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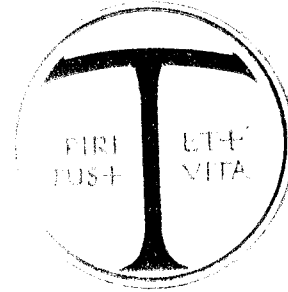


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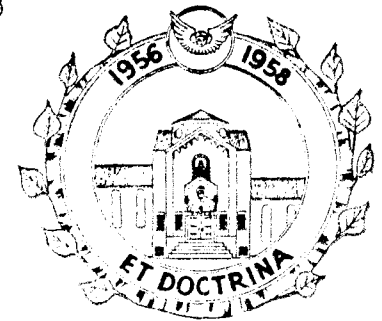
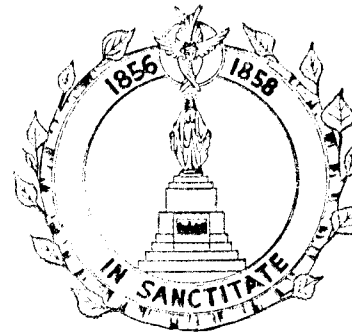
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The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW



VOL. VII, NO. 10, OCTOBER, 1957

the CORD

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The Editorial staff of THE CORD dedicates this issue to St. Bonaventure University, which commemorates the Centennial of the Foundation of the School.

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In 1854 Bishop Timon of Buffalo and Mr. Nicholas Devereux of Utica, N.Y., petitioned the Holy See for Missionaries to minister to the needs of the faithful in Southwestern New York. The idea of a university in that area was their dream. Pope Pius IX referred the petitioners to the successor of Saint Francis in Rome. In 1855 three Franciscan Priests and one Brother landed in New York and settled in Ellicottville, in Cattaraugus County. The planning and erection of a college at Allegany, N.Y., was forthwith undertaken. Nicholas Devereux donated the property as well as the sum of \$5,000 to the project. The cornerstone of the building was laid on August 20, 1856. Two years later, on the Feast of Saint Francis, October 4, the College was inaugurated, dedicated, and placed under the patronage of St. Bonaventure.

Thus came to fruition another Franciscan institution of higher learning, observing the *Sanctitas* of Saint Francis and the *Doctrina* of Saint Bonaventure. The long tradition of Franciscan education, which was first recognized at the Universities of Paris and Oxford in the Thirteenth Century, had brought forth a new child into the world.

The child under the patronage of Saint Bonaventure and the protection of Saint Francis, has prospered and has now completed one hundred years.

The first building raised on the campus by the four Friars from Italy has long since crumbled into dust, but from its hallowed ashes has sprung a campus dotted with fourteen buildings, religious shrines, and athletic fields. Two disastrous fires, in 1930 and in 1933, merely proved to be stepping stones to greater development and incentives to progress.

The original Liberal Arts College has now become a separate entity in the new university structure. During the years have been added a School of Business, a School of Education, the School of Theology (Christ the King Seminary), a Graduate School, the Franciscan Institute, St. Elizabeth's Teachers' College, and the Evening Session.

By act of the Regents of the University of the State of New York, St. Bonaventure's College was elevated to the status of a university on July 1, 1957.

A year-long program of events, from March 1, 1957 to October 4, 1958, will commemorate the Centennial.

The Liturgy of Of Extreme Unction

Fr. Martin Wolter, O.F.M.

The Sacrament of Extreme Unction is so called because it is the extreme or last of anointings bestowed by the Church. The earlier anointings with holy oils take place in connection with the administering of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders. But the name, "Extreme Unction," does not imply that this sacrament must be deferred until the extreme or final moment of life. For, contrary to the belief and practice of many Catholics, this sacrament is not intended only for those who are actually dying, but also for those who are seriously ill and in danger of death. In fact the Church for many centuries did not employ the term "Extreme Unction," to describe this sacrament, but rather called it "The Anointing of the Sick." If we study and reflect on the Liturgy of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction we shall readily see that it aims at the physical health of the body as well as the spiritual health of the soul.

Physical Health of the Body

To understand properly the liturgy of this sacrament it will be well to review briefly our theology of sickness. Sickness as such is not the work of God, but rather that of the devil. In Sacred Scripture the Book of Genesis tells us that God created man with a sound and healthy body. He also turned over to man the whole earth with its fruits, grains and medicinal herbs to maintain that body in its pristine integrity and vigor. It was Satan who seduced our first parents and through their sin brought sickness and death into the world. It seems as though the fallen angels, proud spirits that they are, have a special contempt and hatred of man's flesh. They like to see man suffer physical pains and maladies. They strive with satanic cunning and malice to bring about man's spiritual downfall through the weakness of his flesh. Though Satan appealed to Eve's curiosity and pride, he did so through the medium of the beauty and tastiness of the forbidden fruit. In the book of Job we

read how Satan speaks to God: "Skin for skin, and all that a man hath he will give for his life: but put forth thy hand, and touch his bone and his flesh, and then thou shalt see . . ." (Job 2:4-5). Not only does the devil take a special satanic pleasure in striking at man's poor body, but he also hopes to turn us away from God through our bodily senses. What a sense of chagrin and defeat Satan feels when we voluntarily chastise and subject our body with its concupiscences! That is why the most ascetic and rigorously penitential of the saints are often the ones who endure the most violent attacks of the devil.

Adam and Eve were given sickness and death in punishment for their sin. Job suffered because the Lord wished to test his virtue and give him an opportunity for greater merit. Yet in both cases the sickness is represented as something in itself evil and coming from the work of the devil. So also in the holy Gospel we read of a "woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by an unclean spirit" (Lk. 13, 11), and Christ speaks of her as one "whom Satan has bound" (Lk. 13, 16). And the evangelists repeatedly narrate, as it were in one breath, how Christ would cast out devils and heal sickness.

Such are the thoughts that lie behind the liturgy of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. Sickness is the result of Satan's cunning malice and man's unfortunate fall into the snare of sin. Christ and the Church come with divine power and mercy to liberate man from the power of Satan and the sad effects of human frailty. There is no trace of vindictive justice or harshness in these prayers of the Church; no attitude like: "I told you so, now will you be good?" Rather the Church resembles the wise but compassionate mother who has indeed warned her children again sin and Satan, but now that they have been hurt she has nothing but love and concern for their wounds. The conduct of the Church in this sacrament, "The Anointing of the Sick," reflects the spirit of Christ, who when he heard of the centurion's sick servant, said quite simply: "I will come and cure him" (Mt. 7, 8).

Yes, we should realize that the Sacrament of Extreme Unction does aim at recovery from sickness. In the entire liturgy of this sacrament there is not a single word about the last agony of a Christian, not even a hint of death. The Church has indeed a ritual for the dying, the "Commendatio Animae" or "Commending of the Soul unto God. . . There the Church says nothing about recovery of health, and visualizes only the safe departure of the soul from this world to the next. But let us remember that the ritual for the dying is not the same as the ceremony of Extreme Unction, even though at times they may be administered conjointly.

The Liturgy of Extreme Unction begins, in a way, with the Christian Mass on Holy Thursday. During this Mass the Bishop of the diocese consecrates all the holy oils including the Oil of the Sick. Hence the Epistle of this Mass contains the scriptural description of Extreme Unction. "Is any one among you sick? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him" (Jas. 5, 14-15). The Gospel of this same Mass tells how Christ sent out his Apostles: "... and they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many sick people, and healed them" (Mk. 6, 13). The actual prayer for the blessing of the oil reads in part: "... by thy holy benediction may it be to all who are anointed with this ointment of heavenly medicine, a safeguard of mind and body to drive out all pains, all infirmities and all sickness of mind and body." Thus already in the preparation of this Oil of the Sick the Church indicates quite clearly that it is to be used for bodily cures.

The actual rite of administering the Sacrament of Extreme Unction continues along the same vein. The first main prayer, for instance, reads thus: "O Lord Jesus Christ, as we, thy lowly servants, enter this house may our coming bring with it everlasting happiness, divine riches, unclouded joy, fruitful charity, *enduring health*. Let no demons have access here; let the angels of peace be present." Then follows another beautiful prayer: "Let us pray and beg our Lord Jesus Christ to bless this house and all who live in it. May He keep them in this dwelling *safe and sound*." So likewise do the official Latin prayers after the anointings speak only of a cure, not of dying: "... cure, O Redeemer, we implore Thee, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the illness of this sick man ... give him his health, inward and outward, so that he may once more be able to take up his work ... purified and made whole by his sufferings, may he find himself restored by thy healing. ... Free thy servant from sickness, restore to him his health, raise him up by thy right hand, strengthen him by thy power, protect him by thy might, and give him back to thy holy Church."

We have stated that in the liturgy of Extreme Unction the Church speaks only of curing the sick Christian and makes no mention of his death. Yet we all know that sometimes the patient lives and sometimes he dies. The Council of Trent explains this fact as follows: "At times when it is expedient for the welfare of the soul (this sacrament) restores bodily health." The new *Collectio Rituum* issued for use in this country now seems to recognize this practical eventuality and also the fact that

sometimes the patient is at death's door when the priest is called. Hence a short prayer has now been added for these circumstances ("si ex adjunctis suadetur") which asks God for the grace of a happy death. It is beautiful and practical for such cases. But it is in the vernacular and not part of the original liturgy, so that it resembles a modern footnote to an ancient Latin document.

A distinctive mark about the liturgy of Extreme Unction is the fact that all of the prayers (at least in the Latin original) are either in the third person subjunctive (may the Lord) or in the first person plural (we pray). There is nothing like the "I baptize thee," "I confirm thee," or "I absolve thee" of the other sacraments. The reason for this probably lies in the historical fact that in the early middle ages several priests would come to anoint the sick person in solemn style. The prayer at the imposition of hands, when the Holy Trinity is invoked together with all the angels and saints, very strikingly indicates that the whole Mystical Body of Christ is gathering around to come to the aid of the afflicted member.

In the liturgy of Extreme Unction we see the Church thus manifesting the same concern for the sick as Jesus himself reveals in the Gospel. This spirit of compassion is likewise mirrored in the life of St. Francis. The Seraphic Father even cites it as a mark of his conversion. "When I was in sin it seemed to me very bitter to see lepers, and the Lord himself led me amongst them and I showed mercy to them" (Testament). In the fourth chapter of the Rule of the Friars Minor St. Francis commands the superiors of the Order to "take watchful care of the sick ..." And again in the sixth chapter of that same Rule he admonishes all his followers: "If any one of them should fall into illness the other brothers must serve him as they would wish to be served themselves." It is according to the spirit of Christ, of the Church, and of St. Francis, therefore, to have genuine solicitude for the sick and the suffering. There is something suspect in our spirituality if it begins to make us inhuman.

Spiritual Health of the Soul

On the other hand we ought not to descend to the plane of the merely natural and thus become sentimental humanitarians. Sickness is permitted by almighty God for a supernatural purpose, and this purpose must not be lost sight of. Sickness derives from man's sin, and sin cannot be ignored. And so we find both the liturgy of Extreme Unction and the teaching of St. Francis reminding us that, while looking after the physical health of the body, we should not neglect the spiritual health of the soul.

For it does often happen that critical illness in the body brings with it a spiritual danger for the soul. When the dynamo of the body has a power failure, the lights of the soul grow dim. As the flame of fever rages through the house of the brain, the spiritual faculties which dwell there are thrown into confusion and panic. An attack on the citadel of the flesh brings anxiety to the spirit entrenched there. And so the sick person finds it hard to concentrate his mind and heart on prayer. To meditate, to examine the conscience, to elicit heartfelt acts of faith, hope, love and contrition — all this is difficult indeed. For all the energy of the human spirit seems bent on seeking bodily relief. The pressure of present pain seems more important than speculation on the future life. If the thought of possible death and judgment does loom up before the patient's mind, it only serves to make him more worried and miserable. So it is that the devil, who sought to make Job's illness the occasion of sin, now hopes to ensnare the Christian by means of this sickness.

St. Francis has warned us of these things. "If for years on end," he said, "(the Devil) is not able to down the person he has been tempting, he does not haggle over the delay so long as the person gives in to him in the end. That is his business. He thinks of nothing else day and night" (II Celano, no. 113). And in chapter ten of his *First Rule* the Poverello writes: "If (the sick brother) be disquieted and angry, either against God or against the brothers, or perhaps eagerly ask for remedies, desiring too much to deliver his body which is soon to die, which is an enemy of the soul, this comes to him from evil and he is fleshly, and seems not to be of the brothers, because he loves his body more than his soul."

Mindful of all these spiritual difficulties in time of physical illness the Church comes to our aid with the beautiful Sacrament of the Last Anointing. The prayers of the ritual for the Anointing of the Sick breathe a soothing calm and a reassuring confidence: ". . . may our coming bring with it everlasting happiness, divine riches, unclouded joy . . . May (the Lord) turn away from them all the powers of the enemy, rescue them from all dread and bewilderment." No wonder the Council of Trent declares that this holy anointing "raises up and strengthens the soul of the sick person by exciting in him great confidence in the divine mercy, supported by which the sick man bears more lightly the miseries and pains of his illness and resists more easily the temptations of the devil."

But the Church does more than simply aid the sick Christian in his present difficulties with bodily weakness and the temptations of the

devil. Through the Sacrament of Extreme Unction the Church heals the wounds of past sins and prepares the soul for future glory. For the priest dips his thumb in the Oil of the Sick and makes with it the sign of the cross on the patient's eyes, ears, nose, mouth, hands and feet. At the same time he prays: "Through his holy anointing and his most loving mercy may the Lord forgive you whatever wrong you have done by seeing . . . by hearing, etc." St. Thomas Aquinas thus comments: "All our knowledge arises from the senses; and because it is there that sin has its first beginning in us, it is there that the medicine should be applied."

The Council of Trent tells us that this "anointing takes away sins if there be any still to be expiated, and also the remains of sin . . ." This of course presupposes that the sick person is truly sorry for his sins, at least with the motives of imperfect contrition. Venial sins are thus forgiven and even mortal sins if the person is unable to confess. Moreover, it is possible that not only some but even *all the temporal punishment* due to sin can be remitted through the efficacy of this sacrament if one receives it properly. Here the grace of the sacrament coincides and cooperates with the providential role of sickness in human life.

Our Lord pointed out that this role of sickness includes both atoning for past sins and deterring us from future sins. Christ taught this when he cured the man paralyzed for thirty-eight years and then admonished him: "Behold, thou art cured. Sin no more, lest something worse befall thee" (Jo. 5, 14). The Church continues this teaching in her rite of Extreme Unction when she prays that the sick person may be "purified and made whole by his sufferings." Now if all sickness throughout life aims at detaching us from sin and the effects of sin, then surely with the aid of the powerful and special graces of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction our critical and especially our final illness may well achieve a final cleansing of the soul, preparing it for heavenly glory.

Our holy father St. Francis exhorts us to take this view of bodily sickness and to make the best possible use of it. In chapter ten of his *First Rule* he writes: "I ask the sick brother to give thanks to the Creator for all things, and that he desire to be as God wills him to be, whether sick or well; for all whom the Lord has predestined to eternal life are disciplined by the rod of affliction and infirmities, and the spirit of compunction; as the Lord says: 'Those whom I love I rebuke and chastise' (Apoc. 3, 9)."

Thus we see that the Liturgy of Extreme Unction fully satisfies all

the needs of man in serious illness. It cures him physically at times when such is the will of God. It grants him spiritual courage and strength in the hour of bodily weakness. It infuses special graces that enable him to profit by this illness. It wipes away the last stains of sinful life so that if the Angel of Death should call, he is prepared for speedy and glorious entry into eternal life.

The Sacrament of Extreme Unction thus concurs with St. Francis' own solicitude for the physical and spiritual well-being of the sick. Let us beg our holy Father Francis to obtain for us from God the blessing of receiving this Last Anointing. Then purified and strengthened by the help of its graces we may be able to join our Seraphic Father in joyful singing:

Praised be my Lord for our sister, the bodily death,
From which no living man can flee.
Woe to them who die in mortal sin;
Blessed are those who shall find themselves in Thy most holy will.
For the second death shall do them no ill.



CHORUS FROM ASSISI

*We are the fractions of fire,
The syllabled spectrum of song,
We who eat bread soaked in waiting,
Whose white chains of longing are strong.*

Our winter was empty as ashes
And we had not a penny for bread,
But the eyes of our Mother sang riches
And we dined on heaven instead.

Then on a day filled with summer
Our Mother set fire to the skies
While she and the Poor Man were talking—
And heaven burned in their eyes.

*We are the fractions of fire,
The syllabled spectrum of song
We who eat bread soaked in waiting,
Whose white chains of longing are strong.*

Sister Florian Eggleston, O.S.F.

Bonaventure Of Bagnorea

Sr. M. Frances, S.M.I.C

Among the illustrious men and women whose brilliant careers — for good or evil — made the thirteenth century so remarkable in so many ways, there stands somewhat in the background the retiring figure of Giovanni di Fidanza, better known to us as Saint Bonaventure, the Seraphic Doctor. Although one of the outstanding personalities of his century, Bonaventure's fame became gradually obscured as the Middle Ages waned and passed over into the Renaissance, and today he is little more than a name even to Franciscans. It is difficult to introduce him. A few facts, several disputed dates, a good number of plausible conjectures — this is about all the help history can give us. There is no contemporary or near contemporary life of Saint Bonaventure, only a few quick sketches and passing remarks, most of them from men who were unreliable or inaccurate or biased in their judgment. Because he was never a popular saint, there is not even the usual accumulation of pious legends for us to draw upon. Yet, despite the meagerness of the facts of his life, Bonaventure still emerges from the pages of history a compelling and attractive figure, speaking intimately to us and revealing the full charm of his personality in his many extant writings. He is a man well worth knowing.

I. The Student

Giovanni or John di Fidanza was born in Bagnorea, in the vicinity of Viterbo, in 1221. His father was also Giovanni di Fidanza; his mother, Maria Ritella. We do not know how many children were born to them, but it is fairly certain that there was another boy who took orders, referred to in the old documents as Canon Fidanza of the Cathedral of Bagnorea. The family's station in life is a matter of conjecture, but it would seem likely, from what we know of Saint Bonaventure himself (obviously neither prince nor peasant) that they belonged to the comfortable and powerful Italian bourgeoisie.

Nothing is known of Bonaventure's early years except the incident of his cure by Saint Francis. He describes it himself in the Introduction to his life of Saint Francis (*Legenda Maior*, Prol., 3), recounting how "through his invocation and merits, I was snatched from the jaws of death while yet a child, as I remember with fresh and vivid memory."

In his shorter life (*Legenda Minor, VIII*), Bonaventure again refers to this: "God does not cease," he writes, "to glorify His servant by numberless miracles wrought in various parts of the world, as I myself can vouch from personal experience. For as I lay dangerously ill as a child I was snatched from the very jaws of death and restored to a healthy life owing to a vow my mother made to the blessed Father Francis. Around this incident grew the legend that Saint Francis himself gave the name Bonaventure to the little Giovanni — exclaiming prophetically "O buona ventura!" It seems fairly certain, however, that the cure took place after the death of Saint Francis; and although Bonaventure is the name by which John Fidenza was more commonly known to his contemporaries, how he obtained it we do not know.

Very little can be said of Bonaventure's early education. In the brief, *Etsi sedes*, of October 4, 1482, Sixtus IV asserts that he received his education at the convent in Bagnorea. This is plausible only if it refers to his earliest education, for it is an established fact that he went to Paris at an early age (about fifteen) where he pursued his studies in the Faculty of Arts during the years 1236-1242.

The Paris Bonaventure knew was colorful, turbulent, exciting. Students from every corner of Europe were flocking to the halls of Mount Ste. Genevieve, "the oven," as Odo of Chateauroux called it, "where the intellectual bread of the whole world was baking." Aristotle had just been introduced into the Christian schools of the West, and through the efforts of Alexander of Hales and William of Auvergne, the suspicions of ecclesiastical authorities regarding the Stagyrte and his Arabian commentators were being gradually allayed. Philosophy was about to become the handmaid of theology. Alexander of Hales, the "Irrefragable Doctor," the "Father of Scholastic Theology," the "Master-arch of Theologians," was himself something of an innovator both in his use of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard as a theology textbook and in his propounding of the idea of goodness as the foundation of his theodicy. This was the man who, around 1240, had startled the intellectual world by becoming a Friar Minor. When the poor and humble friars first came to Paris, bringing with them the dove-like simplicity that inspired the *Cantic of the Creatures*, Alexander, who had shown by subtle reasoning the beauty of all things and the source of all things in Beauty, experienced the joy of a thinker, as Gemelli observes, who sees philosophy personified in living men. So he became one of them, wearing the Franciscan habit over the masters' gown. When Bonaventure came to Paris, Alexander was in full ascendancy at the University. An original and profound thinker, a brilliant teacher, Alexander was also

a man of lofty spirituality. John of Garland called him "a pearl of purity," and the genial Salimbene considered him "the best cleric in all the world."

The sanctity and genius of Alexander of Hales, however, was hardly representative of the University as a whole. Many of the most gifted masters were worldly, arrogant, and quarrelsome; while the students, though eager for learning, were generally erratic and unruly. If students' morals were ever free, they were perhaps never quite so free as at Paris during the years Bonaventure spent there. Yet he seems to have remained serenely untouched by that gay and rowdy throng (though we can glimpse from casual remarks in his writings how closely and with what tolerant affection he observed them), for there was apparently never a question about the purity of his student life. In fact, Alexander of Hales was later to say that it seemed to him Adam had not sinned in Bonaventure. Such a statement, coming from a man accustomed to weigh the full meaning of words, bespeaks a cleanness of soul and mind that had no interest even in temptation.

As an arts student Bonaventure would have followed the ordinary course of the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic) and *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy); and he would seem to have given more than ordinary attention to rhetoric and dialectic, for he became a powerful and persuasive orator, a graceful writer, and a subtle dialectician.

Having completed his studies in the Faculty of Arts, Bonaventure entered the Franciscan Order. It is difficult to determine the place and date of his entrance, but the most recent and acceptable opinion considers Paris the place and 1243-44 the date. Several motives seem to have inspired Bonaventure to become a Friar Minor: the memory of the grace he had received from Saint Francis; the example of famous teachers, such as Alexander of Hales and Haymo of Faversham, who were entering the Order; the personal influence of Alexander himself, whom Bonaventure loved and admired as a father; and the likeness he saw between the Order and the early Church. Writing in later years, he described the trend of his thoughts during this early period. "Do not take offense," he pleaded, "that in the beginning the Brethren were simple and unlettered. This ought rather to raise the Order in your esteem. For my part, I acknowledge as before God that what chiefly drew me to love the life-work of Blessed Francis was that it bore so close a resemblance to the beginning and growth of the Church. As the Church began with simple fishermen and afterwards numbered renowned

and skilled doctors, so too it happened in the Order of Blessed Francis. In this way God makes it evident that the Institute was founded not by the prudence of men but by Christ" (*Epist. de III Questionibus, VII*, 336).

During his novitiate, Bonaventure continued his studies under Alexander of Hales. Between the young friar who was seeking a philosophy for the Franciscan ideal he loved and the master who had found the realization of his philosophy in that ideal, there was an intellectual bond far stronger than that of ordinary friendship, and a filial-paternal love much deeper than the natural affection of father and son. If Bonaventure was so profoundly impressed by the wisdom and holiness of his master, Alexander was no less impressed by the limpid purity of his young disciple's mind, and made every effort to develop it along the lines of its extraordinary mystical-mathematical bent.

Besides Alexander of Hales, whom he always followed as his father and master, Bonaventure was also influenced by such Franciscan teachers as Odo Rigaldo, John of Parma, and John of La Rochelle. He had direct contact, in addition, with other outstanding teachers of the time who were not of the Order, notably William of Auvergne, Philip the Chancellor, William of Auxerre, and the Dominican Hugh of Saint-Cher. He may have studied in England — but this is another conjecture. In any case he knew some of the writings of Robert Grossteste and of Adam Marsh, which explains why his metaphysics of light show the influence of the Oxford perspectivists.

Bonaventure continued his studies in the novitiate, but at the same time he was also continuing his spiritual formation. We can form a fairly accurate idea of his interior life during this period from a short work of his, *Regula novitiorum*, and from a long letter to a confrere, *XXV Memorialia*, both written at a later date but explanatory, as he expressly states, of what he himself practiced. "No one can serve God perfectly," he begins in the letter, "as experience certainly teaches unless he strives with all his strength to free himself from the bonds of the world. . . . Therefore we must never permit our heart to be solicited about any created thing, except in so far as it may excite the affection of divine love and desire." Here, briefly, is the keynote of Bonaventure's entire spirituality: to subordinate all worldly affairs to the affairs of God, to deal with them as necessity requires but never to become entangled in them; and to love created things as the means by which we can reach God. This was the characteristic of his learning and piety: the aim of all his endeavors, the reason for the calm determination he

always manifested as superior. It was seen especially in the serenity of his countenance, in that "imperturbable equanimity" with which, as Angelo of Clareno testifies, "he silenced everyone."

In 1248 Bonaventure received the baccalaureate in biblical studies and began his teaching career in the school of the Friars Minor. His first work, according to Salimbene, was his commentary on the Gospel of Saint Luke. "Brother John of Parma," says Salimbene, "permitted Brother Bonaventure of Bagnorea to lecture in Paris — which he had never permitted to anyone else — for he was a bachelor but did not yet have a seat. And then he gave a lecture on the whole Gospel of Saint Luke which was beautiful and excellent; then he wrote four books on the *Sentences* which even to this day remain useful and esteemed. It was then the year 1248, but now the year 1284."

The reason for Bonaventure's early start in teaching may have been the dearth of qualified lecturers, for Alexander of Hales had died in 1245 followed in the same year by John of Rupella. In any case, Bonaventure seems to have acquitted himself surpassingly well. The four books on the *Sentences* represent his first and last scientific work. Hereafter, though he wrote voluminously, his treatises were to be shorter works, directed more toward exposition of ascetical and mystical theology than toward the building of scientific philosophical or theological syntheses.

The statutes of the University of Paris required that theology students pass two years from the beginning of the study of the Bible to the time of their study of the *Sentences*. Accordingly, we may suppose that Bonaventure began his work on the *Sentences* in 1250-51 and received the doctorate in 1253.

It was just at this time that the University of Paris was the scene of more than usually violent disturbances. A drunken brawl had broken out among the students, and the civil guard intervened, killing one of them and seriously wounding several. Such encounters were frequent and they created a bad spirit between the city magistrates and the University authorities. The magistrates, in the interests of public order, kept insisting that the students be subject to their jurisdiction, while the University sought to exempt them from it. This latest affair brought matters to a climax. The University demanded the punishment of the civil guard; the magistrates refused. Thereupon the entire staff of secular teachers suspended their lectures and withdrew from the University. The regulars, however, kept their halls open and continued to lecture. Understandably, this widened the steadily growing rift between

the regular and secular clergy, and when the difficulty with the magistrates was finally settled, the seculars took action against the offending regulars. There is no doubt that the Mendicant Orders had been unpopular at Paris ever since they first arrived. Their teachers were the most brilliant at the University, their lecture halls the best appointed, their followers the most enthusiastic. They enjoyed the favor of kings and popes, and were granted many privileges. Possessing neither money nor lands, they wanted for nothing. Granted that some of the secular masters at the University were worldly and indifferent to spiritual matters, we can still understand their resentment, for many of them were poor, and while forbidden to engage in commerce, found the places in the services of the Church occupied by the Mendicants. The tension increased when in 1252 the University limited the seats of the Mendicant Orders to one each, and when in the following year it demanded an oath from all University members, including the regular clergy, to observe its statutes. The Dominicans and Franciscans protested, but John of Parma, the Franciscan Minister General, considered more expedient to accept the University's regulations and overruled the Paris friars' protest. With peace between the Friars Minor and the University thus restored, there is no reason to suppose that Bonaventure was not granted the doctorate in 1253, together with the privilege of exercising the *determinatio* in disputed questions.

The titles of Bonaventure's *determinationes* suggest that he still remained in the thick of the fight between the secular clergy and the Mendicants. The concessions of John of Parma, if they calmed the tempest for a time in regard to the Franciscans, were not sufficient to remove all rancour. With the publication of a book by the Franciscan Gerard of Borgo San Donnino, a most unfortunate treatise filled with the mysticism of the Joachimite heresy, and the treatise of William of Saint-Amour, a vicious polemic against the Mendicant Orders, the conflict broke out anew. Up to this time it had been solely juridical in character, confined to matters of University administration; now it took root in theological and ascetical soil. Alarmed at the new developments, Louis IX ordered the University to hold a solemn *determinatio* on the question of evangelical perfection, especially poverty. Bonaventure and Thomas of York were chosen to represent the Franciscans. The result of the *determinatio*, in which the sharpest minds of the University were pitted against each other, was the condemnation of William's book.

Nevertheless, the tension remained, and the conflict was still smouldering when in the February of the following year, 1257, the

General Chapter of Rome accepted the resignation of John of Parma and elected Bonaventure, on John's recommendation, to succeed him. Bonaventure was then but thirty-six years old.

II. The Minister General

From the very outset Bonaventure dedicated himself to the new labor placed before him. In his first official letter addressed to the Order, dated April 23, 1257, he gave unmistakable evidence that a profound scholar and a mystic can also be an excellent administrator. He begins in the usual medieval style, confessing his unworthiness for so high and exalted an office, the settles down to deal with the matter at hand: ten causes he has observed for the growing laxity in the Order. "When I consider the causes," he writes, "that to some extent darken the glory of our Order, I see first of all the manifold business affairs in which money, so inimical to the poverty of the Order, is greedily sought, imprudently accepted, and used. I see the idleness of many Brothers, their useless travelling from place to place, a scandal rather than an edification to the people. I see the construction of costly and pretentious buildings, which disturbs the peace of the Order, annoys our benefactors, and often causes hard words to be said against us. I see the bestowal of offices on Brothers who are untried, unmortified, and incapable. Then there is the eager acceptance of legacies and the officious interference with obsequies, to the great offence of the secular clergy. Finally, there is an increase of dangerous friendships, whence arise suspicions, calumnies, and scandals; expensive living, by which the Brethren become a burden to the people. Though many are not guilty, yet the curse strikes all if the innocent do not oppose the guilty. In flame your zeal. Drive out the buyers and sellers from the Heavenly Father's house. Awaken in all the Brethren a desire for devout prayer. Limit the reception of candidates; for this statute I will have strictly observed. Root out these evil ways, though it be hard. The sublimity of your profession demands it; the calamities confronting us demand it; Saint Francis himself, the Blood of Jesus Christ, and God demand it." He concludes with a stern warning: "Should I learn from the visitors, whom I desire to pay special attention to these matters, that my directions have been obeyed, I shall give thanks to God and to you. But if it should be otherwise, which God forbid, you may rest assured that my conscience will not permit me to allow the matter to pass unnoticed. Though it is not my intention to forge new chains for you, yet must I, in compliance with the dictates of my conscience, aim at the extirpation of

abuses" (*Opera Omnia*, VIII, 468). Assuredly, the Friars Minor had a General.

Following an interview with Pope Alexander IV, Bonaventure began a series of trips which were to place him in immediate contact with the various provinces of the Order. His keen observation and insight and deep knowledge of human nature enabled him to discover every ill and to apply exactly the right remedy in due season. His sane and efficacious criterion in governing the Order — the mitigated observances of the Rule legitimately brought about by papal indulgences — soon bore fruit. Under his administration of seventeen years, the religious discipline and the spiritual and intellectual life of the Order reached a perfection seldom attained in later times. It was the era of saints and doctors and of the great theological syntheses of the Franciscan school.

It must not be imagined, however, that the office of Minister General of that heterogeneous — one might even say heterodox — body of men was anything of a plum dropped into the eager hands of the polished young doctor of Paris; it was rather a crown of thorns and sack of rocks bound to his unwilling back. Still, as Gemelli remarks, no matter how difficult the circumstances, Bonaventure always preserved the mentality of a scholar, the equilibrium of a bourgeois, the tact of a gentleman, and the fusion of all these gifts into the supernatural harmony of his holiness.

At the time Bonaventure took office, the Order was torn by internal dissensions of a most painful and dangerous kind. There were three mutually hostile factions within the Seraphic Order, and within each camp were men of solid virtue and superior ability. The first group comprised the early followers of Saint Francis. They held fast to his practices and ideals: poverty in its strictest form, life in hermitage, manual labor, observance of the Testament of Saint Francis as of greater binding force than the Rule. The *Spirituali* went along with this group. There is no questioning their sincerity, but they made the mistake of insisting that the personal ideals of Saint Francis were of obligation for all. At the opposite extreme were the *Relaxati*, those who sought further mitigations and dispensations. In the middle, bearing the resentment of both extremes, were the *Mitigati*, or Brethren of the Community, who observed the Rule as it stood, full and entire, and sought for nothing more nor less. It was to this middle group that Bonaventure belonged. He knew exactly and revered deeply the ideals of Saint Francis, but he was also able to distinguish between what Francis desired for himself alone, what he left free to the individual to imitate or not, and what he strictly enjoined upon every Friar Minor.

Another point at issue was the interpretation of the Rule. Many of the stouthearted and thickheaded *Spirituali* insisted on literal observance "without gloss." Bonaventure argued with sweet reasonableness that the Rule is a law and must be interpreted according to the norms that hold good for other laws.

Yet for all his wisdom and prudence, many of the best friars — Giles of Assisi, Jacopone da Todi, Angelo of Clareno — mistrusted and opposed him, while many of the worst ones tried to excuse their laxity on the grounds of his mildness. It is interesting to note what Peter Olivieri, one of the *Spirituali*, replied to the latter group: "Hitherto," he says, "it was the custom to adduce worthy men as examples of perfection; now, alas, they are brought forward to justify relaxation and inobservance . . . Let me say what I think of Bonaventure. He was a most excellent and pious man, and in his teaching insisted on the perfection of poverty. But he was of a somewhat delicate constitution and therefore, perhaps, inclined to be somewhat indulgent to himself, as I have often heard him humbly admit. For he was not greater than the Apostle who said: 'We all offend in many things.' Still, the prevailing laxity affected him so much that I heard him declare at the Chapter of Paris that from the day he was made Minister General there was never a moment when he was not prepared to be ground to dust so that the Order might retain the purity and strictness intended by Saint Francis and his companions, and attain the end they aimed at. On this account the holy man may be excused somewhat, though not entirely. He was not one of those who sought to justify relaxation and assail the purity of the Rule, making such conduct the norm of their lives. If he was in any way found wanting, he regarded the matter with grief and sorrow" (*Opera Omnia*, X, p. 50). It is ironical that one of the greatest saints of our Order, generally recognized as its second founder, should have required such a back-handed defence. But then, the entire history of the Franciscan Order is but a vast mosaic of ironies.

Six years after the Constitutions of Narbonne, abuses were still rife in the Order, and Bonaventure was still throwing the full weight of his authority against them. He never relaxed his vigilance. "I adjure you," he wrote the superior of the Order, "by the shedding of Christ's most precious Blood and by the wounds of His Passion, which appeared with unmistakable clearness on the body of our holy Father Saint Francis, that like prudent and faithful servants of Christ you apply yourselves diligently to the rooting out of pestiferous abuses, and that you show yourselves attentive to discipline and examples of religious

fervor. In the first place, stir up the Brethren to a love of prayer, at the same time entreat and even compel them to observe the Rule faithfully — 'fearing the countenance of none; rooting up and pulling down; wasting and destroying;' committing the disaffected and insubordinate to prison or expelling them from the Order, as the laws of justice and piety may demand, lest, while with cruel mercy you spare a diseased member, the corruption extend itself to the entire body" (*Opera Omnia*, VIII, p. 470).

Sometime after his election as Minister General, (probably 1263), Bonaventure was faced with the decidedly unpleasant duty of practicing what he preached. He was obliged to preside at the trial of John of Parma, his ex-superior and teacher, the man who had received him into the Order and who had named him most worthy to succeed him in office. Bonaventure had already been forced to imprison the recalcitrant Gerard of Borgo San Donnino for refusing to retract his Joachimite ideas, but the heresy was still strong within the Order, appealing especially to the *Spirituali*, whose love for Saint Francis bordered on imbalance. They considered Joachim of Flora the inspired precursor of Francis, the herald of a new and mystical order in the Church. While Joachim had been a man of singular holiness and had died in full communion with the Church, his trinitarian doctrine had been proscribed by the Fourth Lateran Council. Yet, if we can believe Salimbene, John had definite leanings toward the Joachimite doctrine. In any case he was formally tried, but the trial was never brought to a conclusion thanks to the intervention of Cardinal Ottoboni-Freschi in his behalf. It is not difficult to believe that Bonaventure and Cardinal Orsini, the Protector of the Order, were vastly relieved at this timely intervention and as for John, he was happy to retire to a hermitage, living so well that the Order venerates him today as Blessed John of Parma.

The proceedings of the trial have not come down to us, so it is impossible to judge fairly of the matter; but Angelo of Clarenò has left to history a bitter accusation against Bonaventure's manner of conducting the trial. "Bonaventure," he writes, "on the testimony of John of Parma himself, acted wrongly in no slight degree; for while discussing the question in dispute privately with John of Parma in his cell, he agreed with him, affirming that he thought as he did, but publicly, in the presence of the Brethren, he showed that he held the contrary. Angelo then gives vent to his indignation: "Brother John enters. As one suspect of heresy he is forced to take an oath; a wise man is cross-examined by those less wise; an aged man by youths; one full of the

Holy Ghost is searched into by the indevout, and by those who follow the desires of their heart. Then the wisdom and holiness of Bonaventure were obscured and vanished, and his mildness, by the agitation of his soul, was changed into violent anger. To such an extent was he carried away that he exclaimed: 'If it were not for the honor of the Order I should have him publicly punished as a heretic!' (*Opera Omnia*, X, p. 49). Certainly the situation was sufficiently nerve-wracking to have taxed Bonaventure's self-control to the utmost limits. Nevertheless, Angelo's denunciation is no doubt colored by partisan bias, for he was a leader among the rigorists who never fully shared their General's points of view.

For all his delicate health, Bonaventure's life as Minister General was active to a degree that would prostrate most modern superiors. He travelled incessantly from province to province, preached before popes and kings, monks and nuns, universities and councils. He kept in touch with developments in all branches of secular, ecclesiastical, and intellectual life, taking an active part whenever it seemed to him needful or good. His collected writings swell to ten folio volumes of the Quaracchi edition. His sermons alone fill some 750 pages, exclusive of the triple series of *Collationes*; and the sermons we have are but summaries of the originals. He presided at six general chapters, most of them somewhat stormy, several of crucial importance in the history of the Order. At the first Chapter, that of Narbonne, 1260, he revised the statutes and promulgated the famous Constitutions of Narbonne, the groundwork for all future legislation in the Order. Asked by the Chapter to write a life of Saint Francis, he visited Umbria and sought information from the first disciples of Francis who were still alive, presumably Giles, Leo, and Illuminatus. His two works, the *Legenda Maior* and *Minor*, were approved by the Chapter of Pisa in 1263, which Chapter also determined several regulations aimed to increase devotion to Our Lady. At the Chapter of Paris, 1266, it was declared that Bonaventure's life of Francis was the only one to be used, and all the others were to be destroyed. This apparently high-handed measure has been lamented by many historians and excused by others on the theory of its being necessary for peace of the Order, which could not be maintained as long as the earlier lives, so definitely partisan in tone, served to fan the flames of discord among the three opposing factions. It would seem, however, that neither the lament nor the excuse is needed, for recent scholarship has noted that the statute refers only to the liturgical texts or legends used in the Office, the others having served their purpose only until something better could be produced.

In 1265 Pope Clement IV, looking about for a man suited to fill the vacant see of York, settled on Bonaventure. The situation in England at this time was extremely delicate and dangerous, and the Pope was fully aware of it. In the Bull announcing the appointment, Clement left a testimony of how highly Bonaventure was esteemed by those he suited to judge him on his own merits. The words of the Bull being quoted. "We have long considered this appointment. We have given it our profound and careful attention. Our mind has long been occupied with it in all its bearings. The welfare of a Church so great and honorable, of a daughter so noble and so devoted to the Apostolic See, of a Catholic Kingdom so renowned as England and so dear to the Roman See — the welfare of a Church so amply endowed and enjoying Archbishopial dignity fills us with deepest solicitude. It has aroused our anxiety, increased our vigilance, and intensified our deliberation. We have studied more intimately, and considered more carefully, all that in this election might make for the greater welfare of the Church, of the Apostolic See, and of the entire Kingdom. We have striven by every means in our power to find a worthy man — one devoted to the Apostolic See and suited to the wants of the aforesaid Church and zealous for the peace and welfare of the Kingdom — a man conspicuous for learning remarkable for foresight—a man whom the Lord might love, in whose goodness He might dwell — a man whose good deeds render him worthy of imitation, by whom the Catholic flock as by a shining light may be led to salvation. Seeking for such a one we have fixed our choice on thee — our mind has rested on thee with entire satisfaction. For we behold in thee religious fervor, candor of life, irreproachable conduct, renowned learning, prudent foresight, serious gravity. We see that thou hast long and so laudably presided over thine Order, and fulfilled so faithfully the office of Minister General — exercising it prudently and profitably for the welfare of the Order, striving to live innocently under regular observance, showing thyself peaceful and lovable to all. Wherefore we are fully convinced that we see in thee what we desire for the welfare of the said Church, the Apostolic See, and the entire Kingdom. By our Apostolic authority, therefore, we make provision for the aforesaid Church through thee, and constitute thee its Archbishop and Pastor, absolving thee from the office of Minister General and transferring thee to the said Church, granting thee free licence to go thither. Therefore we exhort, admonish, affectionately entreat, and strictly command thee by virtue of holy obedience not to resist the Divine Will, nor to oppose any obstacle nor delay to our command, but humbly to submit to the

call of Heaven and accept the burden placed on thee by God" (Wadding, Anno 1265).

Bonaventure hastened to Perugia begging Clement to relieve him of the appointment. Surely only the weightiest reasons could have induced him to decline so urgent an appeal, but what the reasons were we do not know. Pious biographers have sometimes adduced Bonaventure's humility as grounds for refusal of the honor, which is as sensible as to attribute to humility a man's refusal of martyrdom. England was in the throes of civil war; law and order were practically suspended; the people were bitterly opposed to the appointment of foreigners to their sees and impatient of papal intervention. The last papal legate had been threatened with death if he dared set foot in the country. In the mind of the Pope, the man who could have dealt most successfully with that situation was Bonaventure, and Bonaventure undoubtedly had the intelligence to realize it himself. Since his devotion to the welfare of the Church is beyond question, we can only surmise that a real and insurmountable difficulty, and not any personal reluctance, forced him to refuse the appointment.

That Bonaventure was truly a humble man goes without saying. The fact is fully attested to by his contemporaries, and forms the subject of the few anecdotes that we have of him. One of the most charming of these is recounted by Salimbene, "Brother Mark," he writes, "was my special friend, and to such a degree did he love Brother Bonaventure that he would frequently burst into tears on recalling (after our father's death) the learning and the heavenly graces that had crowned his life. When Brother Bonaventure, the Minister General, was about to preach to the clergy, this same Brother Mark would say to him: 'You are indeed a hireling,' or, 'On former occasions you have preached without knowing precisely what you were talking about. I sincerely hope you are not going to do that now.' Brother Mark acted thus to incite the General to more painstaking efforts. His depreciation was merely affected and in no way genuine, for Mark reported all the sermons of his master and treasured them greatly. Brother Bonaventure rejoiced at his friend's reproaches, and that for five reasons. First, because he was of a kind-hearted and long-suffering disposition; second, because thus he could imitate his blessed Father Francis; third, because it showed how loyally Mark was devoted to him; fourth, because it afforded him the means of avoiding vainglory; fifth, because it incited him to more careful preparation" (*Chronica*, p. 138).

During the Lent of 1270, Bonaventure began his famous series of conferences known as the *Collationes de decem Præceptis*. From the

time of his election as Minister General he had devoted himself almost exclusively to the affairs of the Church and of the Order, and had taken no active part in University life beyond preaching to select groups. Nevertheless, his frequent and prolonged visits to Paris kept him in close contact with John Peckham, Arthur of Bruyas, and Roger Bacon, who in turn kept him informed of the ideas that were soon to be laid down upon the University an avalanche of pagan Aristotelianism and Averroism. Realizing the grave danger facing Christian theology, he entered the fray with full vigor and remained active in it until his election to the Cardinalate.

In 1269 the Chapter of Assisi recommended the work of the *quadragesimales*, inaugurated for the *studium* of Paris four masters of studies of different nationalities, and added further precepts on devotion to Master Eckhard, one of which developed into the *Angelus*.

Meanwhile the University of Paris was enjoying a fresh outbreak of unpleasantness between the secular and the regular clergy. This time it was an incendiary tract by Gerard d'Abbeville that brought the boiling pot to a high boil. Several masters were involved in the dispute — Gerard himself, Nicholas of Lisieux, Thomas Aquinas, and John Peckham. Bonaventure was the first to reply to Gerard with the publication of his *Apologia pauperum*. Gerard answered with his *Letter Apologeticus*. Bonaventure, under pressure of duty, was unable to continue the battle, but left his sword and shield in the able hands of John Peckham.

An interregnum of three years had followed the death of Clement IV. Contemporary witnesses testify that Bonaventure's influence at the Conclave at Viterbo, 1271, finally resulted in a compromise that secured the election of Gregory X. The new Pope showed himself more favorable to Bonaventure as Clement had been. In 1273, while Bonaventure was in Paris, he received from Gregory the papal Bull *Sacrosanctum*, requiring him to prepare the questions that would probably be raised at the forthcoming Council of Lyons.

A few years previously, a new teacher, Siger of Brabant, had arrived at the University of Paris and was setting forth, with all the glitter and power of his perverted genius, a unified and complete doctrine of pagan rationalism. Although the authorities had already given him several sharp raps on the knuckles, Siger continued to teach and to draw immense crowds to his lectures. His doctrine, based on the teachings of Averroes, held the unity of the intellect, the eternity of the world, and the power of philosophy to solve all the problems of the human mind. To be a philosopher, he said, is to attain to the summit of a full

perfect life; theology has its origin in fables and fiction and can teach man nothing; it only proves a hindrance in his search for truth. Reason alone is the source of all certitude.

Siger of Brabant was simply more than Bonaventure could endure. Despite the burdens of his office, he once more appeared at the University, this time in full magisterial dignity, and began what historians have called the "Battle of the Hexaemeron." The following selection will serve to illustrate the general tone and line of his arguments: "Beware of the danger, beware of the danger! In the last days of the Synagogue the Jews based their study of the Divine Law on authority, and now today, in the same manner, we are basing our study only on reason. Assuredly those who love Sacred Scripture cultivate philosophy as well, so as to have it confirm their faith. But Philosophy is the 'tree of knowledge of good and evil,' for in it falsehood is mixed with truth. If you try to equal the philosophers, like them, you will say: How could Aristotle have been mistaken? And spurning Scripture, you will lose the faith. If you say the world is eternal, you know nothing of Christ. If you say there is but one intellect for all men and that there is no bliss after this life and no resurrection of the dead, if you eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you are turning away from the faith. Prudence is needed in the study of philosophy; all that is contrary to the doctrine of Christ must be shunned like deadly poison. If you establish rationally that the world is eternal you will doubtless explain that these are your arguments but not your belief. Hear the words of the Law: "If a man open a pit and dig one and cover it not, and an ox or an ass fall into it, the owner of the pit shall pay the price of the beast (Ex. 21:33). Think you that the Holy Spirit is referring mainly to a material pit? No, but to the pit of error. You open that pit when you make falsehood appear likely and support it with philosophical arguments. If then your disciples fall into the pit, you will be responsible. Those, too, do not cover the pit sufficiently who are content to declare that faith holds the opposite, and they are an occasion of sin against faith; for: 'Whoever doubts his faith is unfaithful.' Here one makes himself a master in knowledge who never knew anything, and he begets errors. Here another would have philosophy discover the mystery of the Trinity and he does not even know what he is saying. Let him first study Sacred Scripture or at least inquire from one who knows Scripture, for he must walk in the simplicity of faith" (*Opera Omnia*, IX, pp. 62-3). It is remarkable how well Bonaventure's words apply to our own times. We have to remind ourselves that he is addressing a group of University men, mostly clerics, and that he is speak-

ing in the thirteenth century, the era that romantic historians have called the greatest in the Age of Faith.

III. The Cardinal

The magnificent *Collationes in Hexaemeron* lasted from April 28, 1273, and constitute the ultimate doctrinal monument of Bonaventure's genius. Unfortunately they remained unfinished, for on May 23, 1273, he received notice of his nomination as Cardinal-Archbishop of Albano, together with the strict command to accept the nomination. Bonaventure acquiesced and was consecrated in Lyons, November 1, 1273, together with his Dominican friend, Peter of Tarantaise, by Gregory himself. At the same time Bonaventure was named Vicar of the Papal Legate for the forthcoming Council of Lyons.

The main considerations to be taken up by the Council referred to the union of the Greek Church, the Crusades, and the general ecclesiastical reform. In the work preparatory to the Council Bonaventure was assigned the leadership.

The antagonism between the regular and secular clergy was causing trouble and even in the preliminary meetings of the Council made itself felt in the open attacks of the seculars. Bonaventure vigorously defended the Mendicants; nevertheless, the Second Council of Lyons suppressed all new mendicant Orders excepting the Franciscans and Dominicans, and left in precarious position the Carmelites and Hermits of Saint Augustine. Fr. Laurence Costelloe (*St. Bonaventure*, 103) quotes a satirical triplet directed toward Bonaventure and other Franciscan members of the Council, Rigaldo, Archbishop of Rouen, and Paul, Bishop of Tripolis. It runs:

*Bonaventure, Rouen, and Tripolitane
Dispense papal laws and unmindful remain
Of their Order which scorns all honors as vain.*

Despite his elevation to the Cardinalate, Bonaventure was permitted to govern the Order until the Chapter of Lyons was convoked. The Chapter elected Jerome of Ascoli Minister General, whereupon Bonaventure was relieved of the office.

The Second Council of Lyons held its first session on May 7, 1274. The two new Mendicant Cardinals, Bonaventure and Peter of Tarantaise, were seated to the right of the Pope. Largely through the influence of Bonaventure, who was greatly admired by the Greek theologians, the union of the Greek Church was sealed June 28. In the papal Mass celebrated for the occasion, after the singing of the Gospel in Greek and Latin, Bonaventure preached his last sermon. It was also his last pu-

er. Attacked suddenly by an unknown illness, he ended his earthly life toward the dawn of July 15, 1274, in the convent of the Friars Minor at Lyons.

Bonaventure's untimely death at the age of fifty-three was universally mourned. Peter of Tarantaise celebrated the Mass for him and preached the eulogy, taking as his theme the pathetic words of David mourning the death of Jonathan (II Kings, 1:26): *I grieve for thee, my brother Jonathan, exceedingly beautiful and lovable above the love of women.* This text was suggested, no doubt, not only by Peter's personal affection for Bonaventure, but also if not especially by that striking characteristic of his that all his contemporaries, even those who opposed his policies, so strongly emphasized — his wonderful amiability. The last words recorded of him, the comment of the historian of the Council of Lyons, repeat that verdict: "This grace the Lord had given him, that whosoever looked upon him was forthwith irresistibly drawn to love him" (*Opera Omnia*, X, p. 67). And to this comment we have nothing further to add, except to remark that as loveliness characterized our Seraphic Father, so it has always characterized his most faithful sons and daughters. If we cannot follow the Seraphic Doctor in his learning and sanctity nor in his life of service for the Order and the Church, there is nothing to prevent us from imitating his amiability, that charming quality through which he drew all who loved him to the love of God.



The Crucified And The Light Of Life

Salvator Butler, S. J.

I

St. Bonaventure Interprets Himself

Among the Church's masters of spiritual theology, none is more authoritative than the Seraphic Doctor, and none is in a position to speak with sounder wisdom on the spiritual life which the Seraphic Father exemplified.

Yet the pious individual seeking immediate and practical learning must depend upon less masterful guides, since St. Bonaventure's thought is difficult of access because of his rarified intellectuality and mysticism and because of the form in which the thoughts are expressed. Some of the lesser men are often chosen because of their Bonaventurian thought, but learning from them is not the same as learning from St. Bonaventure, for where they do not actually misinterpret, they of necessity borrow more or less of themselves with more or less of the Seraphic Doctor.

But St. Bonaventure does not confine himself to any single manner of exposition. At times he is figurative, descriptive, and mystical, at others he is altogether scientific. Again, he is often quite practical and detailed. Could it not be supposed, then, that a confrontation of different types of writing where they bear upon the same subject matter could fill out the meaning one of another, and to some extent help the author to interpret his own mind? Precisions so obtained would be a certain guarantee of faithfulness on the one hand, and on the other the more imaginative mystical works could serve to illustrate the details and principles of the technical works. They might in this way supply a more concrete and accessible material to work upon.

An attempt is made at the end of this article to show the possibilities opened up by such a method on the practical level. It consists in looking to St. Bonaventure directly for instruction on the spiritual life, confirming and enlarging upon his doctrine through references to his own works, rather than beginning with a modern author and confirming or enlarging upon doctrine as presented by him through dissections and comments of the Seraphic Doctor accordingly as the selected texts might appear to corroborate the modern system.

Here a passage of the scientific *Triple Way* is illustrated with excerpts from the more mystical and descriptive texts of the *Tree of Life*. Both texts follow the lines of devotion to the Crucified.

II

St. Francis Model for the Scholar

It was well over seven hundred years ago that St. Francis introduced a way of life based upon a simple, direct following of the Gospel texts with Jesus Christ Himself in a personal, very intimate way as teacher and model. As mystical core of this way of perfection, St. Francis advocated the transformation of the heart through love of Christ Crucified.

Times, conditions, habits of thought have vastly and radically changed since that time, but St. Francis with his ideal of the Gospel life, and his seraphic love of the Crucified, is still regarded with loving trust as a model for religious perfection. It is possible, however, that in seeing him through our sentimental, rather than mystical, modern-day eyes we are prone to impose upon him traits that resemble ourselves more than they resemble him. In particular, his reputation for romantic poesy might be examined. Early authors ascribe his spontaneous emotionalism and exuberant affection for the creatures of nature, and his swift, unreservedly whole-hearted response to God less to his temperament, and mostly to an extraordinary grace of union with God. This enabled him to understand things according to what his contemporary biographers called the *Eternal Light*. The emotional poesy would then explain hardly more than the visible shell, leaving the astounding marvel of his inner life with God strange to us and unrecognized. But it is this inner man of grace who is more worthy of our interest and admiration.

It would seem that his transformation was effected through seraphic love, which indeed enflamed his heart, and at the same time enlightened his mind. The flame of the heart is recognized today; the enlightenment of the intellectual faculties by that same flame is given far less emphasis. We are then left with an incomplete image of St. Francis, and one that does not provide the incentive it should to seek understanding according to the Light which also enlightens the angels, and the knowing of things as well as the loving of them as Christ views them in His own Heart.

St. Francis as a model for the scholar is not immediately obvious for the reason that he himself was not a scholar. He was, however, learned, albeit in a different way. He excelled rather in the fruits of knowledge which others acquire through scholarly industry. It is hardly

possible to suppose otherwise. This would mean throwing the orbi-
biographers into discredit, and consequently dissolving the authori-
our most trusted sources for the genuine Poverello.

Intellectually, he was in fact jubilantly active, but in his
manner. Not only was he through his great purity, (as St. Bonave-
will not let us forget) at home with heavenly truths, but he under-
the secrets of the created world as well. Celano tells us, "the penet-
intuition of his heart succeeded in discovering, in an extraordi-
manner, and one unknown to others, the mystery of creatures." (I
was profoundly learned in what he so generously loved, and
knowledge he exulted joyfully.

The gift of wisdom flourished generously in the Poverello. In
the "igniculus sapientiae" may glow, or flame up more or less vi-
Whatever the case, for the Franciscan it is of maximum importance
he also cultivate wisdom, that fruit of simplicity and fear of the
in which truth and love embrace, and that he respond with de-
to the Seraphic Father's example in this respect also, lest his heart
his head dwell, so to speak, in a soul divided against itself.

III

St. Bonaventure Teaches the Integral Poverello

If what has been said is not too gravely erroneous, we might
to the discovery that the modern religious in his intellectual life
narly falls short of imitating the Poverello as much as he
Although he may approach his studies with devotion in the sense
studies quite willingly for God, he could do more in bringing that
tion to bear upon the act of study itself so as to pervade it. The
of devotion is not applied to the faculties studying in such wise
fervor inspires an approach to the objects of their science with
St. Bonaventure calls that "gaze of admiration," whereby he would
that truth is wonderful. The mental powers are not so educated
they become psychologically disposed through the warmth of de-
to recognize the scientifically true as being also good and
The scholar of our times, whose heart is divided from his head,
accustomed to seeking knowledge of things according to the
wholeness of the reality they have received from the hand of
holy Artisan. He fulfills his scope when he has absorbed knowl-
things in the form of neatly schematized data.

But if the scholar knew how to apply the fire of his prayerful
to the illuminating of what he has learned to be true he could do
it as good and admire it as beautiful, and it is admiration that de-

to perceive what is greater than ourselves, and it is beauty that dis-
plays things under the aspect of their perfection. If he could place the
immense apparatus of his philosophical and theological knowledge at
the service of the rectified and integrated powers of the soul, then he
could, grace aiding, turn the full powers of a purified inner eye upon
a clearer, truer and grander view of the Sovereign Good and Triune God
Himself, and consider under the rays of His own Light the wonderful
creatures He has made to mirror His glorious splendor. He would then
more accurately conform to the humble image of the Poverello, who
through a crucified *mind* as well as *heart* exceeded the puny limits of
man to perceive God as all in all, and who in so doing most perfectly
conformed to the Incarnate Word.

Our times do not permit professors to establish requirements similar
to those of the fatherly St. Bonaventure. They are not likely to insist
that their students accompany their speculation with devotion, their
investigation with admiration, their observation with enthusiasm, nor
do they feel it their obligation to instruct them on how to reflect within
the soul upon philosophical and theological theses with divinely inspired
wisdom (*Itinerarium*, Prologue, 4). It suffices that they be industrious,
methodical, scientifically accurate. Whatever their fervor of devotion,
study should remain study, and devotion a matter for the heart.

The method of the Seraphic Doctor presupposes his doctrine of
restoring or rectifying the faculties fallen into disorder through the
sin of Adam. However, a modern professor, rather than teach the
rectification of the heart, as St. Bonaventure would have it, is more
likely to teach that the heart with its inherent impulses and fondness
for imagery falsifies through its very nature the investigations of the
mind. On the other hand, the pious religious commonly fears that
intellectual investigation in devotion serves mostly to dampen the ardor
of prayer — which as a matter of fact it can easily do if the heart is not
harmoniously reordered through ascetic discipline.

Indeed, it must be kept in mind, in this regard, that such *rectifica-*
tion according to the Seraphic Doctor not only means redirecting of the
corporeal faculties to the seconding and fortifying of the higher spiritual
faculties, but also withdrawing them from the wilful bent toward sen-
sible things. He insists firmly on the necessity of detaching them from
sensible and corporeal satisfactions. One cannot turn toward one thing
without at the same time turning away from another.

There are saints of other ages who bear witness that the heart is by
no means doomed to remain a rebel to truth: the heart can and should

serve the mind loyally in the effective pursuit of truth, rather than diverting it therefrom, and the mind can help wonderfully to nuance and magnify the aspirations of the heart toward God. Among the saints is the Seraphic doctor, who explained the Poverello for each generation, and whose explanations remain in our present day for a man who has the good fortune to sieze the meanings he intended.

A difficulty still remains in the task of interpretation. To understand St. Boaventure, one must, like him, have the habit of admiration. But our modern industrial-age minds have lost their faculty for admiration. Or rather, we habitually dispose of it where it will place an obligation upon our reason lest we be lifted from the safety of the earth. We are habituated to bestowing a maudlin admiration upon the vainglamour of Hollywood, while going to mechanically ordered and slick stream-lined manuals to find our knowledge. How then are we to follow the acrobatic perepities of this thirteenth century theologian? He learned among the architects who disported their spirits by deftly balancing stone vaults weighing many tons upon lace-crowned pillars as dainty flower stems. He rubbed elbows with the artists who in the profuse figured ornamentation of their carved porches and stained glass windows composed images intended for teaching, and especially to teach the too ignorant to read. Their "Bibles for the illiterate" are found at the present day to be so fantastically and intricately involved and developed and so exasperatingly esoteric that specialized archeologists and handigraphers are at great pains to decipher them.

Nevertheless, insofar as he is accessible, St. Bonaventure remains an able guide to the spirituality which the Seraphic Father embodied, who can teach us who the whole St. Francis is. He longed to be transformed into the Crucified Christ, and the Stigmata assure us that he was so transformed. What then does St. Bonaventure have to tell us of fruitful means of imitating him in this devotion?

(To be continued)



Giles Of Assisi

CHAPTER I

Concerning the Virtues and Graces and Their Effects and the Vices

The graces of God and virtues are the ladder and the way of ascending to heaven; and the vices and sins are the way and the ladder of descending to hell.

Vices and sins are poison; virtues and good works are the antidote.

Grace attracts grace; and one vice attracts another vice.

Grace is unwilling to be praised; and vice is unwilling to be despised. That is, a man of grace is unwilling to be praised and has no desire for human acclaim; and the man of vice is unwilling to be despised and reproved—which attitude proceeds from pride.

The mind finds rest in humility; and patience is her daughter.

Purity of heart sees God; and devotion partakes of him.

If you love, you shall be loved; if you fear, you shall be feared; if you serve, you shall be served; if you act well toward others, others will act well toward you.

Blessed is he who loves and does not for that reason desire to be loved; blessed is he who fears and does not for that reason desire to be feared; blessed is he who serves and does not for that reason desire to be served; blessed is he who acts well toward others and does not for that reason desire others to act well toward him. And because these are great things, the foolish do not attain to them.

There are three things that are very great and useful, if a man has them he cannot fall into evil. The first is if you endure in peace, for God's sake, every affliction that may come upon you. The second is if you are the more humbled by whatever you do or receive. The third is if you faithfully love those goods that cannot be seen with the bodily eye.

Those things that are the more cheaply regarded and thrust aside by worldly men are honored and received by God and his saints. And those things that are the more greatly loved and embraced and honored by worldly men are still more greatly hated and thrust aside and despised by God and his saints. Man hates all that should be loved and loves all that should be hated.

Once Brother Giles asked a certain friar: "Have you a good soul?" He replied, "My Brother, I do not know." Then Brother Giles said: "Holy contrition, holy humility, holy charity, holy devotion, and holy joy make a soul holy and good."

CHAPTER II

Concerning Faith and the Incomprehensibility of God

All things whatsoever that can be thought of, seen, spoken about and touched are nothing compared with the things that cannot be thought of, spoken about, seen, or touched.

All the wise and holy men who were, are, and will be, who have spoken or will speak about God, have not nor will ever say anything about God that compares with what he is, save as the prick of a needle compares with heaven and earth and all the creatures in them—any more than a thousand times less. For as a mother uses childish speech in talking to her little son, for otherwise he would not understand her words, so in the same manner the Sacred Scriptures speak to us.

Once Brother Giles said to a certain secular judge: "Do you believe that the gifts of God are great?" The judge answered: "I believe." To whom Brother Giles said: "I will show you that you do not believe" and he added: "How much are all your possessions worth?" The judge answered: "They are worth perhaps a thousand pounds." Brother Giles said to him: "Would you give them for ten thousand pounds?" "I would give them very willingly," he replied. Then said Brother Giles: "It is certain that all earthly things are nothing compared with heavenly things; why then do you not give these for those?" The judge replied: "Do you think that any man does as much as he believes?" Brother Giles answered: "Holy men and women have tried to put in practice the good that they believed and were able to do, and whatever they could not accomplish in deed they accomplished by holy desires; holy desire supplies for a deficiency in the work. If a man had perfect faith he would reach a state such that full certitude would be given him. Therefore, if your faith is good, your works will be good."

To the man who with certitude awaits the great and eternal good—what evil can any evil do to him? And to the man who awaits the great and eternal evil—what good can any good do to him? To the man who loses the good of all goods—what good can all the angels and saints of heaven restore to him? How can he be consoled, and who can console him? None, except the divine visitation.

Yet never ought a sinner despair of God's mercy as long as he lives, because there is hardly a tree so thorny and knotted that man cannot climb it, even and beautiful and adorn it. So much the more should we hope in God's mercy, that he will adorn his saints with his gifts.

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