

## BOOK ONE

solely and entirely with all the strength of your souls, burning with My love – in the same way as the Apostles, martyrs, and all other souls who by My grace received the grace of perfection – shall drink deep of the richest and best wine in My cellar, which is the supreme joy of love in the bliss of heaven.

CHAPTER 45: *That we should strive to recover our nobility, and restore the likeness of the Trinity within ourselves*

NEVERTHELESS, although this is the truth concerning God's infinite mercy towards you and me and all mankind, we should not therefore presume upon it and be wilfully reckless in our way of living. For now that we may hope to be restored by the Passion of our Lord to the dignity and happiness which we lost through Adam's sin, we should be all the more eager to please Him. And although we may never attain it in this life, we should desire to recover some degree and likeness of that dignity, so that the soul may be re-formed by grace to a shadow of the image of the Trinity which it once had by nature, and which it will have fully in heaven. This is the true life of contemplation, which has its beginning here in this feeling of love and in the spiritual knowledge of God, which comes when the eyes of the soul are opened. This life will never be lost or taken away from us, but will be perfected on another plane in the joys of heaven. Our Lord promised this to Mary Magdalene, who was a contemplative, when He said to her: *Maria optimam partem elegit, quae non auferetur ab ea* (Luke x, 42). Mary has chosen the best part – that is, the love of God in contemplation – for it shall never be taken away from her. I do not say that you may in this life recover such entire and perfect purity and innocence, knowledge and love of God, as you had at first or shall have in the life to come. Nor do I say that you can escape all the sorrows and penalties of sin, nor that in this life

you can wholly destroy and overcome false, vain self-love, or avoid all venial sins. For these will always well up in your heart like water from an impure spring, unless they are stopped by great and fervent charity. But if you may not entirely overcome them, strive to reduce them somewhat, and come as near to purity of soul as you can. For God assured the children of Israel when He led them into the land of promise, and figuratively all Christians, saying: *Omnis locus, quem calcaverit pes tuus, tuus erit* (Deut. xi, 24). That is to say, as much land as you may tread upon with the foot of true desire shall be yours in the land of promise — that is, in the joy of heaven — when you enter it.

CHAPTER 46: *How Jesus is to be sought, desired, and found*

SEEK then what you have lost, so that you may find it. I am convinced that anyone who could once have a little insight into the spiritual dignity and beauty which belong to the soul by nature, and which it may regain by grace, would loathe and despise all the joy, love, and beauty of the world as he would the stench of corruption. But for the frailty and essential needs of bodily nature, his sole desire night and day would be to long, lament, pray, and seek how he might regain it once more. Nevertheless, since you have not yet seen fully what it is, because the eyes of your soul are not opened, I know well one word in which is found all that you can seek, desire, and find, for in that word is all that you have lost. This word is JESUS. I do not mean this word Jesus as it might be painted on a wall, or written in a book, or spoken by the lips, or pictured inwardly by the workings of your mind, for in these ways a man without charity may find Him. I mean Jesus Christ the blessed One, God and Man, son of the Virgin Mary, whom this name expresses, and Who is all goodness, endless wisdom, love, and

sweetness; your joy and your worship, your everlasting happiness, your God, your Lord, and your salvation.

If, then, you feel a great longing in your heart for Jesus — either by the remembrance of His Name Jesus, or of any other word, prayer, or deed — and if this longing is so strong that its force drives out of your heart all other thoughts and desires of the world and the flesh, then you are indeed seeking your Lord Jesus. And if, when you feel this desire for God, for Jesus — for it is all one — you are helped and strengthened by a supernatural might so strong that it is changed into love and affection, spiritual savour and sweetness and knowledge of truth, so that for the time your mind is set on no created thing, nor on any feeling or stirring of vainglory nor self-love nor any other evil affections (for these cannot appear at such a time) so that you are enclosed in Jesus alone, resting in Him with the warmth of tender love, then you have found something of Jesus. Not Jesus as He is, but an inward sight of Him; and the more fully you find Him, the more you will desire Him. So whatever form of prayer, meditation, or activity leads you to the highest and purest desire for Him, and to the deepest experience of Him, will be the means by which you may best seek and find Him. Therefore, if you will consider what you have lost and what you seek, life up your mind and heartfelt desire to Jesus Christ, even though you are blind and can see nothing of His Godhead. Say to yourself that it is He whom you have lost, and He alone whom you desire to have, that you may be with Him where He is, since there is no other joy, no other bliss in heaven or in earth except in Him. And even though you feel His nearness through the gift of devotion or knowledge or in any other way, do not rest content with this feeling as though you had fully found Jesus. Forget what you have found, and always desire Jesus more and more, so that you may find Him more fully, as though you had so far found nothing. For consider this, that however great your experience of Him may be — even though

you were carried up in spirit to the third heaven like Saint Paul\* — you have not yet known Jesus as He is in His glory. However deep your knowledge and experience of Him, He utterly transcends it. Therefore, if you wish to find Him as He is in the realms of love and joy, let your soul never cease to long for Him in this present life.

CHAPTER 47: *How profitable it is to have the desire for Jesus*

I WOULD rather feel in my heart a true and pure desire for my Lord Jesus Christ, although I had very little spiritual knowledge of Him, than perform all the bodily penances of all men living, or enjoy visions and revelations of angels, hear sweet sounds, or experience any other pleasurable outward sensations were they unaccompanied by this desire. In short, all the joys of heaven and earth would have no attraction for me unless I might also have this desire for Jesus. I think that the prophet David felt this when he wrote: *Quid enim mihi est in caelo? et a te quid volui super terram?* (Ps. lxxiii, 23). Lord, what have I in heaven but Thee? And what can I desire on earth but Thee? As though he had said: Lord Jesus, what heavenly joy can satisfy me, unless I desire Thee while I am on earth, and love Thee when I come to heaven? Meaning, none indeed! Therefore, if you wish to have any inward knowledge of Him, whether in body or soul, seek nothing but an earnest desire for His grace and His merciful presence, and recognize that your heart can find no satisfaction in anything outside Him. This was David's desire, when he said: *Concupivit anima mea desiderare justificationes tuas in omni tempore* (Ps. cxix, 20). Lord, my soul longed for the desire of Thy righteousness. Therefore seek desire by desire, as David did. And if in your prayers and meditations

\* II Cor. xii, 2.

your desire leads you to feel the inward presence of Jesus Christ in your soul, hold firmly to it in your heart so that you do not lose it: then if you should fall, you may soon find Him again.

Therefore seek Jesus whom you have lost. He wishes to be sought, and longs to be found, for He Himself says: *Omnis qui quaerit, invenit* (Matt. vii, 8). Every one who seeks shall find. The search is arduous, but the finding is full of joy. Therefore if you wish to find Him, follow the counsel of the wise man, who said: *Si quaesieris quasi pecuniam sapientiam, et sicut thesauros effoderis illum: tunc intelliges timorem Domini, et scientiam Dei invenies* (Prov. ii, 4). If you seek wisdom — which is Jesus — like silver and gold, and dig deep for it, you shall find it. You must dig deep in your heart, for He is hidden there, and you must cast out utterly all love and desire of earthly things, and all sorrows and fears with regard to them. In this way you shall find Jesus the true Wisdom.

CHAPTER 48: *Where and how Jesus is to be sought and found*

BE like the woman in the Gospel, of whom our Lord said: *BQuae mulier habens drachmas decem, si perdidit unam, nonne accendit lucernam, et everrit domum suam, et quaerit diligenter donec inveniat eam? Et cum invenerit, convocat amicos suos, dicens: Congratulamini mihi, quia inveni drachmam quam perdideram* (Luke xv, 8). What woman is there who will not light a lamp, and turn her house upside down, and search until she finds it? Implying: none. And when she has found it, she calls her friends to her and says: Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost. This coin is Jesus, whom you have lost: if you wish to find Him, light the lamp of God's word. As David says: *Lucerna pedibus meis verbum tuum* (Ps. cxix, 105). Lord, Thy word is a lamp to my feet. By this lamp you will see where He is, and how you may find Him. You may light another lamp

if you wish, which is your reason, for our Lord says: *Lucerna corporis tui oculus tuus* (Matt. vi, 22). The light of your body is the eye. Similarly it may be said that the lamp of the soul is the reason, by which the soul may come to see all spiritual things. With this lamp you will certainly find Jesus if you hold it up from underneath the measure. As our Lord says: *Nemo accendit lucernam et ponit eam sub modio, sed super candelabrum* (Matt. v, 15). No one lights a lamp in order to set it under a measure, but on a lampstand: that is to say, your mind must not be engrossed in worldly activities, useless thoughts, and earthly desires, but must always aspire above all earthly things to the inward vision of Jesus Christ. If you do this, you will see all the dust, dirt, and small blemishes in your house, that is, all the worldly loves and fears within your soul. Yet not all, for as David says: *Delicta quis intelligit?* (Ps. xix, 12). Who may know all his sin? Meaning, no one. Cast out all these sins from your heart, sweep your soul clean with the broom of the fear of God, wash it with your tears, and you shall find your coin, Jesus. He is the coin, He is the penny, and He is your heritage. It is easier to describe this coin than to find it, for the search is not the work of an hour or a day, but of many days and years, and it demands both bodily toil and spiritual effort. But if you do not give up, but search diligently, sorrow deeply, grieve silently, and humble yourself until tears of pain and anguish flow because you have lost Jesus your treasure: then at length and when He wills it you shall find Him. And if you find Him as I have said – that is, if you are able with a pure conscience to feel the close and peaceful presence of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, given as a fore-shadowing and glimpse of Him as He is – then you may if you wish call your friends to sing and make merry with you because you have found your coin, Jesus.

CHAPTER 49: *Where Jesus is lost, and through His mercy found again*

SEE now the courtesy and mercy of Jesus. You have lost Him. But where? In your own house; that is, in your soul. If you had lost Him outside your own house – that is, if you had lost the power of reason through original sin – you would never have found Him again. But He left you your reason, and so He is within your soul, and will never be lost outside it. Nevertheless you are no nearer to Him until you have found Him. He is within you, although He is lost to you; but you are not in Him until you have found Him. In this, too, is His mercy, that He would suffer Himself to be lost only where He may be found. There is no need to travel to Rome or Jerusalem to search for Him: but turn your thoughts into your own soul where He is hidden, and seek Him there. For as the prophet says: *Vere in es deus absconditus* (Isa. xlv, 15). Truly, Lord, Thou art a hidden God. And Christ himself says in the Gospel: *Simile est regnum caelorum thesuro abscondito in agro, quem qui invenit homo, prae gaudio illius vadit, et vendit universa quae habet, et erit agrum illum* (Matt. xiii, 44). The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which when a man finds, for joy of it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Jesus is the treasure hidden in your soul. If you could find Him in your soul, and your soul in Him, I am sure that you would gladly give up the love of all earthly things in order to have Him. Jesus sleeps spiritually in your heart as he once slept bodily in the ship with His disciples. But they, fearing to perish, awoke Him, and He quickly saved them from the tempest. Therefore rouse Him as they did by prayer, and wake Him with the loud cry of your desire, and He will quickly rise and help you.

CHAPTER 50: *The things that prevent our hearing and seeing Jesus within us*

NEVERTHELESS I expect that you are more often asleep when you should be calling on Him than He when you call, for He often calls you with His sweet secret voice, silently stirring your heart to leave all the clamour of worldly vanities in your soul that you may listen to Him alone. For David said of our Lord: *Audi, filia, et vide, et inclina aurem tuam, et obsecrabo viscere populum tuum et domum patris tui* (Ps. xlv, 10). Listen, daughter, and see; turn your ear to me, and forget the folk of your worldly thoughts, and the house of your natural affections. Here you may see how our Lord calls you and all others who will listen to Him. What hinders you, then, that you can neither see Him nor hear Him? Indeed, there is so much din and disturbance in your heart arising from foolish thoughts and bodily desires that you can neither hear Him nor see Him. Therefore put away all this restless noise, and break your love of sin and vanity; bring into your heart the love of virtues and true charity, and you will hear our Lord speak to you. For as long as He does not find His likeness re-formed in you, He remains a stranger and far distant from you.

CHAPTER 51: *That humility and charity are the especial livery of Jesus, through which man's soul is reformed to His likeness*

PREPARE yourself, therefore, to be clothed with His likeness — that is, in humility and charity which are His livery — and then He will admit you to His friendship and show you His secrets. He Himself said to His disciples: *Qui diligit me diligetur a Patre meo, et manifestabo ei meipsum* (John xiv, 21). Whoever

loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will show Myself to him. There is no virtue that you can acquire or work that you can do that will make you like our Lord without humility and charity, for these two are God's especial livery. This is clearly seen in the Gospel, where our Lord speaks of humility: *Discite a me, quia mitis sum et humilis corde*. Learn of Me, He says, not to go barefoot, or fast in the desert for forty days, or choose disciples, but learn from Me humility, for I am gentle and humble of heart. And of charity He says: *Hoc est praeceptum meum; ut diligatis invicem sicut dilexi vos. Item in hoc cognoscet homines quia discipuli mei estis, si dilectionem habueritis ad invicem* (John xiii, 34). This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you; for in this shall men know you for My disciples. Not because you work miracles, or cast out devils, or preach and teach, but because each of you loves the other in charity. If you will be like Him, be humble and loving. And charity means that you must have a true love for your fellow-Christian.

CHAPTER 52: *How a man may recognize the origins of sin in himself*

NOW you have heard a little of what your soul is, its original dignity, and how it lost it. I have also told you that this dignity may in part be recovered and enjoyed again by grace and by diligent effort. I shall now try to explain, however inadequately, how you may enter into yourself to recognize the origin of sin and destroy it as completely as you can. By this means you may recover some part of your dignity. For a time you must abandon all physical activity and outward affairs as far as possible. Then withdraw your thoughts from your bodily senses, so that you pay no attention to what you hear, see, or feel; for your heart must not be fixed on these things. After this exclude from your mind all material images, and all thought

of your former activities and those of other people. This requires little interior discipline when you enjoy the grace of devotion; but you must also do this when you feel no devotion, and this is very much harder. Direct your whole intention and purpose to the Lord Jesus, desiring to seek, feel, or find nothing except the grace and presence of Jesus. This requires great effort, for vain thoughts throng into your mind to divert your attention to them. But if you keep Jesus Christ constantly in mind you can withstand them, and if you do so, you will find something - not Jesus the object of your search, but the simple recollection of His Name. What else? Indeed, you will find nothing but a dark and painful image of your own soul, which has neither the light of the knowledge of God nor any love and devotion to Him. This image, if you examine it carefully, is entirely enveloped in the black cloak of sin - pride, anger, spiritual indolence, covetousness, gluttony, and lust.

CHAPTER 53: *The real nature of this image of sin*

THIS is not the image of Jesus, but the image of sin, which Saint Paul calls the body of sin and the body of death (Rom. vi, 6). You carry about this image and black shadow with you wherever you go, and from it spring many streams of sin, both great and small. In the same way, if the image of Jesus were re-formed within you in beams of spiritual light, there would rise heavenwards from it burning desires, pure affections, wise thoughts, and all the noble virtues. So out of this image spring movements of pride, envy, and other sins which debase man's true nature to the level of the beasts.

But perhaps you are now beginning to wonder what this image is like; and lest you should remain long in doubt, let me tell you that it is nothing material. What is it then? you ask. In reality it is nothing, and you may ascertain this if you will test

it as I have told you. Withdraw your thoughts from all material things, and you will find nothing in which your soul may rest. This 'nothing' is none else than darkness of mind, and lack of love and light, just as sin is nothing other than lack of God.

Were the roots of sin greatly reduced and dried up in you, and your soul rightly re-formed in the image of Jesus, then if you looked into your heart you would not find nothing. You would find Jesus, not the bare recollection of His Name, but Jesus Christ himself waiting to teach you. Through Him you would find the light of understanding, and not the darkness of ignorance. In Him you would find love and delight, and not the pangs of bitterness and sorrow. But because you are not yet re-formed, when your soul withdraws from all material things and finds nothing but darkness and depression, it seems a hundred years before it emerges again through some bodily pleasure or vain thought. This is not surprising, for if a man came home to his house and found nothing but a smoking fire and a nagging wife, he would quickly run out again. Similarly, when your soul finds no comfort within itself, but only the black smoke of spiritual blindness and a constant nagging by carnal thoughts which rob it of all peace, it is soon anxious to escape again. This is the darkness of mind and the dark image about which I have spoken.

CHAPTER 54: *Whoever wishes to find Jesus must be ready to fight in spiritual darkness against this image of sin*

NEVERTHELESS you must struggle and strive in this darkness of mind; that is, you must withdraw your thoughts from all material things as completely as you can. And then, when you find nothing but sorrow, pain, and blindness in this darkness, you must be patient and endure it awhile if you wish to find Jesus. And here you must take pains to keep Jesus Christ

in your thoughts, constantly considering His Passion and His humility, and by His power your mind will surmount this darkness with fervent desire for God. Do not permit your thoughts to dwell on this 'nothing', but on Jesus Christ whom you desire: resolve to break down this 'nothing' and pass through it. You must dread and detest this darkness as you would the devil out of hell, for it hides Jesus and His joy from you. But all your seeking will not find Him unless you pass through this darkness of mind. This is the spiritual conflict that I spoke of, and the purpose of all my writing is to stir you to enter upon it if you feel the grace to do so.

This darkness of understanding and this 'nothing' of which I speak is the image of the first Adam. Saint Paul knew this well, for he said of it: *Sicut portavimus imaginem terreni hominis, ita portemus imaginem iam et caelestis* (1 Cor. xv, 49). As we have formerly borne the image of an earthly man, that is, the first Adam, so we may now bear the image of the heavenly man, who is Jesus, the second Adam. Saint Paul often found this image very heavy, for it was so burdensome to him that he cried out: *O quis me liberabit de corpore mortis?* (Rom. vii, 24). Oh, who will deliver me from this body and from the image of death? And then he comforted himself as well as others, saying: *Gratia Dei per Jesum Christum* (Rom. vii, 25). The grace of God through Jesus Christ.

Now I have told you a little about this image, and how it is nothing. However, if you cannot understand how I can rightly say that nothing can be an image—since nothing always remains nothing—I will try to elucidate my meaning. This image is a false and misguided love of self. From this love spring all kinds of sin in seven rivers. These are pride, envy, anger, spiritual indolence, covetousness, gluttony, and lust. This is something that you can experience for yourself, for every kind of sin flows out in one or other of these rivers. If the sin is mortal it destroys charity in you, and if venial it diminishes its fervour.

CHAPTER 55: *The image of sin, and what flows from it*

YOU can now see that this image is not nothing, for it is a great evil, it is a strong spring of self-love, from which flow these seven rivers as I have said. But you may say: 'How can this be true? I have forsaken the world, I am enclosed in a cell, and I have no dealings with others. I do not compete against them, I do not buy or sell, nor do I have any worldly business. By the mercy of God I keep myself pure, and have renounced worldly pleasures. Furthermore, I pray, keep vigils, and labour in body and in spirit as well as I can. How then can this image be so great in me as you say?' In reply I grant that you may do all these things and more, and I hope this is true. You make every effort to block the outflow of these rivers, but perhaps you are leaving their real source intact. You are like a man who had in his garden a contaminated well with many channels running from it. He went and blocked these channels but left the spring untouched, thinking that all was now safe. But the water sprung up at the bottom of the well and stood stagnant for so long that it ruined all the beauty of the garden, although no water flowed out. It may be the same with you, if by grace you have blocked the rivers of this spring from escaping. So far so good, but beware of the spring within. Unless you block it and cleanse it as thoroughly as you can, it will poison all the flowers in the garden of your soul, however lovely they may outwardly appear to those who see them.

But you may now ask: 'If I undertake this task, how shall I know when the spring is completely blocked?' I will therefore tell you how to determine whether this image exists within you and its extent, so that you may know how effectively or ineffectively its source has been stopped. And since pride is the principal river, I will deal with this first.

CHAPTER 56: *What pride is, and when it is sin*

ACCORDING to scholars, pride is nothing other than love of your own excellence; that is, of your own reputation. Therefore the more you love and delight in your own reputation, the greater is your pride, and the greater is this wicked image within you. If pride stirs in your heart, leading you to imagine yourself holier, wiser, better, and more virtuous than others, or that God has given you grace to serve Him better than others; or if you regard other men and women as inferior to yourself, and hold exaggerated opinions of your own excellence in comparison with others; or if as a result you feel content and self-satisfied, it is a sure sign that you bear this black image within you. And although it may be hidden from the eyes of other men, it appears clearly in the sight of God.

But you say that you cannot escape these stirrings of pride, for you often feel them against your will; therefore you do not hold them to be sin, or if sin, only venial. My reply to this is that mercy to feel these stirrings of pride and such like is no sin, whether they spring from the corrupt influence of this evil image within you, or from the instigation of the devil. This is a grace and privilege granted by virtue of the Passion of Jesus Christ to all Christians baptized by water and the Holy Spirit: but for Jews and Moslems who do not believe in Christ all such stirrings are mortal sin.\* For Saint Paul says: *Omne quod non est ex fide peccatum est* (Rom. xiv. 23). All that is done without faith in Christ is mortal sin. But through His mercy we Christians have this privilege that such feelings are not sin, but are the penalty of original sin. Nevertheless, when through negligence or ignorance of our true nature we entertain these feelings and come to cherish them, then there is sin, which is great or less in proportion to your pleasure in them; sometimes it is venial and

sometimes mortal. When it is venial and when mortal I cannot define in detail; however it seems right that I should say a little.

CHAPTER 57: *When pride is mortal sin: its effect in worldly people*

WHEN the stirrings of pride are welcomed and enjoyed, so that the heart chooses to rest content in it with pleasure and seeks nothing better than to revel in it, then this pride is mortal sin. For he who chooses this pleasure as his god, not resisting it with reason and will, makes it a mortal sin. But you may say: 'Who is so foolish as to choose pride as his god? No man living would do so.' I answer that I cannot and will not define in particular who sins through mortal pride, but I say in general that there are two forms of pride, one bodily and the other spiritual.

Bodily pride affects men of worldly life, while spiritual pride affects hypocrites and heretics. These three sin mortally through pride. I allude to worldly living men such as Saint Paul speaks of: *Si secundum carnem vixeritis, moriemini* (Rom. viii. 13). If you live according to the flesh, you shall die. And I say that a worldly man who loves and seeks his own reputation above all else, and chooses it as his supreme aim and joy, commits mortal sin. But you may say: 'Who would choose to love and honour himself instead of God?' My answer is that anyone who loves his reputation so much that he wishes to appear better or greater, richer or of higher rank than others, and who devotes all his energies to this, commits mortal sin if in order to win and keep it, he breaks the commandments of God, sets aside love and charity to his fellow-Christians, or is ready and willing to do so rather than imperil his own reputation, position, or personal ambitions. One who committed this mortal sin would deny that he chose

that his own way is right, and therefore feels no qualms of conscience or humility of heart. Indeed, unless God in His mercy sends him humility while he lives, he will in the end go to hell. Yet he thinks that he has done well, and that he will win the joys of heaven by his teachings.

CHAPTER 59: *How pride in hypocrites is mortal sin*

THE hypocrite also commits mortal sin through pride. A hypocrite is one who makes self-esteem his sole satisfaction and chief delight. It comes about in this manner. When a man does many good deeds, both corporal and spiritual, the devil later suggests to him how good and holy he is, how he deserves other people's esteem, and how high he is in the sight of God above other men. He considers this suggestion and fully accepts it, for he thinks of it as coming from God, inasmuch as it is true that he does all these good deeds better than other men. But once he accepts this suggestion as true, self-love and self-satisfaction spring up in his heart, and he thinks himself so good, so holy and so full of grace that for a time his mind becomes so intoxicated that it excludes all other thoughts, both spiritual and material, and his heart becomes absorbed in this vain self-esteem. This intoxication of spiritual pride is enjoyable, so that he clings to it and fosters it as much as he can. For the sake of this self-love and vain delight he will pray, keep vigils, fast, wear a hair shirt, and afflict himself in various ways, and will suffer these things lightly. Sometimes he will offer verbal thanks and praise to God, and even squeeze a tear from his eye, and think himself assured of salvation. But in reality he does all these things for love of his own praise, which he chooses and enjoys in place of love and joy in God. And that is the root of all his sin. He does not deliberately choose sin as sin, but chooses this

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pride as his god: but he is deceiving himself, for he chooses it by his own behaviour. But another type of worldly man, who loves and seeks to enhance his own reputation – but not to the extent that he would commit mortal sin or neglect charity to his neighbours in order to win or maintain it – sins venially but not mortally; his guilt is proportionate to his self-love and depends on circumstances.

CHAPTER 58: *How pride in heretics is mortal sin*

HERETIC sins mortally through pride, because he takes a delight in clinging to his own opinion, maintaining it to be true although it is contrary to God and Holy Church.\* He will not retract his opinion, but holds to it as truth, and so makes it his god. But he deceives himself, for God and Holy Church are in such unity and accord that whoever opposes one opposes both. Therefore anyone who says that he loves God, and keeps His commandments, but despises Holy Church and disregards the laws and ordinances made by its supreme head for the direction of all Christians, is a liar. He does not choose God, but chooses the love of himself, which is the opposite to the love of God, and in so doing he commits mortal sin. And in the very matter in which he thinks to please God most, he displeases Him most, for he is blind and will not see. Of this blindness and false confidence in one's own opinions the wise man says: *Est via quae videtur homini recta; et novissima ejus deducunt ad mortem* (Prov. xiv, 12). There is a way which seems right to a man, but which leads him at length to eternal death. This is especially true of heresy, for other worldly sinners who commit mortal sin and continue in it usually come to recognize their errors and are smitten in conscience that they are not in the right way. But the heretic always supposes that his doings and opinions are good, and that no one is better than he. So he thinks

pleasure and joy in which he delights as good and as his spiritual objective, making no effort of will against it, and mistaking it for joy in God. But this is not so, and he therefore commits mortal sin. Job says of a hypocrite: *Gaudium hypocritae ad instar puncti. Si ascendit in caelum superbia ejus et caput ejus ad nubes tetigerit, quasi sterquilinum in fine perdetur* (Job xx, 5, 6). The joy of a hypocrite is no more than momentary, for if he rises up to heaven in the pride of his heart and his head touches the clouds, at the end he is cast out like a dung-heap. The joy of a hypocrite lasts only a moment, for however great his self-adulation and complacency throughout his life, and however much he adorns himself with good deeds to be seen and praised by the world, in the end nothing remains but sorrow and pain. You may say: 'There are few like this, and none are so blind that they would mistake vain self-love for love of God.' As to this I cannot say, and would not if I could; but this I can tell you, that there are many who are hypocrites although they think they are not, and there are many who are afraid of being hypocrites although they certainly are not. Which is the one and which the other God knows, and none but He. Whoever has a humble fear will not be deceived, and whoever thinks himself secure may easily fall. For Saint Paul says: *Qui aestimat se aliquid esse cum nihil sit, ipse seducit* (Gal. vi, 3). Whoever thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, deceives himself.

CHAPTER 60: *How impulses of pride and vainglory in good people are only venial sins*

ON the other hand men or women who devote themselves to the contemplative life surrender their own wills and offer themselves wholly to God with a full general resolution never to sin willingly by pride, nor to take vain delight in themselves, but to delight in God alone with all their powers.

But if after this surrender of the will to God they are still troubled by frequent impulses of pride, and momentarily yield to them without recognizing them as such, their sin is only venial. For instance, this is the case when having recognized this vain self-love for what it is, they correct themselves and steel their wills to resist it. When they ask mercy and help of God, our Lord in His mercy is quick to forgive this sin of self-love, and He will reward their efforts to resist it. Such is the graciousness shown by our Lord to all who are His especial servants and chosen friends. These include all who for His love gladly and freely forsake all the sins of the world and the flesh, and give themselves body and soul to His service with all their powers, as do enclosed anchorites and true Religious, who for the love of God and the salvation of their souls enter some Order approved by Holy Church. And if there are some who at first entered Religion with worldly motives – such as food and lodging – yet if they repent and amend their motives so as to serve God, then as long as they hold to this intention and pursue it as fully as their frailty permits, they are true Religious. And whoever they may be and whatever their position in Holy Church – whether priests, clerics, laymen, widows, wives, or young girls – if for love of God and desire for salvation they will sincerely and fully renounce all desire for worldly honours and pleasures, and restrict their worldly affairs to a bare minimum, they are God's true servants. And if they willingly offer themselves to God's service by devout prayer, holy thoughts, and other good works both bodily and spiritual, and if they steadfastly persevere in this intention, they are God's especial servants in Holy Church. And by means of this goodwill and intention, which is God's gift to them, they will increase in grace and charity in this life, and will have an especial reward in the joys of heaven. Their place will be higher than of that other chosen souls who did not offer themselves soul and body, inwardly and outwardly, to God's service as fully as they did.

their status and calling in Holy Church, and is proportionate to the greatness of their charity. For he who loves God with the greatest charity in this life, whatever his status, whether simple or learned, secular or religious, will have the highest reward in the glory of heaven, for he will have the deepest love and knowledge of God, and this is the supreme reward. As to this reward, it may happen that some man or woman of the world, lord or lady, knight or squire, merchant or ploughman will have a higher reward than some priest or friar, monk or canon, or enclosed anchoress. And why? Surely because he has a greater love for God.

The other reward is secondary, and God gives this for special good works which a man does voluntarily over and above what he is bound to do. The doctors of the Church mention three things in particular: martyrdom, preaching, and virginity. These three things are excellent, and since they surpass all others, they will have a special reward known as an aureole. This is an exceptional honour special sign ordained by God to reward outstanding achievements, and it is given in addition to the supreme reward of the love of God, which is given to them and to others alike. This applies to other exceptional good works, which if they are done sincerely, are specially acceptable in the sight of God and commended by Holy Church. Such include the enclosure of an anchoress by the authority of Holy Church, and the entering of an approved religious Order. In the judgement of the Church, the stricter the Order the better. After and beneath these comes the taking of priestly orders, either to care for men's souls and to administer the Sacraments of Holy Church, or from a personal desire to please God and to help one's fellow-Christians by the Sacrifice of the precious Body of our Lord Jesus Christ. When these are done sincerely for God's sake, these are special and excellent works, approved by Holy Church and acceptable in the sight of God, and everyone will receive the particular reward that is his due. On account of

All these, whom I call God's servants and chosen friends, although at times through frailty or ignorance they may take pleasure in impulses of vainglory, do not commit mortal sin by this pleasure because the pleasure that they feel prevents their reason and will from recognizing these impulses. For the general intention established in their hearts to please God and forsake all sin when they recognize it preserves them during these impulses, as in all others that spring from frailty, and it will preserve them as long as they firmly maintain this intention.

CHAPTER 61: *How different states in the Church have different rewards in heaven: of two rewards, supreme and secondary*

FOR your consolation and that of all who have embraced the state of an enclosed anchoress, as well as those who by the grace of God have entered any Religious Order approved by Holy Church, I will say further that all those who by the mercy of God shall be saved will have an especial glory and reward for their lives in the joys of heaven, a reward above that of other souls, however holy, who did not share their state in Holy Church. This glory is incomparably greater than all the glories of this world, and if you could but see it, you would not exchange it for all the glory of the world even if you could enjoy it without sin, nor would you wish to change your state of anchoress or Religious, or lessen your especial reward in heaven. This is called an accidental reward, but lest others misunderstand what I mean, I will define it more clearly. You should understand that amid the joys of heaven there are two rewards which God gives to chosen souls. One is supreme and principal, and consists in loving and knowing Him in proportion to the degree of charity granted by God to the soul while living in this mortal body. This is the best and supreme reward, for it is God Himself, and is granted to all souls that are saved, whatever

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his status a bishop and prelate will receive a higher accidental reward than all others, as is shown in Holy Scripture by the prophet Daniel, when he says: *Tu autem vade ad praefinitum tempus, et requiesces, et stabis in sorte tua in finem dierum* (Daniel xii, 13). That is to say, when the angel had shown Daniel the secrets of God, he said: Go to the rest of your bodily death, and you shall stand in your place as a prophet at the last day. And as Daniel will assuredly stand as a prophet at the day of judgement, and enjoy the honour and precedence of a prophet as well as the supreme reward of the love and sight of God, so you will stand in your own place as an anchoress, a Religious as a Religious, and so with other high callings, and will receive honour above others at the day of judgement.

### CHAPTER 62: *A short address on humility and charity*

**N**OW from what I have said, if I have made it clear, you will find it a comfort in your way of life and a help in learning humility. For although it be true that if you come to heaven you will receive the special reward for your state of life, there may be many a wife and woman living in the world who will be nearer to God than you, and who will love Him more and know Him better than you despite your way of life. This will put you to shame unless you labour to acquire as full and perfect a degree of charity as anyone living in the world. For if by the gift of God you attain only the same degree of charity as one who remains in a worldly occupation, you will have the same degree of the supreme reward; but in addition to this you will receive the particular reward and honour belonging to your own calling, which he will not have. If, then, you wish to grow in grace, forget your calling – for it is nothing in itself – and direct all your desires and efforts to acquiring charity, humility, and other virtues. All depends on this.