in another life nothing is better known. — A. C. 2888.

itself. You shall ask of this soul, What, I pray, disposes you to do this thing and that? Was it that God directed you, and gave you to know or understand His will? — I know nothing; I understand nothing; neither do I think about my knowing nothing;* all is God and God's will to me, and I no longer know what God's will is, because that will has become, as it were, natural to me. — But why do you do this rather than that? — I know not: I give myself up to that which carries me along. — Well, why? — It carries me along, because, my proper self having no longer any being, I am carried along with God, and God alone causes this movement. He goes that way; He acts, and I am but an instrument which I do not see or look at. I no longer have any interest separate from Him, because, by losing myself, I have lost all interest of my own; accordingly, I am not capable of understanding any reason, nor of giving any for my conduct, for I no longer have any conduct.* I act, however, infallibly, so long as I have no other principle than the infallible principle.

This blind abandonment is a thing of state to the soul I am speaking of; because, having become one and the same with God, it can see God only; for, having lost all dissimilarity, propriety, distinction,

* For they [angels in love to the Lord] see in themselves whether the things which they hear are true or not, and they see this not from any sight in the thought, like others, but from the affection of truth in their understanding; for all truths with them are inscribed on their affections, which derive their essence from celestial love, which is love to the Lord. Thus truths with them make one with their affections. — A. E. 826.

there is no longer room for abandonment, because to abandon one's self one must needs be something, and have the power of disposing of one's self.*

8. The soul I am speaking of is, by this state, lost in God with Jesus Christ, as St. Paul says, — mingled with Him, as the river I have spoken of is blended in the sea, so that it finds itself no longer. It has the ebb and flow of the sea, no longer by choice and will and liberty, but by state, because, the boundless sea having absorbed its scanty and limited waters, it shares in all that is done by the sea, but without being distinguished from the sea itself. It is the sea that carries it along, and yet it is not carried along, because it has lost all that is proper to it; and having no other movement than the sea, it acts as the sea itself; not that by its nature it has these qualities, but because, in losing all its proper qualities, it no longer has any others than those of the sea, and can never be any thing but the sea.

This does not mean, as I have said, that the soul does not so retain its nature, that, if God willed, He could not draw it forth in a moment from the sea, though this is what He will not do. It does not lose its nature as a creature, and God might cast it forth from His divine bosom, but He does not do so. This creature, as we have said, acts then, in a manner, divinely.

9. But some one will say to me, — In this way you take away from man his liberty. Not so; he is now

* For man in genuine humiliation divests himself of all ability to think and do any thing from himself, and leaves himself altogether to the Divine, and thus accedes to the Divine. — A. C. 6866.

without liberty by an excess of liberty, because he has freely lost all created liberty. He shares in the uncreated liberty, which is no longer narrowed, limited, or confined, as regards any thing whatever.* The soul is so free and so large, that the whole earth appears to it only as a point, without its being confined within it. It is free to do all things, and to do nothing. There is no state or condition to which it does not adapt itself; it can do all, and can do nothing that other men do.

10. Oh, wonderful state! who can describe thee, † and what is it thou canst fear and apprehend? Loss, death, damnation? — Thou hast said, O holy Paul! “Who shall ever be able to separate us from the love of Jesus Christ?” “We are confident,” says this great saint, “that neither death, nor life, nor principalities, nor powers, &c., shall be able to separate us therefrom,” Rom. viii. 35, 38. Now, this expression, “we are confident,” excludes all doubt. Well, great saint, where was thy confidence? — It was in the infallibility of God Himself. ‡ — Frequently as the let-

* Freedom derived from the proprium is to indulge in all kinds of pleasures, to despise others in comparison with one's self, to subject them to himself as servants. But when he loses this freedom, he then receives from the Lord heavenly freedom, which is a thing altogether unknown to those who are in freedom derived from the proprium. — A. C. 5786.

† The perceptions of the celestial man can never be described; for they extend to the most minute and particular things, with all variety, according to states and circumstances. — A. C. 521.

‡ It is an eternal truth that the Lord governs heaven and earth; also, that no one lives from himself, except the Lord; consequently, that the all of life flows in, good of life from the Lord, and evil of

ters of this great apostle, this mystical doctor, are read by the world, it yet does not understand them, although the whole mystic way, its beginning, its progress, and its end, are described therein, and even the divine life itself — the world does not understand these things in them, but a person to whom the understanding of them has been imparted sees them there plainer than the day.

11. Oh! if the men who find it so hard to give themselves up to God, could but experience this, they would acknowledge, that, although the way which led to it was extremely hard, one single day of this state well rewards so many years of suffering. — But by what route does God lead men thither? — By ways quite the opposite to those we imagine for ourselves. He builds by casting down; He gives life by taking it away.

Oh, if I could only tell what He does, and the wonderful methods He makes use of to reach this point! But I must be silent, — man cannot receive it, — those who are in this state can understand me.* Here

life from hell. This is the faith of the heavens: when man is in this faith, in which he may be when in good, then evil cannot be affixed and appropriated to him, because he knows that it is not from himself, but from hell. When man is in this state, he can then be gifted with power; for then he will trust solely in the Lord. — A. C. 6325.

* But these things, although they are clear to those who are in the light of heaven, are still obscure to those who are in the light of the world; thus to most persons at this day, and perhaps so obscure as to be scarcely intelligible. Nevertheless, inasmuch as these things are treated of in the internal sense, and are of such a nature, the opening of them is not to be dispensed with: a time is about to come when there will be illustration. — A. C. 4402.

there is no more need of place or of time;* every thing is alike; all places are good, so that if the order of God should lead them into Turkey, such persons would find themselves as much at ease there as elsewhere, all means being now useless, since the soul has infinitely surpassed them. Being eminently in the end, there is nothing more to be looked for.†

12. Here all is God; God is everywhere, and in all; and thus the soul is equal in all. Its prayer is God Himself;‡ always equal, never interrupted, — although the soul does not perceive it otherwise than by a state of consistence;§ and if, at times, God diffuses some overflowing of His glory over its facul-

* When man is in a state of love or of heavenly affection, he is then in an angelic state, namely, as it were, not in time, if there be no impatience in the affection; for impatience is a corporeal affection, and so far as man is in it, so far he is in time; but so far as a man is not in it, so far he is not in time. This is manifest in a sort of image from all the joy and gladness which are of affection, in that, when man is in them, time does not appear to him; for he is then in the internal man. The affection of genuine love withdraws man from corporeal and worldly objects; for it elevates his mind towards heaven, and thus withdraws it from the things of time. — A. C. 3827.

† He who has arrived at spiritual good has no more need of doctrinals, which are from others, for he is in the end whither he was tending, and no longer in the means; and doctrinals are nothing else but the means of arriving at good as the end. — A. C. 5997.

‡ For the Lord's Divine Human is all worship and all doctrine, insomuch that it is worship itself, and doctrine itself. — A. C. 2811.

§ But as to what concerns divine worship from celestial good, such as is with those who are in the Lord's celestial kingdom, it is not effected by confessions, adorations, and prayers, of the same quality with those who are in the spiritual kingdom; thus not by truths from the memory, but by truths from the heart, which act as one with the love itself in which they are. — A. C. 10,295.

ties and senses, it works no change in this inmost state, which ever continues the same. Mary, who possessed this state in a degree more perfect than any creature can have it, was indifferent about remaining or not remaining on earth after the ascension of her Son. And she would have remained thus throughout eternity, if such had been the good pleasure of God. Such a soul is not concerned about solitude, or intercourse with the world; all is alike to it. It is no longer desirous of being delivered from the body, in order to be united to God without a medium. In this state it is not only united, but transformed; changed into the object of its love, which causes that it no longer thinks about loving. For it loves God, Who is love from Himself, and by state, although this state is not such that it is impossible to be lost.

CHAPTER III.

1, 2. Perfect union, or Deiformity, explained by a comparison. 3—5. These souls, apparently ordinary and despised, are of great value, as also their actions; but they are few in number, and of different degrees. 6, 7. The secrets of God are manifested to these hidden souls, and by them to others. 8, 9. Permanence and growth of this state, although unequally. 10, 11. All proper capacity is to be lost; the capacity, participated from God by transformation, grows boundlessly.

1. THERE occurs to me a comparison which seems to me well suited to the subject, taken from grain. The good is first separated from the bad, — whereby is indicated conversion and separation from sin. After

the grain is thus separate and pure, it must be ground by affliction, crosses, diseases, &c. When it is thus ground and reduced to flour, it is still necessary to remove from it, not impurities, for they exist no longer; but all that is coarse, which is the bran. When there remains nothing but the finest flour, purified from every thing foreign, we make bread of it by kneading. It seems as if, in this operation, we were defiling the flour, making it dark and dingy, and taking from it its delicacy and whiteness; and this, only to make of it a pastry which is by no means as beautiful in appearance as the flour was. Subsequently, this pastry is put to the fire. It must fare even so with such souls. But, after the bread is baked, it is destined for the king's mouth, who not only unites it to himself by kneading it, but eats, digests, consumes, and annihilates it, and so changes it into himself, and causes it to pass into his own substance.

You will observe, that it is not enough that the bread is handled and eaten even by the king, though this is the very highest privilege it could enjoy, and the end for which it is destined. It cannot be changed into his substance, unless it is annihilated by digestion, and thereby loses all its own proper form and quality.

2. This comparison serves well to express all the states of the soul, — that of union and the great difference between it and transformation, in which, the soul, in order to become one with God and be transformed and changed into Him, must, of necessity, be not only eaten, but digested, that thus, after losing all that is

properly its own, it may become one and the same thing with God!

This state is very little known; * for which reason, it is not much spoken of.† O state of life! how strait is the way that leads to thee! O love, purest of all, since thou art God Himself! O love, boundless and independent, incapable of being limited by any thing whatsoever!

3. Notwithstanding, these souls appear as if they were very ordinary, as I have said, because they have nothing in the exterior to distinguish them, except a boundless liberty, which often scandalizes souls limited and confined within themselves; to whom, inasmuch as they see nothing better than what they have, all which they possess not themselves seems to be bad. But the liberty they condemn in these souls, so simple and so innocent, is a holiness incomparably more eminent than all that they believe holy. It is thus we are to understand the passage which says, "that the iniquity of a man is of more worth than a woman who does well," *Ecclus. xlii. 14*; because the apparent faults of these persons, who alone can deserve to

* The arcanum which here [*Gen. xxix. 7*] lies hid is, that there are few who ever arrive at a full state (concerning which state see n. 2636), and thus who can be regenerated. — A. C. 3787.

† But as these subjects are of such a nature, that they transcend the apprehension of the natural man, and cannot be seen except in the light in which the rational or internal man is, in which light few at this day are, because few are regenerated, therefore it is better to illustrate them no further, inasmuch as the illustration, unknown and transcending the apprehension, is not to bring them into light, but more into the shade. — A. C. 3596.

be considered as *men*, are of more worth than the good deeds of others, effeminate in comparison with them, who do good so feebly, though in appearance so fervently; because the works of the latter have no more power than the principle from which they spring, which is nothing but the endeavor of a weak creature — although an endeavor exalted and ennobled [by grace]. But souls perfected in the Divine Unity act in God, from a principle of boundless power; and so their small actions are more acceptable to God than the many heroic actions of others, which appear so great before men.

4. This is the reason why souls of this degree are not concerned, and do not seek to do any great things, being satisfied to be as they are each moment. What wert thou doing, O Mary, on earth, after the ascension of thy Son? Wert thou pressed with anxiety to convert many souls — to do great things? — Such a soul does more, without doing any thing, towards converting a kingdom, than five hundred preachers who are not in this state. Mary did more for the church while she did nothing, than all the apostles together. I do not mean that God does not often permit these souls to be known: this is by no means so, since very many persons are directed to them, to whom they communicate a vivifying principle, thereby winning many others to Jesus Christ. But this is done with care or anxiety, by mere Providence.

Oh! if men knew the glory which these persons, often the offscouring of the world, render to God, they would be astonished and delighted. For it is

properly they who render to God a glory worthy of God, without thinking about doing so, because, God acting in them in God, He derives from Himself in them a glory worthy of Himself.*

5. Oh, how many souls, quite seraphic in appearance, are far distant from this state! Still, there are in this state, as in all the others, souls more or less divine. The divine Mary was privileged above all; next to her, many progress in this state more or less, according to the design of God. Those who reach it in the present life, reach it, usually, only a little before death, except it be that God, wishing to make use of them and to do wonders by them, should, for some special end, advance them in this way. Such cases, however, are exceedingly rare.†

6. For God hides them in His bosom and under the exterior of the most ordinary life, that they may be known to Himself alone, although they are His favored ones. Here the secrets of God in Himself, and of Himself in these pure creatures, are manifested, not in the way of speech, view, light, but by the know-

* The Divine cannot look at any thing else than the Divine, and cannot look at that elsewhere than in things created from itself. Hence it is that the Lord is so conjoined to man, spirit, and angel, that every thing which has relation to the Divine is not from them, but from the Lord. In a word, the Lord cannot have an abode, and dwell with man and angel, except in His own, and not in their proprium; for this is evil. — D. P. 53.

† They who are regenerating do not all arrive at this [the celestial] state, but some, and the greatest part at this day only to the first; some only to the second; some to the third, fourth, and fifth; few to the sixth; and scarcely any one to the seventh. — A. C. 13.

ledge of God dwelling in them.* And when such a soul is to write or speak, it is itself astonished that all flows from this divine depth, without its ever having thought that it possessed such things.† It finds in itself, as it were, a deep [well] of knowledge, without memory or recollection, like an invaluable treasure which one does not observe until he is under the necessity of manifesting it, when the manifestation of it to others is the manifestation of it to the soul itself.‡

When such a soul writes, it is astonished to find that it writes of things it does not know, and did not believe itself to be acquainted with, though it cannot doubt that it really possesses them in writing them.§

* They who are in good from truth look through truths upward to the Lord; but they who are in good, and thence in truth, are in the Lord, and from Him look at truths. — A. C. 8771.

† That in the good of love, which flows in from the Lord through the angels, there is all truth, which truth would manifest itself from itself, if man lived in love to the Lord, and love towards the neighbor, is manifest not only from those things which exist in heaven, but also from those which exist in inferior nature. — A. C. 6323.

‡ In the interior man is the good which continually flows in from the Lord, and there conjoins itself with truths, and makes them to be faith, and next to be charity. When, therefore, these truths are conjoined to good, then man is regenerated; for then he no longer looks from truths at what is to be believed and what is to be done, but from good, because he is imbued with truths; and has them in himself. — A. C. 8772.

§ By Adam and his wife is understood the most ancient church, which was a celestial church. The men of that church, being principled in love to the Lord, had divine truths inscribed upon them, and thence knew from influx the things corresponding in the natural man, which are called scientifics; in a word, with the men of that church spiritual influx had place, which is from the spiritual mind into the

This is not the case with others : their lights precede their experience. They are like persons who see at a distance things they do not possess, and who describe things they have seen, known, understood, &c.* But the soul we are speaking of is like one who contains a treasure within himself; it does not see it until after its manifestation, although it has all along possessed it.

7. This does not, however, still express well my meaning. God is in this soul, or rather the soul no longer is, — it acts no longer ; but God acts, and it is the instrument.† God comprehends in Himself all treasures, and causes them to be manifested by this soul to others ; and then, in drawing them from its inmosts, it knows that they were there, although, by being lost to itself, it could never have reflected upon them. I am sure that any soul in this degree will understand me, and know very well the difference

natural, and thus into the things which are therein, which things they saw according to their quality, as in a mirror, from correspondence. — A. C. 617.

* That they who are of the Lord's spiritual church are interiorly natural, is because they only acknowledge that for truth which they have imbibed from parents and masters, and afterwards have themselves confirmed with themselves, and do not see inwardly and perceive whether truth be from any other source than from this, that they have confirmed it with themselves. It is otherwise with the celestial: hence it is that the latter are rational, but the former interiorly natural. — A. C. 6240.

† It is known in the learned world that the principal cause and the instrumental act together as one cause; man, inasmuch as he is a form recipient of the Lord's life, is an instrumental cause, but life from the Lord is the principal cause; this latter life is felt in the instrumental as its life, when yet it is not its. — A. C. 6325.

between this and other states. The first sees these things and enjoys them as we enjoy the sun; the second has become the sun himself, which does not enjoy nor think upon his own light.*

8. This state is very permanent, and there is no change as to the inmost of it, except an increased progress in God. And, as God is infinite, He can divinize a soul ever more and more, and that by enlarging its capacity. Mary, as I have said elsewhere, was entirely filled with grace at her first conception. And this is well discovered to the soul. She was in the fulness of God when she conceived the Word, and yet she grew almost boundlessly until her death. — How, if she was full, as the angel assures us, could she be filled yet more? — It was because God enlarged her capacity every day, losing her and expanding her in Himself, as the water we have spoken of spreads itself ever wide and wider in proportion as it is lost in the sea, in which it is perpetually abysing itself, without ever going forth from it.

9. God deals in like manner with these souls. All who are in this degree have God, but some more, others less. They are all in a state of fulness, but they are not all in an equal amount of fulness. A small vessel, when full, is as much filled as a large one; but it does not contain as much. The case is

* For the men of the celestial church are such, that they perceive all the truths and goods of heaven from the Lord by influx into their interiors; whence they see goods and truths inwardly in themselves, as implanted, and have no need to learn them by a posterior way, or to treasure them up in their memory. — A. E. 739.

the same with these souls : they all have the fulness of God, but according to the capacity of receiving, and thus there are those to whom God enlarges this capacity daily. For this reason, the more souls live in this divine state the more they are ennobled, their capacity becoming continually more immense, without there being any thing for them either to desire or to do. For they always have God in fulness, God never allowing a moment's void in them ; for, in proportion as He increases and enlarges, in the same proportion He fills with Himself. It is the same as with the air ; a small apartment is full of air, but a large one contains more air ; enlarge this apartment more and more, and just in that degree, infallibly though imperceptibly, the air will always be getting admission. In the same manner, without change of state or of disposition, and without feeling any thing new, the soul increases in fulness and largeness. But the capacity of the soul can never be increased in this manner, except by annihilation, because, up to this time, the soul has a repugnance to being enlarged.

10. It is well to explain here a point of some importance, which is, that there is an apparent contradiction in my saying that the soul must be annihilated in order to pass into God, and lose what is proper to it, while yet I speak of a certain capacity which it retains.

There are two capacities. The one is proper to the creature, and this capacity is small and limited : when purified, it is adapted to receive the gifts of God, but not God Himself ; because what we receive in ourselves

is less than ourselves, as what is confined in a vessel is less extended, although more precious, than the vessel which receives it.

But the capacity I am now speaking of is a capacity of being extended, and of becoming lost continually more and more in God. This has place after the soul has lost that propriety which fixed it in itself, and when, being no longer held back or straitened in itself (because its annihilation,* by taking from it all particular form, has disposed it to flow into God, so that it loses itself, and flows abroad in Him who cannot be comprehended), the more it abysses itself in Him, the more it extends itself and becomes boundless, sharing in His perfections.†

11. It is a capacity of ever growing and extending

* Regeneration is nothing else than for the natural to be subjugated, and the spiritual to obtain the dominion; and the natural is then subjugated when it is reduced to correspondence; and, when the natural is reduced to correspondence, it then no longer reacts, but acts as it is commanded, and obeys the dictates of the spiritual in nearly the same manner as the acts of the body obey the dictates of the will, and as the speech with the countenance is according to the influx of the thought. Hence it is evident that the natural ought altogether to become as nothing in respect to willing, in order that man may become spiritual. — A. C. 5651.

† When it [the old natural] has become as nothing, then man is gifted with a new natural, which is called the spiritual natural: it is called spiritual from this, because the spiritual is what acts by or through it, and manifests itself by it as the cause by the effect. When this is the case, man then receives good from the Lord; and, when he receives good, he is gifted with truths; and, when he is gifted with truths, he is perfected in intelligence and wisdom; and, when he is perfected in intelligence and wisdom, he is blessed with happiness to eternity. — A. C. 5651.

more and more in God, being able to be transformed into Him in an ever-increasing degree, just as water, joined to its source, blends with it ever more and more.

God being our original, He has created us with a nature such that it can be united and transformed so as to make one with Himself.

CHAPTER IV.

1, 2. The first impulses of these souls are all divine. They have no more reflections, and why. 3—5. Their sufferings are without reflection, but by impression. 6—8. The greatness of these sufferings, which, however, do not impair their repose or contentment, by reason of their defication, which grows boundlessly but gradually. 9—12. Neither goods nor evils can any longer impair their peace, just as God is neither troubled nor changed by His sight of men's sins, because all redounds to His glory.

1. THE soul, then, has nothing to do here but to remain as it is, and to follow, without resistance, all the impulses of its mover. All its first impulses in this state are from God,* and constitute His infallible leading.† This is not the case in the lower states,

* For the truths with them [those of the Lord's celestial kingdom] are inscribed on their love: wherefore, when they do from love what is prescribed, they do it at the same time from truths, without any thought concerning them from what is doctrinal, thus without calling them forth from the memory. — A. C. 10,295.

† With respect to perception of good and truth in things celestial and spiritual, the interior angels have this from the Lord, and the men of the most ancient church had it, and the celestial have it who

except after the soul has begun to taste and delight in its centre; but even then it is not so infallible; and any one who should observe this rule, without being in this highly advanced state, would be likely to go astray.

2. This, then, is the way in which such a soul is led, viz., by following, blindly and without leading, the impulses which are from God, without reflection. Here all reflection is banished, and the soul would find difficulty in resorting to it, even if it desired to do so. But since it might perhaps, by making the effort, succeed in this, reflections must be shunned above every thing else; because reflection is the only thing capable of leading man back into himself, and taking him out of God. Now I say, that, if man does not go forth from God, he will never sin; and that, if he does sin, it is because he has gone forth from Him, which can only be done by propriety. The soul cannot return into itself except by reflection, which would be a hell like that which befell the first angel, who, in looking at himself with complacency, instead of considering what he owed to God, loved himself, and became a devil.* And this state would be so much the more horrible, as the other should be more advanced.

are in love to the Lord: they know instantly, by a certain internal animadvertence, whether a thing be good and whether it be true; for the Lord insinuates this, inasmuch as they are conjoined to the Lord by love. — A. C. 2831.

* With respect to the state of a man of the church, the case is this: during the progress of regeneration, he learns truth for the sake of

3. It will be objected, that, according to this, there can be no suffering in this state — (there is none as to the interior, but there may be as to the senses, as I have said) — because, it will be said, there must be reflection in order to suffering, and it is reflection which constitutes the principal and most painful part of suffering. All this is true in a certain sense; and, as it is the fact that souls far inferior to these suffer, at one time in the way of reflection, and at another in the way of impression, it is to be understood that those of this degree cannot suffer otherwise than by impression. This does not hinder that the pain undergone is without limits, and much more severe than that which results from reflection; just as one burnt by having the fire impressed upon him would feel it more sensibly than one who should be burnt by reflection from the fire.*

good, for he has the affection of truth to this intent; but, after he is regenerated, he then acts from truth and good. When he is arrived at this state, he ought not to betake himself to his former state; for, if he should do this, he would reason (ratiocinate) from truth concerning the good in which he is, and would thereby pervert his state; for all reasoning (ratiocination) ceases, and ought to cease, when man is in a state to will what is true and good; for then he thinks and acts from the will, consequently from conscience, and not from the understanding as before; and, if he should from this again, he would fall into temptations and sink therein. — A. C. 3652.

* There are several kinds of temptations, which in general may be divided into the celestial, spiritual, and natural; and these ought never to be confounded with each other. Celestial temptations can have no place except with those who are principled in love towards the Lord; and spiritual temptations with those only who are in charity towards their neighbor. — A. C. 847.

4. But it is asked, — Will not God direct their thoughts by the way of reflection so as to make them suffer more? — God will not do this in the way of reflection. He may show them in a moment what they must suffer; but it will be by a direct sight, not accompanied with self-reflection, — just as beatified spirits see in God what is in Himself, and what takes place out of Him in the creatures and in themselves, without exercising self-regard or self-reflection, but continuing firmly attached, abysed, and lost in God.*

5. This is a point as to which many spiritual persons are deceived, since they believe that nothing can be known or suffered except by reflection. On the contrary, the knowledges and sufferings of this kind are very light in comparison with the others.

6. All suffering that is distinguished and knows itself, although commonly expressed in such high terms, does not equal that of these souls, who do not know their sufferings, and who cannot assert that they suffer, because of the great separation of the two parts. It is both true that they suffer extreme anguish, and that they suffer nothing, and are in a state of perfect contentment. I believe that if such a soul were led into hell, it would endure its cruel

* For God is everywhere, and yet not in space; wherefore, He is as well within as without an angel, and hence an angel can see God; that is, the Lord, both within and without himself, — within, when he thinks *from* love and wisdom; without, when he thinks *of* love and wisdom. — D. L. W. 130.

pains in this manner, in complete contentment; not contentment caused by a sight of the good pleasure of God, but an essential contentment by reason of the blessedness of its transformed interior. It is this which makes these souls indifferent as regards all states. This does not prevent, as I have said, extreme suffering, as extreme suffering does not prevent perfect happiness. Those who have experienced this, can well understand it.

7. It is not here as in the passive state of love, in which the soul is so filled with sweetness, or with love for suffering and for the good pleasure of God. This is not at all the case. This state comes about by a loss of all things in God; by a state of deification, in which all is God, without the soul's seeing that it is so. The soul is established by state in its sovereign good, without change. It is in a deep-seated beatitude, where nothing can cross its perfect happiness, when that happiness is from a permanent state; for many enjoy it transitorily, previous to having it by permanent state. God gives, in the first place, the light of this state, and next, the delight of it; at length, He gives it in the way of confused perception, not distinct; next, He gives the state itself, in a permanent manner, and establishes the soul in it for ever.

8. I shall be told that, the soul being established in this state, there is nothing further for it to do. The fact is just the other way; there is always a boundless work to be done on the side of God, though not

on that of the creature. God does not divinize the soul all at once, but by little and little; and then, as has been said, He increases the capacity of the soul, which He can always deify more and more, since He is an unfathomable abyss.

“O God! how great is Thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for those who fear (Ps. xxxi. 19) and who love Thee!” It was the sight of this state which made David cry out so often after he was purified from his sin.

9. These souls can no longer be astonished, either at any grace that is related to them, or at any sin that may be committed, since they know thoroughly both the goodness of God which causes the one, and the wickedness of man which is the source of the other. The whole world might perish without their being troubled by it, if God did not impress this concern upon them. Are they, then, no longer jealous for the honor of God, since they no longer afflict themselves at the sins which are committed by the world? No; by no means. They are jealous for the glory of God as God Himself is.

God is, of necessity, obliged to love His own glory more than any other can; and all that He does in Himself, and out of Himself in others, He does in reference to Himself. Nevertheless, He cannot be displeased at the sins of the whole world,* nor at the

* The Lord is as far from cursing and being angry with any one as heaven is from earth. Who can believe that the Lord, who is omniscient and omnipotent, and rules the universe in wisdom, and is

ruin of all men, although, in order that He might save them all, He was incarnate, and took a suffering and mortal body, and laid down His life. These souls also would give a thousand lives to save them, because God, Who has transformed them, has made them share in His own qualities,* and they see it all as God does. And although God does truly desire the salvation of all men, and gives to them all the grace necessary for their salvation, — although, by their own fault, that grace is not always effectual, — He yet does not fail to derive glory from their ruin. For it is impossible that God should permit any thing whatever in which He is not necessarily glorified, either in the way of justice or of mercy. This, indeed, is not the intention of him who transgresses against God; for he does Him thereby an active dishonor; but still on God's side there is no passive dishonor, and it must needs be that the transgressor's own sin should, against his own will, redound to the glory of God.†

thus infinitely above all infirmities, is angry with such miserable dust, — that is, with men, who scarce know any thing that they do, and can do nothing of themselves but what is evil? Wherefore with the Lord there is never to be angry, but to be merciful. — A. C. 1093.

* The nature and quality of the Lord's love transcends all human understanding, and is more especially incredible to those who do not know what the celestial love is, in which the angels are. Those angels, for the sake of saving a soul from hell, make no account of death; yea, if it was in their power, they would endure hell for such a soul. — A. C. 2077.

† For such is the state and such is the equilibrium of all things in

11. Although God, from His nature, cannot be offended, he who offends Him deserves boundless punishment, by reason of the wicked will which he has to offend and dishonor this infinite Goodness. If he does not effect this as regards God, he yet always does it as far as his own action and will are concerned; and this will is so malignant, that, if it could take from God His divinity, it would do so.* It is, therefore, this malignant will on the part of the subject which makes the guilt, and not the action; for if a person whose will is lost, abysed, and transformed in God, were reduced by absolute necessity to commit deeds of sin, — as certain tyrants compelled the virgin martyrs to do, — they would do them without sin. This is plain.

12. But to return: I say that these souls can have no concern about sin, because, although they hate it without bounds, they are no longer painfully affected

another life, that evil returns upon him who does it, and becomes the evil of punishment, and that it is inevitable. This is called its permission for the sake of the amendment of evil: still, however, the Lord turns all the evil of punishment into good, so that nothing but good is from the Lord. — A. C. 592.

* These two loves [the love of self, and the love of the world] increase, so far as the reins are given them, and so far as man is advanced into them; and at length they increase beyond measure, so that they not only desire to govern all in their own kingdom, but also beyond its borders, even to the ends of the earth: yea, those loves, when they are unrestrained, ascend even to the God of the universe; that is, to such a height that they who are in them wish to climb into the throne of God, and to be worshipped instead of God Himself. — A. C. 7375.

by the sight of it since they see it as God sees it. And although, were it needful for them to give their own life to prevent the commission of a single sin, they would do it, if God so willed, yet this is without action, without desires, without inclination, without choice, without eagerness on their side, — all in a perfect state of death, in which they no longer see things save as God sees them, and no longer judge of them save as He judges.

THE END.

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