

# JOURNEY OF THE MIND INTO GOD

## St Bonaventure of Bagnoregio<sup>1</sup>

### INCIPIIT PROLOGUS ITINERARIUM MENTIS IN DEUM

#### PROLOG

*1 In principio primum principium, a quo cunctae illuminationes descendunt tanquam a Patre luminum, a quo est omne datum optimum et omne donum perfectum, Patrem scilicet aeternum, invoco per Filium eius, Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum, ut intercessionem sanctissimae Virginis Mariae, genitricis eiusdem Dei et domini nostri Iesu Christi, et beati Francisci, ducis et patris nostri, det illuminatos oculos mentis nostrae ad dirigendos pedes nostros in viam pacis illius, quae exuperat omnem sensum; quam pacem evangelizavit et dedit dominus noster Iesus Christus; cuius praedicationis repetitor fuit pater noster Franciscus, in omni sua praedicatione pacem in principio et in fine annuntians, in omni salutatione pacem optans, in omni contemplatione ad exstaticam pacem suspirans, tanquam civis illius Ierusalem, de qua dicit vir ille pacis, qui cum his qui oderunt pacem, erat pacificus: Rogate quae ad pacem sunt Ierusalem. Sciebat enim, quod thronus Salomonis non erat nisi in pace, cum scriptum sit: In pace factus est locus eius, et habitatio eius in Sion.*

I shall begin by invoking, through His Son Our Lord Jesus Christ, the First Principle, from Whom all enlightenment descends as through the Father of Light, and from Whom all that is given is of the best and all of Whose gifts are perfect<sup>2</sup>. In this way, through the intercession of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, who bore this same God and Our Lord Jesus Christ, and through the intercession of the blessed Francis, our guide and father, He might give illumination to the eyes of our mind<sup>3</sup> to point our feet in the direction<sup>4</sup> of peace, which reaches beyond perception<sup>5</sup>. This is the peace which Our Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed and gave to us<sup>6</sup> and which our father Francis reiterated, beginning and ending all his teachings with peace, choosing in all his greetings peace and longing in all his contemplation for ecstatic peace, just like the citizen of Jerusalem, who was peaceful with those who hated peace<sup>7</sup>. Ask for what concerns the peace of Jerusalem<sup>8</sup>, he said, for he knew, given that it is written in the Scriptures that His place is made in peace and His dwelling is in Sion, that the throne

<sup>1</sup> This text is from the Quaracchi edition of the *Opera Omnia S Bonaventura*, Vol V, 1891.

<sup>2</sup> James 4:17

<sup>3</sup> Eph 1:17

<sup>4</sup> Lk 1:19

<sup>5</sup> Phil 4:7

<sup>6</sup> Jn 14:27

<sup>7</sup> Ps 119:7

<sup>8</sup> Ps 121:6

of Solomon was nothing if not peaceful.

*2 Cum igitur exemplo beatissimi patris Francisci hanc pacem anhelo spiritu quaerem, ego peccator, qui loco ipsius patris beatissimi post eius transitum septimus in generali fratrum ministerio per omnia indignus succedo; contigit ut nutu divino circa Beati ipsius transitum, anno trigesimo tertio ad montem Alvernae tanquam ad locum quietum amore quaerendi pacem spiritus declinarem, ibique existens, dum mente tractarem aliquas mentales ascensiones in Deum, inter alia occurrit illud miraculum, quod in praedicto loco contigit ipso beato Francisco, de visione scilicet Seraph alati ad instar Crucifixi. In cuius consideratione statim visum est mihi, quod visio illa praetenderet ipsius patris suspensionem in contemplando et viam, per quam pervenitur ad eam.*

So, following the example of the blessed father Francis, I made an exhaustive spiritual search for this peace - I, a sinner, the seventh Minister General of the brothers following the passing of the blessed father himself. It happened, then, in the thirty-third year after his passing<sup>9</sup> that, by divine permission, in love, because it was a quiet place, I went seeking Mount Alverna, where I remained. While considering some ways of ascending into God, a miracle occurred to me which was identical with that which had occurred to blessed Francis himself in that same place. This was a vision of the Seraph<sup>10</sup>, winged in the likeness of the Crucified. As I thought about this, it suddenly struck me that this vision showed the suspension of the father in contemplation and the path by which he had reached this contemplation.

*3 Nam per senas alas illas recte intelligi possunt sex illuminationum suspensiones, quibus anima quasi quibusdam gradibus vel itineribus disponitur, ut transeat ad pacem per exstáticos excessus sapientiae christianae. Via autem non est nisi per ardentissimum amorem Crucifixi, qui adeo Paulum ad tertium caelum raptum transformavit in Christum, ut diceret: Christo confixus sum cruci, iam non ego; vivit vero in me Christus; qui etiam adeo mentem Francisci absorbit, quod mens in carne patuit, dum sacratissima passionis stigmata in corpore suo ante mortem per biennium deportavit. Effigies igitur sex alarum seraphicarum insinuat sex illuminationes scalares, quae a creaturis incipiunt et perducunt usque ad Deum, ad quem nemo intrat recte nisi per Crucifixum. Nam qui non intrat per ostium, sed ascendit aliunde, ille fur est et latro. Si quis vero per ostium introierit, ingredietur et egredietur et pascua inveniet. Propter quod dicit Ioannes in Apocalypsi: Beati qui lavant vestimenta in sanguine Agni, ut sit potestas eorum in ligno vitae, et per portas ingrediantur civitatem; quasi dicat, quod per contemplationem ingredi non potest Ierusalem supernam, nisi per sanguinem Agni intret tanquam per portam. Non enim dispositus est aliquo modo ad contemplationes divinas, quae ad mentales ducunt excessus, nisi cum Daniele sit vir desideriorum. Desideria autem in nobis inflammantur dupliciter, scilicet per clamorem orationis, quae rugire facit a gemitu cordis, et per fulgorem speculationis, qua mens ad radios lucis directissime et intensissime se convertit.*

<sup>9</sup> St Francis died October 4th 1226, so this makes the year in question 1259.

<sup>10</sup> for the Seraph, cf Isaiah 6:2

So, by means of these six wings, it is possible accurately to understand the six levels of enlightenment, by which the soul, as though taking steps or making gradual movement, transcends into peace through an ecstatic deepening of Christian wisdom. This path, however, is nothing but a burning love for the Crucified, which so transformed Paul into Christ, being caught up in the third heaven - so much so that he said, "I am crucified with Christ - but it is now not I who live, but Christ who lives in me"<sup>11</sup>. It was also this love which so absorbed Francis' mind and expressed itself in his flesh for two years before his death, during which time he bore the most sacred stigmata of the Passion. The image of the six seraphic wings implies the six grades of enlightenment, which begin with the created world and lead ultimately to God, into whom no-one truly enters except through the Crucified. For, whoever does not enter by the door, but ascends in some other way, is but a trespasser and a thief<sup>12</sup>. And if anyone goes through the gate, he will enter and leave and thus find the pasture<sup>13</sup>. Therefore, John says in the Apocalypse, Blessed are those who wash their clothes in the blood of the Lamb: their power will lie in the Tree of Life and they will gain access to the city through the gates<sup>14</sup>. What he is saying here is that a person will not reach the heavenly Jerusalem through contemplation, unless they enter through the blood of the Lamb as through a gate. For one is not disposed in any way to divine contemplation, which leads to mental disassociation, unless, like Daniel, one is a man of desires<sup>15</sup>. Desires are inflamed within us in two forms: through the clamor of prayer, which makes us cry out with an aching heart<sup>16</sup>, and through the brilliance of investigation, through which the mind turns itself most directly and most intensely towards the rays of light.

*4 Igitur ad gemitum orationis per Christum crucifixum, per cuius sanguinem purgamur a sordibus vitiorum, primum quidem lectorem invito, ne forte credat quod sibi sufficiat lectio sine unctione, speculatio sine devotione, investigatio sine admiratione, circum-spectio sine exultatione, industria sine pietate, scientia sine caritate, intelligentia sine humilitate, studium absque divina gratia, speculum absque sapientia divinitus inspirata. - Praeventus igitur divina gratia, humilibus et piis, compunctis et devotis, unctis oleo laetitiae et amatoribus divinae sapientiae et eius desiderio inflammatis, vacare volentibus ad Deum magnificandum, admirandum et etiam degustandum, speculationes subiectas propono, insinuans, quod parum aut nihil est speculum exterius propositum, nisi speculum mentis nostrae tersum fuerit et politum. Exerce igitur te, homo Dei, prius ad stimulum conscientiae remordentem, antequam oculos eleves ad radios sapientiae in eius speculis relucetes, ne forte ex ipsa radiorum speculatione in graviolem incidas foveam tenebrarum.*

My first invitation, then, is to the cry of prayer through the crucified Christ, whose blood purges us of the filth of vice. After all, the reader might think that to read without facility, to speculate without devotion, to investigate without wonder, to consider without exul-

<sup>11</sup> 2 Cor 12:2

<sup>12</sup> Jn 10:1

<sup>13</sup> Jn 10:9

<sup>14</sup> Apoc 22:14

<sup>15</sup> Dan 9:23

<sup>16</sup> Ps 37:9

tation, to work hard without piety, to have knowledge without love, to have intelligence without humility, to study without divine grace and to observe without divinely inspired wisdom might be enough. Therefore, to those predisposed by divine grace, to the pious and the humble, to the sensitive and devout, to those anointed with the oil of gladness<sup>17</sup> - both those who love divine wisdom and those who are inflamed with desire for it - and to those who are willing to magnify, to admire and even to taste God, I offer the following ideas, pointing out that, unless the mirror of our mind has not been wiped over and polished, little or nothing will be observed. So, man of God, before conscience bites again and before you raise your eyes to the glittering rays of wisdom, take good care, just in case you catch sight of these very rays and fall into the terrible pit of shadows.

*5 Placuit autem distinguere tractatum in septem capitula, praemittendo titulos ad faciliorem intelligentiam dicendorum. Rogo igitur, quod magis pensetur intentio scribentis, quam opus, magis dictorum sensus quam sermo incultus, magis veritas quam venustas, magis exercitatio affectus quam eruditio intellectus. Quod ut fiat, non est harum speculationum progressus perfunctorie transcurrendus, sed morosissime ruminandus.*

I thought it useful to divide this text into seven chapters, setting their titles out here so as to facilitate an understanding of what is to be discussed. I would therefore ask that the intention of the author be considered more than the work itself, the sense of the words more than the inept writing style, their truth more than their elegance, the exercise of affection more than the intellectual erudition. One should not, moreover, run speedily through the development of these ideas, rather one should think through them with the greatest of care.

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## INCIPIT SPECULATIO PAUPERIS IN DESERTO

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<sup>17</sup> Ps 44:8

# HERE BEGINS THE VISION OF THE POOR MAN IN THE DESERT

## CHAPTER 1

### *DE GRADIBUS ASCENSIONIS IN DEUM ET DE SPECULATIONE IPSIUS PER VESTIGIA EIUS IN UNIVERSO*

#### THE GRADUAL PATH INTO GOD AND THE PERCEPTION OF HIM THROUGH HIS IMPRINTS UPON THE UNIVERSE

1 *Beatus vir, cuius est auxilium abs te, ascensiones in corde suo disposuit in valle lacrymarum, in loco, quem posuit. Cum beatitudo nihil aliud sit, quam summi boni fruitio; et summum bonum sit supra nos: nullus potest effici beatus, nisi supra semetipsum ascendat, non ascensu corporali, sed cordiali. Sed supra nos levare non possumus nisi per virtutem superiorem nos elevantem. Quantumcumque enim gradus interiores disponantur, nihil fit, nisi divinum auxilium comitetur. Divinum autem auxilium comitatur eos qui petunt ex corde humiliter et devote; et hoc est ad ipsum suspirare in hac lacrymarum valle, quod fit per ferventem orationem. Oratio igitur est mater et origo sursum-actionis. Ideo Dionysius in libro de Mystica Theologia, volens nos instruere ad excessus mentales, primo praemittit orationem. Oremus igitur et dicamus ad Dominum Deum nostrum: Deduc me, Domine, in via tua, et ingrediar in veritate tua; laetetur cor meum, ut timeat nomen tuum.*

Blessèd is the man to whom you offer help. He has placed a flight of steps in his heart in the vale of tears, in the place where he put them<sup>18</sup>. Since beatitude is nothing other than the fruit of the highest good, and since the highest good is superior to us, no-one can achieve this state of beatitude unless they rise beyond themselves - and that not with the body, but with the heart. But we cannot be raised beyond ourselves, unless a superior virtue raise us. For however much the inner steps are set out, nothing can take place unless divine assistance is also present. Divine help, furthermore, accompanies those who seek it with a humble and devoted heart, which is to long for it in this vale of tears; and this is done through fervent prayer. Prayer therefore is the mother and the origin of this upward movement. For this reason, in his book *On Mystical Theology*, Dionysius the Areopagite, wanting to teach us about mental disassociation, first of all offers a prayer. So let us pray and ask the Lord our God: Lead me Lord in your way and let me step in your truth. Let my heart be glad and let me be awed by your name<sup>19</sup>.

2 *In hac oratione orando illuminatur ad cognoscendum divinae ascensionis gradus. Cum enim secundum statum conditionis nostrae ipsa rerum universitas sit scala ad*

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<sup>18</sup> Ps 83:6

<sup>19</sup> Ps 85:11

*ascendendum in Deum; et in rebus quaedam sint vestigium, quaedam imago, quaedam corporalia, quaedam spiritualia, quaedam temporalia, quaedam aeviterna, ac per hoc quaedam extra nos, quaedam intra nos: ad hoc, quod perveniamus ad primum principium considerandum, quod est spiritualissimum et aeternum et supra nos, oportet, nos transire per vestigium, quod est corporale et temporale et extra nos, et hoc est deduci in via Dei; oportet, nos intrare ad mentem nostram, quae est imago Dei aeviterna, spiritualis et intra nos, et hoc est ingredi in veritate Dei; oportet, nos transcendere ad aeternum, spiritualissimum, et supra nos aspiciendo ad primum principium, et hoc est laetari in Dei notitia et reverentia maiestatis.*

Through praying in this way, one is enlightened and becomes acquainted with the steps leading into the divine. For, since our circumstance is the ladder which leads us into God, and since among things there are imprints and images, physical and spiritual things, temporal and transtemporal things - and, in this regard, things outside us and inside us -, we therefore arrive at the point of considering the First Principle, which is the most spiritual and which is eternal and superior to us. It is appropriate that we go beyond the imprint, which is physical and temporal and outside us: this going beyond is to be led into the path of God. It is appropriate that we enter into our mind, which is the transtemporal image of God, spiritual and within us: this entering into our mind is to step into the truth of God. It is appropriate that, by looking at the First Principle, we transcend into the eternal, most spiritual and superior to us - and this is to be glad in the knowledge of God and to dwell in the truth of His majesty.

*3 Haec est igitur via trium dierum in solitudine; haec est triplex illuminatio unius diei, et prima est sicut vespera, secunda sicut mane, tertia sicut meridies; haec respicit triplicem rerum existentiam, scilicet in materia, in intelligentia et in arte aeterna, secundum quam dictum est; fiat, fecit, et factum est; haec etiam respicit triplicem substantiam in Christo, qui est scala nostra, scilicet corporalem, spiritualem et divinam.*

So this is the path of three days in solitude<sup>20</sup>, the threefold enlightenment of a single day - evening, morning and midday. This in turn refers to the threefold existence of things - matter, intelligence and the art of eternity, according to what has been said: Let it be made, he has made it and it has been made<sup>21</sup>. This also refers to the threefold substance in Christ, Who is our ladder, that being the physical, the spiritual and the divine.

*4 Secundum hunc triplicem progressum mens nostra tres habet aspectus principales. Unus est ad corporalia exteriora, secundum quem vocatur animalitas seu sensualitas: alius intra se et in se, secundum quem dicitur spiritus; tertius supra se, secundum quem dicitur mens. - Ex quibus omnibus disponere se debet ad conscendendum in Deum, ut ipsum diligat ex tota mente, ex toto corde et ex tota anima, in quo consistit perfecta Legis observatio et simul cum hoc sapientia christiana.*

According to this threefold development, our mind has three principle aspects. The

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<sup>20</sup> Ex 3:18

<sup>21</sup> Gen 1:3

first aspect deals with the physical, and this is referred to as the animal or the sensory. The second aspect looks within the self and into the self, and this is referred to as the spirit. The third aspect is superior to the self, and this is referred to as the mind. From the point of view of all of these aspects, our mind should completely immerse itself within God and delight in Him, with its entire mind, heart and soul<sup>22</sup>, which activity constitutes simultaneously both Christian wisdom and a perfect observance of the Law.

*5 Quoniam autem quilibet praedictorum modorum geminatur, secundum quod contingit considerare Deum ut alpha et omega, seu in quantum contingit videre Deum in unoquoque praedictorum modorum ut per speculum et ut in speculo, seu quia una istarum considerationum habet commisceri alteri sibi coniunctae et habet considerari in sua puritate; hinc est, quod necesse est, hos tres gradus principales ascendere ad senarium, ut, sicut Deus sex diebus perfecit universum mundum et in septimo requievit; sic minor mundus sex gradibus illuminationum sibi succedentium ad quietem contemplationis ordinatissime perducatur. - In cuius rei figura sex gradibus ascendebatur ad thronum Salomonis; Seraphim, quae vidit Isaia, senas alas habebat; post sex dies vocavit Dominus Moysen de medio caliginis, et Christus post sex dies, ut dicitur Matthaeo, duxit discipulos in montem et transfiguratus est ante eos.*

Since these aspects already mentioned come in pairs - as when one considers God to be the alpha and the omega<sup>23</sup>; or else sees God in one of these aspects either through a mirror or in a mirror; or else, given that one of a pair can be seen mixed up with the other, it must therefore also be seen in its own pure form - so it is necessary that these three principle steps work themselves out as a group of six. God created the macrocosm in six days and rested on the seventh and, through six stages of enlightenment, the microcosm is lead, in a most consequent way, into the stillness of contemplation. Among the symbolic treatments of this are the six steps which lead upwards to the throne of Solomon<sup>24</sup>, the six-winged Seraph seen by Isaiah<sup>25</sup>, the six days after which God called upon Moses from a cloud<sup>26</sup>, and the six days after which, according to Matthew, Christ led the disciples onto the mountain and was transfigured before them<sup>27</sup>.

*6 Iuxta igitur sex gradus ascensionis in Deum, sex sunt gradus potentiarum animae per quos ascendimus ab imis ad summa, ab exterioribus ad intima, a temporalibus conscendimus ad aeterna, scilicet sensus, imaginatio, ratio, intellectus, intelligentia et apex mentis seu synderesis scintilla. Hos gradus in nobis habemus plantatos per naturam, deformatos per culpam, reformatos per gratiam; purgandos per iustitiam, exercendos per scientiam, perficiendos per sapientiam.*

So, alongside the six levels of ascension into God, there are six levels of the soul's

<sup>22</sup> Mk 12:30

<sup>23</sup> Apoc 1:8

<sup>24</sup> 3 Kings 10:19

<sup>25</sup> Isaiah 6:2

<sup>26</sup> Ex 26:16

<sup>27</sup> Mt 17:1

potential, through which we climb from the depths to the heights and from those things which are external to those which are internal, through which we move together from the temporal to the eternal: these are perception, imagination, reason, intellect, intelligence and the mind's highest point, at which the spark of conscient action catches hold. We have these levels placed naturally within us, they are deformed by error, reformed by grace, purified by what is just, developed through experience and perfected by wisdom.

*7 Secundum enim primam naturae institutionem creatus fuit homo habilis ad contemplationis quietem, et ideo posuit eum Deus in paradiso deliciarum. Sed avertens se a vero lumine ad commutabile bonum, incurvatus est ipse per culpam propriam, et totum genus suum per originale peccatum, quod dupliciter infecit humanam naturam, scilicet ignorantia mentem et concupiscentia carnem; ita quod excaecatus homo et incurvatus in tenebris sedet et caeli lumen non videt nisi succurrat gratia cum iustitia contra concupiscentiam, et scientia cum sapientia contra ignorantiam. Quod totum fit per Iesum Christum, qui factus est nobis a Deo sapientia et iustitia et sanctificatio et redemptio. Qui cum sit Dei virtus et Dei sapientia, sit Verbum incarnatum plenum gratiae et veritatis, gratiam et veritatem fecit, gratiam scilicet caritatis infudit, quae, cum sit de corde puro et conscientia bona et fide non ficta, totam animam rectificat secundum triplicem ipsius aspectum supradictum; scientiam veritatis edocuit secundum triplicem modum theologiae, scilicet symbolicae, propriae et mysticae, ut per symbolicam recte utamur sensibilibus, per propriam recte utamur intelligibilibus, per mysticam rapiamur ad supermentales excessus.*

Now at the point of creation, man was made for the stillness of contemplation and, for that reason, God placed him in a paradise of delights<sup>28</sup>. But, by turning away from the true light towards relative good, he was bent down under the weight of his own error, and his whole line under the weight of this basic error, which infects humanity in two ways - that is, by mental ignorance and by physical desire. In this way, man is utterly blind and sits, bent over, in the darkness, not seeing the light of Heaven unless grace cares for him, offering him justice to counteract his desire and both experience and wisdom to counteract his ignorance. This is done in its entirety by Jesus Christ, who has been made by God to be our wisdom and justice and sanctification and our redemption<sup>29</sup>. While he is the virtue of God and the wisdom of God, and while he is the Word incarnate and full of grace and truth, he has made grace and truth. That is to say, he has instilled the grace of love, which, because it comes from a pure heart and from good conscience and from genuine faith, is able to rectify the entire soul according to the three visions previously described. He has taught the experience of truth according to the three aspects of theology - the symbolic, the literal and the mystical - so that, through the symbolic, we might rightly use our perception, through the literal, we might rightly use our intelligence and, through the mystical, we might reach the state beyond mental activity and there be enraptured.

*8 Qui igitur vult in Deum ascendere necesse est, ut vitata culpa deformante naturam,*

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<sup>28</sup> Gen 2:15

<sup>29</sup> 1 Cor 1:30



*naturales potentias supradictas exerceat ad gratiam reformantem, et hoc per orationem; ad iustitiam purificantem et hoc in conversatione; ad scientiam illuminantem et hoc in meditatione; ad sapientiam perficientem et hoc in contemplatione. Sicut igitur ad sapientiam nemo venit nisi per gratiam, iustitiam et scientiam; sic ad contemplationem non venit nisi per meditationem perspicuam, conversationem sanctam et orationem devotam. Sicut igitur gratia fundamentum est rectitudinis voluntatis et illustrationis perspicuae rationis; sic primum orandum est nobis, deinde sancte vivendum, tertio veritatis spectaculis intendendum et intendendo gradatim ascendendum, quousque veniatur ad montem excelsum, ubi videatur Deus deorum in Sion.*

It is therefore necessary that whoever wants to ascend into God must, by avoiding error, which deforms one's nature, exercise their natural powers, which were described above. Thus, through our prayer we reconstitute our grace, through our behavior we truly purify ourselves, through our meditation we develop our enlightened experience, and through our contemplation we perfect our wisdom. Just as no-one comes to wisdom except through grace, truth and experience, so no-one comes to contemplation except through analytical meditation, pure behavior and devout prayer. Just as grace is the basis of the correct attitude of the will and of the clarity of analytical reasoning, so we should first pray, then live in purity and then, gradually understanding the true appearance of things, ascend the levels of understanding, arriving finally on the exalted mountain, where we see the God of gods in Sion<sup>30</sup>.

*9 Quoniam igitur prius est ascendere quam descendere in scala Iacob, primum gradum ascensionis collocemus in imo, ponendo totum istum mundum sensibilem nobis tanquam speculum, per quod transeamus ad Deum, opificem summum, ut simus veri Hebraei transeuntes de Aegypto ad terram Patribus repromissam, simus etiam Christiani cum Christo transeuntes ex hoc mundo ad Patrem, simus et sapientiae amatores, quae vocat et dicit: Transite ad me omnes, qui concupiscitis me, et a generationibus meis adimplemini. A magnitudine namque speciei et creaturae cognoscibiliter poterit Creator horum videri.*

So since one is first to ascend, rather than descend, Jacob's ladder<sup>31</sup>, let us situate the first step at the bottom, by considering that we perceive this entire world as being a mirror. Through this, we pass into God, the supreme creator, as true Hebrews, passing over from Egypt into the land again and again promised to our ancestors<sup>32</sup>, as Christians, passing over with Christ from this world to the Father<sup>33</sup>, and as lovers of wisdom, which says to us, Pass over to me all who desire me and be fulfilled by my generations<sup>34</sup>, for by the beauty and the number of them can their Creator be seen<sup>35</sup>.

*10 Relucet autem Creatoris summa potentia et sapientia et benevolentia in rebus creatis secundum quod hoc tripliciter nuntiat sensus carnis sensui interiori. Sensus*

<sup>30</sup> Ps 83:8

<sup>31</sup> Gen 28:12

<sup>32</sup> Ex 13:3

<sup>33</sup> Jn 13:1

<sup>34</sup> Ecc 24:26

<sup>35</sup> Wis 13:5

*enim carnis aut deservit intellectui rationabiliter investiganti, aut fideliter credenti, aut intellectualiter contemplanti. Contemplans considerat rerum existentiam actualement, credens rerum decursum habitualement, ratiocinans rerum praecellentiam potentialement.*

Moreover, the highest power and wisdom and benevolence of the Creator shines in created things, announced in three ways to the inner perception by the physical perception. For the physical perception serves the intellect, either through rationally investigating, faithfully believing or intellectually contemplating. In contemplating, the intellect considers the current existence of things, in believing, it considers the habitual course of things, and in reasoning, it considers the potential perfection of things.

*11 Primo modo aspectus contemplantis, res in se ipsis considerans, videt in eis pondus, numerum et mensuram: pondus quoad situm, ubi inclinatur, numerum, quo distinguuntur, et mensuram, qua limitantur. Ac per hoc videt in eis modum, speciem et ordinem, nec non substantiam, virtutem et operationem. Ex quibus consurgere potest sicut ex vestigio ad intelligendum potentiam, sapientiam et bonitatem Creatoris immensam.*

According to the first aspect, the person who contemplates sees things in themselves as possessing weight, number and dimensionality<sup>36</sup> - their weight, as being where they are sited and their physical distribution, their number, as being how they are distinguished, and their dimensionality, as being how they are limited from one another. And so they are seen to have a modality, a beauty and an order, in addition to having substance, potential and activity. From these things, as from an imprint, there is seen to come together that which leads to an understanding of the immense power, wisdom and goodness of the Creator.

*12 Secundo modo aspectus fidelis, considerans hunc mundum attendit originem, decursum et terminum. Nam fide credimus, aptata esse saecula Verbo vitae; fide credimus, trium legum tempora, scilicet naturae, Scripturae et gratiae sibi succedere et ordinatissime decurrere; fide credimus, mundum per finale iudicium terminandum esse; in primo potentiam, in secundo providentiam, in tertio iustitiam summi principii advertentes.*

According to the second aspect, the person who believes sees the world as having an origin, a course and an end. For, through faith, we believe that the ages have been prepared for the Word of Life<sup>37</sup>; through faith, we believe that the seasons of the three laws - of nature, of written texts and of grace - succeed one another in a most orderly linear development; and, through faith, we believe that the world is to be brought to an end by a final act of realisation. Thus, one is aware of power in the first place, of providence in the second place and of the justice of the Supreme Principle in the third place.

*13 Tertio modo aspectus ratiocinabiliter investigantis videt, quaedam tantum esse,*

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<sup>36</sup> Wis 11:21

<sup>37</sup> Heb 11:3

*quaedam autem esse et vivere, quaedam vero esse, vivere et discernere; et prima quidem esse minora, secunda media, tertia meliora. - Videt iterum, quaedam esse tantum corporalia, quaedam partim corporalia, partim spiritualia; ex quo advertit, aliqua esse mere spiritualia tanquam utriusque meliora et digniora. - Videt nihilominus, quaedam esse mutabilia et corruptibilia, ut terrestria, quaedam mutabilia et incorruptibilia, ut caelestia; ex quo advertit, quaedam esse immutabilia et incorruptibilia, ut supercaelestia.*

*Ex his ergo visibilibus consurgit ad considerandum Dei potentiam, sapientiam, et bonitatem ut entem, viventem et intelligentem, mere spiritualement et incorruptibilem et intransmutabilem.*

According to the third aspect, the person who investigates by reasoning sees that certain things simply exist, that other things exist and live, but that other things exist and live and discern: the first of these is the lowest level, the second the middle level and the third the best level. And furthermore it is seen that certain things are only corporal and certain things partly corporal and partly spiritual; from this it follows that still other things are entirely spiritual and are better and more worthy than those found in either of the other groups. On the other hand, it is also seen that certain things are mutable and corruptible, as are mundane things, and that certain things are mutable and incorruptible, as are divine things: from this it follows that certain things are immutable and incorruptible, as are things beyond the divine.

There is a natural development, therefore, from these visible things, towards a consideration of the power, wisdom and goodness of God, as the being, living and understanding, as the purely spiritual, incorruptible and unchangeable.

*14 Haec autem consideratio dilatatur secundum septiformem conditionem creaturarum, quae est divinae potentiae et bonitatis testimonium septiforme, si consideretur cunctarum rerum origo, magnitudo, multitudo, pulcritudo, plenitudo, operatio et ordo.- Origo namque rerum secundum creationem, distinctionem et ornatum quantum ad opera sex dierum divinam praedicat potentiam cuncta de nihilo producentem, sapientiam cuncta lucide distinguentem et bonitatem cuncta largiter adornantem.- Magnitudo autem rerum secundum molem longitudinis, latitudinis et profunditatis; secundum excellentiam virtutis longe, late et profunde se extendentis, sicut patet in diffusionem lucis; secundum efficaciam operationis intimae, continuae et diffusae, sicut patet in operatione ignis, manifeste indicat immensitatem potentiae, sapientiae et bonitatis trini Dei qui in cunctis rebus per potentiam, praesentiam et essentiam incircumscriptus existit.- Multitudo vero rerum secundum diversitatem generalem, specialem et individualement in substantia, in forma seu figura et efficacia ultra omnem humanam aestimationem, manifeste trium praedictarum conditionum in Deo immensitatem insinuat et ostendit.- Pulcritudo autem rerum secundum varietatem luminum, figurarum et colorum in corporibus simplicibus, mixtis et etiam complexionatis, sicut in corporibus caelestibus et mineralibus, sicut lapidibus et metallis, plantis et animalibus, tria praedicta evidenter proclamat.- Plenitudo autem rerum, secundum quod materia est plena formis secundum rationes seminales; forma est plena virtute secundum acti-*

*vam potentiam; virtus est plena effectibus secundum efficientiam, idipsum manifeste declarat.- Operatio multiplex, secundum quod est naturalis, secundum quod est artificialis, secundum quod est moralis, sua multiplicissima varietate ostendit immensitatem illius virtutis, artis et bonitatis, quae quidem est omnibus "causa essendi, ratio intelligendi et ordo vivendi".- Ordo autem secundum rationem durationis, situationis et influentiae, scilicet per prius et posterius, superius et inferius,<sup>7</sup> nobilius et ignobilius, in libro creaturae insinuat manifeste primi principii primitatem, sublimitatem et dignitatem quantum ad infinitatem potentiae; ordo vero divinarum legum, praeceptorum et iudiciorum in libro Scripturae immensitatem sapientiae; ordo autem divinorum Sacramentorum, beneficiorum et retributionum in corpore Ecclesiae immensitatem bonitatis, ita quod ipse ordo nos in primum et summum, potentissimum, sapientissimum et optimum evidentissime manuducit.*

This consideration extends outwards according to the sevenfold condition of created things, which is the sevenfold testimony of divine power and goodness, that being the origin, magnitude, multitude, physical appearance, the fullness, the operation and the order of all things. The origin of things, according to their creation, distinction and embellishment and as much as it deals with the works of the six days of creation, speaks of the divine power which produced all things from nothing, the divine wisdom which clearly distinguishes one thing from another and the divine goodness which generously adorns all things. Magnitude is concerned with the length, breadth and depth of things, according to their excellence which extends far and wide and deeply, as can be seen in the diffusion of light. This, together with the effect of their most interior, continual and diffuse activity, as can be seen in the activity of fire, manifestly shows the extent of the power, wisdom and goodness of the Triune God Who, in all things, exists as unconstrained power, presence and essence. The multitude of things, according to their general, special and individual diversity, in substance, in form or figure, and efficacious beyond human understanding, manifestly suggests and shows the immensity of the three conditions in God, as previously described. Physical appearance is in accordance with the lights, forms and colors of simple, mixed and even composite bodies, whether celestial and mineral, stone and metal, plant and animal, also evidently proclaims these three things. The fullness of things - according to which matter is full of forms due to the seminal reasons, form is full of power due to active potential, power is full of effects due to its efficiency - manifestly declares this thing once more. The manifold activity of those things which are either natural, or artificial, or moral, due to their most extensive variety, show the immensity of His power, art and goodness, which for all things is "the cause of existence, the rationality for understanding and the way of living"<sup>38</sup>. Order figures out the duration, situation and influence - that is, by what is before and what is after, what is superior and what is inferior, what is noble and what is less noble, it clearly suggests the primacy, sublimity and dignity of the First Principle, as far as it regards the infinity of His power; furthermore, the order of divine laws, precepts and judgments in the book of Scripture clearly suggests the immensity of His wisdom; lastly, the order of divine sacraments, rewards and punishments in the body of the Church clearly shows the immensity of His goodness. In this way, order itself leads us by the hand to the First and Supreme, the Most

<sup>38</sup> St Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* Book VIII, Chapter 4

Powerful, the Most Wise and the Best.

*15 Qui igitur tantis rerum creaturarum splendoribus non illustratur caecus est; qui tantis clamoribus non evigilat surdus est; qui ex omnibus his effectibus Deum non laudat mutus est; qui ex tantis indiciis primum principium non advertit stultus est.- Aperi igitur oculos, aures spirituales admove, labia tua solve et cor tuum appone, ut in omnibus creaturis Deum tuum videas, audias, laudes, diligas et colas, magnifices et honores, ne forte totus contra te orbis terrarum consurgat. Nam ob hoc pugnabit orbis terrarum contra insensatos, et contra sensatis erit materia gloriae, qui secundum Prophetam possunt dicere: Delectasti me, Domine, in factura tua, et in operibus manuum tuarum exultabo. Quam magnificata sunt opera tua, Domine! omnia in sapientia fecisti, impleta est terra possessione tua.*

Whoever is not enlightened by the splendors of such created things is blind. Whoever does not awaken at such a noise is deaf. Whoever doesn't praise God because of all these things is mute. Whoever does not turn towards the First Principle because of these indications is stupid. So open your eyes, prick up your spiritual ears, loosen your lips and wake your heart<sup>39</sup>, so that you may see, hear, praise, love, adore, magnify and honor your God in all created things, just in case the entire universe rise up as one against you. For this reason, indeed, the entire universe will fight against those who are unaware<sup>40</sup>; but for those who are aware, there will be glory, for those who, according to the Prophet, can say, In what you will do, Lord, you have given me delight and I shall be joyful at the work of your hands<sup>41</sup>. How wonderful are your works, Lord, you have done all things in wisdom and the earth is full of your riches<sup>42</sup>.

## CHAPTER 2

### *DE SPECULATIONE DEI IN VESTIGIIS SUIS IN HOC SENSIBILI MUNDO*

#### THE VISION OF GOD THROUGH HIS IMPRINTS UPON THE WORLD AS WE PERCEIVE IT

*1 Sed quoniam circa speculum sensibilibum non solum contingit contemplari Deum per ipsa tanquam per vestigia, verum etiam in ipsis, in quantum est in eis per essentiam, potentiam et praesentiam; et hoc considerare est altius quam praecedens: ideo huiusmodi consideratio secundum tenet locum tanquam secundus contemplationis gradus, quo debemus manuduci ad contemplandum Deum in cunctis creaturis, quae ad mentem nostram intrant per corporales sensus.*

However, since concerning the mirror of perception, not only does it happen that God

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<sup>39</sup> Pro 22:17

<sup>40</sup> Pro 5:21

<sup>41</sup> Ps 91:5

<sup>42</sup> Ps 103:24

is contemplated through these things as through imprints, but also in these things to the extent that He is in them in essence, power and presence. This consideration is superior to what was just explained and so is held to be the second level of contemplation: by this we should be lead by the hand to contemplate all the created things which enter into our minds through physical perception.

*2 Notandum igitur, quod iste mundus, qui dicitur macrocosmus, intrat ad animam nostram, quae dicitur minor mundus, per portas quinque sensuum, secundum ipsorum sensibilium apprehensionem, oblectationem et diiudicationem.- Quod patet sic: quia in eo quaedam sunt generantia, quaedam generata, quaedam gubernantia haec et illa. Generantia sunt corpora simplicia, scilicet corpora caelestia et quatuor elementa. Nam ex elementis per virtutem lucis conciliantis contrarietatem elementorum in mixtis habent generari et produci, quaecumque generantur et producuntur per operationem virtutis naturalis.- Generata vero sunt corpora ex elementis composita, sicut mineralia, vegetabilia, sensibilia et corpora humana.- Regentia haec et illa sunt substantiae spirituales sive omnino coniunctae, ut sunt animae brutales, sive coniunctae separabiliter, ut sunt spiritus rationales, sive coniunctae inseparabiliter, ut sunt spiritus caelestes, quos philosophi Intelligentias, nos Angelos appellamus. Quibus secundum philosophos competit movere corpora caelestia, ac per hoc eis attribuitur administratio universi, suscipiendo a prima causa, scilicet Deo, virtutis influentiam, quam refundunt secundum opus gubernationis, quod respicit rerum consistentiam naturalem. Secundum autem theologos attribuitur eisdem regimen universi secundum imperium summi Dei quantum ad opera reparationis, secundum, quae dicuntur administratorii spiritus, missi propter eos qui hereditatem capiunt salutis.*

You should note that this world, the macrocosm, enters into our soul, the microcosm, through the gates of the five senses, according to the apprehension, enjoyment and analysis of these things which are perceived. This is obvious, since some things are generating, other things are generated and still other things are controlling the former and the latter. The things which are generating are simple, they are the celestial bodies and the four elements. This is because whatever gets generated and produced from the elements, is produced and generated by the activity of natural power, due to the power of the light which unifies the differences which exist between the elements. The things which are generated, on the other hand, are bodies, composed from the elements, that is to say minerals, vegetables, sensible things and human bodies. The things which rule the former and the latter are spiritual substances, whether entirely conjoined such as animals or seperably conjoined such as rational spirits or else inseparably conjoined, such as the celestial spirits, which philosophers call Intelligences and which we refer to as Angels. Philosophers hold that it is they who move the celestial bodies and so to them is attributed the administration of the universe, taking up the influence of power from the First Cause, Which is God, which influence they pour out through their work of government and which follows the natural course of things. Theologians, moreover, attribute to these spirits the control over the universe, according to the power of the Supreme God, which deals with the work of reparation according to what are called the spirits of administration, sent because of

those who are seizing the inheritance of salvation<sup>43</sup>.

*3 Homo igitur, qui dicitur minor mundus, habet quinque sensus quasi quinque portas, per quas intrat cognitio omnium, quae sunt in mundo sensibili, in animam ipius. Nam per visum intrant corpora sublimia et luminosa et cetera colorata, per tactum vero corpora solida et terrestria, per tres vero sensus intermedios intrant intermedia, ut per gustum aquea, per auditum aërea, per odoratum vaporabilia, quae aliquid habent de natura humida, aliquid de aërea, aliquid de ignea seu calida, sicut patet in fumo ex aromatibus resoluta.*

*Intrant igitur per has portas tam corpora simplicia quam etiam composita, ex his mixta. Quia vero sensu percipimus non solum haec sensibilia particularia, quae sunt lux, sonus, odor, sapor et quatuor primariae qualitates, quas apprehendit tactus; verum etiam sensibilia communia, quae sunt numerus, magnitudo, figura, quies et motus; et "omne, quod movetur ab alio movetur", et quaedam a se ipsis moventur et quiescunt, ut sunt animalia: dum per hos quinque sensus motus corporum apprehendimus, manuducimur ad cognitionem motorum spiritualium tanquam per effectum cognitionem causarum.*

So a human, called the microcosm, has five senses, like five gates, through which enters into the soul the perception of all things. Through vision there enter sublime and luminous bodies and other colored things and through touch solid and earthly bodies; through the three intermediate senses enter the intermediate bodies - liquids through taste, auditory phenomena through hearing and vapors through smell. Vapors have about them something humid, something gaseous, something fiery or hot - which can be perceived from the smoke given off by incense.

Through these gates there enter both simple bodies and their admixtures, in the form of composite bodies. Because, through our senses we perceive not only specifics such as light, sound, odor, taste and the four primary qualities which touch apprehends, but also general things such as number, magnitude, figure, stillness and movement. And, since "all things which move are moved by something else"<sup>44</sup> and since certain things, such as animals, move and remain at rest under their own steam, at the same time as we are aware of the movement of bodies through the five senses, we are led by the hand towards acquaintance with spiritual movers, in the same way as an effect leads to an acquaintance with its causes.

*4 Intrat igitur quantum ad tria rerum genera in animam humanam per apprehensionem totus iste sensibilis mundus. Haec autem sensibilia exteriora sunt quae primo ingrediuntur in animam per portas quinque sensuum; intrant, inquam, non per substantias, sed per similitudines suas primo generatas in medio et de medio in organo et de organo exteriori in interiori et de hoc in potentiam apprehensivam; et sic generatio speciei in medio et de medio in organo et conversio potentiae apprehensivae super illam facit apprehensionem omnium eorum quae exterius anima apprehendit.*

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<sup>43</sup> Heb 1:14

<sup>44</sup> Aristotle, *Physics* Book VII, text 1 ff

So, according to these three classes, the entire perceivable world enters into the human soul through apprehension. Moreover, these external things are at first perceived as entering the soul by way of the five senses. I should say that they enter, not in substance, but through their appearance, generated at first at their core; from their core they move to the external organ, from where they move into the interior organ and, finally, into that power which apprehends them. In this way, the generation of species at the core and from the core of the organ and the conversion, through the apprehending power, of all these things means that the soul apprehends them as being external.

*5 Ad hanc apprehensionem, si sit rei convenientis, sequitur oblectatio. 7 Delectatur autem sensus in objecto per similitudinem abstractam percepto vel ratione speciositatis, sicut in visu, vel ratione suavitatis, sicut in odoratu et auditu, vel ratione salubritatis, sicut in gustu et tactu, appropriate loquendo. Omnis autem delectatio est ratione proportionalitatis. Sed quoniam species tenet rationem formae, virtutis et operationis, secundum quod habet respectum ad principium, a quo manat, ad medium, per quod transit, et ad terminum, in quem agit: ideo proportionalitas aut attenditur in similitudine, secundum quod tenet rationem speciei seu formae, et sic dicitur speciositas, quia "pulcritudo nihil aliud est quam aequalitas numerosa", seu "quidam partium situs cum coloris suavitate". Aut attenditur proportionalitas, in quantum tenet rationem potentiae seu virtutis, et sic dicitur suavitas, cum virtus agens non impropotionaliter excedit recipientem; quia sensus tristatur in extremis et in mediis delectatur. Aut attenditur, in quantum tenet rationem efficaciae et impressionis, quae tunc est proportionalis, quando agens imprimendo replet indigentiam patientis, et hoc est salvare et nutrire ipsum, quod maxime apparet in gustu et tactu, Et sic per oblectionem delectabilia exteriora secundum triplicem rationem delectandi per similitudinem intrat in animam.*

If this apprehension is of something agreeable there follows enjoyment. The sense furthermore takes a proportionate delight in the perception of the object through its abstract appearance, whether through seeing its beauty, or through smelling or hearing its savor, or through tasting or touching its wholesomeness. But, since the species holds the rationale for its form, power and activity, it indicates thereby how it flows from the origin into the center, passing through that point to the end, where it acts. For this reason, proportionality is found either in its appearance, which accounts for its physicality or form, and for which reason it is called beauty - since "beauty is nothing but numerical equality"<sup>45</sup> or "a certain distribution of parts and suitable color"<sup>46</sup> ; or it is found in its potential and power, for which reason it is called savor, so long as the acting power is not disproportionate to the recipient; or else it is found in its efficacy and the impression which it makes, which are proportionate when the agent supplies what the recipient lacks, which is to save and nourish itself and which appears mainly in taste and touch. Thus, following the threefold reason for delight, the enjoyment of delightful things outside the self enter the soul by means of their appearance.

<sup>45</sup> St Augustine *De Musica* Book IV, Chapter 13, n38

<sup>46</sup> St Augustine *De Civitate Dei* Book XXIII, Chapter 19, n38



6 *Post hanc apprehensionem et oblectationem fit diiudicatio, qua non solum diiudicatur, utrum hoc sit album, vel nigrum, quia hoc pertinet ad sensum particularem; non solum, utrum sit salubre, vel nocivum, quia hoc pertinet ad sensum interiorem; verum etiam, quia diiudicatur et ratio redditur, quare hoc delectat; et in hoc actu inquiritur de ratione delectationis, quae in sensu percipitur ab objecto. Hoc est autem, cum quaeritur ratio pulcri, suavis et salubris: et invenitur quod haec est proportio aequalitatis. Ratio autem aequalitatis est eadem in magnis et parvis nec extenditur dimensionibus nec succedit seu transit cum transeuntibus nec motibus alteratur. Abstrahit igitur a loco, tempore et motu, ac per hoc est incommutabilis, incircumscribibilis et omnino spiritualis. Diiudicatio igitur est actio, quae speciem sensibilem, sensibiliter per sensus acceptam, introire facit depurando et abstrahendo in potentiam intellectivam. Et sic totus iste mundus introire habet in animam humanam per portas sensuum secundum tres operationes praedictas.*

Following apprehension and enjoyment there comes analysis. This is not simply the analysis of whether something be white or black, since this pertains to the specific perception, nor of whether it be wholesome or harmful, since this pertains to interior perception, but it is also an analysis to establish why something produces delight - in other words, an inquiry into the reason for the delight which is due to the object. This is also the case when a rationale is sought for beauty, or savor or wholesomeness, which is found to be the proportion of equality. The rationale for equality, moreover, is the same in great things as in small things, it neither alters its dimensions, nor does it change nor pass away and neither is it altered by movement. It abstracts from place, time and movement and thus is unchangable, unlimited and in all things spiritual. So analysis is an act, which, through abstraction and purification, causes the perceivable object, apprehended directly by the senses, to enter into the intellectual power. And in this way the whole world has to enter the human soul through the gates of the senses and according to these three activities.

7 *Haec autem omnia sunt vestigia, in quibus speculari possumus Deum nostrum.- Nam cum species apprehensa sit similitudo in medio genita et deinde ipsi organo impressa et per illam impressionem in suum principium, scilicet in obiectum cognoscendum, ducat; manifeste insinuat, quod ille qui est imago invisibilis Dei et splendor gloriae et figura substantiae eius, qui ubique est per primam sui generationem, sicut obiectum in toto medio suam generat similitudinem, per gratiam unionis unitur, sicut species corporali organo, individuo rationalis naturae, ut per illam unionem nos reduceret ad Patrem sicut ad fontale principium et obiectum. Sic ergo omnia cognoscibilia habent sui speciem generare, manifeste proclamant, quod in illis tanquam in speculis videri potest aeterna generatio Verbi, Imaginis et Filii a Deo Patre aeternaliter emanantis.*

All of these things are imprints through which we can look upon our God. For the perceived object is an appearance born at the core and then impressed upon the organ itself, which impression gives rise to the object with which one is to become acquainted. This clearly suggests that that which is the invisible image of God<sup>47</sup>, the

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<sup>47</sup> Col 1:15

splendor of His glory and the form of His substance<sup>48</sup> - which is universal due to His primary generation, in the same way as an object generates its appearance from its core - is united by the grace of union, as something perceivable to the bodily organs of a rational individual: that union is led back to the Father in the form of a primordial source and its object. Thus, since all things with which one can become acquainted have to generate their own perceived form, and since in them can be seen the eternal generation of the Word as in a mirror, they clearly proclaim the eternal emanation of the Image and the Son from God the Father.

*8 Secundum hunc modum species delectans ut speciosa, suavis et salubris insinuat, quod in illa prima specie est prima speciositas, suavitas et salubritas, in qua est summa proportionalitas et aequitas ad generantem; in qua est virtus, non per phantasma, sed per veritatem apprehensionis illabens: in qua est impressio salvans et sufficientes et omnem apprehendentis indigentiam expellens. Si ergo "delectatio est coniunctio convenientis cum convenienti"; et solius Dei similitudo tenet rationem summe speciosi, suavis et salubris; et unitur secundum veritatem et secundum intimitatem et secundum plenitudinem replentem omnem capacitatem: manifeste videri potest, quod in solo Deo est fontalis et vera delectatio, et quod ad ipsam ex omnibus delectationibus manuducimur requirendam.*

According to this approach, the object giving pleasure is perceived as beautiful, pleasing and wholesome, which implies that in this first object is original beauty, pleasure and wholesomeness, in which there is supreme proportionality and equality to its source, in which there appears an uncorrupting power, not through illusion but through the truth of apprehension. In this there is a salvific impression which expels both substitutes and everything that may be lacking in apprehension. If, therefore, "delight is a conjunction of the pleasurable to the pleasurable", and if only the appearance of God accounts for the highest of beauty, pleasure and wholesomeness, and if that is united according to the truth and to the interiority and to the fullness which fills its capacity, then it can clearly be seen that in God alone is the source and true delight and that we are led by the hand to seek that same thing in all which delights us.

*9 Excellentiori autem modo et immediatiori diiudicatio ducit nos in aeternam veritatem certius speculandam. Si enim diiudicatio habet fieri per rationem abstrahentem a loco, tempore et mutabilitate ac per hoc a dimensione, successione et transmutatione, per rationem immutabilem et incircumscripibilem et interminabilem; nihil autem est omnino immutabile, incircumscripibile et interminabile, nisi quod est aeternum; omne autem quod est aeternum, est Deus, vel in Deo: si ergo omnia, quaecumque certius diiudicamus, per huiusmodi rationem diiudicamus; patet, quod ipse est ratio omnium rerum et regula infallibilis et lux veritatis, in qua cuncta relucent infallibiliter, indelebilitate, indubitanter, irrefragabiliter, indiudicabiliter, incommutabiliter, incoarctabiliter, interminabiliter, indivisibiliter et intellectualiter. Et ideo leges illae, per quas iudicamus certitudinaliter de omnibus sensibilibus, in nostram considerationem venientibus; cum sint infallibiles et indubitabiles intellectui apprehendentis, sint indelebiles a memoria recolentis tanquam semper praesentes, sint irrefragabiles et in-*

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<sup>48</sup> Heb 1:3

*diudicabiles intellectui iudicantis, quia, ut dicit Augustinus, "nullus de eis iudicat, sed per illas": necesse est, eas esse incommutabiles et incorruptibiles tanquam necessarias, incoarctabiles tanquam incircumscriptas, interminabiles tanquam aeternas, ac per hoc indivisibiles tanquam intellectuales et incorporeas, non factas, sed increatas, aeternaliter existentes in arte aeterna, a qua, per quam et secundum quam formantur formosa omnia; et ideo nec certitudinaliter iudicari possunt nisi per illam quae non tantum fuit forma cuncta produciens, verum etiam cuncta conservans et distinguens, tanquam ens in omnibus formam tenens et regula dirigens, et per quam diiudicat mens nostra cuncta, quae per sensus intrant in ipsam.*

However, by a more excellent and more immediate method, analysis leads us to look upon eternal truth with greater certainty. For, whilst analysis arises through a reasoned abstraction of place, time and transformation and, thereby, through immutable, unlimited and endless reason, of dimension, succession and transmutation, there however remains nothing which is entirely immutable, unlimited and endless - apart from that which is eternal; and everything which is eternal is God, or in God. And, therefore, however more certainly we analyse all things, we analyse them according to this reason, which is clearly the reason of all things, the infallible rule and the light of truth in which all things are illumined infallibly, indelibly, indubitably, unbreakably, indistinguishably, unchangably, unconfinally, interminably, indivisibly and intellectually. And so, as we consider those laws, with which we judge with certainty those things which we perceive, while they are infallible and indubitable to the intellect of the one apprehending, indelible to the memory of the one recalling and unbreakable and indistinguishable to the intellect of the one judging, so, because, as Augustine says, no-one judges from them, but through them, it is required that they be unchangable and incorruptible because necessary, unconfinal because unlimited, endless because eternal, and, for this reason, indivisible because intellectual and incorporeal - not made, but uncreated, eternally existing in that art of eternity, from which, through which and consequent to which all elegant things are given form. For this reason, they cannot with certainty be gauged save through that which not only produced all other forms, but which also preserves and distinguishes all things, as in all things the essence holding the form and the rule directing it; and, through this, our mind analyses all things which enter into it through the senses.

*10 Haec autem speculatio dilatatur secundum considerationem septem differentiarum numerorum, quibus quasi septem gradibus conscenditur in Deum, secundum quod ostendit Augustinus in libro De Vera Religione et in sexto Musicae, ubi assignat differentias numerorum gradatim conscendentium ab his sensibilibus usque ad Optimum omnium, ut in omnibus videatur Deus.*

*Dicit enim, numeros esse in corporibus et maxime in sonis et vocibus, et hos vocat sonantes; numeros ab his abstractos et in sensibus nostris receptos, et hos vocat occurrentes; numeros ab anima procedentes in corpus, sicut patet in gesticulationibus et saltationibus, et hos vocat progressores; numeros in delectationibus sensuum ex conversione intentionis super speciem receptam, et hos vocat sensuales; numeros in memoriam retentos, et hos vocat memoriales; numeros etiam, per quos de his omni-*

*bus iudicamus, et hos vocat iudiciales, qui ut dictum est necessario sunt supra mentem tanquam infallibiles et indiudicabiles. Ab his autem imprimuntur mentibus nostris numeri artificiales, quos tamen inter illos gradus non enumerat Augustinus, quia connexi sunt iudicialibus; et ab his manant numeri progressores, ex quibus creantur numerosae formae artificiatorum, ut a summis per media ordinatus fiat descensus ad infima. Ad hos etiam gradatim ascendimus a numeris sonantibus, mediantibus occursoribus, sensualibus et memorialibus.*

*Cum igitur omnia sint pulcra et quodam modo delectabilia; et pulcritudo et delectatio non sint absque proportione; et proportio primo sit in numeris: necesse est, omnia esse numerosa; ac per hoc "numerus est praecipuum in animo Conditoris exemplar" et in rebus praecipuum vestigium ducens in Sapientiam. Quod cum sit omnibus evidentissimum et Deo propinquissimum, propinquissime quasi per septem differentias ducit in Deum et facit, eum cognosci in cunctis corporalibus et sensibilibus, dum numerosa apprehendimus, in numerosis proportionibus delectamur et per numerosarum proportionum leges irrefragabiliter iudicamus.*

This observation is further broadened according to the consideration of seven kind of number by which one climbs fully, as up seven steps, into God. This is what Augustine says in the sixth chapter, "On Music", of his book *The True Religion*, where he assigns different kinds of number, ascending stepwise from perceived things into the universal Creator, so that God might be seen in all things.

For he holds that there are numbers in bodies and, primarily, in sound and voices, which he calls "sounds". There are numbers which have been abstracted and received by our senses, which he calls "indicators". There are numbers proceeding from the soul into the body, as are perceived in gesticulation and in activity, and these he calls "movements". There are numbers in the delight of the senses, which comes from noticing the perceptions which are received, and these he calls "sensations". There are numbers in retained memories, and these he calls "memories". There are even numbers, through which we distinguish all things, which he calls "decisions" and which, as has been said, are necessarily superior to the mind as infallible and indistinguishable. These also imprint upon the mind artificial numbers, which Augustine does not include in these steps since they are connected with decisions. And from these flow the movement numbers, from which are created many forms of artificiality, with the result that there appears an ordered descent from the highest level to the lowest, via that which is in between. From these, we also ascend stepwise via numbers of sound, by way of the indicators, sensations, and memories.

Since all things are beautiful and, to some extent, give delight, and since beauty and delight are not other than proportionate, and since proportion is found at first in number, it is necessary that everything be numerical. Thus, "number is the foremost exemplar in the Maker's mind" and, in things, the foremost imprint which guides us to wisdom. Because, when it is most evident to all and closest to God, it is most nearly as though the seven kinds of numbers lead into God and cause Him to be realised in all physical and perceived things. While we apprehend the numerical, we take delight

in numerical proportion and analyse most securely by means of the laws of numerical proportion.

11 *Ex his duobus gradibus primis, quibus manuducimur ad speculandum Deum in vestigiis quasi ad modum duarum alarum descendendum circa pedes, colligere possumus, quod omnes creaturae istius sensibilis mundi animum contemplantis et sapientis ducunt in Deum aeternum, pro eo quod illius primi principii potentissimi, sapientissimi et optimi, illius aeternae originis, lucis et plenitudinis, illius, inquam, artis efficientis, exemplantis et ordinantis sunt umbrae, resonantiae et picturae, sunt vestigia, simulacra et spectacula nobis ad contuendum Deum proposita et signa divinitus data; quae, inquam, sunt exemplaria vel potius exemplata, proposita mentibus adhuc rudibus et sensibilibus, ut per sensibilia, quae vident, transferantur ad intelligibilia, quae non vident, tanquam per signa ad signata.*

From these two first steps, by which we are led by the hand to look upon God through His imprints, in the manner of the two wings about the feet of the Seraph, we can gather that all created things in this perceivable world lead the soul of the one contemplating and tasting wisdom into eternal God. This is because that First Principle, most powerful, most wise and best, of eternal origin, light and fullness, whose activity is efficient, exemplary and consequent, has shadows, resonances and pictures, imprints, likenesses and images, signs given divinely to us, that we might look upon God. They are, I continue, exemplary - or, rather, exemplified: they are proposed to minds both rough and perceptive so that, through those things which they see, these exemplars might be transferred to those things which are intellectually grasped, which they do not see, in the same way that signs are signified.

12 *Significant autem huiusmodi creaturae huius mundi sensibilis invisibilia Dei, partim quia Deus est omnis creaturae origo, exemplar et finis, et omnis effectus est signum causae, et exemplatum exemplaris, et via finis, ad quem ducit: partim ex propria repraesentatione; partim ex prophetica praefiguratione; partim ex angelica operatione; partim ex superaddita institutione. Omnis enim creatura ex natura est illius aeternae sapientiae quaedam effigies et similitudo, sed specialiter illa quae in libro Scripturae per spiritum prophetiae assumpta est ad spiritualium praefigurationem; specialius autem illae creaturae, in quarum effigie Deus angelico ministerio voluit apparere; specialissime vero ea quam voluit ad significandum instituere, quae tenet non solum rationem signi secundum nomen commune, verum etiam Sacramenti.*

Those things in this perceived world which are created signify the invisible things of God<sup>49</sup>. This is partly because God is the origin, exemplar and finality of every created thing and because every effect is the sign of a cause, the example of an exemplar and the way towards the end to which it leads. It is also partly from its own representation, partly from a prophetic prefiguration, partly from angelic activity and partly from a further institution. For, by its nature, every created thing is a certain likeness and image of that eternal wisdom, but especially those ideas which have been employed in the Book of Scripture through the spirit of prophecy for the prefiguration of things of the

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<sup>49</sup> Rom 1:20

spirit. This is especially the case with those created things in whose likeness God has chosen to appear through angelic ministry, more so that which He wished to institute as an indication - which term is not used only to delineate "sign" as in general speech, but also to delineate "sacrament".

*13 Ex quibus omnibus colligitur, quod invisibilia Dei a creatura mundi, per ea quae facta sunt, intellecta concipiuntur; ita ut qui nolunt ista advertere et Deum in his omnibus cognoscere, benedicere et amare inexcusabiles sint, dum nolunt transferri de tenebris in admirabile lumen Dei. Deo autem gratias per Iesum Christum, Dominum nostrum, qui nos de tenebris transtulit in admirabile lumen suum, dum per haec lumina exterius data ad speculum mentis nostrae in quo relucent divina, disponimus ad reintrandum.*

It follows that the invisible things of God are clearly seen as understood by His creation, that is the created things of the world. Thus those who do not want to turn towards these things and to know, bless and love God in all of these are quite beyond the pale<sup>50</sup>, so long as they do not want to move from the shadows into the wonderful light of God<sup>51</sup>. But thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ Our Lord, who has taken us from the shadows into his wonderful light<sup>52</sup>: through this light, shone outwardly, we set ourselves to reenter the mirror of our mind, in which the divine things glisten.

### CHAPTER 3

#### DE SPECULATIONE DEI PER SUAM IMAGINEM NATURALIBUS POTENTIIS INSIGNITAM

#### THE VISION OF GOD THROUGH HIS IMAGE MARKED UPON THE NATURAL POWERS

*1 Quoniam autem duo gradus praedicti, ducendo nos in Deum per vestigia sua, per quae in cunctis creaturis relucet, manuduxerunt nos usque ad hoc, ut ad nos reintraremus, in mentem scilicet nostram, in qua divina relucet imago; hinc est quod iam in tertio loco, ad nosmetipsos intrantes et quasi atrium forinsecus relinquentes, in sanctis, scilicet anteriori parte tabernaculi, conari debemus per speculum videre Deum; ubi ad modum candelabri relucet lux veritatis in facie nostrae mentis, in qua scilicet resplendet imago beatissimae Trinitatis.*

*Intra igitur ad te et vide, quoniam mens tua amat ferventissime semetipsam; nec se posset amare, nisi nosset; nec se nosset, nisi sui meminisset, quia nihil capimus per intelligentiam, quod non sit praesens apud nostram memoriam; et ex hoc advertis, animam tuam triplicem habere potentiam, non oculo carnis, sed oculo rationis. Con-*

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<sup>50</sup> Rom 1:29

<sup>51</sup> 1 Cor 15:57

<sup>52</sup> 1 Pt 2:9

*sidera igitur harum trium potentiarum operationes et habitudines, et videre poteris Deum per te tanquam per imaginem, quod est videre per speculum in aenigmate.*

So the two levels previously described, leading us into God through His imprints, through that which shines in all things, have lead us by the hand to reenter ourselves - that is our own mind - in which the divine image shines. Now we are already at the third stage, where we enter into our very selves, as though leaving the outer entrance hall, and enter into the place of holiness, that is the outer part of the tabernacle, where we ought to begin to see God, as through a mirror. Here, like light from a candlestick, the light of truth shines in the face of our minds, reflecting the image of the most blessed Trinity.

So enter for yourself, and see how fervently your mind loves itself. It would not be able to love itself, unless it knew itself, and it would not be able to know itself unless it remembered itself, since we grasp nothing with our understanding which is not first within our memory. From this you can see, that your soul has a threefold power - an eye not in the physical sense, but in the sense of reason. Think about the activity and characteristics of these three powers and you will be able to see God in yourself, as though in an image, which is to see Him as though, mysteriously, in a mirror<sup>53</sup>.

*2 Operatio autem memoriae est retentio et repraesentatio non solum praesentium, corporalium et temporalium, verum etiam succedentium, simplicium et sempiternalium. - Retinet namque memoria praeterita per recordationem, praesentia per susceptionem, futura per praevisionem.- Retinet etiam simplicia, sicut principia quantitatum continuarum et discretarum, ut punctum, instans et unitatem, sine quibus impossibile est meminisse aut cogitare ea quae principiantur per haec.- Retinet nihilominus scientiarum principia et dignitates ut sempiternalia et sempiternaliter, quia nunquam potest sic oblivisci eorum, dum ratione utatur, quin ea audita approbet et eis assentiat, non tanquam de novo percipiat, sed tanquam sibi innata et familiaria recognoscat; sicut patet, si proponatur alicui: "De quolibet affirmatio, vel negatio"; vel: "Omne totum est maius sua parte", vel quaecumque alia dignitas, cui non est contradicere "ad interius rationem".*

*Ex prima igitur retentione actuali omnium temporalium, praeteritorum scilicet, praesentium et futurorum, habet effigiem aeternitatis, cuius praesens indivisibile ad omnia tempora se extendit. Ex secunda apparet, quod ipsa non solum habet ab exteriori formari per phantasmata, verum etiam a superiori suscipiendo simplices formas, quae non possunt introire per portas sensuum et sensibilibus phantasias. Ex tertia habetur, quod ipsa habet lucem incommutabilem sibi praesentem, in qua meminit invariabilium veritatum.- Et sic per operationes memoriae apparet, quod ipsa anima est imago Dei et similitudo adeo sibi praesens et eum habens praesentem, quod eum actu capit et per potentiam "capax eius est et particeps esse potest".*

The activity of the memory is the retention and representation, not only of what is present, physical and temporal, but also of what is consequent, simple and eternal. The

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<sup>53</sup> Cor 13:12

memory retains what is past, through remembering it, what is present, through grasping it, and what is future, through foresight. It also retains simple things, such as the principles of continual and discrete quantities - like point, instance and unit - without which it is impossible to recall or consider those things which are derived from them. But it also eternally retains the eternal scientific principles and axioms because, while engaged in reason, it can never ignore them; rather, it approves the things it hears and agrees with them, not as though it was hearing them for the first time, but as though it was recognising what was innate and familiar. This is clear, if you make a statement to someone such as, "the affirmation or negation of x" or "Every whole is greater than its parts" or any other axiom which is not inherently self-contradictory.

From the first, then, the actual retention of all temporal things - that is the things of the past, present and future - has an image of eternity whose indivisible present extends throughout time. From the second, it appears that it has not only been formed from the outside by images, but also by accepting from above simple forms, which cannot enter through the gates of the senses, through the illusion of whatever is perceived. From the third, it is seen that it has an light, immutably present to itself, through which it remembers the truth of those things which are unchanging. And so it appears, through the activity of the memory, that the soul itself is the image and likeness of God, to the extent that it is present to itself and has presence within Him - because it seizes Him by act and by power, being capable and able to take part in Him.

*3 Operatio autem virtutis intellectivae est in perceptione intellectus terminorum, propositionum et illationum.- Capit autem intellectus terminorum significata, cum comprehendit, quid est unumquodque per definitionem. Sed definitio habet fieri per superiora, et illa per superiora definiri habent, usquequo veniatur ad suprema et generalissima, quibus ignoratis, non possunt intelligi definitive inferiora. Nisi igitur cognoscatur quid est ens per se, non potest plene sciri definitio alicuius specialis substantiae. Nec ens per se cognosci potest, nisi cognoscatur cum suis conditionibus, quae sunt; unum, verum, bonum. Ens autem, cum possit cogitari ut diminutum et completum, ut imperfectum et ut perfectum, ut ens in potentia et ut ens in actu, ut ens secundum quid et ut ens simpliciter, ut ens in parte et ut ens totaliter, ut ens transiens et ut ens manens, ut ens per aliud et ut ens per se, ut ens permixtum non-enti et ut ens purum, ut ens dependens et ut ens absolutum, ut ens posterius et ut ens prius, ut ens mutabile et ut ens immutabile, ut ens simplex et ut ens compositum: cum "privationes et defectus nullatenus possint cognosci nisi per positiones", non venit intellectus noster ut plene resolvens intellectum alicuius entium creatorum, nisi iuvetur ab intellectu entis purissimi, actualissimi, completissimi et absoluti; quod est ens simpliciter et aeternum, in quo sunt rationes omnium in sua puritate. Quomodo autem sciret intellectus, hoc esse ens defectivum et incompletum, si nullam haberet cognitionem entis absque omni defectu? Et sic de aliis conditionibus praelibatis*

*Intellectum autem propositionum tunc intellectus dicitur veraciter comprehendere, cum certitudinaliter scit, illas veras esse; et hoc scire est scire, quoniam non potest falli in illa comprehensione. Scit enim, quod veritas illa non potest aliter se habere; scit igitur, illam veritatem esse incommutabilem. Sed cum ipsa mens nostra sit commuta-*



*bilis, illam sic incommutabiliter relucens non potest videre nisi per aliquam lucem omnino incommutabiliter radiantem, quam impossibile est esse creaturam mutabilem. Scit igitur in illa luce, quae illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum, quae est lux vera et Verbum in principio apud Deum.*

*Intellectum vero illationis tunc veraciter percipit noster intellectus, quando videt, quod conclusio necessario sequitur ex praemissis; quod non solum videt in terminis necessariis, verum etiam in contingentibus, ut: si homo currit, homo movetur. Hanc autem necessariam habitudinem percipit non solum in rebus entibus, verum etiam in non entibus. Sicut enim, homine existente, sequitur: si homo currit, homo movetur; sic etiam, non existente. Huiusmodi igitur illationis necessitas non venit ab existentia rei in materia, quia est contingens, nec ab existentia rei in anima, quia tunc esset fictio, si non esset in re: venit igitur ab exemplaritate in arte aeterna, secundum quam res habent aptitudinem et habitudinem ad invicem secundum illius aeternae artis repraesentationem. Omnis igitur, ut dicit Augustinus De Vera Religione, vere ratiocinantis lumen accenditur ab illa veritate et ad ipsam nititur pervenire.- Ex quo manifeste apparet, quod coniunctus sit intellectus noster ipsi aeternae veritati, dum non nisi per illam docentem nihil verum potest certitudinaliter capere. Videre igitur per te potes veritatem, quae te docet, si te concupiscentiae et phantasmata non impediant et se tanquam nubes inter te et veritatis radium non interponant.*

Now, the activity of the intellect lies in the comprehension of terms, propositions and inference. The intellect moreover grasps what is signified by these terms, when it understands, through definition, what each thing is. But the definition needs must be through higher things, and these must also be defined through higher things, right up to those things which are supreme and most general, ignorance of which precludes the understanding of lower things. Thus, unless one becomes acquainted with Being, the definition of anything specific cannot be known. Nor can you be acquainted with Being unless you are acquainted with its conditions, which are the One, the True and the Good. As Being can be thought of as incomplete and complete, as imperfect and perfect, as potential Being and as actual Being, as consequent Being and as simply Being, as Being in part and Being in totality, as transient Being and as stable Being, as Being in terms of another and Being in terms of itself, as Being mixed up with non-being and as pure Being, as dependent Being and as absolute Being, as previously Being and as Being afterward, as changable Being and as unchangable Being, as simple Being and as complex Being, and "since its defects and limitations can be known only through positive statements", we cannot count upon our intellect to resolve fully our understanding of any one created being, unless it be helped through the understanding of the purest, most immediate, most complete and most absolute Being, which is simple and eternal Being and in which are the rationale for all things in their purity. How, moreover, does the intellect know that this being is defective and incomplete - or any of the other conditions already mentioned - if it has no familiarity with the Being which is beyond fault?

The intellect is said truly to grasp the understanding of propositions when it knows for sure that they are true. And to know this is to know, since an error cannot be made in

such a proposition, for it knows that the truth cannot be had in another form and, therefore, that the truth is unchanging. But since our mind itself is changable, it cannot see the light of this unchanging truth unless another light shines unchangingly upon it - and that cannot be a changable, created, thing. In this light, therefore, it knows the light which enlightens everyone coming into this world<sup>54</sup>, which is the true light which, in the beginning, was the Word with God<sup>55</sup>.

But our intellect then truly perceives the understanding of an inference, when it sees that the conclusion necessarily follows from the premise. It does not only see in terms of what is required, but also in terms of what is consequent, for an understanding - so, if a man runs, then something is causing the man to move. It also perceives this necessary characteristic not only in things which exist but also in things which are not existing - so, just as for an existing man it follows that, if he runs, then there is something causing his movement, so also if he is not existing. In this same way, then, the necessity of inference does not come from the existence of a thing in matter, because this is consequent, nor from the existence of a thing in the soul, since this would be a fiction were it not existing in the thing. So it comes, rather, from the exemplar in the art of eternity, according to which things have an aptitude and interrelated characteristics, according to its representation in the art of eternity. As Augustine says in *The True Religion*, the light of all who reason truly is kindled by Truth and so exerts itself so as to reach it. From this it is clear that our intellect is conjoined with eternal Truth, without whose guidance it is incapable with any certainty of grasping a truth. Thus you can see the truth through yourself, which teaches you - so long as desires and illusions do not get in the way and place themselves like clouds between you and the rays of Truth.

*4 Operatio autem virtutis electivae attenditur in consilio, iudicio et desiderio.- Consilium autem est in inquirendo, quid sit melius hoc an illud. Sed melius non dicitur nisi per accessum ad optimum; accessus autem est secundum maiorem assimilationem: nullus ergo scit utrum hoc sit illo melius, nisi sciat, illud optimo magis assimilari. Nullus autem, scit, aliquid alii magis assimilari, nisi illud cognoscat; non enim scio, hunc esse similem Petro, nisi sciam vel cognoscam Petrum: omni igitur consilianti necessario est impressa notio summi boni.*

*Iudicium autem certum de consiliabilibus est per aliquam legem. Nullus autem certitudinaliter iudicat per legem, nisi certus sit quod illa lex recta est, et quod ipsam iudicare non debet; sed mens nostra iudicat de se ipsa: cum igitur non possit iudicare de lege, per quam iudicat; lex illa superior est mente nostra, et per hanc iudicat, secundum quod sibi impressa est. Nihil autem est superior mente humana, nisi solus ille qui fecit eam: igitur in iudicando deliberativa nostra pertingit ad divinas leges, si plena resolutione dissolvat.*

*Desiderium autem principaliter est illius quod maxime ipsum movet. Maxime autem movet quod maxime amatur; maxime autem amatur esse beatum; beatum autem*

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<sup>54</sup> Jn 1:9

<sup>55</sup> Jn 1:1

*esse non habetur nisi per optimum et finem ultimum: nihil igitur appetit humanum desiderium nisi quia summum bonum, vel quia est ad illud, vel quia habet aliquam effigiem illius. Tanta est vis summi boni, ut nihil nisi per illius desiderium a creatura possit amari, quae tunc fallitur et errat, cum effigiem et simulacrum pro veritate acceptat.*

*Vide igitur, quomodo anima Deo est propinqua, et quomodo memoria in aeternitatem, intelligentia in veritatem, electiva potentia ducit in bonitatem summam secundum operationes suas.*

The activity of elective power relates to counsel, judgment and desire. Counsel, moreover, is concerned with an inquiry as to whether one thing be better than another. But what is better cannot be described without access to that is best and such access comes from the degree of similarity. So no-one knows whether one thing is better than another unless they can compare them both with what is best. But no-one knows to what extent something is similar to something else unless they are acquainted with it. After all, I cannot know that someone is like Peter unless I am acquainted with Peter. Thus, upon all those who offer true counsel there is necessarily imprinted the idea of the supreme Good.

Accurate judgement, then, concerning what is to be counselled, comes through some law. No-one, though, can judge with certainty according to the law, unless they are certain that the law is correct and that they ought not, therefore, to judge it. But our mind judges itself: and, since it cannot judge according to that very law by which it judges, this law is superior to our mind, and so our mind judges according to what is imprinted upon itself. But there is nothing superior to the human mind, except for that which created it and, therefore, in judging, our deliberative faculty extends to divine law if that provides a complete explanation.

Desire is primarily directed towards that which most moves it. Whatever moves the most loves the most, moreover, and whatever loves most is blessed. To be blessed, though, is not experienced, save for in the best and ultimate end. Human desire has an appetite for nothing save for the highest Good, or for something which aims for the highest Good or for something which has a similarity to the highest Good. So great is the force of the highest Good, that one which is created cannot love something unless it is through a desire for It; the one which is created makes a mistake, though, for it takes an image to be the Truth itself.

So notice how the soul is near to God and how, according to their activities, the memory leads into eternity, how intelligence leads into truth and how elective potential leads into the highest Good.

*5 Secundum autem harum potentiarum ordinem et originem et habitudinem ducit in ipsam beatissimam Trinitatem.- Nam ex memoria oritur intelligentia ut ipsius proles, quia tunc intelligimus, cum similitudo, quae est in memoria, resultat in acie intellectus, quae nihil aliud est quam verbum; ex memoria et intelligentia spiratur amor tanquam nexus amborum. Haec tria scilicet mens generans, verbum et amor, sunt in anima*

*quoad memoriam, intelligentiam et voluntatem, quae sunt consubstantiales, coaequales et coevae, se invicem circumincedentes. Si igitur Deus perfectus est spiritus, habet memoriam, intelligentiam et voluntatem, habet et Verbum genitum et Amorem spiratum, qui necessario distinguuntur, cum unus ab altero producat, non essentialiter, non accidentaliter, ergo personaliter.*

*Dum igitur mens se ipsam considerat, per se tanquam per speculum consurgit ad speculandam Trinitatem beatam Patris, Verbi et Amoris, trium personarum coaeternarum, coaequalium et consubstantialium, ita quod quilibet in quolibet est aliorum, unus tamen non est alius, sed ipsi tres sunt unus Deus.*

According to the order, origin and characteristics of these powers, we are led into the Most Blessed Trinity itself. For from memory there arises its offspring, intelligence, because we understand that likeness, which is in the memory, echoes in the sharpness of the intellect, which is solely verbal. Love is breathed out by memory and intelligence, whose nexus it is. This trio - the generating mind, the word and love - are found in the soul as memory, intelligence and the will, which, in their organic, common movement, share substance, eternity and existence. If God, then, is perfect spirit, He has intelligence, memory and will, and He has a generated Word and a breathed Love, which should be distinguished, since one is produced from the other - neither essentially, nor accidentally but, therefore, personally.

While, then, the mind considers itself, it rises through itself as through a mirror to look upon the blessed Trinity of the Father, the Word and the Love, of the three persons sharing eternity and equality and substance: this means that, Whoever in Whomever belongs to the others, the one is not the other but they are three in one God.

*6 Ad hanc speculationem quam habet anima de suo principio trino et uno per trinitatem suarum potentiarum, per quas est imago Dei, iuvatur per lumina scientiarum, quae ipsam perficiunt et informant et Trinitatem beatissimam tripliciter repraesentant. - Nam omnis philosophia aut est naturalis, aut rationalis, aut moralis. Prima agit de causa essendi, et ideo ducit in potentiam Patris; secunda de ratione intelligendi, et ideo ducit in sapientiam Verbi; tertia de ordine vivendi, et ideo ducit in bonitatem Spiritus Sancti.*

*Rursus, prima dividitur in metaphysicam, mathematicam et physicam. Et prima est de rerum essentiis, secunda de numeris et figuris, tertia de naturis, virtutibus et operationibus diffusivis. Et ideo prima in primum principium, Patrem, secunda in eius imaginem, Filium, tertia ducit in Spiritus sancti donum.*

*Secunda dividitur in grammaticam, quae facit potentes ad exprimendum; in logicam, quae facit perspicaces ad arguendum; in rhetoricam, quae facit habiles ad persuadendum sive movendum. Et hoc similiter insinuat mysterium ipsius beatissimae Trinitatis.*

*Tertia dividitur in monasticam, oeconomicam et politicam. Et ideo prima insinuat primi*

*principii innascibilitatem, secunda Filii familiaritatem, tertia Spiritus sancti liberalitatem.*

The soul is assisted towards a vision of its origin, triune and one through the trinity of its own powers, and through which it is an image of God, by the light of sciences, which perfect and inform it and which represent the threefold Blessed Trinity. For philosophy is, in every respect, either natural or rational or moral. The first deals with the cause of being and so leads into the potential of the Father; the second deals with the reasons for understanding and so leads into the wisdom of the Word; the third deals with the manner of living and so leads into the goodness of the Holy Spirit.

Once again, we divide the first into metaphysics, mathematics and physics. The first of these concerns the essence of things, the second concerns number and form, and the third concerns nature, powers and various activities. So the first leads into the first principle, the Father, the second into His image, the Son, and the third into the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The second is divided into grammar, which gives us the ability to express ourselves, logic, which predisposes us to discursive thought, and rhetoric, which gives us the ability to persuade or work with the emotions. This, in a similar way, suggests the mystery of the Blessed Trinity itself.

The third is divided into the individual, the familiar and the societal. The first suggests the unborn quality of the First Principle, the second the Son's place in the family and the third the openness of the Holy Spirit.

*7 Omnes autem hae scientiae habent regulas certas et infallibiles tanquam lumina et radios descendentes a lege aeterna in mentem nostram. Et ideo mens nostra tantis splendoribus irradiata et superfusa, nisi sit caeca, manuduci potest per semetipsam ad contemplandam illam lucem aeternam. Huius autem lucis irradiatio et consideratio sapientes suspendit in admirationem et econtra insipientes, qui non credunt, ut intelligant, ducit in perturbationem, ut impleatur illud propheticum: Illuminans tu mirabiliter a montibus aeternis, turbati sunt omnes insipientes corde.*

All these sciences have certain infallible rules, like lights and rays descending from the eternal law into our mind. For that reason, our mind is illuminated and suffused by such great splendors - unless, that is, it be blind - that it can be lead by hand, through its very self, to contemplate upon this eternal light. The illumination and consideration of this light suspends a wise person in wonder while, on the other hand, it leads the foolish, who do not believe themselves capable of understanding, into confusion. This fulfills the prophesy: You enlighten wonderfully from the hills of eternity and have disturbed those whose hearts are foolish<sup>56</sup>.

## CHAPTER 4

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<sup>56</sup> Ps 75:5-6

## DE SPECULATIONE DEI IN SUA IMAGINE DONIS GRATUITIS REFORMATA

### THE VISION OF GOD IN HIS IMAGE REFORMED BY GRATUITOUS GIFTS

*1 Sed quoniam non solum per nos transeundo, verum etiam in nobis contingit contemplari primum principium; et hoc maius est quam praecedens: ideo hic modus considerandi quartum obtinet contemplationis gradum. Mirum autem videtur, cum ostensum sit, quod Deus sit ita propinquus mentibus nostris, quod tam paucorum est in se ipsis primum principium speculari. Sed ratio est in promptu, quia mens humana, sollicitudinibus distracta, non intrat ad se per memoriam; phantasmatis obnubilata, non redit ad se per intelligentiam; concupiscentiis illecta, ad se ipsam nequaquam revertitur per desiderium suavitatis internae et laetitiae spiritualis. Ideo totaliter in his sensibilibus iacens, non potest ad se tanquam ad Dei imaginem reintrare.*

But it is not only in passing through ourselves, but also within ourselves, that we consider the First Principle: and this is greater than what has gone before. It is for this reason that this fourth mode of consideration reaches the level of contemplation. And when it is shown, it is amazing to see how close is God to our minds, given that so few observe the First Principle in themselves. But the reason for this is straightforward: distracted by things which concern it, the human mind does not enter into itself by memory, nor, clouded by illusions, does it return to itself through intelligence, nor, enticed by desires, does it in any way turn back to itself through a desire for internal sweetness and spiritual joy. Thus it lies down and covers itself in the world which it perceives, and cannot reenter itself as into the image of God.

*2 Et quoniam, ubi quis ceciderit, necesse habet ibidem recumbere, nisi apponat quis et adiciat, ut resurgat; non potuit anima nostra perfecte ab his sensibilibus relevari ad contuitum sui et aeternae Veritatis in se ipsa, nisi Veritas, assumpta forma humana in Christo, fieret sibi scala reparans priorem scalam, quae fracta fuerat in Adam.*

*Ideo, quantumcumque sit illuminatus quis lumine naturae et scientiae acquisitae, non potest intrare in se, ut in se ipso delectetur in Domino, nisi mediante Christo, qui dicit: Ego sum ostium. Per me si quis introierit, salvabitur et ingreditur et egredietur et pascula inveniet. Ad hoc autem ostium non appropinquamus, nisi ipsum credamus, speremus et amemus. Necesse est igitur, si reintrare volumus ad fruitionem Veritatis tanquam ad paradysum, quod ingrediamur per fidem, spem et caritatem mediatoris Dei et hominum Iesu Christi, qui est tanquam lignum vitae in medio paradisi.*

And since, wherever one has fallen, they will necessarily lie there unless someone falls in order to help them rise again<sup>57</sup>, so our soul cannot from what is perceived perfectly intuit a consideration of itself and of the Truth in itself, unless the Truth, having assumed a human form in Christ, itself becomes the ladder which repairs the previous ladder, which was broken through Adam.

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<sup>57</sup> Isa 24:20

For this reason, however enlightened we might be in terms of nature and of acquired knowledge, we cannot enter into ourselves, in order to delight in the Lord in his very self, unless it is by means of Christ, who said, I am the door: whoever enters through me will be saved, will come in and go out, and will find the pasture<sup>58</sup>. Furthermore, we do not approach the door unless we have trust, hope and love. So it is necessary, if we want to go back inside and enjoy the fruits of Truth, as in Paradise, that we reenter through the faith, hope and compassion of Jesus Christ, the mediator between God and humanity, who is like the tree of life at the heart of Paradise.

*3 Supervestienda est igitur imago mentis nostrae tribus virtutibus theologicis, quibus anima purificatur, illuminatur, et perficitur, et sic imago reformatur et conformis supernae Ierusalem efficitur et pars Ecclesiae militantis, quae est proles, secundum Apostolum, Ierusalem caelestis. Ait enim: Illa quae sursum est Ierusalem libera est, quae est mater nostra. - Anima igitur credens, sperans et amans Iesum Christum, qui est Verbum incarnatum, increatum et inspiratum, scilicet via, veritas et vita; dum per fidem credit in Christum tanquam in Verbum increatum, quod est Verbum et splendor Patris, recuperat spiritualem auditum et visum, auditum ad suscipiendum Christi sermones, visum ad considerandum illius lucis splendores. Dum autem spe suspirat ad suscipiendum Verbum inspiratum, per desiderium et affectum recuperat spiritualem olfactum. Dum caritate complectitur Verbum incarnatum, ut suscipiens ab ipso delectationem et ut transiens in illud per exstaticum amorem, recuperat gustum et tactum. Quibus sensibus recuperatis, dum sponsum suum videt et audit, odoratur, gustat et amplexatur, decantare potest tanquam sponsa Canticum canticorum, quod factum fuit ad exercitium contemplationis secundum hunc quartum gradum, quem nemo capit, nisi qui accipit, quia magis est in experientia affectuali quam in consideratione rationali. In hoc namque gradu, reparatis sensibus interioribus ad sentiendum summe pulchrum, audiendum summe harmonicum, odorandum summe odoriferum, degustandum summe suave, apprehendendum summe delectabile, disponitur anima ad mentales excessus, scilicet per devotionem, admirationem et exultationem, secundum illas tres exclamationes, quae fiunt in Canticis canticorum. Quarum prima fit per abundantiam devotionis, per quam fit anima sicut virgula fumi ex aromatibus, myrrhae et thuris: secunda per excellentiam admirationis, per quam fit anima sicut aurora, luna et sol, secundum processum illuminationum suspendentium animam ad admirandum sponsum consideratum; tertia per superabundantiam exultationis, per quam fit anima suavissimis delectationis deliciis affluens, innixa totaliter super dilectum suum.*

Therefore the image of our mind must be clothed in the three powers of spiritual wisdom, by which the soul is purified, enlightened and perfected and thus reformed and made, in its resemblance to the heavenly Jerusalem, a part of the Church militant which is the offspring of that celestial Jerusalem. For, as the Apostle says, That which is lifted up is the liberated Jerusalem, which is our mother<sup>59</sup>. So, while the soul, believing, hoping and loving Jesus Christ, who is the incarnate, uncreated and inspired Word - that is to say, the way, the truth and the life - in faith believes Jesus Christ to be

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<sup>58</sup> Jn 10:9

<sup>59</sup> Gal 4:26

the uncreated Word, which is the Word and splendor of the Father, it recovers its spiritual hearing and vision so as, respectively, to receive His teaching and to consider the splendor of His light. But while, in hoping, it yearns to receive the Word of inspiration, through desire and affection it recovers its spiritual sense of smell. And while, in love, it embraces the incarnate Word, delighting in Him and stepping into Him in ecstatic love, it recovers its senses of taste and touch. Having recovered these senses, while it sees and hears, tastes, smells and embraces its spouse, it can sing out like the bride in the Song of Songs, which was written for the purpose of contemplation on this fourth level, which no-one can grasp unless they accept it<sup>60</sup>, because it exists more as a sensual experience than as a process of rational consideration. For, on this level, with its interior senses recovered so as to perceive supreme beauty, to hear supreme harmony, to sense supreme scent, to savor supreme taste, to experience the most delicious thing, the soul is disposed to mental disassociation - that is to say, through devotion, wonder and exultation - according to these three exclamations which are made in the Song of Songs. The first of these is provoked by an abundance of devotion, in which the soul is like a wisp of aromatic smoke, as from myrrh or frankincense<sup>61</sup>; the second is provoked by a supreme wonder, in which the soul is like the dawn, the moon and the sun - at which stage in its enlightenment, the soul is suspended in wonder, considering its spouse<sup>62</sup>; the third is provoked by an overflowing exultation, in which the soul flows with the most delectable of joys, reclining utterly in the arms of its beloved<sup>63</sup>.

*4 Quibus adeptis, efficitur spiritus noster hierarchicus ad conscendendum sursum secundum conformitatem ad illam Ierusalem supernam, in qua nemo intrat, nisi prius per gratiam ipsa in cor descendat, sicut vidit Ioannes in Apocalypsi sua. Tunc autem in cor descendit, quando per reformationem imaginis, per virtutes theologicas et per oblectationes spiritualium sensuum et suspensiones excessuum efficitur spiritus noster hierarchicus, scilicet purgatus, illuminatus et perfectus.- Sic etiam gradibus novem ordinum insignitur, dum ordinate in eo interius disponitur nuntiatio, dictatio, ductio, ordinatio, roboratio, imperatio, susceptio, revelatio, unctio, quae gradatim correspondent novem ordinibus Angelorum, ita quod primi trium praedictorum gradus respiciunt in mente humana naturam, tres sequentes industriam, et tres postremi gratiam. Quibus habitis, anima intrando in se ipsam, intrat in supremam Ierusalem, ubi ordines Angelorum considerans, videt in eis Deum, qui habitans in eis omnes eorum operatur operationes. Unde dicit Bernardus ad Eugenium, quod "Deus in Seraphim amat ut caritas, in Cherubim novit ut veritas, in Thronis sedet ut aequitas, in Dominationibus dominatur ut maiestas, in Principatibus regit ut principium, in Potestatibus tuetur ut salus, in Virtutibus operatur ut virtus, in Archangelis revelat ut lux, in Angelis asstitit ut pietas". Ex quibus omnibus videtur Deus omnia in omnibus per contemplationem ipsius in mentibus, in quibus habitat per dona affluentissimae caritatis.*

When this is accomplished, our spirit is ennobled and may climb upwards, insofar as

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<sup>60</sup> Apoc 2:17

<sup>61</sup> Cant 3:6

<sup>62</sup> Cant 6:9

<sup>63</sup> Cant 8:5



it it accords to that heavenly Jerusalem, into which it cannot enter unless it has first descended into the heart through grace, as John observed in his Apocalypse<sup>64</sup>. Further, it descends into the heart when, through the recovering of the image, through spiritual wisdom and through mental dissassociation and sensual enjoyment on the spiritual level, our spirit is ennobled - which is to say, it is purified, enlightened and perfected. It is marked also with nine steps, laid out in the following order: observation, consideration, guidance, personal choice, strengthening, determination, acceptance, revelation and anointing. These correspond directly to the nine orders of angels, insofar as the first three are concerned with the nature of the human mind, the next three with the effort made by the mind and the final three to the grace received by the mind. Once the soul has these things, entering into itself it enters into the supreme Jerusalem, where, looking upon the orders of angels, it sees in them God who, dwelling within them, is the source and operator of all their activity. As Bernard said to Eugenius, "God loves in the Seraphim as compassion, knows in the Cherubim as truth, sits in the Thrones as equality, rules in the Dominations as majesty, rules in the Principalities as principal, guards in the Powers as salvation, works in the Virtues as virtue, reveals in the Archangels as light and in the Angels he assists as piety." God is thereby seen as all things in all things, through the contemplation of Him in minds where He dwells through the gifts of the very richest compassion.

*5 Ad autem speculationes gradum specialiter et praecipue adminiculatur consideratio sacrae Scripturae divinitus immissae, sicut philosophia ad praecedentem. Sacra enim Scriptura principaliter est de operibus reparationis. Unde et ipsa praecipue agit de fide, spe et caritate, per quas virtutes habet anima reformari, et specialissime de caritate. De qua dicit Apostolus, quod est finis praecepti, secundum quod est de corde puro et conscientia bona et fide non ficta. Ipsa est plenitudo Legis, ut dicit idem. Et Salvator noster asserit, totam Legem Prophetasque pendere in duobus praeceptis eiusdem, scilicet dilectione Dei et proximi; quae duo innuuntur in uno sponso Ecclesiae Iesu Christo, qui simul est proximus et Deus, simul frater et dominus, simul etiam rex et amicus, simul Verbum increatum et incarnatum, formator noster et reformator, ut alpha et omega; qui etiam summus hierarcha est, purgans et illuminans et perficiens sponsam, scilicet totam Ecclesiam et quamlibet animam sanctam.*

As a specific and primary support for the observations made at this level, sacred Scripture is divinely instigated, just as philosophy was at the previous level, since sacred Scripture is mainly concerned with reparation. In this way, it also deals with faith, hope and love, through which powers - and especially through love - the soul is to be reformed. As the Apostle says, it is the goal of the commandments, achieved accordingly by having a pure heart, a good conscience and a genuine faith<sup>65</sup>; he says also that it is the fulfillment of the Law<sup>66</sup>. Our Savior also holds that the whole of the Law of the Prophets depends upon these two commandments, namely love of God and love of one's neighbor, which together bow as one to the Church's spouse Jesus Christ, who is simultaneously God and neighbor, simultaneously brother and Lord, simulta-

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<sup>64</sup> Apoc 21:2

<sup>65</sup> 1 Tim 1:5

<sup>66</sup> Rom 13:10

neously King and friend, simultaneously the uncreated and incarnate Word, the one who forms and reforms us, the Alpha and the Omega. He is therefore the very highest of nobles, purifying and enlightening and perfecting the bride in the form of the holy Church and of every holy soul.

*6 De hoc igitur hierarcha et ecclesiastica hierarchia est tota sacra Scriptura, per quam docemur purgari, illuminari et perfici, et hoc secundum triplicem legem in ea traditam, scilicet naturae, Scripturae et gratiae; vel potius secundum triplicem partem eius principalem, legem scilicet Moysaicam purgantem, revelationem prophetica illustrantem et eruditionem evangelicam perficientem; vel potissimum secundum triplicem eius intelligentiam spiritualem: tropologicam quae purgat ad honestatem vitae; allegoricam, quae illuminat ad claritatem intelligentiae; anagogicam, quae perficit per excessus mentales et sapientiae perceptiones suavissimas, secundum virtutes praedictas tres theologicas et sensus spirituales reformatos et excessus tres supradictos et actus mentis hierarchicos, quibus ad interiora regreditur mens nostra, ut ibidem speculetur Deum in splendoribus Sanctorum et in eisdem tanquam in cubilibus dormiat in pace et requiescat, sponso adiurante, quod non excitetur, donec de eius voluntate procedat.*

Therefore that which is noble in this regard and noble in regard to the Church is the entire corpus of sacred Scripture, through which we are shown how we are purified, enlightened and perfected. This takes place in accordance with the threefold law which has been handed down, that being in accordance with nature, scripture and grace - or, more specifically, in accordance with its principle part, namely the purification through the law of Moses, the illumination of prophetic revelation and the perfection of the teaching found in the Gospels. More specifically yet in relation to its spiritual intelligence, the behavioral, which purifies us for an honest life, the allegorical, which enlightens us for clarity of intelligence, and the contemplative, which perfects us through mental disassociation and through the most wonderful insights into wisdom, according to the three aspects of spiritual wisdom discussed above, as well as each of the recovered senses, the three disassociations mentioned before and the noble activity of the mind - all of this causes our mind turns back into itself. From there, it looks upon God in and within the splendors of the Saints<sup>67</sup>, like the bride resting within her bed, sleeping peacefully, having made a promise that she will not be stirred until she comes forth by His will.

*7 Ex his autem duobus gradibus mediis, per quos ingredimur ad contemplandum Deum intra nos tanquam in speculis imaginum creatarum, et hoc quasi ad modum alarum expansarum ad volandum, quae tenebant medium locum, intelligere possumus, quod in divina manuducimur per ipsius animae rationalis potentias naturaliter insitas quantum ad earum operationes, habitudines et habitus scientiales; secundum quod apparet ex tertio gradu. - Manuducimur etiam per ipsius animae potentias reformatas, et hoc gratuitis virtutibus, sensibus spiritualibus et mentalibus excessibus; sicut patet ex ex quarto. Manuducimur nihilominus per hierarchicas operationes, scilicet purgationis, illuminationis et perfectionis mentium humanarum, per hierarchicas*

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<sup>67</sup> Ps 109:3

*revelationes sacrarum Scripturarum nobis per Angelos datarum, secundum illud Apostoli, quod Lex data est per Angelos in manu Mediatoris. Et tandem manuducimur per hierarchias et hierarchicos ordines, qui in mente nostra disponi habent ad instar supernae Ierusalem.*

These two middle steps, through which we enter so as to contemplate God within ourselves, as in the reflections of created images, are as though wings, stretched out in order to take flight. From them, we can understand that we are led by the hand into divine things by the powers of reason itself, whose activities, characteristics and approaches to understanding are all naturally occurring within us, as we saw when on the third step. We are also led by the hand by means of the soul's recovered powers, and this, as we have seen on the fourth level, is achieved through the strength of grace, through spiritual perception and through mental dissasociation. Nonetheless, we are led by the hand through the graded activities by which the human mind is purified, enlightened and perfected and through the graded revelation of sacred Scripture as given to us by the angels, which accords with what the Apostle said, that the Law has been given by the angels into the hand of the mediator<sup>68</sup>. Finally, we are led by the hand through the nobles and through the orders of nobles, which are arranged in our minds after the image of the heavenly Jerusalem.

*8 Quibus omnibus luminibus intellectualibus mens nostra repleta, a divina Sapientia tanquam domus Dei inhabitatur, effecta Dei filia, sponsa et amica; effecta Christi capitis membrum, soror et coheres; effecta nihilominus Spiritus sancti templum, fundatum per fidem, elevatum per spem et Deo dedicatum per mentis et corporis sanctitatem. Quod totum facit sincerissima caritas Christi, quae diffunditur in cordibus nostris per Spiritum sanctum, qui datus est nobis, sine quo Spiritu non possumus scire secreta Dei. Sicut enim quae sunt hominis nemo potest scire nisi spiritus hominis, qui est in illo; ita et quae sunt Dei nemo scit nisi spiritus Dei.- In caritate igitur radicemur et fundemur, ut possimus comprehendere cum omnibus Sanctis, quae sit longitudo aeternitatis, quae latitudo liberalitatis, quae sublimitas maiestatis et quod profundum sapientiae iudicantis.*

Having been filled with all these lights of understanding, our mind is inhabited by Divine Wisdom, like a house of God, and is made a daughter, a bride and a friend of God, made a member, a sister and a co-inheritor with Christ at the head, made nonetheless a temple of the Holy Spirit, founded upon faith, raised up through hope and dedicated through the sanctity of body and mind. All of this creates in Christ the most sincere compassion, which is spread into our heart by the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us<sup>69</sup> and without which we cannot know the secrets of God. For without the spirit within, a person cannot know themselves, just as without the spirit which is within God nothing of God can be known<sup>70</sup>. We are therefore rooted and founded in compassion so that, with all the Saints, we may understand the length of eternity, the breadth of openness, how sublime is majesty and how deep is the wisdom of analyti-

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<sup>68</sup> Gal 3:19

<sup>69</sup> Rom 5:5

<sup>70</sup> 1 Cor 2:11

cal thought <sup>71</sup> .

## CHAPTER 5

### *DE SPECULATIONE DIVINAE UNITATIS PER EIUS NOMEN PRIMARIUM, QUOD EST ESSE*

THE VISION OF DIVINE UNITY THROUGH ITS PRIMARY NAME, WHICH IS *BEING*

1 *Quoniam autem contingit contemplari Deum non solum extra nos et intra nos, verum etiam supra nos: extra per vestigium, intra per imaginem et supra per lumen, quod est signatum supra mentem nostram, quod est lumen Veritatis aeternae, cum "ipsa mens nostra immediate ab ipsa Veritate formetur"; qui exercitati sunt in primo modo intraverunt iam in atrium ante tabernaculum; qui vero in secundo, intraverunt in sancta; qui autem in tertio, intrat cum summo Pontifice in sancta sanctorum; ubi supra arcam sunt Cherubim gloriae obumbrantia propitiatorium; per quae intelligimus duos modos seu gradus contemplandi Dei invisibilia et aeterna, quorum unus versatur circa essentialia Dei, alius vero circa propria personarum.*

It also happens that God is contemplated, not only outside ourselves through His imprints and within ourselves through His image, but also upon ourselves through His light, which is imprinted upon our minds<sup>72</sup> and which is the light of eternal Truth, since "our mind is formed directly by eternal Truth itself". Those who have been stimulated in the first way have already entered the entrance hall, in front of the tabernacle, while those who have been stimulated in the second way have entered into holiness. Those who have been stimulated in the third way have entered through the most superior medium into the most holy of holy states, where above the Ark the Cherubim look down upon the means by which reconciliation is achieved. Thus we understand the two modes, or stages, of contemplating the invisible and eternal things of God, one of which turns around those things which are essentially God, whilst the other turns around those things which belong to the personal sphere.

2 *Primus modus primo et principaliter defigit aspectum in ipsum esse, dicens, quod qui est primum nomen Dei. Secundus modus defigit aspectum in ipsum bonum, dicens, hoc esse primum nomen Dei. Primum spectat potissime ad vetus testamentum, quod maxime praedicat divinae essentiae unitatem; unde dictum est Moysi: Ego sum qui sum; secundum ad novum, quod determinat personarum pluralitatem, baptizando in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti. Ideo magister noster Christus, volens adolescentem, qui servaverat Legem, ad evangelicam levare perfectionem, nomen bonitatis Deo principaliter et praecise attribuit. Nemo, inquit, bonus nisi solus Deus. Damascenus igitur sequens Moysen dicit, quod qui est primum nomen Dei; Dionysius sequens Christum dicit, quod bonum est primum nomen Dei.*

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<sup>71</sup> Eph 3:17-18

<sup>72</sup> Ps 4:7

The first mode primarily and particularly fixes its observation upon Being, saying that The One Who Is is the primary name of God<sup>73</sup>. The second mode fixes its observation on The Good, saying that this is the primary name of God. The first looks to the Old Testament, which teaches primarily the divine Essence and in which Moses says, I am who I am<sup>74</sup>; the second looks to the New Testament, which presents the plurality of persons and in which baptism is conducted in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit<sup>75</sup>. For that reason, our teacher Christ, desirous of raising those who were as yet unformed, who observed the Law, into the perfection described in the Gospel, attributed the term goodness precisely and primarily to God: no-one, he declared, is good except for God<sup>76</sup>. And therefore, following Moses, St John Damascene said that The One Who Is is the primary name of God; and, following Christ, St Dionysius the Areopagite says that The Good is the primary name of God.

*3 Volens igitur contemplari Dei invisibilia quoad essentiae unitatem primo defigat aspectum in ipsum esse et videat, ipsum esse adeo in se certissimum, quod non potest cogitari non esse, quia ipsum esse purissimum non occurrit nisi in plena fuga non-esse, sicut et nihil in plena fuga esse. Sicut igitur omnino nihil habet de esse nec de eius conditionibus; sic econtra ipsum esse nihil habet de non-esse, nec actu nec potentia, nec secundum veritatem rei nec secundum aestimationem nostram. Cum autem non-esse privatio sit essendi, non cadit in intellectum nisi per esse; esse autem non cadit per aliud, quia omne, quod intelligitur, aut intelligitur ut non ens, aut ut ens in potentia, aut ut ens in actu. Si igitur non-ens non potest intelligi nisi per ens, et ens in potentia non nisi per ens in actu; et esse nominat ipsum purum actum entis: esse igitur est quod primo cadit in intellectu, et illud esse est quod est actus purus. Sed hoc non est esse particulare, quod est esse arctatum, quia permixtum est cum potentia, nec esse analogum, quia minime habet de actu, eo quod minime est. Restat igitur, quod illud esse est esse divinum.*

Since therefore the mind wants to contemplate the invisible things of God insofar as the unity of His essence is concerned, let it first give its attention to Being itself and see that Being, in this sense, is most certain. This is because it cannot be thought as not-Being, since pure Being only occurs in total antithesis to not-Being, in the same way as Nothing is also in total antithesis to Being. Therefore, since Nothing has absolutely no connection with Being, so, conversely, Being has absolutely no connection with Nothing - neither in act, nor in potential, neither in terms of the truth of things nor in terms of our own opinion. Moreover, because not-Being is the lack of Being, it does not occur to the intellect except in terms of Being; Being does not occur to the intellect through any other medium, since everything which can be understood is understood either as a non-Being, as potential Being or as active Being. So, since non-Being can only be understood through Being and potential Being only through active Being, and since "Being" names only the pure act of being itself, then Being is what first occurs to

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<sup>73</sup> Exod 3:14

<sup>74</sup> Exod 3:14

<sup>75</sup> Matt 28:19

<sup>76</sup> Lk 18:19

the intellect and this Being is that which is a pure act. But this is not particular Being since, being mixed with potential, particular Being is restricted; nor is it analogous Being since, being minimally active, analogous Being exists but minimally. It follows, then, that this Being is divine Being.

*4 Mira igitur est caecitas intellectus, qui non considerat illud quod prius videt et sine quo nihil potest cognoscere. Sed sicut oculus intentus in varias colorum differentias lucem, per quam videt cetera, non videt, et si videt, non advertit; sic oculus mentes nostrae, intentus in entia particularia et universalia, ipsum esse extra omne genus, licet primo occurrat menti, et per ipsum alia, tamen non advertit. Unde verissime apparet, quod "sicut oculus vespertilionis se habet ad lucem, ita se habet oculus mentis nostrae ad manifestissima naturae"; quia assuefactus ad tenebras entium et phantasmata sensibilia, cum ipsam lucem summi esse intuetur, videtur sibi nihil videre; non intelligens, quod ipsa caligo summa est mentis nostrae illuminatio, sicut, quando videt oculus puram lucem, videtur sibi nihil videre.*

The blindness of the intellect is, therefore, wonderful, because it does not consider that which it sees first, without which it can become acquainted with nothing. But just as the eye, concerned with perceiving differences in color, does not see the light through which it sees other things - and if it does see it, it fails to notice it - so the eye of our mind at first perceives Being itself but, since it is concerned with particular and universal beings and because Being itself lies outside every other type of thing, it fails to notice Being itself, but notices instead those things which Being itself infers. From this it truly appears that "just as a bat turns its eye towards the light, so the eye of our mind turns to the most obvious things in nature" - since, having gotten used to the shadows of beings and to illusory perceptions, when it looks upon the light of the supreme Being it appears to it that it sees nothing. Because it does not understand that darkness is the supreme enlightenment of our minds<sup>77</sup>, when the eye sees pure light, it appears to it that it sees nothing.

*5 Vide igitur ipsum purissimum esse, si potes, et occurrit tibi, quod ipsum non potest cogitari ut ab alio acceptum; ac per hoc necessario cogitatur ut omnimode primum, quod nec de nihilo nec de aliquo potest esse. Quid enim est per se, si ipsum esse non est per se nec a se?- Occurrit etiam tibi ut carens omnino non-esse ac per hoc ut nunquam incipiens, nunquam desinens, sed aeternum- Occurrit etiam tibi ut nullo modo in se habens, nisi quod est ipsum esse, ac per hoc ut cum nullo compositum, sed simplicissimum.- Occurrit tibi ut nihil habens possibilitatis, quia omne possibile aliquo modo habet aliquid de non-esse, ac per hoc ut summe actualissimum. Occurrit ut nihil habens defectibilitatis, ac per hoc ut perfectissimum. Occurrit postremo ut nihil habens diversificationis, ac per hoc ut summe unum.*

*Esse igitur, quod est esse purum et esse simpliciter et esse absolutum, est esse primum, aeternum, simplicissimum, actualissimum, perfectissimum et summe unum.*

If you are able to notice this most pure Being, it will occur to you that It cannot be

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<sup>77</sup> Ps 138:11

thought of as being received from another. That being the case, It is thought of in every way as being primary, since It cannot be from nothing, nor can it be from something. For what in fact is It, if Being itself is neither through itself nor from itself. For it occurs to you that Being itself is completely lacking in non-Being and, because of this, It never begins and never ceases - and so is eternal. And it occurs to you that in no way does It have anything, save for Being itself, and so that It is composed of nothing - that It is utterly simple. It occurs to you that It has no possibility, since everything which is possible has in some way something of non-Being - and so It is utterly of now. And it occurs to you that It has nothing which is defective - and so is utterly perfect. And it occurs to you finally that It has no diversity and so is utterly one.

Being, therefore, because it is pure Being and simple Being and absolute Being, is the primary, eternal, the utterly simple, the utterly now, the utterly perfect and the utterly one Being.

*6 Et sunt haec ita certa, quod non potest ab intelligente ipsum esse cogitari horum oppositum, et unum necessario infert aliud. Nam quia simpliciter est esse, ideo simpliciter primum; quia simpliciter primum, ideo non est ab alio factum, nec a se ipso potuit, ergo aeternum. Idem, quia primum et aeternum; ideo non ex aliis, ergo simplicissimum. Item, quia primum, aeternum et simplicissimum; ideo nihil est in eo possibilitatis cum actu permixtum, et ideo actualissimum. Item, quia primum, aeternum, simplicissimum, actualissimum; ideo perfectissimum; tali omnino nihil deficit, neque aliqua potest fieri additio. Quia primum, aeternum, simplicissimum, actualissimum, perfectissimum; ideo summe unum. Quod enim per omnimodam superabundantiam dicitur respectu omnium. "Quod etiam simpliciter per superabundantiam, dicitur, impossibile est, ut conveniat nisi uni soli". Unde si Deus nominat esse primum, aeternum, simplicissimum, actualissimum, perfectissimum; impossibile est, ipsum cogitari non esse, nec esse nisi unum solum. Audi, igitur, Israel, Deus tuus Deus unus est. - Si hoc vides in pura mentis simplicitate, aliquando perfunderis aeternae lucis illustratione.*

And these descriptions are so certain that their opposite cannot be conceived by one who is contemplating Being itself, and one necessarily infers the other. For because It is simple Being, It is simply first. And, because It is simply first, It has not been made by another, nor could It have made Itself, and It is therefore eternal. Similarly, because It is first and eternal, It does not come from any others and It is therefore utterly simple. Similarly, because It is first and eternal and utterly simple, there is nothing within It which could be mixed with activity and It is therefore utterly now. Similarly, because It is first and eternal and utterly simple and utterly now, It is therefore utterly perfect. Such a thing lacks nothing, nor can there be anything in addition to It. Because It is first and eternal and utterly simple and utterly now and utterly perfect, it is utterly one. For, that through which there is superabundant singularity is said in respect of all things. "For, as it is said, it is impossible that that which is simply superabundant might come together in a form other than as one." Thus, if God means that which is first and eternal and utterly simple and utterly now and utterly perfect Being, it is impossible that It be thought not to be, and it is impossible that It be thought of if not

as singularity. Listen, therefore, Israel: God your God is One<sup>78</sup>. If you see this in the pure simplicity of your mind, you will somehow be filled with the illumination of eternal light.

*7 Sed habes unde subleveris in admirationem. Nam ipsum esse est primum et novissimum, est aeternum et praesentissimum, est simplicissimum et maximum, est actualissimum et immutabilissimum, est perfectissimum et immensum, est summe unum et tamen omnimodum.- Si haec pura mente miraris, maiore luce perfunderis, dum ulterius vides, quia ideo est novissimum, quia primum. Quia enim est primum, omnia operatur propter se ipsum; et ideo necesse est, quod sit finis ultimus, initium et consummatio, alpha et omega.- Ideo est praesentissimum, quia aeternum. Quia enim aeternum, non fluit ab alio nec deficit a se ipso nec decurrit ab uno in aliud: ergo nec habet praeteritum nec futurum, sed esse praesens tantum. - Ideo maximum, quia simplicissimum. Quia enim simplicissimum in essentia, ideo maximum in virtute, quia virtus, quanto plus est unita, tanto plus est infinita.- Ideo immutabilissimum, quia actualissimum. Quia enim actualissimum est, ideo est actus purus; et quod tale est nihil novi acquirit, nihil habitum perdit, ac per hoc non potest mutari. - Ideo immensum, quia perfectissimum. Quia enim perfectissimum, nihil potest cogitari ultra ipsum melius, nobilius nec dignius, ac per hoc nihil maius; et omne tale est immensum.- Ideo omnimodum, quia summe unum. Quod enim summe unum est est omnis multitudinis universale principium; ac per hoc ipsum est universalis omnium causa efficiens, exemplans et terminans, sicut "causa essendi, ratio intelligendi et ordo vivendi". Est igitur omnimodum non sicut omnium essentia, sed sicut cunctarum essentiarum superexcellentissima et universalissima et sufficientissima causa; cuius virtus, quia summe unita in essentia, ideo summe infinitissima et multiplicissima in efficacia.*

But you have something which will raise you up into the state of wonder. For Being itself is first and last, it is eternal and utterly present, it is utterly simple and greatest, it is utterly now and utterly unchanging, it is utterly perfect and ultimate, it is utterly one and is in all ways. If you wonder at these things with a pure mind, you will be filled with greater light; while you see What is beyond, It is for that reason last, because It is first. For, because It is first, It works all things on account of Itself and, for this reason, it is necessary that It be the ultimate finality, the beginning and the summation, the Alpha and the Omega. For that reason It is utterly present, because It is eternal. For, because It is eternal, It does not flow from another, nor does It cease to be, nor does It succeed from one to another. So It has neither a past nor a present - It is present Being. For that reason It is the greatest, because It is utterly simple. For because It is utterly simple in Its essence, It is greatest in potential, for the more potential is unified, the more infinite it is. For that reason It is utterly unchanging, because It is utterly now. Because It is utterly now, It is complete activity. And, because It is such, It acquires nothing new, It loses nothing It once had, and therefore cannot be changed. For this reason, It is immense, because It is perfect. Because It is perfect, nothing better or more noble or more worthy than It can be conceived, and in this way there is nothing greater - all such things are immense. It is in all ways because It is utterly one. Because It is utterly one, It is the universal principle of all groups of things and, for this

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<sup>78</sup> Deut 6:4



reason, It is the universal cause for the origin, existence and termination of all things - the "cause of existing, the principle of understanding and the manner of living". So It is in all ways, not as the essence of all things, but as the most superior and utterly excellent, the utterly universal and the utterly sufficient cause of all other essence, whose potential, a singularity of essence which, for that reason, is the most highly and utterly infinite and utterly various in Its efficacy.

*8 Rursus reverentes dicamus: quia igitur esse purissimum et absolutum, quod est simpliciter esse est primum et novissimum, ideo est omnium origo et finis consummans.- Quia aeternum et praesentissimum, ideo omnes durationes ambit et intrat, quasi simul existens earum centrum et circumferentia.- Quia simplicissimum et maximum, ideo totum intra omnes et totum extra, ac per hoc "est sphaera intelligibilis, cuius centrum est ubique et circumferentia nusquam". - Quia actualissimum et immutabilissimum, ideo "stabile manens moveri dat universa".- Quia perfectissimum et immensum, ideo est intra omnia, non inclusum, extra omnia, non exclusum, supra omnia, non elatum, infra omnia, non prostratum.- Quia vero est summe unum et omnimodum, ideo est omnia in omnibus, quamvis omnia sint multa et ipsum non sit nisi unum; et hoc, quia per simplicissimam unitatem, serenissimam veritatem, sincerissimam bonitatem est in eo omnis virtuositas, omnis exemplaritas et omnis communicabilitas; ac per hoc, ex ipso et per ipsum et in ipso sunt omnia, et hoc, quia omnipotens, omnisciens et omnimode bonum, quod perfecte videre est esse beatum, sicut dictum est Moysi: Ego ostendam tibi omne bonum.*

Let us go over this once again. Because the utterly pure and absolute Being, which is simply Being, is primary and terminal, It is the origin and the ultimate finality of all things. Because It is eternal and utterly present, It encompasses and enters throughout time, as though existing as the center and circumference at one and the same time. Because It is utterly simple and the greatest, It is wholly within and wholly without all things, for which reason It is "an intelligible sphere, whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere". Because It is utterly now and unchanging, It "remains stable and moves the universe". Because It is utterly perfect and immense, It is within all things, though not included, and It is without all things, though not excluded, It is above all things, though not raised over them, and It is below all things, though not spread out underneath them. Because It is utterly one and in all ways, It is everything in everything<sup>79</sup>, even though everything be many and It is nothing if not one. And It is so because, through the utterly simple singularity, the utterly serene truth and the utterly sincere goodness, there is in Him all potentiality, all indication and all communicability. For this reason, from Him and through Him and in Him all things are<sup>80</sup>; and, because He is the omniscient, omnipotent and in all ways Good - and perfectly to see this is to be blessed - for this reason Moses said, I shall show you all that is good<sup>81</sup>.

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<sup>79</sup> 1 Cor 15:28

<sup>80</sup> Rom 11:36

<sup>81</sup> Exod 33:19

## CHAPTER 6

### DE SPECULATIONE BEATISSIMAE TRINITATIS IN EIUS NOMINE, QUOD EST BONUM

#### THE VISION OF THE MOST BLESSED TRINITY IN ITS PRIMARY NAME, WHICH IS *THE GOOD*

*1 Post considerationem essentialium elevandus est oculus intelligentiae ad contuiti-  
nem beatissimae Trinitatis, ut alter Cherub iuxta alterum statuatur. Sicut autem visio-  
nis essentialium ipsum esse est principium radicale et nomen, per quod cetera inno-  
tescunt; sic contemplationis emanationum ipsum bonum est principalissimum funda-  
mentum.*

Following the consideration of the essential characteristics of God, the eye of intelli-  
gence must be raised upwards, to observe the Blessed Trinity, so that the one  
Cherub be placed next to the other. But, just as Being is the fundamental principle  
and name of the vision of God's essential characteristics, through which the rest  
come to be known, so Good itself is the most basic foundation for the contemplation  
of the aspects of the Trinity.

*2 Vide igitur et attende quoniam optimum quod simpliciter est quo nihil melius cogitari  
potest; et hoc tale sic est, quod non potest recte cogitari non esse, quia omnino melius  
est esse quam non esse; sic est, quod non potest recte cogitari, quin cogitetur trinum  
et unum. Nam "bonum dicitur diffusivum sui"; summum igitur bonum summe diffusi-  
vum est sui. Summa autem diffusio non potest esse, nisi sit actualis et intrinseca, sub-  
stantialis et hypostatica, naturalis et voluntaria, liberalis et necessaria, indeficiens et  
perfecta. Nisi igitur in summo bono aeternaliter esset productio actualis et consub-  
stantialis, et hypostasis aequae nobilis, sicut est produciens per modum generationis et  
spirationis - ita quod sit aeternalis principii aeternaliter comprincipiantis- ita quod  
esset dilectus et condilectus, genitus et spiratus, hoc est Pater et Filius et Spiritus  
sanctus; nequaquam esset summum bonum, quia non summe se diffunderet. Nam  
diffusio ex tempore in creatura non est nisi centralis vel punctualis respectu immensi-  
tatis bonitatis aeternae; unde et potest aliqua diffusio cogitari maior illa, ea videlicet, in  
qua diffundens communicat alteri totam substantiam et naturam. Non igitur summum  
bonum esset, si re, vel intellectu illa carere posset.*

*Si igitur potes mentis oculo contueri puritatem bonitatis, quae est actus purus principii  
caritative diligentis amore gratuito et debito et ex utroque permixto, quae est diffusio  
plenissima per modum naturae et voluntatis, quae est diffusio per modum Verbi, in  
quo omnia dicuntur, et per modum Doni, in quo cetera dona donantur; potes videre,  
per summam boni communicabilitatem necesse esse Trinitatem Patris et Filii et  
Spiritus sancti. In quibus necesse est propter summam bonitatem esse summam  
communicabilitatem, et ex summa communicabilitate summam consubstantialita-  
tem, et ex summa consubstantialitate summam configurabilitatem, et ex his sum-*

*mam coaequalitatem, ac per hoc summam coaeternitatem, atque ex omnibus praedictis summam cointimitatem, qua unus est in altero necessario per summam circumincessionem et unus operatur cum alio per omnimodam indivisionem substantiae et virtutis et operationis ipius beatissimae Trinitatis.*

Note that "the best" is, simply put, that, other than which, nothing can be thought better. And this is the case with That of which we speak, for It cannot correctly be thought as not being, since being is entirely better than not being. This is the case, because It cannot correctly be thought if It is not thought as being triune and one. For "the good is said to diffuse itself" - and so the ultimate Good must be That which diffuses Itself ultimately. But an ultimate diffusion cannot be unless it be immanent and intrinsic, substantial and hypostatic, natural and voluntary, open and necessary, unfailing and perfect. So unless there is eternally in the ultimate Good an immanent and consubstantial production, together with an equal hypostasis - such as the production through a bringing forth and a giving of breath - so that there be an eternal production of an eternally cooriginating principle, so that there would be a beloved and a beloved, one brought forth and one given breath, that being the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit - unless all these are true, it would never be the ultimate Good, because it would not diffuse itself ultimately. For diffusion through time into created things is but a center or a point in the immensity of the eternal Goodness. Following on from this point, some diffusion can be thought greater than that - namely that, by diffusion, it communicates its entire substance to the other. Therefore it would not be the ultimate Good, were it able to be lacking, whether in reality or in intellectual understanding.

So if you can survey with the eye of your mind the purity of goodness, which is the pure activity of the principle of compassion, pouring forth love which is open and directed and which is a mixture also of the two. This is the most complete diffusion, by means of the nature and the will, which in turn is the diffusion of the Word, in which all things are expressed, and of the Gift, in which all other things are given. Thus you can see, through the ultimate communicability of the Good, that it is necessarily the Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; and that, because of the Trinity's ultimate Goodness that there be ultimate communicability; and that, because of the Trinity's ultimate communicability, that there be ultimate consubstantiality; and that, because of the Trinity's ultimate consubstantiality, that there be ultimate adaptability; from all these, moreover, there is ultimate mutual equality, and through this there is ultimate mutual eternity. From all these preceding characteristics there is an ultimate mutual intimacy, through which the One is necessarily in the Other through the ultimate enfolding, and through which the One collaborates with the Other through the in every way indivisible substance, potential and activity of the most blessed Trinity Itself.

*3 Sed cum haec contemplaris, vide, ne te existimes comprehendere incomprehensibilem. Habes enim adhuc in his sex conditionibus considerare quod vehementer in stuporem admirationis inducit oculum mentis nostrae. Nam ibi est summa communicabilitas cum personarum proprietate, summa consubstantialitas cum hypostasum pluralitate, summa configurabilitas cum discreta personalitate, summa coaequalitas cum ordine, summa coaeternitas cum emanatione, summa cointimitas cum emissi-*

*one. Quis ad tantorum mirabilium aspectum non consurgat in admirationem?- Sed haec omnia certissime intelligimus esse in beatissima Trinitate, si levamus oculos ad superexcellantissimam bonitatem. Si enim ibi est summa communicatio et vera diffusio, vera est ibi origo et vera distinctio; et quia totum communicatur, non pars; ideo ipsum datur, quod habetur, et totum: igitur emanans et produciens et distinguuntur proprietatibus, et sunt essentialiter unum. Quia igitur distinguuntur proprietatibus, ideo habent personales proprietates et hypostasum pluralitatem et originis emanationem et ordinem non posterioritatis, sed originis, et emissionem non localis mutationis, sed gratuite inspirationis, per rationem auctoritatis producentis, quam habet mittens respectu missi.- Quia vero sunt unum substantialiter, ideo oportet, quod sit unitas in essentia et forma et dignitate et aeternitate et existentia et incircumscribilitate.- Dum ergo haec per se singillatim consideras, habes unde veritatem contempleris; dum haec ad invicem confers, habes unde in admirationem altissimam suspendaris: et ideo, ut mens tua per admirationem in admirabilem ascendat contemplationem, haec simul sunt consideranda.*

But make sure, when you think about these things, that you do not see yourself as understanding that which is beyond understanding. For, in these six conditions, you still have to think about what leads the eye of the mind into the unmoving state that is wonder. For in this state there is the ultimate communicability with the property of the Persons, there is the ultimate consubstantiality with the plurality of the hypostases, there is the ultimate adaptability with discrete personality, there is the ultimate mutual equality in terms of order, there is the ultimate mutual eternity in terms of that which is emanated and there is the ultimate mutual intimacy in terms of that which is emitted. Who, then, in looking upon such wonders would not rise up with them in amazement? But we should certainly understand all of these things to be the most blessed Trinity, if we raise our eyes to Its ultimate and most excellent Goodness. For if there is, in It, the ultimate communication and true diffusion, in It is also the true origin and true differentiation. And, because it is the Whole, and not a part, which is communicated, That which is given is That which is had and That is the Whole. Therefore the Emanating and the Producing are distinguished through their properties and they are essentially One. So, because they are distinguished through their properties, they have personal properties and a hypostatic plurality and an emanation of origin and an order defined not by what comes subsequently but by origin; and they have an emission defined not by a change of locality but by the openness of inspiration, due to the authority which the sending has in relation to that which is sent. Because they are One in substance, it is appropriate that there be a Unity in essence and form and nobility and eternity and existence and in lack of restriction. So, whilst you consider these things singly through themselves, you have the means by which to contemplate the Truth; and whilst you compare these with one another, you have the means by which to be suspended in wonder; and so, as your mind ascends through wonder into wonderful contemplation, these things should be considered together.

*4 Nam et Cherubim hoc designant, quae se mutuo aspiciebant. Nec hoc vacat a mysterio, quod respiciebant se versus vultibus in propitiatorium ut verificetur illud quod dicit Dominus in Ioanne: Haec est vita aeterna, ut cognoscant te solum verum Deum, et*

*quem misisti Iesum Christum. Nam admirari debemus non solum conditiones Dei essentialia et personales in se, verum etiam per comparisonem ad supermirabilem unionem Dei et hominis in unitate personae Christi.*

The Cherubim, who looked one upon the other, also indicate this. This was not without mystery, since they looked backwards, from upon the Propitiatorium, upon one another's face<sup>82</sup>, so as to verify what Jesus says in the Gospel of John: This is eternal life, to know You as the only true God and to know Jesus Christ as He whom You have sent<sup>83</sup>. For we should hold in wonder not only the essential and personal characteristics of God in and of themselves, but also through a comparison with the utterly awe-inspiring union of God and Humanity in the unity in the Person of Christ..

*5 Si enim Cherub es essentialia Dei contemplando, et miraris, quia simul est divinum esse primum et novissimum, aeternum et praesentissimum, simplicissimum et maximum seu incircumscribitum, totum ubique et nunquam comprehensum, actualissimum et nunquam motum, perfectissimum et nihil habens superfluum nec diminutum, et tamen immensum et sine termino infinitum, summe unum, et tamen omnimodum, ut omnia in se habens, ut omnis virtus, omnis veritas, omne bonum; respice ad propitiatorium et mirare, quod in ipso principium primum iunctum est cum postremo, Deus cum homine sexto die formato, aeternum iunctum est cum homine temporali, in plenitudine temporum de Virgine nato, simplicissimum cum summe composito, actualissimum cum summe passo et mortuo, perfectissimum et immensum cum modico, summe unum et omnimodum cum individuo composito et a ceteris distincto, homine scilicet Iesu Christo.*

So if you are one of the Cherubim, contemplating what is essential in God, and you are amazed that, at one and the same time, the divine Being is first and last, eternally and utterly present, utterly simple and greatest or most unrestricted, wholly everywhere and never grasped, the utterly now and never moved, utterly perfect and having nothing superfluous or lacking, but nonetheless immense and infinite without end, utterly one and yet in all ways, having all things in Himself - all potential, all truth and all good: look back towards the propitiatory and wonder that in Him the First Principle is joined with the Last, that God created humanity on the sixth day<sup>84</sup>, that the eternal has been joined with temporal humanity, born in due course to a young woman, the utterly simple with the ultimately composite, the utterly now with one who has utterly suffered and died, the utterly perfect and immense with but a slight amount, the utterly one and in all ways with the composite individual, which man, distinct from all the rest, is Jesus Christ.

*6 Si autem alter Cherub es personarum propria contemplando, et miraris, communicabilitatem esse cum proprietate, consubstantialitatem cum pluralitate, configurabilitatem cum personalitate, coaequalitatem cum ordine, coaeternitatem cum productione, cointimitatem cum emissionem, quia Filius missus est a Patre, et Spiritus sanctus*

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<sup>82</sup> Exod 25:20

<sup>83</sup> Jn 17:3

<sup>84</sup> Gen 1:26

*ab utroque, qui tamen semper est cum eis et nunquam recedit ab eis; respice in propitiatorium et mirare, quia in Christo stat personalis unio cum trinitate substantiarum<sup>7</sup> et naturarum dualitate; stat omnimoda consensio cum pluralitate voluntatum, stat Dei et hominis compraedicatio cum pluralitate proprietatum, stat coadoratio cum pluralitate nobilitatum, stat coexaltatio super omnia cum pluralitate dignitatum, stat condominatio cum pluralitate potestatum.*

And if you are the other Cherub, contemplating the personal, and you are amazed that communicability is joined with individuality, that consubstantiality is joined with plurality, that adaptability is joined with personality, that mutual equality is joined with order, that mutual eternity is joined with production, that mutual intimacy is joined with the act of sending forth, because the Son is sent from the Father, and the Holy Spirit - who was nonetheless always with Them and has never receded from Them - is sent by Them both: look back towards the propitiatory and wonder, because in Christ there exists a personal union with a trinity of substances and a duality of natures, there exists in all ways a consensus with a plurality of wills, there exists a presumption of God and Humanity with a plurality of properties, there exists a mutual adoration with a plurality of nobilities, there exists a mutual exaltation over all things with a plurality of dignities and there exists a mutual domination with a plurality of powers.

*7 In hac autem consideratione est perfectio illuminationis mentis, dum quasi in sexta die videt hominem factum ad imaginem Dei. Si enim imago est similitudo expressiva, dum mens nostra contemplatur in Christo Filio Dei, qui est imago Dei invisibilis per naturam, humanitatem nostram tam mirabiliter exaltatam, tam ineffabiliter unitam, videndo simul in unum primum et ultimum, summum et imum, circumferentiam et centrum, alpha et omega, causatum et causam, Creatorum et creaturam, librum scilicet scriptum intus et extra; iam pervenit ad quandam rem perfectam, ut cum Deo ad perfectionem suarum illuminationum in sexto gradu quasi in sexta die perveniat, nec aliquid iam amplius restet nisi dies requiei, in qua per mentis excessum requiescat humanae mentis perspicacitas ab omni opere, quod patraret.*

In consideration of this, moreover, there exists the perfection of enlightenment in the mind since, as on the sixth day, we see that we have been made in the image of God. For, if the image is an expressive likeness, whilst our mind is contemplating the Son of God, the Christ, who is through His nature the invisible image of God, our humanity so wonderfully exalted, united beyond expressibility, seeing in one thing and at one and the same time both the first and the last, the very heights and the very depths, the circumference and the center, the Alpha and the Omega, the causer and that which is caused, the creator and that which is created, the book which is written within and that written without, it has already reached a certain perfection, so that with God it may arrive at the perfection of His enlightenment on the sixth level, as on the sixth day. Now nothing remains except for the day of rest, in which the activity of the human mind in mental disassociation rests from everything which it would do.

## CHAPTER 7

*DE EXCESSU MENTALI ET MYSTICO, IN QUO REQUIES DATUR INTELLECTUI,  
AFFECTU TOTALITER IN DEUM PER EXCESSUM TRANSEUNTE*

THE MENTAL AND MYSTICAL DISASSOCIATION, IN WHICH REST IS GIVEN TO  
THE INTELLECT, THROUGH A COMPLETE AFFECTION, BY WHICH,  
THROUGH MENTAL DISASSOCIATION, ONE PASSES OVER TOTALLY INTO GOD

*1 His igitur sex considerationibus excursis tanquam sex gradibus throni veri Salomonis, quibus pervenitur ad pacem, ubi verus pacificus in mente pacifica tanquam in interiori Hierosolyma requiescit; tanquam etiam sex alis Cherub, quibus mens veri contemplativi plena illustratione supernae sapientiae valeat sursum agi; tanquam etiam sex diebus primis, in quibus mens exercitari habet, ut tandem perveniat ad sabbatum quietis; postquam mens nostra contuita est Deum extra se per vestigia et in vestigiis, intra se per imaginem et in imagine, supra se per divinae lucis similitudinem super nos relucens et in ipsa luce, secundum quod possibile est secundum statum viae et exercitium mentis nostrae; cum tantum in sexto gradu ad hoc pervenerit, ut speculetur in principio primo et summo et mediatore Dei et hominum, Iesu Christo, ea quorum similia in creaturis nullatenus reperiri possunt, et quae omnem perspicacitatem humani intellectus excedunt: restat, ut haec speculando transcendat et transeat non solum mundum istum sensibilem, verum etiam semetipsam; in quo transitu Christus est via et ostium, Christus est scala et vehiculum tanquam propitiatorium super arcam Dei collocatum et sacramentum a saeculis absconditum.*

So the mind has moved through these six levels of perception, as though through the six steps up to the throne of Solomon, by which one reaches peace, the true peace rests in the peaceful mind as in the interior of Jerusalem, as though also through the six wings of the Cherub, by which the mind of the true contemplative is able to be urged upwards by the full illumination of ultimate wisdom, as though also through the first six days, in which the mind has to be exercised, so as to arrive finally in the sabbath of quiet; after which the mind has observed God outside itself through traces and in traces, within itself through image and in image, above itself through the likeness of divine light shining above us, according to what is possible given the state and behavior of our mind. When one arrives on the sixth level, one sees - in Jesus Christ, the mediator between God and Humanity<sup>85</sup>, the First and Supreme Principle - things the like of which can in no way be experienced within the created world and which utterly exceed the perception of the human intellect. So it follows that, by the act of observing, the mind transcends and passes beyond not only the perceivable world, but equally its own self: and Christ is the way and the gate<sup>86</sup> through which this transcendence is achieved, Christ is the ladder and the vehicle<sup>87</sup>, as the Propitiatory is lo-

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<sup>85</sup> 1 Tim 2:5

<sup>86</sup> Jn 14:6

<sup>87</sup> Jn 10:7

cated over the Ark of God<sup>88</sup> and over the sacrament which is hidden from the ages<sup>89</sup>.

*2 Ad quod propitiatorium qui aspicit plena conversione vultus, aspiciendo eum in cruce suspensum per fidem, spem et caritatem, devotionem, admirationem, exultationem, appretiationem, laudem et iubilationem; pascha, hoc est transitum, cum eo facit, ut per virgam crucis transeat mare rubrum, ab Aegypto intrans desertum, ubi gustet manna absconditum, et cum Christo requiescat in tumultu quasi exterius mortuus, sentiens, tamen, quantum possibile est secundum statum viae, quod in cruce dictum est latroni cohaerenti Christo: Hodie mecum eris in paradiso.*

Whoever looks directly at the Propitiatory, looks directly at Him who hangs upon the Cross, with faith, hope and love, with devotion, wonder, exultation, thankfulness, praise and joy, experiences with Him the Passover, that is the transcendence<sup>90</sup>, passes over the Red Sea through the beams of the Cross, enters the desert from Egypt, tastes the hidden manna, and rests together with Christ on the burial mound as though outwardly dead - sensing, nonetheless, so far as it may be possible within their present situation, what was said to the thief hanging alongside Christ on the cross: Today you will be with me in Paradise<sup>91</sup>.

*3 Quod etiam ostensum est beato Francisco, cum in excessu contemplationis in monte excelso - ubi haec, quae scripta sunt, mente tractavi - apparuit Seraph sex alarum in cruce confixus, ut ibidem a socio eius, qui tunc cum eo fuit, ego et plures alii audivimus; ubi in Deum transiit per contemplationis excessum; et positus est in exemplum perfectae contemplationis; sicut prius fuerat actionis, tanquam alter Iacob et Israel, ut omnes viros vere spirituales Deus per eum invitaret ad huiusmodi transitum et mentis excessum magis exemplo quam verbo.*

This has also been shown to the blessed Francis, when, in contemplative disassociation on the high mountain - during which time he worked through the things which have been written here -, there appeared the six-winged Seraph, fastened to a cross, as I and many others have heard about from his companion. Through his contemplative disassociation, he passed over into God: this is offered as an example of perfect contemplation, since he was at first a man of action - as was Jacob, who became Israel. Thus, through his example, God invites all truly spiritual people to take part in such a transcendence, and a mental disassociation through action rather than through words.

*4 In hoc autem transitu, si sit perfectus, oportet quod relinquuntur omnes intellectuales operationes, et apex affectus totus transferatur et transformetur in Deum. Hoc autem est mysticum et secretissimum, quod nemo novit, nisi qui accipit, nec accipit nisi qui desiderat, nec desiderat nisi quem ignis Spiritus sancti medullitus inflamat, quem Christus misit in terram. Et ideo dicit Apostolus, hanc mysticam sapientiam esse per*

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<sup>88</sup> Exod 25:20

<sup>89</sup> Eph 3:9

<sup>90</sup> Exod 12:11

<sup>91</sup> Lk 23:43



*Spiritum sanctum revelatam.*

If this transcendence is to be perfect, all intellectual activity should be relinquished and the entire apex of affection be transferred to and transformed into God. But this is mystical and ultimately secret, since no-one can know who does not accept<sup>92</sup> it, nor does anyone accept it unless they are not the one who desires it, nor does anyone desire it unless the fire of the Holy Spirit, to which Christ set light upon the earth, enflames the very marrow of their bones. This is why the Apostle says<sup>93</sup> that this mystical wisdom has been revealed through the Holy Spirit.

*5 Quoniam igitur ad hoc nihil potest natura, modicum potest industria, parum est dandum inquisitioni, et multum unctioni; parum dandum est linguae, et plurimum internae laetitiae; parum dandum est verbo et scripto, et totum Dei dono, scilicet Spiritui sancto; parum aut nihil dandum est creaturae, et totum creatrici essentiae, Patri et Filio et Spiritui sancto, dicendo cum Dionysio ad Deum Trinitatem: "Trinitas superessentialis et superdeus et superoptime Christianorum inspector theosophiae, dirige nos in mysticorum eloquiorum superincognitum et superlucentem et sublimissimum verticem; ubi nova et absoluta et inconvertibilia theologiae mysteria secundum superlucentem absconduntur occulte docentis silentii caliginem in obscurissimo, quod est supermanifestissimum, supersplendentem, et in qua omne relucet, et invisibilium superbonorum splendoribus superimplentem invisibiles intellectus". Hoc ad Deum. Ad amicum autem cui haec scribuntur, dicatur cum eodem: "Tu autem, o amice, circa mysticas visiones, corroborato itinere, et sensus desere et intellectuales operationes et sensibilia et invisibilia et omne non ens et ens, et ad unitatem, ut possibile est, inscius restituere ipsius, qui est super omnem essentiam et scientiam. Etenim te ipso et omnibus immensurabili et absoluto purae mentis excessu, ad superessentialem divinarum tenebrarum radium, omnia deserens et ab omnibus absolutus, ascendes"*

Therefore there can be nothing in one's nature, just a small amount through hard work, a little through investigation and a great deal through being anointed. A little should be given over to the tongue and much to internal joy. A little should be put down to word and texts and everything to the gift of God. Little or nothing should be given to that which has been created and everything to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, the essence of Creation. So we say with St Dionysius the Areopagite, "Oh Trinity, beyond the most fundamental, beyond the most divine and beyond the most good of all Christians, who guard us and guide us in the knowledge of God, direct us into the centerpoint of mystical expression, which is beyond the unknown and beyond the shining and utterly sublime, where the new and absolute and unspeakable mysteries of wisdom are, according to the darkness of the wise silence which is beyond brilliance, hidden within the ultimately obscured - because that is the most beyond manifest and beyond resplendent, and in that everything shines, and that is the beyond fulfilling invisible intellect whose splendors are invisible and beyond good." This is what he says to God. To the one to whom he writes, he adds: "You, too, my friend, having been toughened on the journey, in considering these mystical vi-

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<sup>92</sup> Apoc 2:17

<sup>93</sup> 1 Cor 2:10

sions, give up the senses and intellectual activity, both perceivable and invisible, everything which exists and everything which does not exist. So far as is possible, unknowingly reestablish yourself in the unity which is beyond every essence and knowledge. For, indeed, giving up all things and absolved from all things, you yourself ascend by means of that which is universally unboundable and and by an absolute disassociation of pure mind, to the ray of divine shadows which is beyond essential."

*6 Si autem quaeras, quomodo haec fiant, interroga gratiam, non doctrinam; desiderium, non intellectum; gemitum orationis, non studium lectionis; sponsum, non magistrum; Deum, non hominem, caliginem, non claritatem; non lucem, sed ignem totaliter inflammantem et in Deum excessivis unctionibus et ardentissimis affectionibus transferentem. Qui quidem ignis Deus est, et huius caminus est in Ierusalem, et Christus hunc accendit in fervore, suae ardentissimae passionis, quam solus ille vere percipit, qui dicit: Suspendium elegit anima mea, et mortem ossa mea. Quam mortem qui diligit videre potest Deus, quia indubitanter verum est: Non videbit me homo et vivet.- Moriamur igitur et ingrediamur in caliginem, imponamus silentium sollicitudinibus, concupiscentiis et phantasmatibus; transeamus cum Christo crucifixo ex hoc mundo ad Patrem, ut, ostendo nobis Patre, dicamus cum Philippo: Sufficit nobis; audiamus cum Paulo: Sufficit tibi gratia mea; Exultemus cum David dicentes: Defecit caro mea et cor meum, Deus cordis mei et pars mea Deus in aeternum. Benedictus Dominus in aeternum, et dicet omnis populus: Fiat, fiat. Amen.*

But if you seek to understand how these things work, examine grace and not doctrine, desire and not intelligence, the ache of prayer and not the study of texts, the spouse and not the teacher, God and not people, darkness and not brightness, not light, but the fire which completely enflames and which transfers one into God through its completeness in anointing and its most burning affection. This fire is indeed God and His forge is in Jerusalem<sup>94</sup> : Christ sets light to the fervor of his strongest passion, which only He truly perceives, and of which he says: My soul has chosen suspension and my bones have chosen death<sup>95</sup> . Whoever loves this death can see God, because it is true beyond doubt. No-one can look on God and live<sup>96</sup> . So let us die and enter into the darkness, let us impose silence upon our cares, our desires and our illusions. Let us pass over with the crucified Christ, from this world to the Father<sup>97</sup> . Showing us the Father, we say with Phillip, It is enough for us<sup>98</sup> , and together with Paul we hear, My grace is enough for you<sup>99</sup> . And we exult with David, saying, My flesh and my heart is lacking, oh God of my heart, eternal God whom I have chosen<sup>100</sup> . May God be blessed forever and may all the people say, Let it be so, let it be so<sup>101</sup> . Let it be so.

Translation by Simon Wickham-Smith, Leipzig, Christmas 2005

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<sup>94</sup> Isaiah 31:9

<sup>95</sup> Job 7:15

<sup>96</sup> Exod 33:20

<sup>97</sup> Jn 13:1

<sup>98</sup> Jn 14:8

<sup>99</sup> 2 Cor 12:19

<sup>100</sup> Ps 72:26

<sup>101</sup> Ps 105:48