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Pride and Prejudice: The Dignity of Labor

Last month on this page, Father Michael reminded us that it is at best unwise seriously to think that pursuing God through academics is somehow less Franciscan—or even un-Franciscan. The great scholar-saints of the Order like Anthony, Bonaventure, and John Duns Scotus show us through their lives as friars, which were both holy and scholarly, that this is the case.

I fear, however, that the opposite danger is the more real for Franciscan life right now. Ours is the day of Higher Education. People are flooding colleges and universities, not only to learn for the sake of knowledge and in order to prepare for their careers, but also for the status that a degree brings and for the security of being in school. Because of all the importance attached to staying in school, I think it's important for us to guard against believing that one *must* be toting around a degree or two to be either personally fulfilled as a friar and/or of use to the Order. Frankly, this position is unmitigated hogwash, and if we followed it out to its logical (absurd) conclusion, it would cause us to look down on the achievements of the men who have dedicated their lives as religious to doing the hundreds of practical jobs that must be done if our Order is to be at all operative on a concrete level.

There is already something of a social stigma attached to manual labor, as few young men seem interested in learning the trades of the truly gifted craftsmen still to be found in the Order. Maybe we are getting too sophisticated to appreciate the nobility of their vocation, and their importance to our way of life. For years, brothers who were skilled tailors, carpenters, electricians, cooks,

Brother Richard E. Hasselbach, O.F.M., is a novice member of Holy Name Province. His study of Bonaventurean mysticism appears elsewhere in this issue, and his translation of the Seraphic Doctor's Sermon on Christ the Universal Teacher was published in our July issue.

gardeners—you name it—have kept our brotherhood running smoothly and have thus enabled the other friars to engage in their apostolates.

At the same time, through their example of dedication and service to both God and the Fraternity, these brothers have given their fellow friars the inspiration and incentive constantly to rededicate their own lives to the Lord's work. If these men are lost to our Brotherhood—if no one comes to take their place because of the unrealistic premium placed on academic achievement, it would be an immeasurable loss to the Franciscan Order.

What some of us have failed to realize is a truth the Church has taught from the beginning, a truth that should be part of us: viz., that manual labor is a sacred thing that ennobles both the workman and the goods he transforms. It has been sanctified by Christ himself, who chose to spend most of his life as a carpenter—not, it might be pointed out, as a social worker—who chose as his first Vicar, not a philosopher but a fisherman.

There are two things that must be done. First, we must respect the men who labor for us with their hands, and appreciate the great contribution they make to the Order. And secondly, those charged with the training of candidates for the Order should encourage young men whose talents lie in manual labor to develop these skills and take pride in them. Such labor qualifies every bit as much as academics as an area wherein one can find true fulfillment as a friar and as a human being. Given the explicit word and stirring example of our Seraphic Founder, and the lives of such saintly friars as Paschal Baylon, the point surely needs no arguing. What it does need is a more than cerebral acceptance, and some practical implementation.

Unless the current trend is reversed sharply, and fast, the dedicated laborer will constitute a vanishing breed of Franciscan; and the resulting damage to the Fraternity will be both deep and prolonged.

Richard C. Hasselbach, of

Rhythms

Sister Mary Seraphim, P.C.P.A.

enchantment over renewal be- stages of optimism and dishind us, we hear new notes being played upon the instrument of the ecclesial community. One particular melody is rising to become a dominant motif of the thoughtful seventies: more Rhythms! There is a time and a moment for everything, but it requires a listening spirit to discern it. We remember the ageless-wisdom of Ecclesiastes with renewed appreciation as we view the few permanent and valid experiments still living among the myriad now-dead plants hasti-Vatican II. We rediscover that time—a time to plant and wait leaves to unfurl, and full-bodied fruit to appear. Only then comes harvest time.

demands a corresponding time possibilities and purposes. for silence. And especially, as

WITH THE RUSH and blush of we pass through alternating couragement, the People of God are made aware that the time for sharing in "the power of the resurrection" presupposes that there be also a time for "the fellowship of his sufferings."

Pursuing these observations on a personal level awakens us to a contemplative dimension in our own lives which spills over into a harmony sorely needed in our fragmented society. A rhythmical response to events around and within us fosters peace and integration. Christian hope is the ly encouraged in the wake of basis for our ability to live in such gentle and delicate response to there is seed time and harvest the changing demands of each moment. It is an attitude of mind in hope for roots to sink deep, which never admits of defeat or despair because it sees all events in a larger-than-present-life perspective. Yet it is capable of In a Church which, while a deep and reverent appreciation active, is "no less devoted to for all the details of here-andcontemplation." a recognition now because it correctly assesses arises that the time for words these values in the light of future

Before one is very old, one

Sister Mary Seraphim, P.C.P.A., a cloistered nun at Sancta Clara Monastery in Canton, Ohio, and a frequent contributor to our pages, has published such exquisitely meditative articles as this, as well as religious poetry, in several leading Catholic periodicals.

ments alongside its glorious ones. receive the gift of the seed. Christmas, alight with stars and Is it difficult to see the analogy lowed by times of fruitful ac actually be periods of profound of the seed in the earth.

Seed Time

ness are not to be regarded as onslaught of the flood rolling merely vacuous times which we across our exposed acreage. How must endure before things start difficult it is at such moments to happen again. Rather, in these to find even one who will unmoments of stillness we should derstand what we are enduring! see the wisdom of the farmer The land stretches barren and flat through the mysterious interplay purpose?" Only after a period of such use- the law of life is one of rhyth-

discovers that life has dark mo- lessness is the land ready to

tinsel, comes only once a year. to this process and the alternating Fridays come around at the end changes in our own lives? Perof every school week, but Mon- haps we have grown to fear or days always turn up too. There resent periods of idleness or are seasons of emptiness fol-enforced uselessness. These can tivity. One can learn to live richness when the anxious spirit through the dark days in the must stop its frenetic activity and conviction that tomorrow may cultivate only its own field. Often bring the dawn. But a deeper the spirituality upon which we lesson must be learned from this had built our active life reveals alternation of dark and light, of a perilous lack of depth when sadness and joy. It is the lesson we are thrown back upon our own resources through sickness, unexpected change, or failure. Much that we took for granted The times of apparent barren-suddenly washes away before the who allows his fields to "rest" around our lonely spirit, and from every few years and to silently the hard sky above echoes the replenish the vitality of their soil soul-searing question: "To what

Even the phenomenon of thun- we find only a naked will to go der and lightning contributes to on in spite of the searing pain the fertility of the dark earth aroused by the doubts that life lying hidden beneath a tangle of has any purpose or future value weeds. Below the surface of the for us... or for those to whom resting land, earthworms silently we had dedicated our energies aerate the soil, loosen it, and in loving service. These deep, prepare mysterious pathways for profoundly lonesome moments enriching nutrients to reach are actually the finest in our lives hitherto unproductive depths. if we can come to recognize that



mical change where each stage prepares for something greater yet to come. The Lord has seen that we stand in need of purification, of preparation, if we are to bring forth that harvest which he desires of us. Into the dark silence he drops a white seed. itself so small and insignificant that we do not see or feel its implantation. It is necessary that we do not, for if we were aware of what is being done, we would want to jump into the process with our own earthbound ideas and hustle the germination process through artificial means.

Fortunately for the seed, we do not see it. We are aware only of the silence, the pain of being pierced by tender, hair-

fine rootlets gently but relentlessly reaching down for the lifegiving water far below the surface of our consciousness. All that is asked of us during these times is that we wait in patience for the time when the harvest will begin. We cannot hurry the process however much we would like to do so. We do not even know exactly what sort of plant (or tree) the seed is meant to produce; so we are unable to judge when it has reached its moment of grace.

Harvest time

We are reminded of the lives of men like Pope John. His Journal reveals a sensitive soul. aware of what God was working in him and often writhing under years of apparently routine assignments and unappreciated service. His hour did not come until he had passed his eightieth year. Only then could one see how carefully God had prepared this man for a unique mission and impact upon our century. Although Pope John stood upon the stage of world awareness for only a brief moment, the power and persuasiveness of his personality wrought changes as extensive as they were unforeseen.

Long years of silence had shaped this man to speak. A lifetime of listening to human hearts had prepared him to articulate their deepest longings with such limpidity that all the creative silence is necessary in

Do not be concerned about your future, but think that perhaps you are drawing near the gateway of eternal life. At the same time be ever more content to live like this, hidden from the world, perhaps forgotten by your Superiors; and do not grieve at being little appreciated, but try to find an even greater joy in "being esteemed of little worth...." So I must go on living from day to day. I will offer more lovingly to Iesus the life I lead here and the restrictions I have to set on my outward activity.... And he goes on to ask himself: What has Msgr. Roncalli been doing during these monotonous years at the Apostolic Delegation? Trying to make himself holy and with simplicity, kindness and joy opening a source of blessings and graces for all Bulgaria, whether he lives to see it or not.1

So long a period of silence was not without its fruit.

world listened and sighed at find- every life. Without it words, acing itself understood at last. Al-tions, even human hearts become though many of Pope John's cheap. We do not hear, indeed. words are memorable and the cannot hear. As a result there actions he initiated unforget- are no resonances in our own table, it was the immeasurable soul to the yearnings or disdepth and breadth of his soul coveries of others. The words which guaranteed that what he we speak do not grow from said and did were of a mag- depths where they have been nitude beyond that of most men. carefully nursed into life and After ten years in Bulgaria, An- meaning, but rather roll off the gelo Roncalli noted in his diary: surface of our soul like water over a washboard. The noises we make are not only useless but actually serve to distract others from the quest of the meaningful and true. Our culture is super-saturated with useless words. It is rare to find among this prolixity words which really live. Most words have only the brief moment of their utterance and then drop silently to the ground, empty of anything which could prolong life or encourage growth.

We go on searching for words of life, living words which spring from spirits which are in touch with the wellsprings of genuine truth-spirits which, like Thomas Merton's, have entered the vaulted chambers of the human soul in reverent silence. There they have taken up a position of rapt listening, no longer drowning out other voices by the A contemplative silence, a noise of their own footsteps but

¹Pope John XXIII, Journal of a Soul, trans. Dorothy White (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), pp. 222 - 23.

having removed their shoes before a Mystery and surrendered to its devastation. Merton admits in his intimate journal, The Sign of Jonas, that he endured long periods of desolating inability to speak or write and that any attempt to do so when "the silence" was upon him ended only in frustration. These terrible periods were, as he later saw, necessary both to revitalize his creative energies and to humble his soul before the only Word which needs to be spoken.

Fruitful Words

Today, more than ever, we need respect for the rhythms of silence in our own lives and in the lives of others. We need contemplatives—not just persons who can speak about contemplation. Perhaps there are already many such silent souls who are quietly and mercifully saving the world from suffocation on words and bringing it back humbly to the primal experience of Moses before the burning bush. This man removed his shoes, the vehicles of his ability to advance in the world, and gazed in silent awe at a contradictory without mystery—combustion consumption—and learned the Name of a Person who had no name. Now again, we need thoughtful recognition of a God who transcends and shatters our patterns of action and a perceptive understanding of his voice amid the clamor of a myriad other voices. Can we hope that the seventies will give us more silence—the silent nurturing of the Word of God until It speaks Itself through human lips?

Fellowship of Suffering

Akin to the rhythms of seed time and harvest time: silence and speaking, is the experience of sharing in the "power of the resurrection" alongside "fellowship of his suffering." Here the image of alternating rhythms falters, for we discover that to share in the sufferings of Christ is concomitant and coextensive with the experience of the power of the resurrection. Saint John the Evangelist wrought his deeply theological gospel account around this profound truth: namely, that in the very act of being lifted up on the Cross, Jesus was glorified. The entire paschal mystery of death, resurrection, and ascension took place at the moment when Jesus bowed his head in utter human defeat and breathed forth his spirit into the hands of his Father:

The shameful death is the elevation of Jesus. Two things meet in the cross. It is the point in history where the Son of Man, who came from above, stooped most; here he descended to the lowest parts of the earth—to the isolation and degradation of crucifixion. But it is also the point

in history at which the Son of Man is raised up from the earth to return to the Father. For John, the crucifixion is the glorification of Christ; the lifting up on the cross is his going to the Father, his ascension. The redemptive act of ascent through descent is achieved in the cross.²

From the Beloved Disciple, then, we learn that we do not need to wait until we have passed through suffering in order to experience the power of the resurrection; but more truly, we should find the strength of the living Christ in our lives at that precise moment when we reach the extreme depths of human pain and failure. Resurrection did not come after death for Jesus, strictly speaking, but precisely in death. Accordingly, we should not set our spiritual sights upon a future glory and fulfillment when we are called upon to participate in the fellowship of his sufferings, but we should rather sharpen our sight to perceive in the acceptance of the dark mystery of the present moment the flowering of the triumph of the risen and glorified Lord.

The Power of the Resurrection

If such an awareness becomes operative in our lives, we will never say that the greatest thing we can wish a person who is

sick or in sorrow is that he will soon be "over it." What we will earnestly pray for is that this person find in his personal anguish the fellowship of Christ. who has taken upon himself and sanctified all pain and sorrow. Perhaps the person whom we wish to comfort is not in a position to benefit from a direct exhortation about the growing glory in his seemingly shattered life: but our own silent recognition that it is so will provide our words with a strength and tranquillity which will mysteriously but powerfully reassure him.

In a world which is racked by frantic questions about the why, wherefore, and rightness of evil, pain and suffering, we Christians must be a tranquil sign of divine purposefulness in all events. In order to be such signs, we must first have experienced fellowship in Christ's sufferings in our own lives. Otherwise we could not know by experience the power of his resurrection. Unless we, too, have gone into death, not once but many times, the incredible truth that Saint John discovered in the cross will never have meaning for us. And if the cross has no meaning for us, our Christianity is empty of all positive content and is valueless for the world as well as for ourselves.

² W. D. Davies, *Invitation to the New Testament* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), p. 491.

Yes, we say, there can be no Easter Sunday unless there is first a Good Friday, a Holy Thursday which brimmed over with total love and total anguish. But do we really understand that Easter happened precisely at that moment when all the evil of Good Friday reached its height? We cannot wait for suffering, humiliation, and evil to depart from our lives before experiencing the power of the resurrection. No, the seed which is buried in the dark earth remains there while it endures the long silences of a growth it cannot see or understand. The resurrection flowers from the seed even as it goes on dying.

We can neither hasten nor hinder the rhythms in our lives. Nor can we ever fully understand them. But if we recognize that life will always be composed of these rhythmical changes as long as we remain this side of the Parousia, we will be able to respond with tranquility and harmony of mind and will to the inexpressible mystery of life which is ultimately the Mystery of God himself.



Francis spent the few days that remained before his death in praise, teaching his companions whom he loved so much to praise Christ with him. He himself, in as far as he was able, broke forth in this psalm: I cried to the Lord with my voice: with my voice I made supplication to the Lord. He also invited all creatures to praise God, and by means of the words he had composed earlier, he exhorted them to love God. He exhorted death itself, terrible and hateful to all, to give praise, and going joyfully to meet it, he invited it to make its lodging with him. "Welcome," he said, "my sister death."

> 2 Celano 217 Ed. Placid Hermann, O.F.M. St. Francis: Omnibus copyright, Franciscan Herald Press

Bonaventure: Prince of Mystics

RICHARD E. HASSELBACH, O.F.M.

The most beautiful and most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical.... He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms—this knowledge, this feeling, is at the center of true religiousness.1

If this is so, then Saint Bonaventure is truly—as Pope Leo XIII called him-easily the "prince" in the area of mystical philosophy.2 If we were to attempt a reduction of mysticism so as to discover its essence, we would find mystics who scorned the material as something base a stumbling block in the way of union with the One. Plotinus was one of these. But we also have mystics such as Francis of Assisi.

earth as rungs in a ladder ascending to God. There are some who rejected a dogmatism which they found to be degenerate and corrupt; or, having failed to satisfy their soul's yearnings. through speculation and thought. they have turned away from these things.

Yet there have been many other mystics, Bonaventure among them, who found it necessary to travel the mystical way via speculative thought and with the aid of dogma. What is the common denominator of mysticism, if not that it is "the most beautiful and profound emotion" a man can know, in which he somehow touches upon the unutterable. which fills him with awe? It is. in short, the fullest possible union a soul can have with God on earth. It is a highly personal thing. and it may have many different manifestations in the lives of individual people. But this is the who saw these same things of essence, and heart of mysticism-

Albert Einstein, cited by L. Barnett, The Universe and Dr. Einstein (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, Bantam Books, 1968), p. 108.

²Audientia Summi Pontificis Leonis XIII, die 11 Nov. 1890, in Acta Ordinis Minorum, ad an. 1890 (Rome, 1890), p. 177.

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Christianity, indeed, of all reli- attain union with God. Man was gion.

the great truths attests to this. All of his thought is directed toward not just a knowledge, but a love of God. For him the world, the Church, philosophy, and theology were all tending toward one end: the arousing in man of the love of God, and the desire to atas possible. As Gilson says,

If the mystical feeling is to be considered as an integral part of human nature, the content of the philosophy of mysticism may very well evolve: but never will any doctrine do more complete justice to the experiences which are the eternal source of mysticism, nor be more comprehensive or more systematically organized than St. Bonaventure's; and if, as is still more evident, mysticism forms an integral part of the Christian life, no doctrinal synthesis will ever be found in which the aspirations of Christian mysticism receive a more abundant satisfaction.3

fallen children of Adam, and it through our own natural effort,

and mysticism is the heart of takes an awful lot of work to recreated in the image and likeness In this sense Bonaventure can of God. He was made as the cenrightly be called the Prince of ter and focus of all creation: a Mystical Theologians. The very being of matter and spirit who way in which he approaches all could appreciate the Presence of the Creator both in the sensible universe and in the divine Ideas. Through sin, though, man lost his likeness to God; he was left with "a disfigured and dull image far removed from him."4 A man cannot, of himself, regain this lost likeness to the Almighty. Only tain as perfect a union with Him the grace of God freely given to us who can never deserve it, can do this.

This is where the mystical journey begins for Bonaventure: with man's recognition that only the freely given grace of God can sanctify this fallen nature, and this only if we desire and cooperate with the divine aid. This grace is the starting point of all spiritual life; and mystical union is nothing more than the end of the spiritual life begun when sanctifying grace first enters the soul. In the last pages of the Itinerarium Mentis in Deum Bonaventure reminds us-in None of us is born a mystic. speaking of the joys of mystical On the contrary, we are born union—that it is not so much If you wish to know how these things may come about, ask grace, not learning; desire, not the understanding; the groaning of prayer, not diligence in reading; the Bridegroom, not the teacher; God, not man.5

Sanctifying grace also supplies a sort of unity between all levels of the spiritual life. There is no qualitative difference between the mystic and the rest of Christians. The mystic is simply the man who lives the Christ-life, given to him through Baptism, out to its fullest extent. And conversely, each man in the state of grace "has within his soul, if he will but follow whither it will lead, the radical principle which, when combined with individual effort. can produce a St. John of the Cross, or a St. Teresa."6

Though all men are mystics through grace, the achievement of mystical union is no easy task. The soul must journey out of sin and into God. This is its itinerary:

He therefore who wishes to ascend to God must first avoid sin, which deforms nature. He must bring the natural powers of the soul under the influence of grace, which re-

forms them, and this he does through prayer, under the influence of justice which purifies, and this in daily acts; under the way of knowledge which enlightens, and this, in meditation; and finally under the power of wisdom which perfects, and this in contemplation. For just as no one arrives at wisdom except through grace, justice, and knowledge, so it is that no one arrives at contemplation except through penetrating meditation. holy living, and devout prayer. And since grace is the foundation of righteousness of the will, and of penetrating enlightenment of reason, we must first of all pray; next we must live holily; then we must gaze at the spectacles of Truth, and by gazing at them, rise step by step until we reach the mountain height where the God of gods is seen on Sion.7

This whole spiritual climb is, for Bonaventure, encompassed in the threefold way of purgation, illumination, and union; and in all three it is grace which unifies, gives life and movement. As Bonaventure notes in the Breviloquium:

Grace is a gift that cleanses, enlightens and perfects the soul: that vivifies, reforms, and strengthens it; that lifts it up, makes it like God, and unites it with him.8

but through the love of God, that these things are possible:

³Etienne Gilson, The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure, tr. Dom Illtyd Trethowan and Frank Sheed (Paterson: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1965),

p. 441. ⁴Philotheus Böhner, O.F.M., The Works of St. Bonaventure, vol. II (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1956), p. 19.

St. Bonaventure, Itinerarium Mentis in Deum, ed. Böhner, ibid., p. 101. ⁶Dunstan Dobbins, O.F.M.Cap., Franciscan Mysticism (New York: J. F. Wagner, 1927), p. 47.

St. Bonaventure, Itinerarium, loc. cit., p. 43.

⁸Idem, Breviloquium, ed. José de Vinck, The Works of St. Bonaventure, vol. II (Peterson: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1963), p. 181.

God's freely given grace is the sine qua non of mysticism-indeed, of any stage of the spiritual life. Without it man could not even begin to desire union with God. Once it has been given, a man must cooperate with it—desire it—if he wishes to attain the joy of mystic union with God.

Working closely in connection with grace—indeed, intrinsically bound to it, are the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and the Theological Virtues. The Gifts are habits divinely implanted which make the soul receptive to grace and aid it in its quest for union with God. They aid in the overcoming of stumbling blocks that the soul encounters on its journey. They help us overcome our bad habits; they augment our nature so that we may more readily and more easily comply with the urgings of the Spirit.

Faith, Hope, and Love also play their part in the mystic climb. No knowledge that the soul has of God-not even the mystic's knowledge—is anything other than faith. Granted, the mystic's faith may be more exalted or more efficacious than the faith of the ordinary believer-and this, because he has experienced and has been somehow illuminated as regards many of the mysteries in which he believes—but the difference is in a real sense only one of degree; even in the mystical state of union with God. the same obedience of the intellect to things unseen is demanded, as is demanded of the pilgrim who has just embarked on his journey into God. Here, as Saint Paul reminds us, we all see through a glass, darkly. Only in the next life will we know even as we are known.

In the prologue to his Breviloquium Bonaventure says this concerning faith: "While we are exiled from the Lord, faith is, as regards every supernatural illumination, the foundation that supports us, the lamp that guides us, and the door that leads us in."9 Indeed, at the heights of mysticism, when the soul experiences God as the unspeakable Other in Otto's striking terms, the Musterium tremendum et fascinansperhaps more faith than ever is demanded to believe in what we can never hope to understand. Hope, in its turn, gives the soul encouragement in its pursuit; and it is in Love that the soul finds the whole reason for its burning desire to attain its longed-for end -it is ultimately through Love that the soul is united to God. in this life.

Sanctifying grace, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the Theological Virtues are the ways in which the love of God operates to draw us back to himself. Without them mystical union—indeed,

any union with God—is unthinkable. But it is not all that is -necessary. Ours is not to be the passive receivers of God's beneficence. Cliché though it may be, it remains unshakeably and importantly true that God helps those who help themselves. We cannot expect to sit back passively while God unites himself to us and bestows upon us the joys of mystical union. The union of the soul and God is certainly wrought through grace, but it is the rule of that union that there must be mutual consent, just as there must be mutual consent between two people who are to be united in marriage. This consent does not, moreover, simply mean the agreement passively to receive; it means an agreement to work in cooperation with grace, to expend the effort needed to follow it out to a new life, which evolves in our daily actions, no matter where it leads us. In short, each of us indicates, by entering into this love-relationship with God. a desire for its consummation and a resolve to work for that endto cooperate actively with the love and help which God unfailingly extends to us.

What the mystical way comes down to, then, is the development of our life with God. Just as the human growth of a person is a



slow process of gradual development, so too is growth in the ways of the mystic a slow, developing process through which we come through a purgative, an illuminative, and finally a contemplative stage.10 The purgative way, as the name vividly indicates, is the stage wherein the soul gradually improves its perspective with regard to things spiritual. In the illuminative way. the soul tries to imitate Christ, the Light of the world, through the practice of virtue. Finally, When this Christlikeness has been attained to some degree.

⁹Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁰A word of caution is in order here. Although Bonaventure divides the mystical climb into three stages, the spirit of each stage permeates the others. What shifts is merely the emphasis. In the purgative stage, e.g., the soul is concentrating on purging itself of sin, and yet there are elements of illumination and even mystical union present even here at the beginning.

God effects a union between the soul and himself. This is the unitive way.

One thing is clearly seen when we look at Bonaventure's treatment of the purgative way: viz., it is not easy to be a mystic. It takes a great deal of natural effort. It is a great temptation to seek after the ecstasy and joy of mystical experience before having striven after it through rigorous self-discipline. But this is a delusion which must be firmly repudiated if progress is to be made. "Bonaventure can endorse the declaration of St. Bernard . . . that it is a reversing of the proper order to ask for the reward before having earned it: to grasp the midday meal before performing the labor."11 The first step to mystical union is that of purgation. This is necessary because sin is a reality in the world and in each of our individual lives. So it must be purged from our lives if we are to be united to the most pure God; and in this first stage of the spiritual life the soul concentrates on this purgation of sin and its effects from its life. To put it in another way, the spiritual neophyte is thus readjusting his life and his priorities in accordance with the new vision he has of God, and the end God has in mind for him. To free the soul from its sinful habits. God asks it to enter within itself—to see the effects

sin has wrought upon it, to discover how its mind has been dulled and its will weakened. But this is only one side of the picture; we must also see juxtaposed to the lowliness of our actual condition the heights to which God is calling us. The metanoia called for here is not an easy thing for a man to accomplish. It calls for a great deal of self-discipline. a veritable death to the old self. We must not only avoid sin and its occasions, but we must struggle to use fully the grace God gives us. We must turn our attention fully to his ways through prayer. petitioning the Lord's help in the difficult task of reforming our lives, and in meditation upon the lowliness to which we have fallen. For Bonaventure this restoration of our minds and hearts is primarily an internal activity, and yet he realized that no internal change can go on without some external expression. More concretely: this metanoia cannot be separated from bodily asceticism-penance, fasting, or Franciscan poverty, chastity, and obedience. But these outward expressions never become an end in themselves. They are but means to the attainment of an internal turning toward God. Their purpose is to discipline the body and to bring it fully into the control of the spirit, which in its turn has fixed its gaze on the things

which are above. Basically, then, corporal mortification serves to free a man from slavery to the cravings of his body so he may be more able to develop in the spiritual life.

Where does the via purgativa end? It ends in the true peace that can come only from being free from the slavery of sin. It is only in the context of this peace that we can proceed upon the illuminative way:

Let anyone who wishes to be cleansed turn to the sting of conscience in the manner explained above.... From this, in turn, proceeds an inner joy that makes our spirit ready to rise aloft. And so this first way originates in the sting of conscience and terminates in the disposition of spiritual joy; it is pursued in pain, but consummated in love.¹²

It is only at this point that the individual can begin really to appreciate the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The second stage—the illuminative way—is characterized by an imitation of Christ. Jesus, as Bonaventure preaches in his fourth sermon, is the one teacher of all men. It is through moulding the actions of our lives to his that we become Christlike—that we are illuminated by the light which is the light of men, which shone in the darkness without

being overcome by it. To succeed in this endeavor, we have to concentrate on the Gospels, and therein we will find what we must do if we would become Christlike. By "imitation" we must of course understand, not merely a conformity to certain external actions (the Pharisees were, after all, rather good at this!), but rather conformity to the spirit of Christ. And to the extent that this conformity is really attained, it cannot but become manifest in our external actions.

Then, through a finely paradoxical reciprocal causality, there results from the external manifestations a further interior development—a deeper understanding of the inner meaning of the Lord's own Reality. "Christ, in his Incarnation, is the mystic 'Door' leading to union with the Godhead."18 Bonaventure can say along with Paul, "For other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid: which is Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 3:11). In Jesus' humanity we find the potentialities for our own humanity.

The primary focus which Bonaventure found in the life of our Savior was the cross. To be his followers, we must in turn pick up our cross daily and follow him. This means that essential to this level of the mystical climb is love

¹¹Dobbins, p. 60.

¹²St. Bonaventure, The Triple Way, ed. José de Vinck, The Works of St. Bonaventure, vol. I (Paterson; St. Anthony Guild Press, 1962), p. 68.

¹⁸Dobbins, pp. 73-74.

presses itself in self-renuncia- spirit of Christ. Following him on tion and sacrifice. In this context the road to Calvary seems to be the paradox that he who loses his an indispensable condition for life will save it, takes on new mystical union with God. As one meaning. This is clearly seen in writer puts it, "It is possible to be the Itinerarium, which both begins and ends the mystic journey chair, to be a mystic only on a with Christ crucified. "It is to cross."17 groans of prayer through Christ crucified, in whose blood we are cleansed from the filth of vices, that I first of all invite the reader."14 And again. "With Christ here; that the union is essentially world to the Father."15

external mortification is required, not indeed for its own sake never for that—but in order to share in the suffering and mortification of Iesus. As true friends invariably emulate one another; as lovers begin at some point to take on one another's characteristics, so "the true worshipper of God, the true disciple of Christ, wanting to conform to the Savior of all who was crucified for his sake, should try in the first place, with earnest intent, always to carry about, in soul and body, the cross of Jesus Christ."16

But we have to be reminded,

of Christ crucified, which ex-useless unless undertaken in the mystical philosopher in an arm-

After this preparation, the soul is finally given to enjoy mystical union with God. We have already glimpsed the paradox involved crucified let us pass out of this God's free gift, and yet a gift after which the individual must un-And so at this level the volun- flaggingly strive. It is of course tary undertaking of internal and impossible for anyone to give a detailed description of the experience of union with the Divinity. This can only be experienced. Still, without pretending to go into the details of the experience, Bonaventure does explain insofar as he finds himself able to do so, how the soul is united to God. Mystical union is a great gift from the Lord, but it is not an extraordinary gift, as would be the gift of miracles. There is no special vocation to mysticism. There is no spiritual élite, chosen by God for this grace. It is open to all as the fulfillment of the Christ-life begun in Baptism. The growth of again and again, that the imitation 'the spirit is evolutionary, rather of Christ's external suffering is than "revolutionary"—meaning

tinuous process from the very be- theme of his entire Itinerarium. ginning of the soul's pilgrimage As he himself put it in his Conthrough to the end, and no violent ferences on the Six Days: "A wrenchings or sudden meta- yearning and a strong desire are morphoses. This seems to me to the door to wisdom."18 be the key to Bonaventure's mysness of our life in God is open the individual disciple. The and in our present state, it is only reason why there are so few mystics is that few men are willing to expend the heroic effort to at- a dim reflection in a mirror" (1 tain these heights.

Desire has been mentioned, a few pages back, as a fundamental, indispensable element of the to achieve mystic union with God God and of the things of God has to extend through the whole tained through meditation. At mystical way-all the way the same time, this knowledge through the illuminative and becomes affective, since the will unitive stages as well as the pur- is inflamed with love for these gative. It was with keen insight realities. And since this knowlinto the meaning of the platonic edge of God is more true and more

that there is a steady and con- made desire the foundational

What happens, then, in the act tical theology: viz., that the full- of contemplation? What certainly does not take place is a direct to all men equally who are willing vision of God himself. While not to pursue it, precisely because ruling this type of thing out comthat fullness which we call mys- pletely in extraordinary cases tical union is nothing other than (such as those of Moses and Paul). the Christ-life fully blooming in Bonaventure holds that as a rule indirectly that the soul experiences God. "Now we are seeing Cor. 13:12); we live in the flesh. exiled from the Lord, and know him only through the eyes of faith.

For Bonaventure the mystical mystical climb. It is worth point- union the soul feels with God ing out now, however, that the takes place through our natural desire in question cannot be re- powers of intellection and volistricted to the initial stages of that tion, to which God adds commuclimb. Though it is obviously nion. Through grace the intellect necessary that the soul which is is illumined with a knowledge of desire that union, it may be some- which is higher and more prowhat less obvious that the desire found than could possibly be ateros, therefore, that Bonaventure beautiful than that which our

¹⁴St. Bonaventure, Itinerarium . . ., p. 33.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 101.

¹⁶St. Bonaventure, The Tree of Life, ed. José de Vinck, The Works of St. Bonaventure, vol. I (Paterson: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1962), p. 97. 17E. Watkins, Philosophy of Mysticism (London, 1920), p. 14.

¹⁸St. Bonaventure, Collations on the Six Days, ed. José de Vinck, The Works of St. Bonaventure, vol. V (Paterson: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1970), p. 24.

minds can ordinarily attain, the act of love made by our will is correspondingly more intense—so much so that it might even be said to possess, in a sense, that which it loves.

Still it is not in the mystical illumination of the intellect that the act of mystical union is consummated, but rather in the inflaming of the will with the love of God. God gives us this more exalted knowledge of himself with a view, precisely, to arousing the soul's love; so unless there is that act of love on our part, the illumination, no matter how grand or profound, would be, stripped of its intrinsic finality, vain.

It is at this culminating point that we can see the close affinity between Bonaventure's mystical theology and the whole tradition of apophatic theology. This tradition, which stems in large part from the influence of the thirdcentury mystic Plotinus, insists that what we say God is not, is actually more literally true than the statements we make to indicate positively what he is. But here, in the mystical climb explained by Bonaventure, the soul is projected beyond the possibilities of its own intellectual acts. It realizes clearly that God is so

much more than could ever be fully "known." Our mind cannot possibly pursue God to the point of "seeing" him; the fullness of the mystical experience is, quite simply, beyond the power of intellection; it passes beyond the highest ideas one's mind can form. Hence "the soul, in that act, enters into night."19 The divine illumination of the intellect draws the soul beyond intellection to the point where it can no longer have knowledge of God in any literally intellectual sense, since at a certain point our mind can comprehend no further "not only because our knowledge has certain irremovable limits, but because in it we come upon something wholly other."20

Even though the intellect falters, or perhaps precisely because it falters, the mystical goal is nonetheless gloriously attained because the individual is united through his will, in love unutterable, to the One beyond all knowing. Pursuing the Good, the will can touch it and find joy in the contact: a joy beyond determination by the mind, it is unutterable, unspeakable, obscure. "One can see and know an object fully grasped by the soul; one can love an object perfectly and immediately if the soul can so much as touch it."21

In this union the mind is joined to God, wherefore in a certain sense it sleeps, while in another it keeps vigil: 'I was sleeping, but my heart kept vigil.' Only the affective power keeps vigil and imposes silence on all the other powers; then man becomes foreign to his senses; he is in ecstasy and hears secret words that man may not repeat, because they are only in his heart. Hence, because nothing can be expressed unless it is conceived, or conceived unless it is understood, and here the intellect does not speak: it follows that a man can hardly speak or explain anything.22

This passage seems to me to exemplify Bonaventure's extremely well balanced understanding of the Negative Way of the apophatic tradition. In Plotinus as well as in the pseudo-Dionysius (another major source for the neoplatonic Christian tradition), the initial approach to God is negative, whereas in Bonaventure one emerges onto the plateau of the negative way only after the mind's arduous quest for an understanding of God. In steering the course he has taken. Bonaventure seems to have avoided the opposed dangers faced by every soul sincerely seeking union with God. He has avoided the Scylla of exaggerated

rationalism, to which I fear orthodoxy has often fallen prey as there appeared no way to do justice to the non-rational aspect of God in the course of forming the rational system and framing it in precise dogmas and concepts. But Bonaventure has avoided as well the Charybdis, equally odious, of agnostic refusal to admit that we can know or express anuthing positive about God. This too is, of course, an excess, one which lends to the idea of God a onesided and negative despair. Bonaventure's path is midway between these two, as we have seen: A man can know God, but in the highest degrees of union he realizes that all such knowledge is of little account—is, by comparison with what is not known, negligible. All we can do, ultimately, is stand back speechless and love the Lord. The Seraphic Doctor himself sums all this up beautifully in the second of his Conferences on the Six Days:

This ascent [i. e., to mystical union with God] comes about by affirmation and by negation. By affirmation, by going from the summit to the depth; by negation, by going from the depth to the summit: and the latter mode is the best; for instance, He is not this, He is not that. In doing so I do not deprive God of what is his or within him, but I attribute it in a higher and better manner than I am able to understand.²³

Bonaventure makes this very point when he says:

¹⁹Gilson, p. 416.

²⁰Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, tr. John Harvey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 28.

²¹Ibid.

²²St. Bonaventure, Collations. . ., pp. 36-37.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 37.

God is beyond every predication we can make of him—in the ultimate analysis, for Bonaventure as for every mystic and every genuine theologian or philosopher, "a God comprehended is no God."²⁴

In our secular society, many look askance on the value of mysticism. Isn't it too removed from the real world? Doesn't the mystic just sit home all day enjoying his mystical experience while the rest of us are out working to make the world a better place? While this opinion may have some currency today, history has been much kinder to mystics. Francis of Assisi, Bonaventure's spiritual father, while he was a great mystic and stigmatic, was at the same time instrumental in renewing the religious life—indeed, the Christendom-of his time. Socially, he ushered in the Renaissance through his preaching of the value and beauty of this earthly life in the climb to God, and the importance of the individual man. Culturally, who could begin to list adequately what the Poverello has meant in the development of Western poetry, painting, sculpture—beginning with Giotto, the father of Renaissance painting in Italy.

Saint Teresa, even though she was a cloistered nun, was a leader in the reform of Spanish religious life. Bonaventure governed a vast and diverse religious order and held it together even as he struggled against error in the intellectual arena of his day; and he brought about a temporary reunion of the separated Eastern Churches at the Council of Lyons, which he, as a Cardinal, was instrumental in organizing. And with all this he stands with Thomas Aquinas as one of the greatest thinkers produced by the scholastic period. Mystics can be doers—the greatest of them were.

What Bonaventure saw was the need for all men-and especially men who professed to be religious —to strive after holiness. When he became Minister General of his order he realized that if it were to have any force in the world it must take its strength from the life of God. If must, in short, be holy. Once this true union with God is established, hypocrisy, falseness, petty disagreements will of necessity dissipate. The problems which beset his order sprang from a forgetting of the spirituality of its Founder. We see from looking at the history of the Franciscan Order, that when true inward spirituality—the mystical approach of Francis—has been neglected or forgotten altogether. the friars have degenerated to the lowest levels; and on the other hand, when that approach has been fostered the order has produced great and holy men, worthy sons of their Father Francis. The world has benefited and will continue to benefit from the presence of such men.

For the secret of the wonderful influence of the Poverello lies in this, that he teaches men how to interpret Christ. In a personal interpretation of Christ, or in the adoption of so genuine an interpretation as that of Francis, the possibilities in the purely religious or in the social sphere are endless.²⁵

Many people today deplore the existence of a "vocation drought." Maybe we do need more priests, more religious. But of far greater importance is our need for more holy priests, more holy religious of humble heart—more heroic people who are willing to follow the path to God charted by Saint Bonaventure, who see that, indeed, if we seek first the kingdom of God and its justice, then all else will be given us besides.



Blood-Doning

studied fixtures of the ceiling lights eminent on the quiescent retina of one who reclines as though plugged to a socket——arterial circuits (via bloodmobile) find their shortest routes; and somewhere in the darknesses a bulbous sack gives light

Hugoline Sabatino, O.F.M.

²⁵Dobbins, p. 195.

²⁴Tersteegen, quoted by Otto, op. cit., p. 25.

The Spirituality of Sir Thomas More and of William Tyndale

Eric McDermott, S.J.

The Yale edition of the Complete Works of Sir Thomas More began many years ago, and various superbly edited volumes have already appeared: notably More's Utopia and his History of King Richard the Third. The latest volume, no less valuable and authoritative, to be completed is so large that it has been issued in three separate books covering more than eighteen hundred printed pages.1 Despite his multifarious duties as Chancellor of England and as head of a large family, Thomas More had been busy in curbing heresy in England both by legal action and by

writing replies to their propaganda. In June 1529 he published his Dialogue Concerning Heresies. Two years later William Tyndale responded with An Answer unto Sir Thomas More's Dialogue, with the subtitle: "Wherein he [Tyndale] declareth what the church is, and giveth a reason of certain words in the translation of the New Testament. After that he answereth particularly unto every chapter which seemeth to have any appearance of truth through all his four books." Within nine months More was ready with his Confutation of Tundale's Answer in three parts. Five more parts

¹St. Thomas More, The Confutation of Tundale's Answer. Critical edition by Louis A. Schuster, Richard C. Marius, James P. Lusardi, and Richard J. Schoeck (vol. 8 of The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of St. Thomas More). New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973. Part I: Text, Bks, I-IV, pp. i-xiv & 1-574; part II: Text, Bks. V-IX & Appendices, pp. 575-1134; part III: Introduction, Commentary, Glossary, Index, pp. i-vii & 1135-1831. Cloth, \$60.00 the three-volume set. The quotations in this essay, unless it is otherwise stated, are taken from Part I, pp. 3-41, and Part III, pp. 1137-1268.

Father Eric McDermott was born in England and is a member of the English Province of the Society of Jesus. Educated at the Universities of London and Oxford, he specialized in medieval and Tudor history. He has spent his life as a teacher: first, at Wimbledon College, London; and, secondly, at Georgetown University. Washington, D.C. He has written a large number of articles for various encyclopedias.

appeared in 1533. It is with this be dangerously tendentious. As a congratulate the four editors and the publishers on putting out a definitive edition of so large a work of More's scholarship.

William Tyndale, More's adversary, was an English priest who had enjoyed fellowship at Cambridge and London with many who were to become well known as reformers, among them Latimer, Cranmer, Bilney, Barnes, and Coverdale. After he left England in 1524, never to return, he was reported to have been "a man of right good living, studious and well learned in scripture, and in divers places in England was very well liked, and did great good with preaching." He had had many arguments with English clergy, "which thing," he was later to write, "only moved me to translate the New Testament. Because I had perceived by experience, how that it was impossible to stablish the lay people in any truth, except the scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother tongue, that they might see the process, order and meaning of the text . . . and even in the Bishop of London's house I intended to have done it."

The translation of scripture into English had unhappily been linked with the heresy of the Lollards in late fourteenth-century England, and the manner in which it was done was found to

Confutation that this essay is result no early sixteenth-century concerned. At the outset one must bishop saw any necessity for a complete translation. Many London merchants thought otherwise, however, and gave financial support to Tyndale to get the job done abroad. By 1526 his New Testament was being sold in England.

> Tyndale had, however, become completely obsessed with the idea of a sweeping reform of the Church in accordance with evangelical principles. The principal obstacles to this most Christian enterprise seemed to him to be the pope and the bishops. Accordingly he promoted the royal supremacy of the Church in England as an instrument for overthrowing ecclesiastical power and establishing the kingdom of Christ according to the teaching of the Gospel. With this goal in mind, he wrote The Obedience of a Christian Man, in which he declared that "the king is in the room of God, and his law is God's law." The book strongly influenced Henry VIII in seizing power over the English Church. Nevertheless, as a modern student has written: "There are passages in the Obedience which bring to mind the shrieks of a tortured animal, and pages of prose that to this day turn livid with hatred, bitterness and the fury of righteous indignation." Henry's actions were, however, to prove disappointing to Tyndale,



falling as they did far short of the austere reformation that he had hoped for.

The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer amounts to about half a million words, but More never intended it to be other than a reference book. "More's method of confutation consists in quoting Tyndale's text in gobbets, seldom more than one paragraph at a time and often merely a single sentence, then overwhelming it with a varied barrage of polemical artillery: painstaking logic, copious invention of arguments, biblical exegesis, invective, heckling, ribaldry, testimony of saints and martyrs. . . . " Such is part of a description of the book by one of sies." the editors. Moreover, it is to be

noted that the first half of the Confutation was written while More was still Chancellor of England with all the duties that office entailed. Since its form was dictated by the desire to refute each of Tyndale's arguments, it lacked the momentum that the development of a single theme would have given it. This More himself was aware of, and he stated that his readers "would peradventure wax weary to read over a long book, and therefore have I taken the more pains upon every chapter to the intent that they shall not need to read over any chapter but one, and that it shall not force [that is, matter] greatly which one throughout all the book."

Sir Thomas wrote not for scholars and divines, but for ordinary folk who might "fall suddenly drunk in the new wine of the newfangled novelties" of the heretics, and neglect "the old wholesome wine with which good folk have lived now this fifteen hundred years." It was only in such a circumstance that he recommended any man to read what he had written. Apart from. that, "I would advise any man neither to read these heretics' books nor mine, but occupy their minds better, and, standing firmly by the Catholic faith of this fifteen hundred years, never once muse upon these new fangled here-

In these words can be found

the spirituality of Saint Thomas More. It is customary to cull from his voluminous writings the topics commonly regarded as belonging to the spiritual life: views on faith, hope, and charity in all its forms, for example, and on morality. But what, in fact, represents a man's spirituality? The spiritual life of the Christian is his response to the good news brought by Jesus Christ. It is what he does as a necessary consequence, and acceptance, of the implications of that Good News. Saint Paul put it quite simply and clearly when he said that the love of Iesus Christ drove him on; and what it drove him on to do was to spread the knowledge of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to the peoples of the Mediterranean world. This he did by preaching and writing; this was his response to the Christian revelation; this was his spirituality. Of course there are hints in Saint Paul of other things that extended his response: for example, his practice of prayer both by himself and with others, especially in the Eucharist.

Each Christian in his turn needs to ask himself what is his response to the Good News. What is it in his life that marks him as a Christian? Recently the question was put another way: could you easily be convicted in a court of law of being a Christian, or would the prosecutor be hard put to it to produce sufficient evidence?

Thomas More saw that his own phrases and thoughts that cover Christian response was to be shown in his personal and domestic life, but, more unusually, in his great writing campaign to further the kingdom of Jesus Christ. This he did in two ways: by putting together a number of outstanding devotional works, as, for example, his Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation, his Treatise on the Holy Eucharist, and his History of the Passion; and by his works of controversy, of which his Confutation of Tyndale's Answer is the most thoroughgoing example.

> His devotional works were to him, undoubtedly, of more importance insofar as they catered to the healthy Christian, whereas his polemical apologetics were in the nature of medicine after disease had struck. "If it might be provided that every man should be so well tempered that no man should by distemperance fall into disease," he observed,

then were it better that the physician bestowed all his time about that part of physic that teacheth to preserve our health, than to write any word of that part that restoreth it. But since it can never be brought to pass that poison will be forgotten, nor that every man shall use himself so circumspectly, but that either of oversight or adventure some shall have need of cure, therefore it is necessary that treacle for the one.

and other medicines for the other be provided and had. And therefore I wish that [the heretics'] books were all gone and mine therewith; so since I see well that that thing will not be, better it is I reckon that there be treacle ready. than the poison to tarry and no treacle for it.

He did not disguise the fact that his writing was a great burden to him, "because the matter is long, and my leisure rare and short," but defense of the kingdom of Christ outweighed all other considerations. "I think that no man doubteth but that this work both hath been and will be some pain and labour to me, and, of truth, so I find it. But, as help me God. I find all my labour in the writing not half so grievous and painful to me, as the tedious reading of their blasphemous heresies, that would God after all my labour done, so that the remembrance of their pestilent errors were erased out of Englishmen's hearts, and their abominable books burned up, mine own were gone with them. and the name of these matters utterly put in oblivion."

More could easily have excused himself from entering into controversy on theology and Church history; and some indeed questioned his competence as against the numerous theologians and divines who were to be found controversy were difficult ones, or in the English Church at that if Tyndale and his friends had time. While this point could be dealt very cunningly with them.

discussed very fruitfully in a wide context, it will be better here to offer More's own points of view. In the first place his own Bishon had asked him to write replies to the heretical books, and such a request served for More as any expression of God's will. The words of Cuthbert Tunstal, Bishop of London, are worth recallings "Because vou, dearest brother." can rival Demosthenes in our vernacular as well as in Latin, and are a frequent and brilliant advocate of the Catholic position whenever it is publicly challenged, you will never find a better way of spending any leisure hours you can snatch away from your official duties than in publishing in English for the common man some books that would help him see through the cunning malice of heretics, and so keep him better alerted and better fortified against these traitorous subverters of the Church."

On the other hand with regard to the question of the adequacy of his scholarship for such work. More declared that "some have asked what have I to do to meddle with the matter, saving that being a layman I should leave it to the clergy to write in, and not having professed the study of holy Scripture, I should leave the matter wholly unto divines." In his reply Sir Thomas said if the subjects of

he would gladly have given place ture's Meditationes Vitae Christi; to respondents more learned than Kempis's Imitation of Christ, he. The subjects, however, were "so plain, evident and clear," and Walter Hilton's Scale of Perso evidently "by the whole fection. The three or four years Church of Christ so clearly put out More spent in the London Charof question," that as one "being in my right mind and a true Christian man," he could only regard himself as adequate for the job, "since I have gone somewhat to school myself and bestowed as many years in study and under as cunning masters as some of them have." Indeed Tyndale and the best of the heretical writers had not adventured more deeply into their topics "but that a right mean learned man, or almost an unlearned woman having natural wit and being sure and fast in the to answer them."

More more than urged that the good people of England would read neither his book nor Tyndale's, "but rather the people unlearned to occupy themselves beside their other business in prayer, good meditation and reading of such English books as most may nourish and increase devotion." Among such books he recommended "Bonaventure of the life of Christ, Gerson of the following of Christ, and the devout contemplative book of Scala perfectionis." (These books were Nicholas Love's The Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ, trans-

wrongly ascribed to Gerson; and terhouse with the Carthusians probably helped him to become familiar with these writings, especially since the Carthusians were noted expounders of the spiritual fourteenth-century teaching popularized both in England and in Flanders.)

While these lines have been concerned with the spiritual response of More, one must not neglect or undervalue that of William Tyndale. Whatever one may think of the truth or falsity of his teaching, there can be little doubt that true Catholic faith, were well able he possessed a burning zeal for the cause of Jesus Christ. His en-Despite his labors, however, thusiasm and extraordinary efforts to make the New Testament available to every English man and woman can only merit the highest praise, which can in no way be diminished by his tendentious, albeit sincere, choice of words. It needed no Luther nor Tyndale to condemn the unhappy features of the contemporary Church. Sir Thomas More himself had long promoted the need for Church reform in both head and members. He and Tyndale were indeed two great Englishmen who gave unsparingly of their strength and wits to promote the kingdom of Jesus Christ; and both lated from the pseudo-Bonaven- alike were to give their lives in

defense of their convictions.

Surely the love of Jesus Christ illumines the greeting with which Tyndale opened his famous Answer: "The grace of our Lord, the light of his Spirit, to see and to judge true repentance toward God's law, a fast faith in the mer-

ciful promises that are in our Saviour Christ, fervent love toward thy neighbour after the example of Christ and his saints, be with thee, O reader, and with all that, love the truth, and long for the redemption of God's elect. Amen."



Book Reviews

Praise Him: A Prayerbook for Today's Christian. Edited by William G. Storey. Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1973. Pp. 223. Paper, \$2.45.

Reviewed by Father Hilary Scott, O.F.M., for eight years pastor to Latin Catholics in Beirut, Lebanon, and a recent guest of Holy Name Friary, the House of Prayer for Holy Name Province. Father Hilary is currently serving at Our Lady's Chapel, New Bedford, Mass.

Confronted with all that has been written these latter days about the theory and value of prayer, I find it indeed refreshing to come across not a "how to" manual, but an actual prayer book, a "here it is; go to it" book.

Thus it is that Praise Him: A Prayerbook for Today's Christian impresses me as just the right thing.

at the right time. Not a sentimental or sugary thing is this prayerbook—it is based on the Church's official Liturgy of the Hours and therefore brings any Christian using it right into the continuation of Christ's "priestly work through the agency of His Church, which is ceaselessly engaged in praising the Lord and interceding for the salvation of the whole world" (Vatican II, Constitution on the Liturgy, §83).

The semi-official Prayer of Christians, published a couple of years ago and presenting itself as ideal perhaps for the clergy and religious, can seem a bit formidable for layfolk. It is indeed a bit unwieldy and clumsy insofar as one needs the Bible or a book of Readings as a companion volume. This new Praise Him; however, keeps the essential features of the Church's official prayer, and at the same time allows "today's Christian" to carry on easily that necessary dialogue with God which en-

ables him to confront and live with reality.

The Psalms, those age-old and answer-proven prayers of the Old Testament, make up the bulk of this book. Divided into a four-week cycle, it provides a Morning Prayer and an Evening Prayer for each day, substantially a Psalm, a short biblical reading, a response, and a collect-prayer. The significant thing is that this is a prayer book made up according to the mind of the Church. The Word of God itself is used, and is in many ways made intelligible to all because it does not become a tedious or repetitious affair. There are even little surprises here and there in the book, consisting of little gems of prayers such as the Divine Praises, Hymn to the Holy Spirit, Saint Francis' Hymn to Brother Sun,

CORRECTION

On p. 260 of our September, 1973, issue, the portion of the quotation in the right-hand column following line 7 should read: "what sound the other is carrying; and the whole person, from the top of his head to the soles of his feet and from his heart to his intellect, who 'hears' the meaning of what the sound is saying."

etc., all of which serve to enhance the spirit of fervent prayer.

All in all, this is a prayer book which I would not hesitate to recommend to anyone, and which I myself intend to give as a gift on appropriate occasions.

Everywhere People Waiting: The Life of Helen de Chappotin. By Sister Agnes Willmann, F.M.M. North Quincy, Mass.: The Christopher Publishing House, 1973. Pp. 376. Cloth, \$5.95.

Reviewed by Sister Mary Seraphim, P.C.P.A., whose article, "Rhythms," appears elsewhere in this issue.

The heart of Helen de Chappotin could never say "No more to give" whenever she was told that people were waiting—waiting for help, understanding, compassion. The almost spontaneous foundation and phenomenal growth of the Institute of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary forms an encouraging page in the life of the Church, and the some ten thousand missionary sisters who carry on her work and spirit today

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are a bright beacon of hope to our Some months after her "resignation," world.

Sister Agnes Willmann writes of the formative influences in the early years of this fifth child of a middleclass French family of Brittany. Lively and with qualities of leadership apparent even in her playful moments, Helen de Chappotin grew up in a staunch Catholic atmosphere dominated by strong loyalty to the Holy Father and the Papacy.

Early deaths among family members introduced Helen to sorrow and opened her generous heart to the sufferings of others. On the eve of her twenty-fifth birthday, Helen set out to join the Order of Mary Reparatrix in Paris. While still a novice, she was sent to India, where her missionary zeal found ample opportunity for expression. She became Provincial of the Indian Houses and inherited many vexing problems regarding the work among native and European groups. Serious misunderstandings of her methods by superiors in France led to her dismissal, along with a small group of the Sisters, from the Institute of Mary Reparatrix.

known in religion, sought advice from the Bishop where she was located and was advised to go to Rome and ask that her group be recognized as a new congregation. This she did and obtained permission to found a novitiate in France. Vocations flocked to her challenging apostolate, and soon the establishment of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary was assured. At one point, opponents tried to have her deposed as head of her congregation —a treatment she accepted humbly.

friends interceded for her, bringing out the real facts of the case, and she was fully reinstated. Upon receiving this news, she only asked that the Sisters pray for those who had caused her such sufferings. The brotherly interest, encouragement and support of the Franciscan Friars led Mother Mary Passion to bring her missionary group into the family of Saint Francis.

The Franciscan Missionaries were requested to staff missions throughout the World-China, Ceylon, India, Madagascar, Tunisia, Canada, Chile, the United States. Novitiates were established in several European countries so that Sisters equipped with the different languages could meet the challenges of missionary work at home and abroad. Mother Mary Passion strove to instill in her daughters a love and loyalty to the Church, a truly Franciscan spiritualitv. and a dauntless courage to meet every sacrifice with gracious valor. Her greatest sorrow as Superior was also her supreme joy: seven of her Sisters were martyred in China during the Boxer Rebellion of 1900. Mother Mary Passion, as she was At her death in 1904, her Congregation counted over 3,000 religious in eight provinces around the globe.

Sister Agnes Willmann writes with love and understanding of her Mether Foundress and brings out many facets of her character and spirituality. The book is written with a flair and the intention to show the narrative's relevance to the modern Church and world. It should be of interest to the young people of today, as well as to all those who know the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary and their prodigious work in the Church.

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