

A
STUDY GUIDE

FOR THE

TREATISE ON THE
LOVE OF GOD

BY

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Prepared for the De Sales Secular Institute

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PREFACE

One of those who gave testimony at the canonical process for the canonization of St. Francis de Sales stated that the Treatise on the Love of God “is a masterpiece, admired by all qualified to judge. But it is certain that in order to understand it well, one must be a very devout and a very learned person, two qualities rarely found in the same person”. There are people who find difficulty in appreciating the “Treatise”.

If the difficulty comes from a lack of devotion, that difficulty can be removed by a prayerful reading of the “Treatise”. In it the great love of St. Francis de Sales for his God shines forth. It is more than inspiring, it is contagious. And he wants it to be so, for his purpose in writing the “Treatise”, as in all his works, is pastoral in nature; he is always seeking to lead souls to God.

If the difficulty is a lack of knowledge, this Outline can be helpful, for in it I have tried to present the development of his thought as clearly as I could. It has often been said that the best way to master the thoughts of an author is to outline his works; that I have tried to do.

The questions and reflections are intended to further the process of assimilating the thoughts of the author and imbibing his fervor for God.



TREATISE ON THE LOVE OF GOD

By St. Francis de Sales

INTRODUCTION

I. DEVELOPMENT

A. 1st Plan: "The Life of St. Charity"

On February 11, 1607, St. Francis de Sales wrote to St. Jane de Chantal that whatever free time he could find, be it only a quarter of an hour, he was devoting to the writing of the life of a saint about whom he would speak often: the life of St. Charity. He had in mind a volume that would be twice the size of the Life of St. Theresa. It is to be noted that he was working on the Life before he published the Introduction.

B. 2nd Plan: "The Book of the Two Tablets"

On February 15, 1609, he wrote to Archbishop Pierre de Villars that he was thinking of publishing two booklets dealing with the two tablets of the Law. One, consequently, would deal with the love of God, and the other with the love of the neighbor. The booklets would be of a practical nature, offering concrete advice, and could be published in one volume.

C. 3rd Plan: "The Treatise on the Love of God"

In June of 1610, the Visitation was founded. St. Francis de Sales' contacts with the first Visitandines gave him a clear insight into the kind of book that was needed: not a few practical counsels, but a thorough treatment of the spiritual life, from the most lofty states of the soul to the most humble, from speculative considerations to practical advice.

II. PUBLICATION

In August 1616. The only edition that appeared under his control. New printings made in 1617, 1617, 1620, each adding mistakes and variations. Translated into Italian in 1620, into English in 1630, into German in 1661, into Polish in 1751, into Latin in 1643.

III. RECEPTION

A. Never as well received as the Introduction. Not surprising, since it is a much more profound treatment of the spiritual life.

B. Unfortunately, it became the subject of much dispute. Holding to a middle course between extremeness, it was quoted by both the right and the left; by Arnault and the Jansenists, Molinos and the Quietists, Fenelon and the Semi-Quietists.

C. The Church, in declaring St. Francis de Sales a Doctor of the Church, has dispelled these clouds.

IV. VALUE – Ravier – p. 325

A. St. Francis de Sales' major work.

B. Contains treasures of spiritual experiences and sound doctrines.

C. As requires many of a most delicate questions of the Christian life, he takes a clear stand, with an assurance born of great personal experiences, and of the

experiences of many Visitandines, Thetimuses and Philotheas, who confided in him.

- D. To his great gifts as a director of souls and as a psychologist, he added an intensive knowledge of theology, of Holy Scripture, of the Fathers of the Church, and of teachings both sacred and profane.
- V. WEAKNESSES
- A. The style is old-fashioned and affected.
 - B. “To suit those who are concerned only with charity in practice, the first four books, and some chapters of the rest, could well have been omitted”: cf © “On Developments” for the reason for these parts: “I assure you I have taken present-day mentality into account. I had to.”
 - C. Vangelac (Process) “The book which St. Francis de Sales composed is a masterpiece, admired by all qualified to judge. But it is certain that in order to understand it well, one must be a very devout and a very learned person, two qualities rarely found in the same person.” Ravier – p. 327

VI. MANUSCRIPTS

There are two sets of manuscripts both, however, only partial.

Manuscript A: The first recording of his thoughts. Very interesting, for they give his first inspirations.

Manuscript B: The definitive recording, very much in accord with the edition of 1616.

VII. DEDICATION

“Jesus, my Savior, to whom can I dedicate these words concerning your love better than to the most lovable heart of her who is the beloved of your soul?”

VIII. PLAN

To describe the birth, growth, decline, activities, qualities, benefits and perfection of God’s love, simply and clearly, plainly and frankly.

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BOOK I: Preparatory Considerations

UNIT I – FIRST CONSIDERATION

Man – The Beautiful – Chapter 1

Note: St. Francis de Sales' approach is most unusual: Man is beautiful, as are all of God's works; sin blemished that beauty; love restores it

I. Nature of Beauty

A. 1st Requirement: An harmonious discord.

1. Introduce unity into diversity and you create order; order yields harmony; harmony, when you have perfect integrity, begets beauty. e.g.: a choir.
2. The beautiful differs from the good. Goodness is what delights us when we possess it (appeals to the will); beauty is what we find pleasant when we know it (appeals to the intellect)

B. 2nd Requirement: Brilliance or clarity.

1. These qualities cause the knowledge of the beautiful to please us (hold us, strike us, give that extra something that makes a thing beautiful).
2. It's the resplendent beauty of the creator breaking through his creations.

C. 3rd Requirement: To be perfect in beauty, living things must also be graceful: i.e. possess harmony of movement.

II. Beauty in Man

To achieve these requirements in man, God enthrones the will over the multiplicity and variety of actions, impulses, feelings, inclinations, habits, passions, faculties and powers to be found in man so as to transform their multiplicity and diversity into perfect unity.

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Questions

1. What do you understand by unity, harmony, integrity?
2. What is your understanding of that added quality necessary to make a thing beautiful?
3. What is the key to making man a beautiful creature?

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Reflections

1. Read the Book of Genesis. Reflect on God's judgment, that the work of His hands was good, and on His declaration that He made man in His own Image and Likeness. Also Wisdom 2:23.
2. 2 Co. 3:18 speaks of the glory that comes to the man of faith.
3. Fr. Langelaan's article: "Man, the Lover of Beauty"
4. On the wonder of man – Psalm 139: 1-8, 23-24

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END UNIT 1, BOOK I

UNT 2 – SECOND CONSIDERATION

The Domination of the Will – Ch. 2 & 3

- I. Can be achieved, as regards others, in three ways:
- A. By authority exercised over those who have the power to disobey. Here there are two wills involved, both free.
 - B. By authority exercised over those who cannot disobey. (e.g. over slaves). Only one will is involved.
 - C. By skill and indirect means, (e.g. over cattle). Here authority plays no part.
- II. Applications as regards man’s actions:
- A. Over the movements of the body. Here the authority is of the second type. (b.)
 - B. Over the natural processes of the body (e.g. growth, reproduction, etc. Here domination is achieved in the third way (c.)
 - C. Over the understanding and memory. The authority is of the first type. (A.)

The will moves the two faculties, puts them to use and applies them at its pleasure, although this is not done so firmly and invariably that fickle and volatile imagination does not often divert and distract them.
 - D. Over the sensual appetite and the passions – chapter 3. The authority is ultimately of the first type. (A.)

Over the crowd of sense and passions rules the will, rejecting their suggestions, repelling their attacks, preventing their effects and, if nothing else, vigorously withholding its consent.

Value: The passions and emotions are natural to man, neither good nor bad in themselves. They are movements. Condemns, in this respect, the Stoics, who would have man live without passions. By means of the passions, the soul is trained in virtue, in courage of spirit.

Consequently, the passions existed in our Lord. But His control was complete, so that He felt only what He wanted to feel. In Him the movements were not disorderly.

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Questions

1. Can it be said that the will dominates actions of man?
2. Where does it meet opposition? In what way can this opposition be overcome?

Reflections

1. St. Catherine of Siena’s struggle as related in Book 4, Chapter 4 of the “Introduction”.
2. Read Chapter 24 of Book 1 of the “Introduction”. Also Chapter 21 of Book 3.
3. Reflect on St. Paul’s struggle. Romans 7:14 – 25.

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END UNIT 2, BOOK I

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UNIT 3 – THIRD CONSIDERATION

The role of love in controlling the emotions and passions and the will itself – Ch. 4

- I. Love is the power that sets man in motion. Consequently, our passions, our emotions, are good or bad, in exact proportion to the goodness or badness of the love that sets them in motion.
- II. Love determines the will to such an extent as to turn that faculty into something like itself: e.g. an upright will means a good love; an evil will means a bad love. The example of the wife assuming the rank and title of her husband.

However, the will does have mastery over love, in that it chooses its love; but it then becomes like it. In addition when it pleases, it can set its love aside by letting the mind dwell on grounds for dislike, by deciding to turn to something else.

FOURTH CONSIDERATION

How determine the goodness (or evil) of a love. How grade them – Ch. 5

- I. The intellectual or reasonable appetite has as many movements as the sense appetite. The movements on these different levels are often in opposition. This is the source of our daily warfare.
- II. The affections (loves) we experience in our rational part are more or less noble and spiritual: a) insofar as they have objects more or less elevated and b) as they are in more eminent rank in the mind. These two criteria are indissolubly connected. The more sublime the object of love, the higher rank it has in man's spirit.

(Read last two paragraphs for illustrations.)

FIFTH CONSIDERATION

That divine love must dominate all other loves – Chapter 6

- I. All the spiritual faculties of man are controlled by the will, and the will is controlled by what it loves, even to resembling it. The love of God, however, holds sway over all other loves – so naturally dominant that, unless it has the mastery, it ceases to exist. Not merely the other movements of the soul do reverence and submit, but intellect and will, too.
- II. No human will can give life to divine love; only the Holy Spirit can pour it out in our hearts; and supernatural as it is, it must take first place.
- III. It dwells in the highest region of the soul, high enough for all the faculties to hear it and obey.
- IV. In gentleness of control it knows no equal, for love has no convicts or slaves, it compels obedience by the force of its charm.
- V. Made in the image and likeness of God, man is intended to find in divine love the motive and mainspring of all he does, as does God.

SIXTH CONSIDERATION

The nature of love.

- I. The parts of love – Chapter 7
 - A. Love has five principal parts, like a tree

1. attraction of the will to good is the root;
2. satisfaction is the foot;
3. movement is the trunk;
4. pursuit, quest and other efforts to achieve union are the branches; and
5. union and possession are the fruit.

It reduces to three:

1. attraction (complacency)
2. movement
3. union

- B. Which is the principal part? Many emphasized the attraction; St. Francis de Sales, the movement. Satisfaction awakens the heart, love sets it to work. In satisfaction, the heart spreads its wings, but love is its flight. Quite clearly, then, love is simply the movement, outflowing and progression of the heart towards good. His basic reason: love is a passion and consequently implies movement.
- C. The names given to love depends on the ease or impossibility of union. He gives the example: gratifying love, velleity, desires, incompatible love.

II. The nature of the attraction – Ch. 8

- A. Though we speak of the movement as occurring in the will, its purpose is to unite two persons.
- B. To think that likeness is the only attraction that gives rise to love is to miss the point.
- C. It is often due to the complimentary relationship existing between lover and beloved.
- D. Of course, if the two – likeness and complimentary qualities – go together, love is undoubtedly awakened more easily, more strongly. When like things are united by adaptation to the same end, it seems to be unity rather than union.
- E. Therefore, the affinity of lover and thing loved is the primary source of love. This affinity consists in correspondence, which is simply a mutual relation that makes suitable things unite so as to communicate some perfection to one another.

III. Love seeks union – Chapter 9

- A. Hatred divides, love unites. So Love has only one object: the union of the lover with what he loves.
- B. This union symbolized by the kiss. Proved by quotations from scripture, particularly the “Song of Songs”, by the fact that by our lips we pour out our hearts to others.

IV. The union craved is spiritual – Ch. 10

- A. Love seeks union, but union of the Spirit. The will is spiritual, so the union which love craves will also be spiritual. No merely carnal union can ever fulfill the demands of love.

B. Other loves, opposed to this spiritual union, must be suppressed.. Reasons:

1. The soul is a limited being. It must conserve its energy for the spiritual. Extent and intensity of concentration are in inverse proportion to each other.
2. The two ecstasies – upward toward the angels, or downward toward the brute. We must make it a great ecstasy upwards so as to make unlikely a return downwards. Spiritual love exists even though sense faculties as well as intellectual faculties achieve unions of their own. But it is never so perfect as when mind and heart together, detached from all carnal attractions, produce a purely spiritual love. Concentrating the affections in this manner renders them not merely better and sweeter, but keener, more energetic, stronger.
3. Purely carnal unions disappoint. Spiritual love discovers greater satisfaction than it ever dreamed union could give – an evergrowing gratification that is at once the effect and the continuing cause of action.

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Questions

1. Why is love so important?
2. How determine the nobility of our love.
3. Why is man destined for divine love? Why must it dominate?
4. Where does St. Francis de Sales place the essence of love?
5. What begets the movement of love?
6. What is the purpose of love?
7. What factors contribute to or weaken the perfection of spiritual love?

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Reflections

1. Consider St. Augustine's declaration that our hearts were made for God and that they will know no rest until they rest in Him. Psalm 84 develops this thought.
2. For a very clear presentation of St. Francis' teachings on the movements of love consult Mueller's "St. Francis de Sales", pp. 28-37 and p. 111
3. St. Francis de Sales had great admiration for the "Song of Songs". Have you read it recently?
4. Psalm 61 expresses beautifully the soul's longing for union with God.

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END UNIT 3, BOOK I

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UNIT 4 – The Human Soul – Chs. 11 & 12

SEVENTH CONSIDERATION: An Analysis of the Activities of the Human Soul.

Note: Before presenting his teachings on Charity, the highest form of love, St. Francis de Sales presents his understanding of the nature of the human soul, since that understanding enters into his teaching on Charity

I. Parts of the soul – Chapter 11

Though unique and indivisible, the soul has three operational levels:

- A. The living: Attractions and aversions. Not due, according to St. Francis de Sales, to only conscious awareness, but to a mysterious hidden instinct in living things.
- B. The Sensitive: Here the attraction or rejection comes from a knowledge obtained through the senses, the appetites.
- C. The Rational: Here the will impels us to seek what is good to the extent that reason perceives or judges it to be so. There are two parts:
 1. The lower part: Here the reasoning is based on information supplied by discernment and judgment, but drawn from sense data.
 2. The higher part: Here the reasoning is based on two kinds of knowledge:
 - a. Natural knowledge: Philosophical, scientific knowledge.
 - b. Supernatural knowledge: Knowledge based on faith, divine revelation.

He gives many examples of the opposition that can arise between these two parts, especially the experience of our Lord in the Garden.

II. Divisions of Human Reason – Ch. 12

- A. 1st Division: Corresponding the Court of the Gentiles in Solomon's temple. The reasoning is based on sense data.
- B. 2nd Division. The Court of the Israelites. The reasoning is based on human wisdom.
- C. 3rd Division: Court reserved for priests and Levites. The reasoning is based on the truths of the faith.
- D. 4th Division: The Holy of Holies.
 1. No light of human reasoning functions there; the mind simply knows, the will simply acts, forcing the soul to acknowledge and submit to the truth of God, and to His will. We simply give the assent of faith, hope, and charity. Faith, hope and charity then diffuse their divine movements into almost all the soul's faculties, both rational and sensitive, and in a holy way reduce and subject them to their just authority.

St. Francis describes in detail, by reference to the high priests' functions in the Holy of Holies, how the soul acts on this level.
 2. There can be opposition between the 3rd and 4th divisions. Examples:

St. Paul's desire to be with Christ and St. Jane de Chantal's temptations against faith.

It's the tension that can exist between theological probing and the assent of faith.

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Questions

1. Give an example of what St. Francis de Sales means by each of the three operational levels he perceives in the soul?
2. Give examples also of the four dimensions of human reason.

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Reflections

1. Has St. Francis de Sales' description of the fourth division helped you to understand the virtues of faith, hope and charity?
2. Do you appreciate the power of these virtues to change your life?

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END UNIT 4, BOOK I

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UNIT 5 – Charity – Chs. 13-18

EIGHTH CONSIDERATION: Forms of Love and the Supreme Form

The role of love in controlling the emotions and passions and the will itself – Ch. 4

I. Forms of Love – Chapter 13

- A. Love of Concupiscence: Loving something for what we can get out of it.
- B. Love of Benevolence: Loving something for its own sake.
 1. Complacence: Rejoicing in the other's contentment.
 2. Desire: Wishing that the other attain contentment.
 3. Simple Benevolence: No common ground with the one loved.
 4. Friendship: There is common ground. Demands:
 - a) Mutual love;
 - b) Mutual knowledge of that love
 - c) Mutual companionship or acquaintance.
 5. Dilection: A friendship of preference.
 6. Deep dilection: The preference is very special.
 7. Eminent dilection: The preference is unequalled, but still comparable to other preferences.
 8. Charity: The preference is sublime, unchallenged, supreme . Owed only to God .

II. Why the word "love" – Chapter 14

- A. A. He finds many reasons and precedents for using the word "love" to signify "charity".
- B. B. For these reasons and because I intend to treat of active, rather than habitual charity, I have called the treatise "The Love of God".

III. Man's Relationship to God – Ch. 15

- C. Man's natural yearning for God. The human heart's natural delight, natural trust in God. This is due solely to the congruity between the soul and God. St. Francis de Sales de Dales describes how truly man is made in the image and likeness of God
- D. Apart from the bond of likeness, a special relationship exists between God and man for their mutual perfection. Not that God is completed by man in any way, but man needs the completion which only God can give – so that humanity provides God with an outlet for the external expression of his perfection.
- E. This yearning for God can never be fully satisfied here on earth. The mind ever wants to know more; the will never comes to the end of its search for goodness to love. Surely we recognize that it is not for this world that we are made.

IV. Our Natural Tendency to Love God More Than Anything: - Chapter 16

- A. A. God planted in the heart of man at creation, a special natural tendency not only of loving good in general, but of loving in particular and above everything else the goodness of God. The sweetness of His supreme providence required that He would contribute to man such help as would be necessary to put into practice and to effectuate this inclination. This help would be, on the one hand, natural as being suited to nature and tending to the love of God as author and sovereign master of nature, and on the other hand, it would be supernatural, because it would correspond, not with the simple nature of man, but with nature adorned, enriched and honored by original justice, which is a supernatural quality proceeding from a most special favor of God. This supernatural quality was lost in the Fall.
 - B. The Fall weakened the inclination but did not destroy it, so that at the first glimpse of God, the first awareness of Him, fans to flame the hidden spark of its natural inclination to love Him.
- V. Man of himself (naturally) cannot love God above all things – Ch. 17

Note: St. Francis de Sales distinguished between the inclination and the ability. The inclination is not destroyed by sin, but the ability is.

What remains is a velleity (wish), not a true efficacious desire.

- A. He teaches that the will fell much more than the intellect, so that the soul can see but cannot do. Gives many examples and then: “These powerful minds, with all their knowledge of God, with all their urge to love Him- dear Lord above, they lacked the strength.”
 - B. For love to reach maturity - that demands the life of grace (the state of Holy Charity). A natural yearning of the heart is nothing but an irresolute resolve.
- VI. VI. The Natural Tendency still has great value -Chapter 18
- A. Fruitless, you would say, for nature to incite us to love it cannot give.
 - B. For God, it is an instrument: delicately He can pick us up with it, whenever His mercy moves Him to compassion.
 - C. The inclination not only shows that we were once in His hands, but that we still belong to Him, that He reserves the right of recapturing us, when His loving providence deems fit.

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Questions

1. List the marks that distinguish charity from other forms of love.
2. There are two forces that draw God and man together. What are they?
3. Can the union be perfected here on earth? Why not?
4. Evaluate man’s natural inclination to love God above all things. What value does it have in itself? What are its limitations? What helps has God supplied? Before the Fall; after the Fall?

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Reflections

1. What relationship do you see between St. Francis de Sales’ teaching on Charity and Our Lord’s teaching on the first and greatest of the commandments?

2. Read the account of man's creation: Gn. 1:26ff.
3. God calls Abraham his friend (Is. 41:8). St. Francis describes the qualities that must distinguish a friendship if it is to become Charity. How did Abraham fulfill those conditions?
4. On Man's Thirst for God, Psalm 142: 1-11; Psalm 63: 2-9, cf. Muller pp. 31-37.

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END UNIT 5, BOOK I

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BOOK II: The Generation of Divine Love

UNIT II – Nature of God – Chs. 1 & 2

I. GOD IN HIMSELF

A. God's perfections are one single perfection. Ch. 1

1. We see God through His many-sided activities, and so endow Him with a multiplicity of excellencies and perfections.
2. There is no variety in God, no distinction of perfections. He is a single, simple, utterly unique perfection. In God, you see, everything is identical with His divine being.
3. He is a single, unmixed excellence which surpasses every perfection by being the source of it in every perfect being.
4. No one can understand the infinite greatness of His perfection, so far does it surpass the sum of all other perfections. The example of the manna.

B. In God there is only one activity - that of being God. Ch.2

1. Our activities come from many sources within us, but in God all come from one source - His divinity - which is pure, unique actuality.
2. We do not transgress the truth in speaking of God's manifold works. There is no complexity of activity where God is concerned, only a single act by which He is God; however, so perfect is this act, it includes everything necessary to produce the various effects which we can see.
3. Examples: the one word that effected creation; the printer producing a whole scene in one impression.
4. His supreme unity gives everything its distinction, produces the order that makes beauty possible. His eternal permanence gives all things their ability to change.

Questions

1. What is the nature of God? Explain the comparison with the printer.
2. In what sense can we speak of diverse activities in God? Explain the comparison with the sun.

Reflections

1. Read prayerfully the last paragraph of Chapter I.
2. Sirach extols the surpassing greatness of God. Sirach 43
3. In Psalm 148 all creation sings His praises and declares that his majesty is above heaven and earth.
4. Read Muller, pp. 22-23.

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END UNIT I, BOOK II

UNIT II – Divine Providence, God’s Giving to Us– Chs. 3-7

II. GOD IN HIS OUTREACH (Outpouring) TO US

A. Divine Providence in general - Ch.3

1. He describes the government of Solomon as a means of explaining the government (providence) of God.
2. Supreme providence is simply the act by which God intends to supply men and angels with the means both necessary and useful, for achieving their destiny (to glorify God). Since these means are of different kinds, we also give God’s providence different names. We divide it into natural or supernatural, and the supernatural we call general, special and particular.

B. Natural Providence.

1. It embraces natural means to help us give glory to the Creator - that is, all of creation: plants, animals, the heavens, the interdependence of things (ecology).
2. Nothing happens by chance, contrary to appearances. He gives examples, especially the example of Joseph: “What the world would have called luck, or chance, Joseph called God’ s providence, which disposes everything for its own end.”

C. Supernatural Providence - i.e., the means provided to lead man to glory (salvation).

1. General

- a) The salvation of angels and men was the intention behind the whole of God’ s creative activity. Its accomplishment followed this sequence: Ch. 4
 - i. Realizing that He could give Himself in no better fashion than by uniting Himself with a created creature – in such a way as to engraft the creature into the Godhead, so as to form one person – His infinite goodness, naturally self-sharing, decided on that method. This method followed the self-giving we see in the Trinity.
 - ii. Of all possible creatures, His choice fell upon the humanity which He intended later on to be united with the Person of God the Son.
 - iii. His supreme providence arranged that the sharing of His goodness should not be limited to the person of His Son and from the innumerable possible beings. He decided to create men and angels as companions for His Son, to share His graces and glory.
 - iv. From the many ways in which He could make His Son true man, He chose that He be born of a virgin, and the virgin would be our Blessed Lady.
 - v. Although God intended to create both men and angels with free will, still, to show that in His eyes they were dedicated to good, to glory, He created all of them in a state of

original justice, which is naught else than a most sweet love which would dispose them for, turn them towards, and set them on the way to eternal happiness.

- vi. He foresaw the fall of some of the angels. Since their disobedience could not be excused, to exalt His justice, He abandoned them to eternal perdition.
- vii. He foresaw the fall of Adam. St. Francis de Sales lists the reasons why God determined to take pity on man.
- viii. That His mercy might be tempered by His justice He decided upon a strict redemption. This could only be accomplished in the Person of His Son, God and man. But it would be done in such a way that the redemption would be overflowing, lavish, excessive, to prove His boundless love.

b) Place of our Lord in this General Providence – Ch. 5

- i. Although one can trace sequence in God's general supernatural providence, the primary and principal object of that creation was the humanity of our Lord. He loved other creatures in proportion to the closeness or remoteness of their relationship to the Savior. Proofs:
 - a. Sacred Scripture. St. Francis de Sales gives many citations.
 - b. People have only one motive in planting a vine – the grapes. Our Lord was the end sought; everything else only stages to the end. He was the first in intention, though the last in realization.
- ii. The superabundant salvation He accomplished. Human nature received more grace through being redeemed by its Savior than it would have received from Adam's unsullied innocence. Results:
 - a. God's providence has left on mankind vivid traces of his severity; but our Savior's redemption touches our miseries and makes them more lovable, more worthwhile, than original innocence.
 - b. Our present state of being redeemed in a hundred times better, more valuable, than that of innocence. The examples of Naaman and the lost sheep.

2. Special Ch. 6

He did not offer a collective impersonal redemption. He has diversified it in so many ways that while His liberality shines in all this variety, this variety reciprocally embellishes His liberality.

Examples:

- a) Our Blessed Lady. St. Francis de Sales dwells on her many privileges. She is the Queen of queens, whose crown is perfect charity, or, rather, Our Lord, Himself.

- b) St. John the Baptist, Jeremiah, and a few others. Purified in their mother's wombs and confirmed from then on in grace, although subject to imperfections or venial sins. They are like queens, wearing charity's crown, and worthy to be placed near our Lady.
- c) The Apostles, David, Mary Magdalene and others. They returned to God and were confirmed in grace from then to death. They wore the wedding garment of charity, but not its crown.

3. Particular - Ch. 7

- a) God is to be admired not only in the tremendous amount of graces and favors lavished on all men and angels, but also in the unbelievable variety.
- b) This variety is to be admired even in externals (e.g. , more and better priests in some areas). Normally the internal means of salvation are more effective, but they have a better chance of success where the external means are unstinted.
- c) We must meet with perfect equality the differences in supernatural gifts. In heaven and on earth each person receives such a personal, individual grace that all are different.
- d) We must not ask why God gives more to one than to another. Reasons:
 - i. Each one receives enough and more than enough to save his soul.
 - ii. The Church is a garden patterned with countless flowers (to reflect the infinite possibilities in God) and so there must be a variety of sizes, colors, and scents.

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Questions

1. What do we mean by Divine Providence?
2. What is meant by the statement that nothing happens by chance?
3. In the providence of God what is the role of Christ?
4. What is meant by "original justice"?
5. Did man profit by the Fall? How?
6. What value is to be found in the diversity of Divine Providence?
7. Why does St. Francis de Sales hail Our Lady as the Queen of Queens, whose crown is perfect charity?
8. What proof can you give that St. Francis de Sales' spirituality was Christocentric?

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Reflections

1. Wisdom 13:1-9 shows us how God's natural providence should lead us to Him.
2. Have you, in the painful experiences of your life, followed the example of Joseph?

3. In God's supernatural providence we see the immensity of God's love for man. Read prayerfully chapter 4.
4. The centrality of Christ in the work of our redemption is wonderfully expressed in Eph. 3:7-21 and Col. 1:15-29.
5. Through the merits of Christ, we are, like Naaman, not only restored but made better than ever. Read Ps. 51.
6. Paragraphs 2 and 3 of chapter 6 should be read often. They help us understand the wonders of grace conferred on Our Lady.
7. God has made all of us different that the love He bestows on us may be individual, personal. Read I Cor. 15:37-41, I Cor. 7:7, and the Treatise, Book 12.
8. cf. Muller, pgs. 23-28

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END UNIT 2, BOOK II

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UNIT 3 – Our Giving to God– Chs. 8-13

III. OUR OUTPOURING TO GOD – ie. THE RETURN OF LOVE

A. How much God wants our love – Ch. 8

1. We can be saved only by love. We can judge, consequently, how much He wants our love, by how much He did to save us.
2. He commands us to love Him, and He sees to it that no man lacks what he needs to practice that command.
3. St. Francis quotes Scripture to show how God’s love inspires every heart, just as the sun warms all living things.
4. He stands at the door and knocks, meaning that His effort never ends to lead us to love Him.
5. He does not resort to cures that are merely sufficient to turn the sinner from his ways. He uses His abundant kindness to lead him on to perfect health.

B. The steps in conversion

1. The Attraction – Ch. 9

- a) Had not the Father attracted us, we should never have come to the Son our Savior. It is He who awakens us, calls us lovingly by His grace.
- b) This first impulse, emotion, which God gives our hearts, is clearly ours, though not of our doing. It is the work of grace.

Explanation:

“Our” in that the movement would be ineffective were it not for our natural inclination to love God. The wind that lifts the apode into the air could do nothing were it not for the feathers and wings of the apode.

2. The Movement – Ch. 10

- a) Our cooperation with His grace. Man has the power to reject that grace, that inspiration. The ruin is his doing, but God who is all good, never forsakes unless forsaken; never takes away his gifts unless we take away our hearts from Him. Man has the power to reject, no matter how much grace is given or how little.

b) Rate of progress – Ch. 11

- i. If we have not made as much progress in loving God as St. Augustine, etc., it is because God has not given us the grace. And if He has not given us the grace, it is because we have not corresponded with His graces as we should have done. And if we have not corresponded, it is because we have freely abused our freedom.
- ii. Even the Saints felt they had not corresponded fully, cf. St. Francis of Assisi; also St. Theresa on the prayer of quiet.

a) Method of Progress

- i. Not by force, but by strings of love – Chapter 12

- a. St. Francis declares that he will treat of the ordinary way in which God attracts us, not of the extraordinary.
 - b. We are drawn by allurements, by delightful attractions, by holy inspirations. This is the human way, i.e., respectful of human liberty. The attraction proper to the human will is sensuality and pleasure.
 - c. When our will follows God's attraction, consents to His impulse, the consent is as freely given as is the resistance., if it refuses, although consent depends more on grace than on the will, while resistance depends solely on the will.
 - d. Although God awakens us without our cooperation, He will not make us rise without it.
- ii. What begins by the attraction of love is strengthened by our response to the impulses of love. – Chapter 13

The activity of inspiration, of grace, combines with our consent, lends strength to our weak efforts, gives life to our feeble cooperation by its own powerful operation, helping, guiding, keeping us company from charity to charity, until we make that act of faith which conversion demands.

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Questions

1. Does God want our love? Prove it.
2. From what source comes the attraction to love God?
3. What contributes to progress in the love of God?
4. What determines the rate of progress?
5. How does God attract us? Why does He attract us in this way?
6. Describe in detail man's part in the growth of love for God.

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Reflections

1. cf. Muller, pgs. 31-37.
2. On God's desire to be loved cf. Luke 12:49, Matt. 22:37-39, Deut. 6:5.
3. Reflect on Peter's experience as described on pgs. 125-126.
4. On how gently God attracts us, read Hosea 11:1-4.
5. Consider Our Lord's gentle treatment of the woman at the well and St. Francis' comments. Reflect also on the story of St. Pachomius.
6. Song of Songs 1:1-4.

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END UNIT 3, BOOK II

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UNIT 4

IV. OUR UNION WITH GOD IN FAITH AND HOPE. Chapters 14 - 17

A. Faith – Ch. 14

1. By His gift of faith, God comes into our souls, talks to our mind. He proposes truths in darkness, in obscurity. But once this divine brightness of faith comes down upon the mind, it compels the obedience of the intellect without any show of reasoning or argument, simply by the charm of its presence. So authoritatively does it compel belief, it gives us a certitude of truth which far exceeds any certitude on earth.
2. Theological reasoning and arguments, miracles and other signs, point to the credibility of the Christian religion yet faith alone is responsible for belief.
3. The assurance which human reason finds in revealed things begins in a loving sentiment of complacency that the will takes from the beauty and sweetness of the truth proposed. Hence faith includes a first start of love.

B. Hope – Chapter 15

1. Origin or genesis of hope
 - a) By a deep and secret instinct (natural inclination) our heart leads in all its actions towards happiness, and reaches out for happiness. It sees it now here, now there, groping as it were.
 - b) When we discover God through faith and see how beautiful He is, how ready to give Himself as the supreme good to all who want Him, heaven knows the gratification we feel, the inspirations we have to unite ourselves forever with a goodness so supremely lovable.
2. The structure of hope – Ch. 16
 - a) God not only impels us to desire Him, but also guarantees that we can easily possess Him.
 - b) The conviction God gives us that heaven is ours adds greatly to our desires, yet weakens any disturbing restlessness so that God's promises give us peace of soul which is the root of the virtue we call hope.
 - c) In hope there are two great acts: we look forward to the fulfillment of God's promises; and we set our hearts on the possession of Him. In the first, our expectation is founded in the efforts of another (God's); in the second, our expectation is founded on our own efforts i.e., God means us to cooperate with this favor by lending to the weakness of our consent the strength of his grace.
 - d) Both acts are due to loving desire for our supreme good. Hope, therefore, is the loving gratification we experience in looking forward to and setting our hearts on our supreme good. Love is behind it all.

e) The Love (Charity) in hope is genuine but imperfect . Ch. 17

The imperfection. The love is not drawn to God's infinite goodness for what it is in itself, but for what it is to us. It is a love of cupidity. Types of such love:

- i. Pure cupidity – The love of slaves, i.e. a love for possessions. We love them only for our profit.
- ii. Virtuous cupidity – The love of friends, a possession that is reciprocal and equal. They belong to us and we to them.
- iii. Reverential cupidity – The love of parents, pastors, etc. it is a love of dependence. We love them not in the quality of parents, etc., but because they are such to us. It's thus that we love God in hope. It is not that He may become our good, but because He is our good. It is not that He may become ours, but because we are His. It is not that He exists for us, but in as much as we exist for Him.

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Questions

1. Does Faith rest on the reasonableness of revealed truths?
2. To what degree does Faith beget certitude?
3. What does human reason contribute to Faith?
4. Is charity to be found in Faith?
5. Give the definition of Hope.
6. In what way is Hope natural to man?
7. In what ways does God encourage our Hope?
8. Does Hope beget peace of soul?
9. Is there true love of God in the virtue of Hope? Explain your answer.

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Reflections

1. How strong is your Faith; how assured is your Hope? If you have experienced crisis, what helped you resolve the crisis?
2. Francis lays great emphasis on the joy to be found in Hope. Muller makes joy one of the outstanding characteristics of Salesian Spirituality: pgs. 65-75.
3. Read attentively St. Francis' explanation of "black but beautiful", pp. 139, second paragraph.
4. Psalm 42; hope in the midst of sorrow.
5. Read the story of Abraham in Genesis. Reflect of the proofs he gave of his faith.
6. Jb. 19. Mary's faith Lk. 1, 35 ff.
7. The Epistles of St. Paul all declare the hope we can have in Christ

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END UNIT 4, BOOK II

UNIT 5

V. PENITENCE – Chs. 18-21

Definition: A form of repentance in which a man rejects and detests the sin he has committed, together with a resolution to make amends. It is the presence of the second element that makes it penitence.

A. Types: Divided according to motives.

1. The purely moral and human – borne without any reference to God.
2. The moral, religious divine – borne of a natural knowledge of having offended God. Gives the example of Epictetus, the philosopher.

3. Christian

a) Why called Christian? Reasons

Reasons:

- i. Little known to the pagans.
- ii. So clearly taught in the gospels. They teach us:
 - a. That anyone who says he has not sinned is out of his mind.
 - b. That anyone who thinks he can heal his sins without repentance is mad.

b) Origin of the movement of Christian penitence.

Born of:

- i. On our side, an awareness that we have done something repugnant to God.
- ii. On His side, that He feels offended.

c) Types: Depends on the motive behind the penitence.

i. Imperfect penitence – Ch. 10

- a. A fear of damnation
- b. A sense of disfigurement, in that we have defiled God's image in us.
- c. Shame and regret that we have departed from the beauty of virtue.
- d. Our failure to follow the example of the Saints.

Value of this imperfect penitence:

- 1.) These motives (described above) are taught us by faith and the penitence that issues from them is praiseworthy though imperfect.
- 2.) Such acts are made for our own soul (its happiness, etc.) in a word, for self love, though it is a lawful, just and well ordered love.

3.) Repentance that does not reject love of God, although it may lack it, is good, but imperfect. But if it did not progress to a holy love of God in some degree, it would profit us nothing for everlasting life.

ii. Perfect Christian Penitence – Ch. 20

- a. Perfect penitence has two different aspects. In virtue of its sorrow and detestation, it separates us from sin. In virtue of the nature of love, whence it has its origin, it reconciles us with God and reunites us with God. The difference between perfect and imperfect: It is the result of a loving reflection on God's goodness, on the fact that sin has offended what is supremely lovable.
- b. I do not mean perfect love of God always preceded this repentance, or that such repentance always precedes such love. At times, as soon as divine love is born within our hearts, penitence is born with that love, and frequently when penitence enters our soul, love enters into penitence.
- c. He uses the birth of Esau and Jacob to show that often the end of repentance is the beginning of perfect love. The sequence: imperfect love (hope) desires and asks for Him; penitence seeks and finds Him; perfect love holds and clasps Him.
- d. Penitence and love are one in that both unite us with God; they differ in the motive behind the movement to union. In love itself the motive is complacency; in penitence it is displeasure, repentance, reconciliation.
- e. Prayers of perfect penitence have great value for they undoubtedly obtain pardon in virtue of the holy love that gives it that sacred movement.

B. The Soul's Progress – God's inspiration accompanies it all the way – Chapter 21

1. Between our first awakening from sin and unbelief and the final resolution we make to believe completely, there often intervenes a long period. A time for prayer.
2. If we do not reject the grace of holy love, it goes on expanding with continual increase in souls until they are entirely converted.
3. If we do not abandon it (grace) it does not abandon us until it has brought us into the harbor of most holy charity.
4. God's graces do for us the threefold service which the great archangel did for Tobias.
 - a) They escort us safely coming and going through the ways of penance.

- b) They preserve us from perils, rid us of the fiend's attacks.
- c) They console us. Give us new life in our difficulty.

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Questions

1. When does repentance become penitence?
2. What types of repentance have no supernatural value?
3. From whence comes the movement of Christian penitence?
4. What is the difference between imperfect and perfect penitence?
5. To what must imperfect penitence lead if it is to avail us to eternal life?
6. is there a progression in perfect penitence?

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Reflections

1. Psalms 51, 38.
2. Reflect on the Declaration St. Francis de Sales would have us sign in our own blood in Book I of the Introduction.
3. When did you last make a thorough examination of conscience as outlined in Book 5 of the Introduction?
4. What does St. Francis de Sales say about Mary Magdalene? About St. Peter? ?Have you had similar experiences?
5. Read Chapter 3 of Book 3 on the tender care of God for the sinner. Also Lk. 15 on the Good Shepherd and the Good Father.

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END UNIT 5, BOOK II

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UNIT 5**VI. CHARITY – A description**

- A. A form of friendship and disinterested love.
1. Disinterested love. We love God for His own sake because of His supremely pleasing goodness.
 2. Friendship – fulfills the conditions for friendship:
 - a) It is reciprocal.
 - b) It is manifested.
 - c) It is nourished by communication.
- B. A friendship of dilection – indeed of an incomparable dilection. So much so that natural powers could never produce it. It is the Holy Spirit who pours it into our hearts.
- C. A dilection of preference, so that in comparison with it other forms of love are not true love, or if they are true love, then this dilection is something infinitely more than love.
- D. A supernatural friendship because:
 1. Comes from the Holy Spirit
 2. Rests in the supernatural knowledge of God’s goodness born of faith.
 3. With faith and hope, resides in the pinnacle of the spirit.
- E. Charity, then, is a love of friendship, a friendship of dilection, a dilection of preference. This preference is incomparable, supreme and supernatural. It is present in the entire soul, like a Sun to make it beautiful by its rays, and in the soul’s spiritual faculties to perfect them, and in all its powers to restrain them. But it is present in the will as on its throne, to reside there, and to make it cherish and love its God above all things.

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Questions

1. In what way is Charity a disinterested love?
2. In what way is it a friendship?
3. What kind of a friendship is it?
4. How does it reside in the soul?

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Reflections

1. Read Psalm 63 and Psalm 100. How do they embody the conditions for Friendships?
2. Reflect on the Our Father. Do you see in it the conditions for friendship?
3. What does St. Francis de Sales recommend in the Introduction to foster communication with God? How faithful are you in practicing them?
4. A beautiful example of disinterested love is St. Francis de Sales’ story of the deaf musician. Do you recall the story?

5. In the Eucharist Our Lord gives Himself to us so completely. Reflect on the article in the Directory on Communion. It points out beautifully how we can give ourselves to Him.
6. The incident of the Woman at the well shows how eager Our Lord is to give Himself to us. John, Ch. 4
7. On the gift of faith, hope and charity read Romans chapter 5.
8. Muller, pg. 171 & ff. explains the Law of Love by which we are to reach the heights of Charity.

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END UNIT 6, BOOK II

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BOOK III – Growth and Perfection of Love**UNIT 1****I. THE POSSIBILITY OF GROWTH**

He proves this possibility by

- A. Quotations from Sacred Scripture
- B. The nature of man. Man goes forward or backwards. But he is summoned to go ever forward so as to win the prize, which is Christ. “Go forward, then, my dear Theotimus, and set no other limit than those of your life. As long as life lasts, run after the Savior.”
- C. The nature of virtue. True virtue has no limit, it goes ever forward. This is especially true of charity, which has an infinite object. It is limited only by man’s condition: i.e., he is a finite being. Hence, the charity of Christ, as a man, is finite; it becomes infinite in that it is the charity of a divine Person, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

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Questions

1. What are the three arguments St. Francis de Sales advances to prove the possibility of growth in love for God? Which argument appeals to you most?
2. Will man’s growth in Charity ever cease? Prove your answer.
3. Do you see a relationship between this possibility of growth and the unending life of heaven?

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Reflections

1. The “Envoi” at the end of Muller’s book has a beautiful exhortation to make progress in love for God.
2. Prov. 4:10 ff. describes the progress of the Good and the Evil.
3. For St. Paul’s mind on progress read Eph. 4; Phil. 1; 2 Cor. 3.

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END UNIT I - BOOK III

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UNIT 2 - God's Part in the Growth - Chs. 2 & 3

II. GOD'S PART

A. How Our Lord has made increase in love easy. - Chapter 2

1. Little deeds that proceed from charity please God and have their place among meritorious acts. While of themselves they cannot bring about any increase of existing love, since they are less vigorous than it, divine providence still keeps account of them, and in its goodness sets values upon them. God immediately rewards them by increasing charity in the present life, and assigning still greater glory in the life to come.
2. The Council of Trent speaks of good works without making any distinction, and thus tells us that not only great but also small works bring increase in Holy Charity.
3. As regards the moral virtues, for example, generosity, a small deed can imply a diminishment. Generosity can become stinginess. But as regards charity, there is nothing, great or small, which is not lovable. It reflects God's goodness, and draws an increase from that goodness not from itself. God sees Himself in it. It is in this way that justification is achieved.

B. How the soul makes progress in charity. - Chapter 3

Using a parable of how a great king acted towards his stricken spouse, he shows that:

1. Original justice and our salvation are the work of God alone. It happened "in us but without us".
 2. Our advance is partly our work, but mostly His, so that "I walk yet not I alone, but the grace of God with me".
- C. His summary: It is mostly His work because it is divine goodness that assists the soul and constantly holds the soul in His holy hand. In this way (1) He makes us see more clearly how sweet is His love for the soul; (2) He constantly continues to enliven it more and more; (3) He supports it against depraved inclinations; and finally, (4) He keeps and defends it against temptations. St. Francis de Sales gives many examples of these ways in which God assists us.

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Questions

1. Does our progress in charity depend upon our performing even greater acts of charity?
2. How can God reward abundantly small acts of charity?
3. Upon whom depends our salvation?
4. Upon whom depends our advancement?
5. How does God assist in our advancement?

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Reflections

1. Read Muller's reflection on the love of the great king for his beloved spouse, pgs. 50-52.

2. Read the Introduction Bk. 3, Ch. 35 on the value of Little Tasks.
3. Are you faithful in little tasks?
4. Are you grateful for the supporting hand of God?
5. The parable of the talents and Our Lord's observation on the widow's mite (Luke 21:1-4) helps us understand how the Lord rewards our efforts.
6. Psalms 22 & 23. The Lord is always with us.

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END UNIT 2 - BOOK III

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Unit 3 - Our Part in the Growth - Chs. 4 & 5

III. PERSEVERANCE - Chapter 4

- A. We can be sure that God will give us the gift of perseverance, if we do our part. He will accomplish in us the good work of our salvation, which He has begun, for He works in us “both the will and the performance” as Trent assures us.
- B. Nature of the gift of perseverance: the sum total and sequence of the various helps, consolations, and acts of assistance by which we continue in God I s love up to the end. For some, the help has been brief (the good thief); for most, it is long (the prophetess Anna).
- C. Value: The most desirable gift we can hope for in this life.
- D. How merit the gift?
 1. Ask for it by the means God has taught us for obtaining it: prayer, fasting, almsgiving, frequenting the sacraments, associating with good companions, hearing and reading sacred scripture.
 2. Will it. It will be given if we will it. We alone can forsake and abandon it by our own will, apart from which nothing is to be feared in this matter. He will complete the work of our salvation provided we are not wanting to His grace.
- E. Steps to the fruit of perseverance: eternal glory. - Ch. 5
 1. From heaven the soul can see the steps (the gifts) by which God led it to this final gift of salvation: divine goodness gives glory after merits, merits after charity, charity after penitence, penitence after obedience to vocation, obedience to vocation after vocation itself, vocation after our Savior’s redemption.
 2. All these steps were ordained in God’s eternal will. All depends on the merits of our Savior ‘s redemption . All these gifts are offered to all men.

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Questions

1. God will not fail to give us the grace we need to grow in His love if we persevere in corresponding to His graces as they come to us.
 - a. How can we help ourselves to persevere in that correspondence?
 - b. Are you conscious of failures to use the helps available to you?
2. There are definite steps by which we progress toward salvation.
 - a. Draw a pictorial representation of those steps.
 - b. Would you make penitence one step or many?
 - c. Would Charity be one big step at the end or many small steps interspersed with penitence?
 - d. Who supports all the steps?
 - e. Would the diagram differ for each person?

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Reflections

1. Read Gook 1, chapter 3 of the Introduction on the universal call to holiness.
2. Muller explains how each one realizes the universal call in a very individual way. Pgs. 85-91, 97-100.
3. Compare the statement above in E 1 with Romans 8:28-30. Can you explain any differences you find?
4. Psalm 73:23-28. God's care for the good.
5. St. Francis de Sales cites many Saints that were assisted by the Lord to persevere. Can you recall incidents where He helped you?
6. Psalm 51 speaks beautifully of penitence of which St. Francis will treat more fully later on.

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END UNIT 3 - BOOK III

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Unit 4 - When Perfect Union Will Be Attained - Chs. 6-8

IV. THE PERFECTION OF LOVE - WHEN ATTAINED

A. We cannot attain perfect union here on earth. - Chapter 6

We can begin our love in this life, but we can consummate it only in the life to come. Reasons:

1. Here we can break the bond by sin. In heaven, the bond is indissoluble.
2. Here on earth we have kisses from the beloved - i.e., the feelings of His presence. In heaven we have the full kiss - i.e., the living in His presence.

B. In heaven the union will be complete. - Chapter 7

1. As regards the degree of love. It will exceed the highest degree of which a person is capable. The degree will be determined not by merit, but by the abundant reward God will give. "Pressed down and running over."
2. As regards intensity. In heaven the exercise of the least charity shall be much more happy and excellent than that of the greatest charity here in this feeble life.

Reason: The loving attention of the blessed is firm, constant and inviolable and can neither perish nor decrease; hence there is more contentment, sweetness, and perfection in the practice of sacred love.

A distinction: This is true as regards the exercise of love. But some great souls on earth have surpassed some of the blessed in charity and habitual love (degree) .

C. The exceptions to these principles of love: Our Blessed Lady - Ch.8

1. "Just as the charity of this mother of love excels in perfection that of all the saints in heaven, so also she practiced it more excellently even in this mortal life." As a result, "by a perpetual advance she rose from love to love."
2. Reasons:
 - a) In addition to her love as a human being, "our fallen nature's solitary boast", there was her love as a mother; and maternal love is the most urgent, the most active and the most ardent of all forms of love.
 - b) There were no obstacles: no sin, no conflict with the sensual appetite, no divisions or separations in spirit. St. Francis de Sales raises the question whether sleep could have been a hindrance to this continuous exercise of love. His answer is "no", for the following reasons:
 - i. She gave sleep to her precious body only to regain strength to serve God better.
 - ii. Through sleep, she took proper care of a precious gift, her body, made more precious by the indwelling of her Son.
 - iii. Her sleep was sanctified by her dreams.
 - iv. During sleep, she was not deprived of the use of reason.

Questions

1. Why will perfect union be realized only in heaven?
2. What factors will bring about the perfect union?
3. Why was Our Lady able to realize a perfect union here on earth?
4. What reasons does St. Francis give for his belief that sleep did not interrupt her continuous growth in love?

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Reflections

1. Again, St. Francis uses the Canticle of Canticles to describe in Chapter 6 our progress in love for our Spouse and how and when the union is consummated.
2. When do you feel that St. Francis de Sales reached perfect union with God?
3. The last paragraph of Chapter 8 is most beautiful

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END UNIT 4 - BOOK III

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Unit 5 - Nature of the Union with God in Heaven - Chs. 9-15

V. THE UNION OF THE BLESSED WITH GOD

The triumphant love that the blessed put forth in heaven consists in the final invariable and everlasting union of the soul with God. What is this union?

A. Accomplished in the intellect. - Chapter 9

1. General Principle: the more pleasant and excellent are the objects our senses encounter, the more ardently and avidly do they enjoy them. This holds true for the intellect. In proportion as truths are more excellent, the intellect applies itself with greater delight and attention to their consideration.
2. The truths that delight the intellect:
 - a) Splendid natural truths, whether philosophical or scientific. Man finds great delight in the discovery and mastery of such truths.
 - b) The sacred truths of faith- Even when perceived, as it were, from afar and in an obscure way, as is our lot here on earth, they are glimpses of the Divine that make our hearts glow within us.
 - c) But what happiness will be ours, when we arrive in the heavenly Jerusalem and the King of glory will Himself manifest with incomprehensible clarity the wonders and eternal secrets of His supreme truth and with such light that our intellect will see in its very presence what it believed here on earth.

B. Present desires will augment our happiness in heaven. - Chapter 10

1. Desire that precedes enjoyment sharpens and intensifies actual experience and the stronger and more urgent the desire, the more agreeable and delightful is possession of the thing desired.
2. Oh what a union will there be of our heart with God in heaven above, where after these infinite desires for the true good, which were never satisfied in this world, we shall find the living, the mighty Source of that good.

C. How the mind is united with God- Chapter 11

1. In this life, everything that enters the mind does so through some form of mediation: the sensible species, the intelligible species; the word of faith. The word of faith does not contain the things that it proclaims; it merely represents them.
2. In heaven, divinity will unite itself to our intellect without mediation. Its intimate presence will take the place of representation and species.
3. God our Father is not content to make us receive His own substance into our mind, that is, to make us see His divinity, but He Himself applies His substance to our minds, so that His eternal substance is both species and object for our understanding. St. Frances de Sales gives the example of a mother, who not only gives milk (her substance) to her child, but by means of her breast (also her substance), not by means of a spoon or bottle.

4. Here on earth this boon is granted us really (in the Eucharist), but in a hidden way, under sacramental species; in heaven God will give Himself openly and we shall see Him “face to face”.

Note: Later, St. Francis de Sales changed his opinion on this point: “I think that the principal cause of the glory of the blessed does not consist in the intellect by which they see and know God, but in the will by which they Love Him with the love of complacency”. Sermons for All Saints, 1620.

D. The Trinity

1. Union with God in the eternal generation of the Son.- Ch.12

- a) The intellect will contemplate God’s very essence and in it His infinite beauty, His omnipotence, total goodness, omniscience, complete justice, and all else in that vast ocean of perfection.
- b) This intellect of ours will clearly behold the infinite knowledge which from all eternity God the Father has of His own beauty, for the expression of which within Himself He pronounces and eternally utters the Word, the Verbum. Just as a distinction of persons is requisite, so also is it sufficient to effect it that the Father speaks and the Son is the Word spoken, that the Father expresses, and the Son is the image, likeness, and figure expressed.
- c) Oh, what joy when our spirits, eternally enlightened by the light of beatitude, shall behold this eternal birth.

2. The Union with God in the vision of the Production of the Holy Spirit. - Ch. 13

- a) Could it be possible for this divine Father and His Son not to love one another with an infinite love, since their will, by which they love, and their goodness, because of which they love, are infinite, but in one and in the other?
- b) The divine love of the Father for His Son is practiced in one sole aspiration set forth reciprocally by the Father and the Son, who in this manner remain united and joined to one another.
- c) As this love is an act that proceeds reciprocally from the Father and the Son, it can be neither the Father nor the Son, from both of whom it proceeds, although it has the same goodness and substance as the Father and the Son. No, it must necessarily be a third divine Person.
- d) Of God, if human friendship is so agreeable and lovely and spreads so delightful an odor on those who contemplate it, how great shall it be, to behold the sacred exercise of God’s reciprocal love for His Son.

E. The Light of Glory, which makes possible the union of the intellect with God. - Ch. 14

1. The created intellect will behold the divine essence without any mediation of representation, or species. However, it will not see it except by means

of a certain excellent light, that disposes, elevates, and strengthens the intellect.

2. By the light of reason, we can know Him as the author of nature; by the light of faith, as the Source of grace; by the light of glory as the fountain of beatitude and eternal life. But we shall not contemplate from afar, but see by the light of glory while plunged into that fountain and engulfed in it.
- F. Union with God will have different degrees and never be exhausted. - Chapter 15
1. In proportion as we possess more or less of the light of glory, we will see more or less clearly the most holy divinity, and, consequently with greater or less happiness.
 2. In the heavenly paradise all spirits see the entire divine essence, but it is not seen nor can it be seen totally by anyone of them or by all of them together. God is infinite; man remains finite. Example: Birds play at pleasure in the vast reaches of the air, but neither any single bird nor the whole race of birds taken together could ever beat their wings in all domains of the air, or arrive at its loftiest region.
 3. The blessed spirits are ravished by two kinds of awe; first, at the infinite beauty they contemplate, and secondly, by the abyss of infinity still to be seen within that same beauty.

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Questions

1. By which faculty does man enter into union with God?
2. What can we do here on earth to augment our happiness in heaven?
3. Is there a difference between our union with truth here on earth and our union with the Truth in heaven?
4. In what way is the Son eternally begotten of the Father?
5. In what way does the Holy Spirit proceed from both?
6. What is the Light of Glory? What does it accomplish?
7. What determines the degree of union with God in heaven?

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Reflections

1. Read the meditations on heaven in the Introduction1: 8&10; 5:10&18; also the Treatise, Book 5, Chapters 10-12.
2. Psalm 119. The soul's thirst for God.
3. Col. 1:15-29. The Preeminence of Christ.
4. Psalm 42:1-6 – How far God surpasses our understanding
5. Hebrews, Chapter 1. The relationship of the Son to the Father.
6. Wisdom, Chapter 8. In surrendering to the guidance of the Holy Spirit we can find wisdom.

7. I Cor. 13:12 and I Jn. 3:2. The vision of God.
8. Jn. 14:2; Mt. 16:27; I Cor. 15:41-42. On the difference that will exist in heaven.

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END UNIT 5 - BOOK III

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BOOK IV – The Decay and Ruin of Charity

UNIT 1

I. THE PROCESS

A. The possibility of decay and ruin - Chapter 1

1. We do not write here of those great chosen souls whom God keeps and confirms in His love, but of the rest of mortal men. St. Francis de Sales gives many quotations and examples to show that all can fall.
2. In this mortal life, even though our souls abound in heavenly love, they are never so filled with it but that under temptation such love can escape from them.
3. Our souls are subject to a thousand moods and miseries, and, consequently, they are easy to change and spoil in love.
4. It is impossible to look on the divinity and not to love it. However, here below we do not see it, but only have a glimpse of it through the shadows of faith. Hence our knowledge is not so great that it does not leave an opening for sudden assaults of other objects and goods.

B. The difference between venial and mortal sin. - Chapter 2

1. Neither venial sin, nor even an affection for venial sin is contrary to the essential resolution of charity, i.e., to prefer God above all things. The reason is that we love something apart from reason, but not contrary to reason. We concede a little too much to the creature - yet we do not prefer the creature to the creator.
2. James 1: 15 “Once passion has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin reaches maturity it begets death.” 3. Venial sin is sin, and consequently it disturbs charity, not as a thing contrary to charity itself, but rather contrary to its operations, progress, and even its intention: viz. that we direct all our actions to God. This intention is violated by venial sin, which directs the actions by which we commit it, not actually against God, but apart from God and His will.

C. Harm done by venial sin.

1. An affection for great sin attaches us so closely to enjoyment of creatures that it deprives us of that spiritual familiarity with God to which charity, as true friendship, arouses us.
2. Charity is an active quality, and so cannot exist long without acting or dying. By interfering with that action, venial sins can prepare us for mortal sin.

D. Total ruin and decay - Ch. 3

1. When we do not put our minds to the practice of holy love, it can become slothful, and so can be affected by temptation.

Our faith can distinguish between true goods we must seek and false goods we must avoid, and if we keep it keenly alert to its duty, it will be a trusty sentinel for charity. But ordinarily we keep our faith asleep or less attentive than needed.

And so self love can make such an attack on our free will as to lead us into complete revolt against the holy love of God.

Then charity departs from our heart with all its following.

2. There remains only faith and hope.

Although in great sorrow, they maintain in us the character and title of Christian, acquired for us by baptism.

3. The loss of Charity is total and effected in a moment. Ch. 4
 - a. Habits acquired solely by human acts do not perish because of a single contrary act. But charity is “poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit”, in an instant. It is also taken away from us in an instant as soon as we turn our will from the obedience we owe to God and give complete consent to rebellion.
 - b. Although the Holy Spirit first infuses charity into the soul and then increases it by adding one degree to another, still the resolution to prefer God’s will before all things is the essential point of sacred love and that in which the image of eternal love, the Holy Spirit, is represented. Hence we cannot remove a single piece of that resolution without all charity immediately perishing.

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Questions

1. What makes possible the decay and ruin of charity?
2. Why does venial sin not destroy charity?
3. What is the harm done by venial sin?
4. Why does mortal sin destroy charity?
5. Why does it destroy charity immediately and not bit by bit?

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Reflections

1. Read Muller: Original sin, pgs 37-44.
2. The first paragraph of Chapter 1 proves from Scripture what we know from life: how prone we are to fail.
3. Review St. Francis’ treatment of temptation in the Introduction, Bk 4.
4. On the evil of venial sins, read Matt. 13:22 and Luke 8:11.
5. I Cor. 9-13. On the limitations we suffer here on earth.
6. I Jn. 15-17. Love of the world can ruin love of God.

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END UNIT 1 - BOOK IV

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Unit 2 - The Blame - Chs. 5-8

II THE BLAME

A. Man alone is to blame - Ch. 5

1. St. Francis de Sales gives many quotations from Sacred Scripture and from the Council of Trent to prove God's desire to save all and God's continuous effort to do so.
2. Hence those who remain in the sleep of sin have no reason to grieve and complain except of . themselves, for they have despised the light, yes, they have been rebellious against it, stubborn before God's invitations and obstinate to His inspirations.
3. This is true even as regards those who have not heard the word of God. The divine natural law is engraved in the hearts of all mortal men. Those who observe it receive light from on high .

B. God is not to blame.

1. He has only love for us. Whatever good in us, whatever good we do must be attributed to Him. - Chapter 6
 - a. Men's love for God takes its origin, progress and perfection from God's eternal love for men. "What do you have that you have not received".
 - b. "I admit that you co-operated with inspiration by giving consent to it. However, if you do not know this, I will teach you that your cooperation had its birth in the operation of grace and your free will, but in such wise that if grace had not gone on beforehand and filled your heart by its operation, your heart would never have had either power or will to effect any cooperation."
 - c. Can man glory in the fact that he did not reject grace, and so made possible its good effects? We can obstruct the effects of inspiration; we cannot give its effects to it. It derives its strength and virtue from God's goodness, which is the place of its origin, and not from man's will, which is the place of its admission.
 - d. If we have any love for God, let its honor and glory be to Him who placed all of it in us, and without whom "nothing was made"
2. We must not ask why He gives more grace to one than to another. Chapter 7
 - a. We must never think of finding a better reason for God's will than His will itself, which is supremely reasonable, yes, the reason of all reasons, the rule of all goodness, the law of all equity.
 - b. Since He is the supreme judge and supremely equitable, it is not reasonable that He manifest His motives, it is sufficient that He simply say, "Done for a good reason".
 - c. St. Bonaventure: "there is no reason except some sort of congruity. Hence we might assign one whereas it might actually be another."
 - d. It was not expedient for our salvation that we should have knowledge of these secret things, but on the contrary, most

profitable that we should be ignorant of them, so as to keep us in humility.

- e. “O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God!”

3. We must accept lovingly what He sends. - Chapter 8 .

- a. When we encounter events of which the causes are unknown to us, it seems that things in the world are governed without reason. Let us believe that just as God is the Maker and Father of all things, so also He takes care of all things by His providence. Let us believe that He presides over our affairs, and the concerns of us who know Him, even though our life is disturbed by some calamity.
- b. God’s providential reasons would have been put on a low level if our little minds could attain to them.
- c. We must never permit our minds to flutter curiously around God’s judgments; if we do so, we will be like little butterflies and burn our wings and perish in the sacred flame.

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Questions

1. How do we know that God is not to blame for our faults?
2. Why are people who never heard the word of God still accountable for their falls?
3. Can man attribute to himself the good he does?
4. Do we have a right to question why God permits suffering?
5. Will history reveal to us the motives of God?
6. Why should we accept lovingly whatever God permits?

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Reflections

1. 2 Peter 3:9 and I Tim. 2:4. God’s desire to save all.
2. John 1:9. Christ enlightens every man.
3. I Cor. 4:7; 15:10. We have received everything from God. To Him belongs all the glory.
4. Reflect on the story of the Princess in Book 3, Ch. 2. She owed everything to the Prince.
5. Hosea, chapter 11. God’s tender love for His people.
6. In the Apostolic Letter: “On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering” John Paul II gives us the following considerations:
 - a. Jesus Christ gives definitive meaning to human suffering in His redemptive suffering, ennobles it and gives it great value. (Jn. 3:16; 10:17-18; Col. 1:24-25)
 - b. The “Gospel of Suffering” is an essential part of the Gospel for everyone (Lk. 9:23; 21:12-19; Jn. 16:33; 2 Tim. 3:12)

- c. One can live a vocation of offering gifts of suffering, sacrifice and prayer out of love for others (Jn. 15:13; Jn. 5:17-20)
- d. Human sufferings build up the Church just like apostolic activities, because Christ desires to include them in His salvific sufferings (Col. 1:24; I Cor. 6:15; Jn. 5:17-20)
- e. Sick and handicapped persons are called to be signs for others of important values which have been forgotten or disregarded. (Mt. 11:25-30; 2 Cor. 12:9-10)

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END UNIT 2 - BOOK IV

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Unit 3 - A Serious Danger - Chs. 9-11

III A SERIOUS DANGER

The deception of imperfect love.

A. Nature of imperfect love. - Ch. 9

1. After Charity has been cut off from the soul by sin, there often remains a certain resemblance to charity and this may vainly deceive and delude us. This resemblance consists in a certain facility in loving. It is not true charity, but merely human love.
2. Charity embraces all the circumstances connected with all of God's commandments. This human love fails to observe some of the commandments, and often lacks the pure and right intention.
3. Cut off from charity, this human love is without any merit and any value for life everlasting, for it then lacks the power to raise the soul to the lofty act of loving God above all things.

B. The danger of this imperfect love. - Chapter 10

In itself, this imperfect love is good, since it is a creation of holy charity and belongs to its retinue, but it is dangerous, since ~ often satisfy ourselves with having it alone. Since it has many outward and inward marks of charity, we think that what we have is Charity itself. We deem ourselves to be saints, while the sins that deprived us of charity increase and wax strong.

C. How to recognize this imperfect love. - Chapter 11

1. Examine in detail the objects of the desires, affections and purpose that you have put before yourself. If you find any object, that you are willing to commit mortal sin in order to obtain it, beyond doubt the entire devout feeling and readiness to serve God have no other source than imperfect human love.
2. This refers to things present. As to fears that we might yield to future temptations, these fears do not constitute a failure, are not a sin. Let us rather hope that when the time comes, we will have the grace to conquer.

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Questions

1. What is the origin of this danger?
2. How do you recognize the deception

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Reflections

1. Have you been deceived by this danger, in yourself or in others?
2. How often have you seriously examined your conscience as regards this deception?
3. I Peter 5:7-11. Trust the Lord for the strength you will need.
4. cf. Muller, p. 179-183, on Love and Danger

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END UNIT 3 - BOOK IV

BOOK V The Two Chief Exercises of Sacred Love

UNIT 1 - Complacence -Chapters 1-5

I. COMPLACENCE --

A. Nature - Chapter 1

1. Complacence is the great motive of love, as love is the great movement of complacence
2. When we have brought our intellect to be truly attentive to the grandeur of the good we see in God, it is impossible for our will not to be touched by complacence in such good. We then use our liberty and authority to reinforce our complacence by acts of approval and rejoicing.
3. Complacence: to approve the good we see in God and to find joy in it.

B. Results:

1. We look to God for our happiness and not to ourselves.
2. We spiritually eat and drink the perfections of the divinity, for we draw them into our hearts by the joy we take in them.
3. We become like the good we love.
4. We experience a great happiness. - Chapter 2
 - a. Complacency gives us gentle rest in the sweetness of the good that delights us and on which we nourish our heart.
 - b. His goodness takes pleasure and feeds itself on our complacence. Our complacence then is increased when we perceive that God is pleased to see that we are pleased in Him.
 - c. There is an incomparable joy when the soul sees that the King Himself now shows His treasures out of love and that among His treasures His infinite love shines brightly.
 - d. St. Francis has an elaborate comparison to show how the joy of complacency surpasses all other joys.
5. We yearn for a greater happiness. - Chapter 3
 - a. Since the divine perfections are stronger than our spirit, when they enter into it, they in turn possess it.
 - b. In this complacence we satiate our souls with delight in such a manner that we do not cease to desire to be satiated to an even greater extent.
 - c. Finite goods cannot be both possessed and desired at the same time. The infinite good makes desire reign in possession and possession reign in desire.
 - d. In our ordinary state we do not have rest and movement at the same time. But when we perform exercises proper to immortal life, that is, when we perform acts of holy love, we find rest in the movement of our affections, and movement in the complacent rest we take in our Beloved. The heart does not make this movement of desire as though striving for enjoyment in order to have it, since it

already has it, but rather as extending itself in the enjoyment it already has.

C. Loving Sympathy

1. Its relationship to complacence. Chapter 4

- a. It is love that produces both compassion and complacence by the power it has of uniting the heart that loves with the thing loved, thus enabling friends to have both good things and evil in common.
- b. The depths of our compassion depend on:
 - i. The greatness of our love for the suffering one;
 - ii. The extent of his sufferings;
 - iii. The presence of his sufferings to us.
- c. The same causes increase complacence. The dearer a friend is to us, the greater pleasure we have in his contentment; if the god in him is excellent, our joy is also greater; if we see our friend rejoicing, our joy becomes very great.

2. Condolence and Complacence in reference to our Lord' s passion. - Chapter 5

- a. Because the dolours of Him I love came from His love, to the extent that they afflict me through compassion, they bring me delight through complacence.
- b. The loving complacence we have taken in our Savior's love makes the compassion we feel for His afflictions infinitely stronger, just as reciprocally when we pass back from compassion for His afflictions to complacence in love, our pleasure therein is far higher and more ardent. Thus there results an ecstasy that is lovingly sorrowful and sorrowfully loving.
- c. It is impossible to state how much the Savior desires to enter into our souls by this love of dolorous compassion.

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Questions

1. Give the definition of complacence.
2. How does it relate to love?
3. How does complacence become a transforming force in the soul making it like unto God?
4. What factors add greatly to the joy we experience in complacence?
5. What is the difference between the possession of a finite good and an infinite good?
6. What is the relationship between compassion and complacence?
7. What increases the depths of our compassion?
8. What begets complacence in the sufferings of Our Lord?
9. Does Our Lord seek to unite us to Himself by compassion for His sufferings?

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Reflections

1. Muller pgs 101-114.
2. Psalm 100. The goodness of God; also Psalm 105:1-6
3. Psalm 42. The soul's longing for God.
4. Gal. 2:19-20 and Gal. 6:14-15. The soul lives, no longer in itself, but has a new life in Christ.
5. How often have you made the Stations of the Cross?
6. Which do you prefer: Christ triumphant on His cross, or Christ dying on His cross?
7. Pg. 244, 1st paragraph. Compassion so united Our Lady to Our Lord that His sufferings became her sufferings. The same was true of St. Paul as regards the trials of his converts: 2 Cor. 11:29; Rom. 9:2-4.
8. Read prayerfully the last paragraph of Chapter 5.
9. Psalm 22. The sufferings of Our Lord.

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END UNIT 1 - BOOK V

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UNIT 2 - Benevolence - Chapters 6-12

II. BENEVOLENCE

A. Origin - Chapter 6 Our love for God begins with our complacency in His supreme goodness and infinite perfections; next we come to the exercise of benevolence, which consists in an approbation of our complacency in Him and perseverance in it expressed in an active desire which makes us want and wish for the good of the being whom we love.

B. The difficulty. - Chapter 6

Benevolence begets the desire to confer good things on the one we love. However, we cannot desire with a true desire any good for God since:

1. His goodness is infinitely more perfect than we can either know or desire;
2. Desire is for a future good, but for God there is no future good.

C. The solution.

1. To express imaginary and conditional desires and to find delight in the fact that the supreme degree of goodness in God makes it impossible to add anything either in true desire or thought. Chapter 6
2. To magnify Him in ourselves by making our complacency in His goodness more and more great. We do not desire this complacency for the pleasure it yields us, but only because the pleasure is in God. - Ch. 6

How to promote this complacency. -Chapter 7

- a. To bring about this increase the soul rigorously forsakes every other pleasure so that it may strive more strongly to find pleasure in God.
 - b. To magnify still further Him who is supremely loved, with attention that grows more and more solicitous, the soul takes note of every aspect of His beauty and perfection.
3. To honor Him. - Chapter 8
- a. Honor is considered to be one of the greatest affects of our benevolence towards others. By it we not only do not imply any need in those whom we honor but protest that they abound in excellence. God not only approves it, but requires it of us as proper to our condition and thus suitable to attest to the respect and love we owe Him.
 - b. This desire to praise God becomes insatiable. The more the soul takes complacency in His infinite goodness, the more it wishes to honor Him. And the more it honors Him, the more it dilates and enlarges its complacency in Him. The more it is pleased with praising, the greater it is displeased that it cannot praise Him still more. The example of the nightingales.
 - c. How the soul tries to increase the praise (honor) of God.
 - i. It begins with its own heart, and never ceases to arouse it to this holy exercise

- ii. It calls all creatures and all the creations of man to praise God.
 - (a) All things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth: Examples: the psalmists, St. Francis, the three children in the fiery furnace.
 - (b) This desire inspired missionaries to spread the gospel, authors to write books of devotion, churches to be erected, religious houses to be built, great art to be created, etc.
- iii. It years for heaven where God can be better praised. Chapter 10
 - (a) The complacence the blessed enjoy makes them feel how sweet are God's perfections and from this is born within them loving benevolence, the living source of sacred music, the eternal "alleluia" - that is "Praise God".
 - (b) The heart, that in this world can neither sing nor hear God's praises as it would, begins to have incomparable desire to be delivered from the bonds of this life and to pass into that other life where the heavenly lover is praised so perfectly. Sometimes indeed, this holy passion becomes so strong that if God so permits, a man may die of it. The example: St. Francis.
- iv. It calls on the church triumphant and above all on our Lord to help it praise God better. Ch .11
 - (a) In this holy effort we pass from the church militant to the church triumphant in which we rise through the angels 'and saints until above all we meet the most sacred Virgin, who with incomparable melody praises and magnifies the divinity more highly, more holily and more delightfully than all other creatures together could ever do.
 - (b) Although all these praises are addressed to the Creator, they issue from creatures. But those from the Son are divine. Oh, what delight will there be for our hearts when our voices mingle with the Savior's voice in the infinitely sweet praises He gives to His eternal Father.
- v. It joins in the supreme praise God gives to Himself. Chapter 12

- (a) Since the praise that issues from the Savior as man is not in every way infinite, it cannot correspond in every part to the infinite greatness of the divinity. This praise issues from the person of Christ which is infinite, but through His human nature, which is finite.
- (b) Finally ~ learn that God can never be praised in keeping with His dignity except by Himself, for He alone can worthily match His supreme praise.

Then we cry out, “Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.” And that men may know that it is not the glory of created praises that we desire for God by this outcry, but rather that essential and eternal glory which is in Himself, we add :As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen

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Questions

1. Complacency in God leads towards benevolence towards God. What makes the transition?
2. Wherein lies the difficulty as regards a benevolent love toward God?
3. How can we express it?
4. One way to express it is to deepen our complacency in God. How is it done?
5. Why is it that to honor God is a very good way to express benevolence towards Him?
6. Why does the honor given to God by all creation fall short of the honor that is His due? Why even the honor given by Our Lord?

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Reflections

1. Do you find your joy in the Lord? It requires concentration on the Lord. – i.e., the benevolent love that leads us to give ourself to Him.
2. What have you done to honor the Lord?
3. Do you sing His praises – e.g., do you say the Liturgy of the Hours?
4. Luke 1:46-55. Our Lady’s Magnificat, a supreme act of benevolent love.
5. The concentration demanded by benevolent love is beautifully expressed by Br. Giles’ statement that our love must become “One on One” and St. Paul’s declaration that he accounts all things rubbish so that Christ might be his wealth. Phil. 3:7-10.
6. On calling all creation to bless the Lord. Psalms 103:19-22; 148, 150. Daniel 3:51-90.

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END UNIT 2 - BOOK V

BOOK VI Union Through Affective Love

UNIT 1 – The Principal Exercise of Affective Love, namely Prayer, and the First Degree of Mental Prayer, namely Meditation. Chapters 1 & 2

I. Mystical Theology – Another Name for Prayer

A. The two principal expressions of love.

Note: In Book 5 we dealt with the two principal factors producing the movements of love towards the beloved. Here we deal with the two principal expressions of union with the beloved.

1. Affective Love: It fills us with complacency, benevolence, and spiritual impulses, desires, aspirations and fervors, and causes us to use the sacred infusions and minglings of our spirit with that of God's.
2. Effective Love: It pours into us the solid resolution, firm courage and inviolable obedience required, to carry out the ordinances of God's will, and to suffer, accept, approve and embrace all that comes from His good pleasure.
3. Comparisons: He gives many. A few:
 - a. Affective: we conceive; Effective: we bring forth
 - b. Affective: we find pleasure in God; Effective: we become pleasing to God.

B. The principal exercises of affective love: Prayer

1. Impossible to describe all the movements of prayer:
 - a. Because of their number, their nature, their characteristics.
 - b. Because they are spiritual, and consequently subtle, almost beyond the reach of the human mind. God alone can fathom them.

2. Definition of prayer: We speak to God and God speaks to us.

Note: He gives many definitions but shows that they can be reduced to the above.

3. Mystical theology (prayer) and speculative theology:
 - a. Alike in that both have the same object: God.
 - b. Different in three ways:
 - i. Speculative theology: deals with God as the supreme being; the divinity of the supreme goodness. Mystical theology: deals with Him as supremely lovable; the supreme goodness of the divinity.
 - ii. Speculative: concerned with God and man. Mystical: concerned with God alone.
 - iii. Speculative: leads to knowledge of God. Mystical: leads to love of God.
4. Why called mystical theology? Because:
 - a. It is from heart to heart by a communication incommunicable to any other but those who make it. .

- b. It is hidden because it fades away under the light of any science to that mental solitude when the soul alone treats with its God alone.
5. Why love desires this secrecy.
- a. Because lovers want to speak only to one another.
 - b. Because they do not say ordinary things in an ordinary manner but with particular features showing the special affection with which they speak. As a result, love does not speak with the tongue alone, but also with eyes, sight, facial expression, and even with silence.

II. MEDITATION - THE FIRST DEGREE OF PRAYER - Chapter 2

- A. Definition: Attentive thought voluntarily repeated, or entertained in the mind in order to arouse the will to holy and salutary affections and resolution. Note that there are three essential elements:
1. Thought: It is therefore a conceptual form of prayer.
 2. Repeated: It is a prolonged effort requiring concentration.
 3. Resolutions: Intended to transform our lives.
- B. St. Francis gives many examples of meditation, and declares that it makes a soul very pleasing to God.

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Questions

1. How would you describe the difference between affective and effective love?
2. How many forms of prayer are there?
3. How would you describe prayer?
4. Why is prayer a mystical experience?
5. What are the special characteristics of meditation?

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Reflections

1. Are you satisfied with your life of prayer? Do you feel it needs improvement in certain areas?
2. Have you had any special mystical experiences? What effect did they have on your life?
3. Have you practiced meditation? Did you have any special difficulty? Review St. Francis' teachings as found in the Introduction, Book 2, chapters 2-9.
4. Psalm 139. How close the Lord is to us!
5. Josue 1:18; Heb. 12:3 and Psalm 119. Through meditation we are to conform our ways to the way of God and the example of Christ.
6. Muller: "Prayer and Love", pgs. 157-171.

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END UNIT 1 - BOOK VI

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Unit 2: 2nd Degree of Mental Prayer: - - Contemplation. Chs. 3-6

III. CONTEMPLATION:

- A. Definition: Contemplation is simply the mind's loving, unmixed, permanent attention to the things of God.

The differences between meditation and contemplation:

- B. The first difference between it and meditation - Chapter 3

That meditation is the mother of love, but contemplation is the the daughter of love.

1. We meditate in order to gather the love of God, but afterwards we contemplate God and are attentive to His goodness because of the delight love enables us to find in it. The example of the Queen of Sheba and Solomon.
2. When love has aroused contemplative attention, that attention begets greater and more fervent love, for it reveals even more wonderful aspects of the beloved, until it is crowned with perfection, when it possesses what it loves. Love causes us to take pleasure in the sight of our beloved, and the sight of our beloved causes us to take pleasure in his divine love.
3. Relationship of knowledge to love - Chapter 4

- a. The will indeed perceives only by means of the intellect, but having once perceived, it has no further need of the intellect in order to practice love. The passions do not follow the knowledge that stirs them up, but very often leaves them behind and advances without measure toward their object.
- b. This is particularly true of the love of God, but is stirred up by a knowledge born of faith. Knowledge obscure and thickly clouded over, as is that of faith, stirs up in us unlimited affection for the goodness it causes us to perceive.
- c. To experience a good is infinitely more agreeable than all the scientific knowledge we can have of it.
- d. The relationship is best when knowledge presents to the will the goodness of God in ever more attractive forms, by ever greater insights, and the will responds ever more completely. At such times it is both drawn and pushed. However, because of our wretched state, it often happens that knowledge hinders our growth in devotion, since "knowledge puffs up" and makes makes us proud.

- C. The Second Difference - Ch. 5

- a. That meditation considers in detail. Contemplation takes a completely simple, united view of the beloved; and this consideration thus united produces a livelier and stronger movement. St. Francis gives many examples of this process:

Here are three:

1. Meditations are like so many streams that come together to form a river (contemplation) which carries far greater cargoes than the many small brooks could ever do.
2. Perfections separate and divide according as they are more remote from God, who is their source. When they approach near to Him they are united until they are lost in the abyss of that unique supreme perfection, "the one thing necessary and the better part" which Magdalen chose and "which shall not be taken away".
3. From meditation come many affections. When these affections are united, they produce a kind of quintessence of affection, which is more active and powerful than all the affections from which they come. It is called contemplative affection.

D. The Third Difference - Ch. 6

That meditation is made with difficulty, labor and reasoning. .

Contemplation is made with delight.

1. Types of contemplation

Note: In these types one's attention is directed to something special as to a point of contact through which one embraces the beloved with joy. In meditation one remains on that special thing, to study it, to probe it, etc. so as to produce a good resolution.

- a. We look at a certain one of God's perfections – for instance, His goodness. We are aware of His other perfections, but attention is fixed on His goodness.
 - b. We cast a single glance of simple thought over several of God's great attributes. We cannot describe anything in particular but only say that the whole is perfect and fair.
 - c. We fasten our attention on a certain divine action, so as to effect a sally of love, not so much at the action as at Him from whom it proceeds.
2. To meditate is to eat, as it were; to contemplate is to drink a wonderful liqueur, so as to be inebriated - that is, to be wrapt outside of ourselves, not to debase us, but to raise us and to range us with the angels. Contemplation presupposes that we have found God and His holy love and that we find joy and delight in Him.

E. The contemplative life.

Ordinarily to attain to contemplation we must hear Sacred Scripture, take part in spiritual discussions and conferences, read devout books, pray, meditate, sing canticles and think good thoughts. Those who practice these spiritual exercises are called contemplatives and the life they live, the contemplative life.

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Questions

1. What is the definition of Contemplative Prayer? Do you know of other definitions?

2. Which of the comparisons made clearer to you the first difference between meditation and contemplation? Why?
3. In which way is knowledge an aid to love? In what way could it be a hindrance?
4. Can love teach us more about the beloved than knowledge can?
5. Which of the comparisons made clearer to you the second difference? Why?
6. Which of the comparisons made clearer to you the second difference? Why?
7. Do you see in the second and third differences a reason why contemplation is often described as non-conceptual prayer?
8. What can help us to grow in contemplative prayer?

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Reflections

1. Have you experienced contemplative prayer?
2. St. Francis gives a list of the helps toward contemplative prayer. Consider this list well.
3. Read carefully the last paragraph on page 284. The heavenly banquet was prepared at a great price. For most contemplation is dearly bought. On this point read Muller, 120 – 126.
4. I Cor. 8: 1-4. A little knowledge can inflate.
5. Luke 10: 38-42. From Martha and Mary we can learn much about meditation and contemplation.
6. Psalm 109:97-104. True Wisdom.

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END UNIT 2 - BOOK VI

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Unit 3 - The Results of Affective Love - 1st. Result: The Enjoyment of God's Presence - Chs.7-12

IV. THE UNION THAT RESULTS FROM AFFECTIVE LOVE

Note: After describing the forms of prayer, by which affective love is nourished, St. Francis describes the results of affective love. There are two results: the enjoyment of God's presence and the wound of love.

The Enjoyment of God's Presence

A. First Form: the loving recollection of the soul - Ch . 7

1. He does not discuss the type of recollection, awareness, described in the Introduction, which is accomplished, as it were, by love's command, but the type which results from love itself.
2. It is effected by grace itself. We have no part in it. Our Lord imperceptibly infuses into the depths of our hearts a certain sweet feeling that bears witness to His presence. The powers of the soul, and even the exterior senses, turn towards this most inward part where their most lovable and most cherished Spouse is.
3. Something similar takes place in many holy, devout faithful, when they receive the divine sacrament, which contains the dew of all heavenly blessings.
4. Factors that influence this loving recollection.
 - a. Love: Love perceives the presence of the beloved by the fact that He spread His attractions throughout the heart and love then carries the whole soul to the beloved. He dwells mostly on this cause.
 - b. Reverence or sweet fear: Simply because God's presence or simply because we know that He sees us, our faculties gather together within us out of respect for His divine majesty, which love makes us fear with a fear of honor and respect.
 - c. There are other causes: He describes a soul who had only to hear mention of a mystery or teaching of our Lord to be plunged into deepest recollection.

B. Second Form: The recollected Soul's repose; The Prayer of Quiet

1. A description of this union with the Beloved - Chs.8-9
 - a. Perceptible: The soul thus inwardly recollected in God, or in God's presence, is at times rendered so sweetly attentive to the goodness of its beloved that it is pleased and satisfied with enjoying the dear presence, not by any consideration it gives it, but by a certain calm and repose it finds in it.
 - b. Imperceptible: Sometimes this repose goes so deep in its tranquility that the whole soul and all its faculties remain as if sunk in sleep. They make no movement or action whatsoever except the will alone and even it does no more than receive the joy and contentment that the beloved presence gives it. What is still more wonderful is that the will does not even perceive the joy and contentment that it receives but enjoys it insensibly. However, if anyone were to deprive it of this repose, it would cry out in pain,

so deeply does the will cherish it. "I found Him whom my heart loves. I held Him and I will not let Him go." This cry is the true sign of deep repose.

2. How to guard this quietude - Ch. 10

- a. The soul to whom God gives holy, loving quietude in prayer, must abstain as much as possible from regarding either itself or its repose.
- b. God does not take it away because of necessary movements, or because of involuntary distractions.
- c. If the soul is unable to preserve quietude in all its faculties (hearing, seeing, memory, intellect) it can at least preserve quietude in the will, the faculty whereby it receives enjoyment of the Beloved presence. Moreover, these other faculties can never so effectively be called back to their duties as by the will's perseverance in holy quiet.
- d. The soul must not become too fond of this tranquility.

3. Degrees of quietude - Ch. 11

- a. Found in all the faculties of the soul, joined and united to the will. Sometimes found only in the will:
 - i. Consciously; or
 - ii. Imperceptibly.

St. Francis had described these degrees as regards the will in the preceding chapters.
- b. He develops the factor of conscious and imperceptible awareness.

Conscious

- i. The soul perceives the presence of God and hears Him speak by inward lights and persuasions.
- ii. Sometimes it perceives Him to speak and in turn speaks to Him, but secretly, softly, delicately.

Sometimes it cannot speak to Him because of joy, or reverence, or dryness.

Imperceptible

Sometimes it neither hears nor speaks. It simply knows that it is, in God's presence, to whom it is pleasing that the soul is there. For St. Francis this degree is the culmination of the prayer of quiet, for he sees in it that total surrender to God's will in which there is nothing of self (holy indifference). He explains how to remain in God's presence, once we are in His presence.

- i. As long as we do anything in God or for God either by intellect or by will.
- ii. As long as we remain simply where it pleases Him that we are there. The example of the statue. "O true God, how good is this way of keeping in God's presence so as to be and to

wish always and forever to be at His good pleasure. Thus, so I believe, in all conditions, yes, even in profound sleep, we are still more profoundly in God's holy presence."

C. Third Form: The Soul's overflow or liquefaction in God - Ch. 12

1. A lover's great complacency in the thing loved produces a certain spiritual powerlessness which makes the soul feel unable to remain any longer within itself. It lets itself go out and flow into whatever it loves. It does not spring out of itself by a sudden leap, nor does it cling as by a joining and union. It flows out gently like something liquid and fluid into God whom it loves.
2. This is a true ecstasy in which the soul is completely beyond the limits of its natural condition.
3. The soul does not die, for death is alien to what is submerged in Life. It is alive but not to itself.
4. When the soul returns to itself, it finds nothing on earth that satisfies it. It lives in extreme annihilation of self and remains greatly weakened in all that pertains to its senses. "I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me."

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Questions

1. To whom do we owe the loving recollection of which St. Francis writes? What factors on our part can influence it?
2. In the text St. Francis gives many examples to explain this loving recollection. Which appealed to you most and why?
3. How does the prayer of quiet differ from loving recollection? Explain the examples of Mary Magdalen and St. John. Are there degrees of it? Explain.
4. To explain the prayer of quiet St. Francis dwells on the experience of Our Lady, St. Elizabeth and the bees. In what way do they explain the prayer of quiet?
5. What interferes with preserving this quietude?
6. Why is it so important that the will persevere in this blessed peace?
7. In what way does the example of the statue teach us the essential requirement to remaining in repose in God's presence?
8. What makes the heart pliable – like unto a liquid?
9. What produces the overflow or liquefaction in God?

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Reflections

1. The Introduction, Part 2, instructs us on how to achieve an awareness of God's presence. Have you been faithful in following those instructions? Such effort can dispose us to receive the gift of awareness of His presence. Have you experienced this gift?
2. The prayer of quiet can be confused with dryness. The difference lies in the peace that reigns in the soul. Have you experienced the prayer of quiet?

3. Consider the change that occurred in Mary Magdalen once Our Lord called her by name, and the experience of the disciples of Emmaus. They did not know it was the Lord until He chose to reveal Himself.
4. In Gal. 2:20 and in Col. 3:13 St. Paul speaks of Christ living in him. This could be a good description of the liquefaction of the soul.

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END UNIT 3 - BOOK VI

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Unit 4 - The Results of Affective Love

2nd. Result: The Wound of Love Chs.13-15

The Wound of Love

A. Nature - Chapter 13

1. Grief, fear, hope, hatred and other affections of the soul enter into the heart only if love draws them there after it.
2. Because love penetrates and pierces right to the central point, the apex of the will, where it has its throne, it is said to wound the heart. The emotions can then enter with it, but only after love has opened the way.
3. How can love cause pain? Love is complacency, indeed, and consequently it is very delightful, provided it does not leave the sting of desire in us. When it leaves that behind, it leaves great pain along with it. This pain comes from love, and, therefore, it is a pain both pleasant and worthy of love.

4. How love wounds:

- a. Of its nature, love is a movement toward another, and consequently a separation from self. Such a division cannot be made without pain, since pain is nothing else than the division of living things that are joined to one another.
- b. It begets the sting of desire. We want ever more to possess the beloved.
- c. There is a type of desire which God gives to a soul He wishes to make highly perfect. It is not a desire for something absent, since the soul feels that God is present in it. The liquefaction has taken place. But it desires worthily to love Him whom no power can love sufficiently . The soul does not have as much force to love as it has love to force itself .

The blessed in heaven see that God is worthy of much greater love than the love they give Him. They would perish forever out of desire to love Him more if God's holy will did not impose on them that wondrous repose in which they rejoice.

d. What adds to the wound - Chapter 14

- i. When the soul sees its God wounded with love for it, it forthwith receives a reciprocal wound.
- ii. When God treats a truly loving soul, as if He believed that He was not loved by it, or as if He distrusted its love. Peter's experience when he was asked three times, "Do you love Me?"
- iii. When a soul feels that it has been deprived of God's love in that it feels not a spark of love or falls into many imperfections.
- iv. The remembrance that once we had no love for God, or very little.
- v. The knowledge that many despise the love

vi. of God.

B. External Effects - Chapter 15

1. When the wounds and the blows of love are many and heavy, they weaken us and give us love's well-loved sickness. The affections of the soul have great power to sax up bodily humors and change bodily qualities. Gives many and detailed examples.
2. The Stigmata: He describes St. Francis of Assisi's experience. Love drove the interior torment of so great a lover to his exterior person. Since love was within him, it could not easily fashion an opening in his outward flesh and therefore the flaming seraph came to his help. It darted rays of such penetrating light as to make real in his flesh the Crucified's outward wounds, which love had inwardly imprinted in his soul.
3. He cites others who suffered physical damage from their wounds of love.

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Questions

1. How can love wound the heart?
2. How can that wound cause joy as well as pain?
3. What can deepen the wound?
4. In what ways is the pomegranate a symbol of Holy Charity?
5. What can be external signs of the wound of love?

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Reflections

1. What do you think of Plato's description of love? Would your experiences lead you to agree with him as regards human love, as regards divine love?
2. Reflect on St. Francis' paraphrase of the words of the Sulamites: "I am black, but beautiful." (Csny. 2:4-5)
3. Recall St. Francis de Sales' own experience of the wound of love, and of the effect it had on his life. Can you point to anything in St. Jane Francis' life that would indicate such a wound? In the life of St. Margaret Mary? In a saint you admire?
4. Psalm 42. The soul's suffering because of desire born of love. Also Psalm 119.
5. Psalm 45. How marvelous is the Lord. The joy to be found in His presence.
6. Jn. 21: 15-20. What pain the reproach implied in the repeated question must have caused Peter!

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END UNIT 4 - BOOK VI

BOOK VII: The Deepening of Union Through Prayer

Note: In this book we will not discuss the general union of the heart with God, but rather certain particular acts and movements that a soul recollected in God makes by way of prayer so as to be more closely united and joined to His divine goodness. These movements are the result of a special grace.

UNIT I – Progression from Union to Unity (Oneness) – Chs, 1-3

I. ONENESS (UNITY) WITH GOD - Chap. 1

- A. Different from simple union. To join and unite things all we need do is merely to apply one to the other so that they touch. But to clasp and press things together we must make a strong application that increases and intensifies their union. Hence to clasp together is to join in a firm, intimate way. This is oneness, or unity. The soul is fastened and pressed to its object when it shows intense affection for it, for such clasping is simply the progress and advance of the union and conjunction.
- B. Types
 - 1. In prayer this union is often made by means of little but frequent flights and advances of the soul toward God.
 - 2. If our heart is once joined to God and remains in this union and nothing draws it away, it continues to sink deeper by an insensible progress in that union until it is wholly in God. This is by reason of the sacred inclination given it by holy love to unite itself ever more and more to supreme goodness.
 - 3. Caution - When I speak here of the sacred perception of God's presence, I do not mean a sensible perception, but that which resides in the summit and supreme point of the spirit where God's love reigns.

II. WAYS IN WHICH THIS UNION IS EFFECTED – Chapter 2

- A. Without or with our cooperation.
 - 1. Sometimes this union is made without our cooperation except for a simple continuation in which we let ourselves be united to God's goodness without any resistance.
 - 2. Sometimes we cooperate as when we assist the sweet force of God's goodness which draws us. Sometimes it seems that we begin to join ourselves to Him before He joins Himself to us. There is no doubt, however, that His action precedes, although we may not perceive it.
- B. Perceptively or Imperceptively
 - 1. Imperceptibly done. Sometimes this union is made so insensibly that our heart neither feels God's operation within nor our cooperation with it, but discovers the union alone insensibly completed.
 - 2. Done in a perceptible manner. At other times we feel God's embrace, since the union is made by sensible action, not only on God's part, but on ours as well.
- C. Faculties involved. Sometimes this union is made by the will alone, and in the will alone. At other times the intellect has part in it, since the will draws the

intellect along and applies it to the subject. Sometimes this union is made by all the faculties of the soul.

- D. In the beginning God was united to our human nature by grace after the Fall. He made a closer and more pressing union in the Incarnation.

To help us unite ourselves more closely to Him, He gave us the Eucharist. This sacramental union calls us and assists us toward that spiritual union of which we speak.

III. THE MEASURE OF THE PERFECTION OF THIS UNION - Chapter 3

The perfection of this union consists in two points: its purity and its strength.

- A. Its purity - He gives many examples of how we may approach God for many reasons other than simple union with Him. "If I approach Him solely for the purpose of being near Him and enjoying this proximity and union, then it is an approach to a pure and simple union"
- B. Its strength - Many theologians call this union "inhesion" or "adhesion". The reason is that the soul remains so caught up, attached and affixed to God's majesty that it cannot easily detach or draw itself away. If detached to some degree, it seeks to return However, "In this it experiences St. Paul's distress, for it is pressed by two desires: it desires to be freed from all exterior concerns in order to remain with Jesus Christ within itself, and it desires to go on with the work of obedience which that very union with Jesus Christ teaches to be so necessary."

III. DURATION

- A. It is called union, suspension, or transport when it is brief, as for instance, by fervent ejaculatory prayer.
- B. It is called ecstasy or rapture when prolonged. The reason is that a soul so firmly knit to God that it cannot easily be drawn away from Him is actually no longer in itself, but in God.

A clarification:

We do not here refer to that union which is permanent in us in the form of a habit (the virtue of charity) whether we are asleep or awake; we speak of the union which is made by action and that is one of the exercises of charity and dilection.

The soul at prayer is more advanced in a unitive action; the saints, even when asleep, in union itself.

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Questions

1. What effects the progress from union to unity?
2. Need the oneness with God be of prolonged duration?
3. Does the oneness described here make us a saint? Wherein would be the difference?
4. Can you grow in oneness with God without perceiving it? Does it need your cooperation? What kind of cooperation?
5. On what basis do you establish the types of oneness with God?
6. What is the difference between a transport and an ecstasy?

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Reflections

1. How truly our progress is the work of God! How little we contribute! Jn. 6:44-51.
2. How truly the secret of progress is to learn to say “yes” always to God!
3. Heaven is for the hereafter. Our union here may be almost imperceptible, consisting only in a deep peace of soul.
4. Psalm 63. A marvelous description of oneness. Also Ps. 73:23-28; Romans 9:35-38.

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END UNIT I - BOOK VII

Unit 2 - Prolonged Unity: Ecstasy or Rapture - Chapters 4-8

IV. ECSTASY OR RAPTURE

A. The relationship - Chapter 4

Ecstasy is called rapture inasmuch as in it God draws and lifts us up to Himself, and rapture is called ecstasy because in it we go out of and above ourselves and remain there so as to be united to God.

B. Called rapture because of a certain violence. - Chapter 4

1. The beauty and goodness of God so attracts the soul that it seems not only to lift it up, but to ravish and bear it away.
2. By its completely voluntary consent and ardent movement, the soul seems not only to move upward, but to eject and throw itself out of its very being and into the divinity . This violence can be downward as well as upward .

Note: This violence need not always be present; it is not inherent in ecstasy; it was not present in our Lady.

C. Types of Sacred Rapture - Chap. 4

1. That of the Intellect. - It is a movement toward enlightenment, caused by wonderment and admiration.
2. That of the Affections. - It is a movement toward fervor, caused by devotion.
3. That of Activity. - It is a movement toward good works, caused by operation.

D. First Type, that of the Intellect - Chapter 4

When it pleases God's goodness to enlighten our heart with some special light about the divine mysteries we see more beauty in these mysteries than we had ever imagined, and thus we enter into admiration. In addition, God sometimes grants the soul a light not only clear, but increasing. When such admiration and wonder is strong, it takes us out of ourselves by the lively attention and application our intellect gives to heavenly things.

E. Second Type, that of the Affections - Chapter 5

1. God, the Father of Light; supremely good and beautiful, by His beauty draws our intellect to contemplate Him, and by His goodness He draws our will to love Him.
2. It happens in the following manner: God touches the will with those sweet allurements, and the will is moved forward and borne toward God. It enters into a rapture, not of knowledge but of fruition, not of admiration but of affection, not of science, but of experience, not of sight but of taste and savor.
3. Comparison of the two raptures:
 - a. They often interchange. The sight of beauty causes us to love it, and love causes us to gaze at it.
 - b. The two do not belong to one another to such an extent that often one may not be without the other. Philosophers may have more

knowledge than love, and good Christians may have more love than knowledge.

4. A danger: False ecstasies

- a. How it can happen: These two types of ecstasies can be produced by the devil or proceed from natural causes in the following way:
 - i. Such sources can propose to the intellect marvelous conceptions that hold it raised up and suspended above its natural powers.
 - ii. By such lights they can give to the will some kind of vain, soft, tender and imperfect love by way of sensual complacency, satisfaction and consolation.
- b. How distinguish the true from the false? - Chapter 6

God's servants have provided many tests. I propose to put before you two marks of a good and holy ecstasy.

- i. Sacred ecstasy never seizes the intellect as much as it does the will, which it fills with a strong affection for God. Hence if an ecstasy is more beautiful than good, more bright than warm, more speculative than affective, it is worthy of suspicion.
- ii. To be true, these two ecstasies must lead to the third, the ecstasy of work and life.

F. The Third Type: The ecstasy of Action - Ch. 6

1. Practiced in two ways:

- a. By keeping all the commandments completely. This is not within human bounds, although it is within the confines of man's spiritual instincts as being most conformable to human reason.
- b. By observing those heavenly inspirations for the fulfillment of which it is necessary not only that God raise us above our powers but also draw us above the instincts and inclinations of our nature.

Examples: The Evangelical Counsels, the Beatitudes.

2. Since no man can in this way go above himself unless the eternal Father draws him, it follows that such a life is a perpetual ecstasy of action.
3. Such ecstasy is heavenly love, which vivifies and animates our soul, and this love is wholly hidden in God and the things of God with Jesus Christ.
4. The two lives in Man - the old man; the new man - Chapter 7
 - a. Love is the first act and principle of our spiritual life. By it we live, feel and move and our spiritual life is such as are our affective movements. When we have placed our love in Jesus Christ we have thereby placed our spiritual life in Him. This union demands that we be crucified with Him. We must die on the cross to our natural life so that we may rise to a supernatural life of love in Him.

- b. What good can a soul have from being ravished up to God in prayer if in his life and conduct he is ravished by earthly, base and natural affections? The ecstasy of prayer to be profitable must lead to the ecstasy of life.
 - c. In the first life we live according to the old man, that is, according to the faults, frailties and infirmities contracted from Adam. In the second we live according to the new man, that is, according to the graces, favors and will of our Savior. Whoever wishes to come to the new life must pass through the death of the old.
5. St. Paul's exhortation to the ecstatic life - Chapter 8
- a. II Corinthians 5: 14-15
 - b. The beautiful story of the eagle and the young girl that raised it.

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Questions

1. What is ecstasy, or rapture? What distinguishes it from suspension or transport of the spirit?
2. Explain the first type of rapture. The second type.
3. What sensation dominates in the first type? In the second type?
4. Why can there be false ecstasies? What is the sure test by which to distinguish the true from the false?
5. What are the signs of the ecstasy of action? Is such an ecstasy permanent?
6. Give two reasons why we must die in order to live?
7. In what way does the action of the Son point out the relationship between the first two ecstasies?

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Reflections

1. These extraordinary forms of prayer are gifts from the Lord. What are you doing to dispose yourself to receive such a gift?
2. Concentrate on the Ecstasy of Action. It alone truly counts. We can truly dispose ourselves to receive it by our fidelity.
3. If, instead of ecstasy, God gives us periods, perhaps long, of dryness, what are we to do? Cf. Introduction: Part IV, Chapter 14.
4. How often do you meditate on the love of Christ for you? It is His love that disposes, presses us, towards the ecstasy of action. 2 Cor. 5:14.
5. Consider the comparison St. Francis uses to help us understand the change God would work in us: the story of the phoenix; the caterpillar that becomes a butterfly. Yet the change is not as great as the new life to which we are called: "hidden with Christ in God." Reflect on the role the cross is to play in bringing about that change.

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END UNIT 2 - BOOK VII

Unit 3 - Relationship of Love to Death - Chapters 9-14

V. LOVE AND DEATH

Relationship - Between death and sacred love there is no difference except that death always does effectively what love ordinarily does only affectively. Sometimes holy love is so powerful that it even brings about separation of body and soul as an actual effect.

A. First type of relationship. To die in love - Chapter 9

This can happen in two ways:

1. To die in the state and habit of love and charity, though not in the exercise of holy love. This can happen when a just man dies a death that is unforeseen and sudden. It is never, however, an unprovoked death, since the just man perseveres in grace. Many examples are given.
2. To die not only in charity and with habitual heavenly love, but also in action and practice of it. Many examples are given.

B. Second Type. To die for love - Chapter 10

Two ways:

1. Faith and charity united. When we say that many of the martyrs died of faith, we must not imply it was for a "dead faith" but rather for a living faith, faith animated by charity. Our confession of faith is not so much an act of intellect and faith, as an act of will and love of God.
2. Charity alone. Example: St. John the Baptist. He gives many examples.

C. Third type. To die by love - Ch .10

When the ardor of holy love is intense, it makes so many assaults upon the heart that the soul is almost entirely taken up with God. It cannot furnish enough help to nature to insure proper digestion and movement. Little by little the vital animal forces begin to fail, life is cut short, and death ensues. Here love is the indirect cause of death. He gives many examples.

D. Fourth Type. To die of love - Ch .11

1. Here love is the direct cause of death. Love not only wounds the soul so as to make it languish away, but it pierces the soul through and through. It gives such a blow directly through the very center of the heart and strikes it so forcefully as to drive the soul out of the body. Gives many examples.
2. He relates two histories of death through love and concludes; "my soul finds nothing hard to believe among the effects of divine love." - Chapter 12

E. The death of our Blessed Lady

1. She died of love - Chapter 13
 - a. Who can doubt that when St. Joseph came to the end of his days, he was carried by his Divine Foster Child from this world into the next. A saint who had loved so much in this life could not die except from love.
 - b. Of our blessed Lady it is impossible to imagine that she died of any kind of death except that of love. It is the noblest of all deaths,

and therefore the death due to the noblest life ever lived among creatures.

Between this Mother and her son, there was no longer a union, but a unity of heart, soul, and life. If she lived her Son's life, she also died her Son's death. All the scriptures and all the learned say He died among the flames of charity.

2. Her death was supremely sweet and tranquil - Chapter 14
 - a. A contradiction. To St. Mechtilde our Lady revealed that she died of an impetuous assault of divine love, but to St. Brigid she declared that she died a supremely peaceful death. St. Francis writes that both statements are true.
 - b. The solution. Love is of itself sweet, gracious, peaceful and tranquil. If it meets with no opposition it grows by peaceful, continuous, gentle increments. This is true during life and at death. In us there is much opposition and consequently turmoil. In our Lady there was never any opposition. St. Francis describes the opposition that can arise at death and shows there could be no such opposition in our Lady, and hence concludes: "The Virgin's death was the roost gentle that can be imagined." But the soul of our Lady did have two portions, and therefore two appetites, with the result that she could experience the struggle of one appetite against the other. In the lower portion she could feel the assaults of love. However, in this heavenly Mother all affections are so well arranged and ordered that love of God held empire and dominion most peacefully without being troubled by diversity of wills and appetites or by contradiction of senses.
 - c. The conclusion: At the foot of the cross love had given to this divine spouse the supreme sorrows of death. Truly, then, it was reasonable in the end death should give her the supreme delights of love.

Questions

1. You have read the lives of saints. In which of these categories would you place their deaths?
2. Do you think modern science would concede that one could die of love as did our Blessed Lady?
3. Have you read any accounts of our Lady's death that would agree with or contradict St. Francis' opinion?

Reflections

1. May love possess us as we die, for then death will be a passage to life.
2. As love possesses us, the fear of death vanishes. Love so possessed the saints that they longed for death.
3. With your mind's eye, why not follow the devout Knight in his pilgrimage.
4. Have you ever meditated on the death of St. Joseph? On the death of our Blessed Lady?

BOOK VIII

Union with God by Effective Love

Part I: With the Signified Will of God

Unit 1 - Conformity with God's Signified Will. Chapters 1-3**I . CONFORMITY****A. Brought about by complacency - Ch. 1**

1. The transformation is brought about imperceptibly by complacency. By often taking delight in God, we become conformed to God and our will is transformed into that of His divine majesty by the complacency it takes in Him. The example of those we love has a mild, imperceptible empire; either must leave them or imitate them.
2. Love is a magistrate who exercises his authority without noise, but merely by that mutual complacency thereby just as we find pleasure in God, we also desire to please Him, and in order to please Him, desire to conform to Him.

B. Brought about by benevolence - Ch. 2

1. Complacency draws us into the mold of God's perfections according as we are capable of receiving them. Benevolence leads us to desire for God all the honor that can be rendered to Him as a kind of external good due to His goodness.
2. We see that God's will is supremely perfect. After this consideration, we desire that His will be the supreme rule and law of everything.
3. This is not an obedience rendered to God in justice as supreme Master and Lord, but an obedience rendered in love because of that unique most perfect goodness which is in Him.

II. The Signified Will of God - Chapter 3

- A. In reality, God has only one most unique and most simple will, although we call it by different names according to the various means by which we know it. Moreover, in keeping with those various names we are in different ways obligated to conform ourselves to His will.
- B. The signified will: All these things that God has signified should be believed, hoped for, feared, loved and practiced.
- C. How to conform ourselves to this will.
 1. This signified will proceeds by way of desire and not by way of absolute will. God makes three acts of will: He wills that we should be able to resist; He desires that we should not resist; and He allows us to resist if we so will. If we resist, He contributes nothing to that resistance. When we obey, He contributes His assistance, His inspiration, His grace.
 2. God's signified will does not cease to be God's true will when we resist it, even though it does not produce as many effects as if we had cooperated with it.

3. The conformity of our heart with God's signified will consists in the fact that we will all that God's goodness signifies to us as His intentions. He gives many examples of honor shown to the signified will of God.

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Questions

1. What is it about God that begets the movements of complacency and benevolence?
2. Wherein do the two movements differ?
3. How do both bring about conformity to His will?
4. Why do we speak of different wills in God?
5. What is God's signified will?
6. We can to some extent render God's will ineffective by our disobedience. Does this change the will of God for us?
7. Why does God not make His signified will an absolute will?

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Reflections

1. What great respect God shows for man by the way in which he draws man to Himself!
2. How truly God desires a relationship of love!
3. How ardently we must strive to open our minds and hearts to the goodness of God that the attraction may become even greater!
4. Recall what St. Francis wrote in Book 5, Chapters 6-12 on benevolence. How well do you observe his teachings?
5. How hard God tries to attract our love! Reflect on the parable of the banquet the king prepared and on how he pressed the invited to come. Matt. 22:2-10, Luke 14:16-23.
6. If we disobey him we have only ourselves to blame. Sirach 15:11-20

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END UNIT 1 - BOOK VIII

Unit 2: His will Signified in the Universal Call to Salvation and in the Commandments. - Chs.4&5

III. How God has signified His will for us.

A. Through the universal call to salvation. - Chapter 4

1. God wills all of us to be saved. Although some are not saved, this is still His true will. He must act, however, not only according to His own nature, which toward man is only benevolent goodness, but also according to man's nature, which possesses the right to choose.
2. We must will our salvation just as God wills it. He wills it by way of desire, and, following His example, we must incessantly desire it. He wills not only the end, our salvation, but also the means, for our will must correspond to God's will in every respect.
3. The means of attaining to salvation, when considered in general, are agreeable to our heart, while they terrify us when considered in detail. For this reason, our prayer should strengthen us to make particular resolutions.

B. Through the commandments - Chap. 6

1. Divine love conforms us to God's will and makes us carefully observe His commandments as the absolute desire of His divine majesty which we wish to please. This complacency with its sweet and amiable violence goes in advance of that necessity to obey which the law imposes on us and converts such necessity into the virtue of dilection and all difficulty into delight. cf. the types of command. Love adds sweetness to both.
2. Even when obedience becomes self-sacrifice it is lovable. The cross, mortification, the yoke, the law of our Savior, who is the true "chaste lamb" are a burden that refreshes hearts that love His divine majesty. "There is no toil in what we love, or if there is any, it is a beloved toil."

Questions

1. Why does God not impose salvation on man?
2. What indications do we have of how much God desires that man be saved?
3. What is man's part in the drama of salvation?
4. What turns obedience into love?
5. What proofs do we have that God wishes his commandments to be obeyed?

Reflections

1. Whenever we doubt God's desire to save all we should reflect on Calvary!
2. How gently and respectfully God approaches man! What greater proof could there be that he wants the relationship to be one of love!
3. When obedience becomes painful we should read Chapter 13 of Book 12.
4. Psalm 119. David's appreciation and love of God's law.
5. I Thess. 4. Paul's exhortation to progress in the observance of God's law.

END UNIT 2 - BOOK VIII

Unit 3: His Will Signified in the Counsels - Chapter 6-9

C. Through the counsels

1. Nature of the counsels - Ch.6

- a. Non-obligatory: When we command, we use our authority to impose obligations, when we recommend (counsel) we make use of friendship to persuade and exhort. But love will lead us to accept these counsels. Complacence, which obliges us to please our Beloved, carries us on to follow His counsels, while benevolence causes us not only to do what He ordains, but also what He counsels, for it desires all wills and affections to be subject to the Beloved.
- b. Lead to perfection. Perfection, however, is individual, differing from one to another, determined by God. Therefore, a soul does not accept counsels except in such manner as . God desires.
- c. Charity makes the choice for each individual. Charity, as the queen of all virtues, gives to the counsels and to all things, rank, order, season and value. St. Francis gives many examples of how Charity makes this choice. All things are made for charity, and charity is made for God - i.e. all things can serve the purposes of charity, and charity ordains and arranges them all according to God' swill.

2. Observance of the Commands leads to observance of the Counsels.- Chapter 7

- a. Drawn by the peace to be found in the observance of God's will and transformed by love of that will into a oneness with it, the devout soul runs in the way of the Lord - i.e., in the observance of all manifestations of that will.
- b. We place ourselves under obedience to the counsels since we see them as given to us only for the more perfect observance of the commandments to which they are related. St. Francis points out how true is this relationship as regards the evangelical counsels and the commandments to which they are related.
- c. On many occasions, our Savior signified His will only by way of desire. Overcoming all opposition, the most valiant Christians have attained to holy perfection by binding themselves to strict observance of their king' s desires. He uses the incident of the three courtiers in David's army to illustrate this point.
- d. Our Lord listens to our desires. Shall we not be so zealous in following our Lord's will that we listen to His desires for us?

3. The Evangelical Counsels

a. They must not be despised - Chapter 8

- i. Because of their intimate connection with the fulfillment of our obligation to strive for perfection. The words in which our Lord exhorts us to aspire and strive toward perfection are so strong and urgent that we cannot falsify our obligation to undertake that design. Our virtues never come to full stature and maturity until they beget in us desires for

progress which serve for the production of new degrees of virtue, and so we pass into the realm of the counsels.

- ii. Because of Him who gave us the counsels. With regard to God, to reject or despise His counsel can only come from the idea that He has not given us good counsel. Such a thing can be thought only in a spirit of blasphemy, as though God were either not wise enough to know or good enough to wish to give good advice.
- b. They must be loved and practiced according to one's state and ability - Ch. 9
- i. Everyone must love them all, since they are all most good.
 - ii. Let us rejoice when we see others undertake to follow counsels that we cannot or must not observe. Charity obliges us to love what is good for a neighbor.
 - iii. We give sufficient testimony to our love for all the counsels when we devoutly observe those suitable to us.
 - iv. Let him who cannot do the whole do some part of it - i.e., if you cannot observe a counsel in its fullness, observe as much of it as you can, for there are degrees in the observance of the counsels. Virtues have quite a range of perfection, and normally there is no obligation to practice them in the highest degree. If we begin to practice them, so that we have them to some extent, that is enough.

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Questions

1. What is the nature of the counsels?
2. What considerations should motivate us to observe them?
3. What principle determines which of the counsels we should observe, and the extent to which we should observe them?
4. In what ways are the counsels related to the commandments?
5. Why do the Evangelical Counsels demand our respect? How do we show that respect?

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Reflections

1. How can we say that we are doing everything possible to correspond with God's will if we do not embrace those counsels that apply to our situation?
2. In the galley of love there are no slaves. How does the observance of the counsels make the difference?
3. In the Introduction St. Francis de Sales gives many instructions on how to observe the Evangelical Counsels. Examine yourself on how well you observe his instructions.
4. Is there a counsel you find difficult to observe? Why?
5. Read Muller, pgs. 114-116, 171-179.

6. At the end of the second paragraph of Chapter 7, there is a beautiful prayer expressing the love that can lead us to declare: “Not my will but thine be done”.
7. Ps. 145:14-21. He listens to our desires; should we not listen to his as manifested in the counsels?
8. Matt. 5; Luke 6. The beatitudes.
9. Introduction Book 3, ch. 11, 1st paragraph. The place of the Evangelical Counsels in our pursuit of perfection.

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END UNIT 3 - BOOK VIII

Unit 4: His Will Signified in His Inspirations - Chs. 10-13

D. Through Inspirations

1. Ordinary inspirations - Chap. 10

- a. Definition: A heavenly ray that brings into our hearts a warm light that makes us see the good and fires us on to its pursuit.
- b. The means of inspiration that God uses are infinite: creation, preaching, tribulation, the Bible, the Saints, etc.
- c. Happy are they who keep their hearts open to inspiration. They never lack what they need to fulfill in a holy way the duties of their profession. They are truly those whom the eternal Father has prepared to be the spouse of His beloved Son. He will protect them from error.

2. Extraordinary Inspirations. Three marks distinguish those that are lawful.

I. First mark. Perseverance - Chapter 11

- i. Inspirations that tend solely to extraordinary perfection in the ordinary exercises of the Christian life. He gives many examples. They are to be followed. He points out two cases where their authenticity can be doubted.
 - a) If they are many. We would then be overwhelmed with too many tasks and achieve nothing.
 - b) If they remove us from our vocation.
 - 1) With St. Thomas, he agrees that there is no need for great consultation before entering a good religious order, since our Lord counsels it, but that once having entered we must be firm and unchanging.
 - 2) To leave in order to pursue a higher good is usually a deception. He gives many examples.
- ii. Those extraordinary inspirations that are not to be followed: There are other exercises that are called extraordinary not only because they make the soul advance beyond the ordinary rate, but also because they carry it on to actions contrary to the common laws of Holy Church, and hence worthy of admiration rather than imitation. He gives many examples.

II. Second Mark. Peace of Soul - Chapter 12

- i. One of the best marks of the goodness of all inspirations and especially the extraordinary is peace and tranquility of heart, since the Holy Spirit is indeed violent but with a violence that is gentle, mild and peaceful.
- ii. God's servants who have had the highest and most exalted inspirations have been the gentlest and most peaceful men,

while those who are deceived by the devil are unsettled, haughty, meddlesome and critical.

III. Third Mark. Obedience- Chapter 13

- i. Most holy humility is inseparably joined to peace and joy of heart. I speak here of noble, solid humility which makes us easy to correct, submissive, and prompt to obey. Gives the example of St. Simon Stylite.
- ii. When God sends His inspiration into a man's heart, the first one He sends is obedience. Hence a man who says he is inspired and then refuses to obey his superiors is an imposter.

To sum it up, the three marks of lawful inspirations are perseverance in contrast to inconstancy and levity; peace and gentleness of heart in contrast to disquiet and solicitude; and humble obedience in contrast to obstinacy and extravagance.

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Questions

1. What is the role of inspirations?
2. St. Francis warns us as regards both types of extraordinary inspiration. What are the dangers he sees in each type?
3. St. Francis gives three marks by which to judge a true inspiration. Must all three be verified?

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Reflections

1. Read Chapter 18 of Book 2 of the Introduction on the great blessing of God's inspirations and of the joy with which we should receive them.
2. Be receptive to God's inspirations by a prayerful spirit.
3. Let all creation and all events speak to you of God.
4. Be sure to discuss any unusual inspiration with your director. Be obedient about them.
5. Psalm 73:23-28. Hold onto God's hand by openness to His inspirations.
6. Acts 9. Saul's conversion. Reflect on his obedience.

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END UNIT 4 - BOOK VIII

Unit 5 - A Short Method of Knowing God's Will - Chapter 14

IV. A short method for knowing the will of God - Chapter 14

When God's will is shown clearly to us by His ordinances and commands, there is nothing further to deliberate. For all other things, it is our liberty to choose what seems good according to our preferences, although we must not do all that is lawful, but only what is expedient.

In matters of small importance, we must proceed in good faith and do freely what seems good to us, provided there is no great disproportion between one work and another and where we meet no important circumstance on one side rather than the other.

Even in important matters we must be very humble and not think of finding God's will by force of scrutiny and subtle distinction. After we have implored the light of the Holy Spirit, applied our thought to search for His good pleasure, taken counsel with our director and perhaps with two or three other spiritual persons, we must come to a decision in the name of God.

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Questions

1. Outside of areas of life covered by His ordinances and commands can we ordinarily know the will of God with absolute certainty?
2. What do you understand by the declaration that the just man lives by faith?
3. Must we use the light of reason to ascertain God's will? Should we pursue it relentlessly?
4. What do you understand by the declaration that the obedient man will never go astray?

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Reflections

1. Recall your own efforts to know the will of God. Have you felt at times as if you made a mistake?
2. Read Chapter 10 of Book 3 of the Introduction: "Be assured that if you have put firm trust in God, the success that comes to you will always be that which is most useful for you, whether it appears good or bad in your judgment."

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END UNIT 5 - BOOK VIII

BOOK IX

Union with God by Effective Love

Part II: With the will of God's Good Pleasure

Unit 1: That God's Good Pleasure is to be Loved even in Suffering - Chs .1-3

I. Exhortation to submit to God's good pleasure - Chapter 1

Definition. God's Good Pleasure: Nothing, except sin, is done without that will of God which is called absolute, or will of good pleasure, which no one can hinder and which is only known to us by events: These show us, by their very happening, that God has willed and intended them.

- A. Let us rejoice because God is so infinite in wisdom, power, and goodness, the three divine properties of which the universe and all that happens in it are but a small proof and, as it were, a sample.
- B. Let us review the history of both men and angels, in whom divine justice and mercy are so wonderfully exercised. Both qualities are to be equally adored, since both are simply one and the same goodness and godhead.

Because the effects of His justice are severe, He always sweetens them by His mercy. Hence death, affliction, sweat and toil with which life abounds are, by God's just decrees, punishments for sins, but they are also, by His sweet mercy, ladders to heaven. Even hell has been sweetened by God's mercy, for the torments are far less than the faults deserve.

- C. As to ourselves in particular, "may Your will, O God, be done in afflictions and punishments to the end that by us, for us, in us, and with us Your will may do all that is pleasing to it."

II. The great value of suffering - Ch. 2

- A. Considered in themselves, trials cannot be loved, but looked at in their origin, that is, in God's good pleasure, they are worthy of unlimited love.

B.

1. To love God's will in consolations is a good love, for it is truly God's will we love and not the consolation.
2. To love God's will in His commandments, counsels and inspirations is the second degree. It carries us forward to renounce our own will and enables us to abstain from many pleasures but not all of them;
3. To love suffering out of love for God is the summit of most holy love. In it nothing is pleasant but the divine will alone.

- C. Suffering is the safe way to pure love. In consolations there is the danger of loving the consolations.

D.

1. Love of the cross makes us undertake voluntary afflictions and enables us to renounce pleasures, honors, and riches. The love found in such exercises is completely agreeable to the beloved.
2. It is still more so when we gently accept tribulations in consideration of God's will.

3. It reaches its most exalted state when we cherish them because of that divine good pleasure from which they come. Chapter 3

III. Spiritual afflictions - Ch. 3

- A. Among all the efforts of perfect love, that made by acquiescence of spirit in spiritual tribulations is undoubtedly the purest and noblest.
- B. Nothing is left to the soul but the supreme point of the spirit, which is attached to the heart and good pleasure of God. Even the act of acquiescence is of little consolation, for the soul hardly perceives it, or thinks it is done so feebly as not to be done sincerely and properly. It may lament like Job, but in that supreme point, the acquiescence is true, strong, and most loving.
- C. In this state, the more love is stripped of all help and abandoned by every assistance from the soul's powers and faculties, the more it is to be prized for so constantly persevering in fidelity.

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Questions

1. How can I love suffering?
2. Why does the reality of God's will in suffering make it lovable?
3. Will God's justice ever prevail over His goodness?
4. What makes all things, the good and the bad, a reason for loving God?
5. What special reason is to be found in the bad?
6. When does love reach its most exalted state?
7. Why are spiritual sufferings of the greatest value?

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Reflections

1. Reflect on the story of Abraham and the story of Job as described by St. Francis. Compare yourself with them.
2. How necessary it is to be completely convinced of the goodness of God! Read Muller, pgs. 45-75.
3. We must all experience to some degree, the Dark-Night-of-the-Soul, which is the topic of Chapter 3. It is the true high point of our spiritual life.
4. Psalm 139:1-10. The all-knowing, the all-good God.
5. God's punishments. Psalm 39:8-14.
6. Man's sufferings. Psalm 77.
7. Our Lord's great sufferings and His resignation: Mark 14:13-14; Matt. 26:37-39; Luke 22:42.
8. Paul's glory in the Cross of Christ. Gal. 6:14; 2 Cor. 12:5-10.

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END UNIT 1 - BOOK IX

Unit 2: Types of Conformity to God's Good Pleasure - Chs. 3 & 4

- I. Types of conformity to God's good pleasure
 - A. Holy Resignation - Chapter 3
 1. Made by way of effort and submission, by way of suffering and patience.
 2. It prefers God's will above all things, yet it loves many other things. It would, for instance, love to live, but God wants it to die: it submits courageously.
 - B. Holy Indifference - Chapter 4
 1. God's good pleasure is the supreme object of the indifferent soul. Whenever it sees it, it runs after it. Without consideration of anything else it always searches for the place where there is more of it. To imagine something impossible, if a soul knew that damnation would be a little more pleasing to God, it would run after its own damnation.
 2. Even the most indifferent heart can be touched by some affection as long as it does not yet know where God's will lies.
 3. It even has a greater love for tribulations because it sees in it nothing to be loved except the mark of God's will.
 4. It does not place its love in the things God wills, but in the will of God who wills them.

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Questions

1. What is the difference between holy resignation and holy indifference?
2. Would you equate holy indifference with what is called pure love, that is, a love in which there is nothing of self?

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Reflections

1. What do you think of the examples St. Francis gives of the difference between holy resignation and holy indifference? Do they awaken in you an admiration for holy indifference?
2. Phil. 1:23-24. St. Paul's great act of holy indifference.
3. Ps. 73:23-28. "When I am with you, the earth delights me not."
4. Ps. 84. The desire for God.

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END UNIT 2 – BOOK IX

Unit 3: Practice of Holy Indifference

- I. In accepting whatever happens - Chapters 5-8
 - A. General Principle - Chapter 5
 1. God's good pleasure must be accepted in every event of every kind. This extends to all three areas of life:
 - a. The natural, such as health, sickness, etc.
 - b. The civil, such as honors, ranks, etc.
 - c. The spiritual, such as consolations, dryness, etc.
 2. As examples, he gives the lives of Job, the apostles, and of our Lord.
 3. Amidst the collapse of everything, if God so chooses, he exhorts us: "Oh, how blessed is the love that reigns within the faithful at the summit of their spirit while they are amid the surging waves of inward tribulation."
 - B. Details: .
 1. Success or failure of our efforts - Chapter 6
 - a. General Guideline: We can hardly recognize God's good pleasure apart from actual events. Hence as long as it is unknown to us, we must keep as close as possible to God's will as manifested or signified to us. But as soon as His divine good pleasure becomes evident, we must immediately place ourselves under His loving obedience.
 - b. Applications:
 - i. In sickness: Use the remedies, but if God decrees death: "lovingly accept it in the highest part of the soul in spite of all opposition from the lower faculties."
 - ii. God very often inspires us with most lofty plans but does not will that they succeed.
 - iii. The following are marks of most perfect indifference: to leave off doing some good when to do so pleases God, and to return after going halfway when it is so ordained by God's will.
 - iv. We must have great care for what God has entrusted to us, but we are not responsible for the outcome, since it is not in our power.
 - c. Exceptions
 - i. At times, God indicates His good pleasure in advance of the events: e.g. the form of Peter's death, St. Paul's imprisonment, the sacrifice of Isaac. In this case, we must immediately unite our will to God's good pleasure. But be prepared for a change if God so wills, as happened in Isaac's case. It was all equal to Abraham, provided God's will was served.
 - ii. At times the outcome is our doing, resulting from our sins. In such cases, we unite our will, not to the outcome,

since it was not God's doing, but to the punishment, which He does will, the punishment being the collapse of our efforts, which he permits.

2. Our advancement in virtue - Chapter 7

- a. Guideline: Let us forget nothing that can bring good success in this devout exercise. But after we have planted and watered, we must realize that it is for God to give the increase. Let us await in peace God's good time, so that it is for God to give the increase. Let us await in peace God's good time, so that tranquility may always reign in our hearts.
- b. Causes of unrest
 - i. Our lack of progress. It is our own fault, not God's, in that we sinned. Ans: We must repent, but the repentance must be tranquil. It will be tranquil if we embrace the abjection in our fall and accept our lack of progress. We must act like the souls in purgatory. They detest the sins for which they are suffering, but they are at peace, for they accept the abjection of their condition and so sing devoutly a canticle to divine justice.
 - ii. The movements of anger and concupiscence that are still felt. Ans: Such movements will always re felt. This is that Philistine whom the true Israelites must always fight against, but can never subdue. He is truly accursed and detestable, since he issues from sin and in practice tends to sin. But such movements never make us guilty unless we assent to them. It is our self-love that desires to be exempt from such attacks.

Why God permits such attacks to continue to the end:

1. They exercise us in virtue;
2. They are a punishment for sin;
3. They manifest the strength and power of divine assistance and grace.

C. The presence of evil – Chapter 8

1. Why God permits evil:

- a. To allow rational creatures to act according to their natural condition.
- b. To render the good worthy of commendation when they do not violate the law.
- c. Our attitude:
 - i. Let us adore and bless this holy permission.
 - ii. Do all in our power that sin permitted may never become sin committed, without, however, destroying human liberty.

d. How to act:

- i. Do all in our power to wipe it away.
- ii. If the sinner is obstinate, let us weep, sigh, and pray for him.
- iii. However obstinate, never lose courage in aiding and serving Him. Never reject Him, as long as there is hope.
- iv. At the very end we must turn our mind from sinners, and place it on other objects and tasks more useful to God's glory.
- v. For the rest, we must always adore, love, and praise God's avenging and punitive justice, just as we love His mercy, for both are daughters of His goodness.

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Questions

1. Is there any limit of our embrace of God's good pleasure?
2. What manifests to us God's good pleasure?
3. How would you explain the difference between God's known will and the will of His good pleasure?
4. Can failure and frustration be a blessing?
5. In what way should we be concerned about our advancement in virtue? In what way should we be at peace about it.
6. What should we do about our falls? About the passions that we still feel?
7. What should be our reaction to the evil we encounter?
8. Are there times when we must accept defeat in our efforts to remove evil? What should we do in such cases?
9. Is the justice of God in punishing evil to be adored and praised? Why?

Reflections

1. How well have you accepted God's good pleasure? In what areas or events have you found it most difficult to accept His decisions? Why?
2. What have been your reactions to failure to advance in prayer, in virtue?
3. Would St. Francis approve of your way of handling evil?
4. Reflect on the examples St. Francis gives of loving acceptance of all kinds of suffering, and of defeat and frustration.
5. Muller: 114-120 The Will of God.
6. Do you have a Philistine in your life? Consider the sentiments of St. Paul. 2 Cor. 12:7-9.
7. St. Paul is admirable in his fight against evil, his acceptance of defeat, and his turning to other fields of labor, while awaiting God's good time to convert the Jews. Acts 13:44-49.

Unit 4: Practice of Holy Indifference

II. In the Death of the Will -Chs. 9-14

A. Steps toward the death of the will.

1. It begins with the desire to love God so as to be united to Him, to become agreeable to Him, and to imitate Him because He has eternally loved us. - Ch.9
2. Very often the next step is a poor one, for there is much self-seeking in it. It is to love God for the pleasure one finds in the exercises of holy love. It is to imitate the flute player who plays to please his prince but also to please himself. Admittedly it is hard to love God without loving to some extent the pleasure we take in His love. When dryness comes such a soul may give up many of its exercises. Chapters 9 & 10
3. The next step is to do God's will simply to please Him and not because of any pleasure we find in it. It is to imitate the deaf musician who plays simply to please his prince. Ch. 11
4. The final step is to continue to do God's will when we feel that we are not pleasing to our Master and that our love is fruitless, yes, even that it is false and vain, since it produces no consolation. It is to imitate the deaf musician who continues to play at his prince's command even when the prince ignores him or walks away. Chapters 11 & 12

In Chapters 11 and 12, St. Frances de Sales describes in profound details the purifications of the soul in this state. Being deprived of all pleasure by which it can re attached to God, such love joins and unites us immediately to God, will to will, heart to heart, without any intervening comfort or further expectation. The soul finds no love in the external senses, for they are incapable of it; nor in the imagination which is cruelly tormented by divine impressions, nor in reason, which is troubled by a thousand obscure arguments. Although it at last finds love in the supreme region of the spirit, yet the soul does not recognize it, for its great distress and darkness hinders it from sensing its great sweetness. He concludes: "What is a soul in this state to do? It does not know how to conduct itself in such great agony. It has no further power except to let its will die, in the hands of God's will, in imitation of its own beloved Jesus."

B. Life of the Soul After this Death - Chapters 13 & 14

1. Our will can never die, yet sometimes it passes over the boundaries of its accustomed life so as to live wholly in the divine will. At such times it neither can nor wishes to will anything further, but abandons itself entirely and without reserve to the good pleasure of divine providence.
2. It is without any particular desire. It remains not only in subjection, but is totally annihilated in itself and converted into God's will.
3. As little children of our heavenly Father, we can walk with Him in two ways. We can walk with the steps of our will which we conform to His, following wherever He leads. This is what God requires of us by His signified will. But we can also walk with our Lord without having any will of our own. We can simply let ourselves be carried by His divine good pleasure, like children in their mother's arms, by a certain kind of

admirable consent which may be called the union, or rather the unity of our will with that of God. We receive the indications of heaven's good pleasure with a most unalloyed tranquility of will that wills nothing whatsoever but acquiesces absolutely in all that God wills to be done in us, on us, or by us.

4. To live this state we must render ourselves as tractable to God's good pleasure, as though we were wax. We must not trick ourselves into willing and wishing for things, but leave them to God for Him to will and do than for us as He pleases.

Questions

1. In the beginning of our devotion our hearts love God for three most pure motive. What are they?
2. What does St. Francis mean by saying that we can love love instead of the beloved? Is this danger especially present when it is a question of divine love?
3. Explain the difference between the seeking of health in God's will and God's will in health.
4. For what is he urging us to strive when he describes "a man in fervent prayer" and "a heavenly singer"?
5. What pleasure is even purer than the pleasure a soul takes in knowing that it pleases God?
6. Why is it that at such times of dryness, the superior part of the soul can bring little help to the lower part?
7. In Chapter 12, St. Francis describes the "supreme passive purification" of the soul – i.e., the purification in which she is not the actor, but the receiver of God's action. She does not fully realize or feel what is happening to her. What is happening?
8. What is the difference between a union and a unity of wills? Explain in your own words one of the examples given by St. Francis.

Reflections

1. Muller: 120-145. He explains and defends Holy Indifference.
2. By comparing yourself to the musician, where do you feel that you are in the journey toward death of the will? Are there areas of resistance?
3. A key point in the death of the will is our attitude toward our desires. Are your desires in conflict with surrender?
4. The example of the child and its mother is very beautiful. What does it tell you?
5. The example of the ball of wax is very good. It warns us not to harden our heart by running in advance of God's will so as to set our hearts on certain objectives. Cf. 1 Peter 5:7.
6. Introduction Book 4, Chapter 14 on Spiritual Dryness warns us against setting our hearts on consolations.
7. Consider Our Lord on the cross. His words reveal the depths of agony involved in the death of the will.

Unit 5: Practice of Holy Indifference

III. In the State of Waiting -Ch. 15

- A. If we can divert our heart from what is happening to us, though we feel it fully, and fix our attention on God's goodness and sweetness, blessing it not in its effects and in the events it ordains but in itself and its own perfection, we will undoubtedly perform a still higher exercise.

He gives the beautiful example of the young girl being operated upon by her father, who pays no attention to what is happening to her, aware only of his love and goodness.

- B. "It seems to me that the soul in this state of indifference must be said to have its will in a simple and general state of waiting. To wait is neither to do nor to act, but only to remain subject to some event. This waiting on the part of the soul is truly voluntary. Nevertheless it is not an action but rather a simple disposition to receive whatever shall happen. As soon as the events take place and are received, the waiting changes into consent and acquiescence."

†

Questions

1. In the State of Waiting, upon what is your attention fixed?
2. Can you point out the differences between this form of Holy Indifference and the other forms?
3. When does the state of waiting end and the state of action begin?

†

Reflections

1. Consider well the example St. Francis gives.
2. Ps. 26:3. Your kindness is before my eyes.
3. Ps. 55:23. Trust in the Lord. Also 1 Pet. 5:7.

†

END UNIT 5 – BOOK IX

Unit 6: The Old and the New Man

- I. The Old and the New Man -Ch. 16
- A. We cannot long remain in such nakedness, stripped of every kind of affection. We must clothe ourselves anew with various affections, perhaps with the very ones we have renounced. But we must put them on again, no longer because they are agreeable, profitable, or honorable to us, but because they are agreeable to God, profitable to His honor, and destined for His glory.
- B. At the proper time we must take up again the affections suitable to the service of charity so that just as we die naked upon the cross with our divine Savior so afterwards we rise again with Him in newness of life.

†

Questions

1. What is the difference between the old man and the new man?
2. To explain his teaching St. Francis gives the examples of Judith and Isais. What is the difference between what happens to them and what happens to us?
3. Who is the new man? Is the old man still alive?

†

Reflections

1. What we are consider here is, in a way, a metamorphosis. This seems to be a basic law of progress. There is a passage from what is lower to what is higher.
2. Col. 3:10-11. The New Man. Also 1 Cor. 12:27; Gal. 3:27-29.
3. Muller, pgs. 138-145. We are not to be without affection.

†

END UNIT 6– BOOK IX

BOOK X

The Command to Love God Above All Things

Unit 1: On Fulfilling This Commandment - Chs. 1-5

- I. The Commandment and the Inclination – Chapter 1
 - A. Man is born to love. Everything moves him to it. Man is the perfection of the universe; spirit the perfection of man; love the perfection of spirit; charity the perfection of love. For this reason, love of God is the end, the perfection, and the excellence of the universe.
 - B. That neither your greatness nor our lowliness, nor any pretext whatsoever should hold us back from loving you, O God, you have commanded us to do this. The whole commandment concerns love, and love of God, who, being supremely good, is supremely worthy of love.
 - C. The consequence of failure to do so: the great torment of the damned. On judgment day, God will make them see clearly the supreme beauty of His face and the treasures of His goodness. The damned will strive to cast themselves upon God so as to be united to Him and to enjoy His love. But divine justice will in such wise deprive the will of its strength that it will be utterly unable to love that object which the intellect proposes as being so greatly worthy of love.
- II. Fulfilled perfectly only in Heaven – Chap. 2
 - A. In heaven we shall love God, not as being bound and obliged by law, but as being drawn and ravished by the joy this object so perfectly worthy of love shall give to our hearts.
 - B. During this infancy which is our mortal life, we must do what lies in us according as we are commanded, since this is not only in our power, but is also very easy.
- III. That God can be loved above all things in different ways, and that such a love does not exclude love for others. – Chapter 3
 - A. Principle: When man loves God supremely, he must love nothing which could separate him from God. Hence God's goodness takes no offense when it sees that we have other loves as long as we preserve for Him the reverence and submission that are His due.
 - B. In different ways and with different degrees of perfection:
 1. In heaven. Each one will see and love Him according to the particular measure of glory divine providence has prepared for him. We shall all have equally the fullness of that divine love, but those full measures will be unequal imperfection.
 2. On earth.
 - a. As in heaven so on earth among those who love God with all their hearts, there are degrees of perfection, for according to the way Holy Scripture puts it, to do a thing with all one's heart means simply to do it with a good heart and without reservation. He gives the example of David, Ezechias and Josias, all of whom Sacred Scriptures declare served God with all their hearts but with different degrees of perfection.

- b. Also, who is ignorant of the fact that the saints progressed in perfection, so that the end of Saints is crowned with a more perfect love than their beginning. He speaks of David's second heart which sang of his love for God far more melodiously than he had ever done with his first heart.
- c. We can give ourselves wholly to God in diverse ways: e.g. by martyrdom, by poverty, by contemplation.

C. Excellence of the supreme love of God:

One drop of this love is worth more than all the other loves that can ever be in the heart of man. For as long as this love lives, it reigns over all our affections causing God to be preferred above all things, wielding its scepter over all other affections.

IV. The Degrees of Perfection in Loving God Above All Things.

Using the household of Solomon for comparison, St. Francis de Sales describes four degrees, or ranks, in fulfilling this commandment.

A. The Maidens – Chapter 4

- 1. They truly love God's sweetness above all things innumerable in number, but with such a mingling of so many different affections that their sacred love is still in its infancy. Hence, in addition to our Lord, they love many superfluous, vain and dangerous things.
- 2. Example: the Prodigal Son

B. The Concubines – 80 in number – Chapter 4

- 1. They do not love dangerous or superfluous things. They love only what God wants them to love, but they love them too ardently and for other causes and motives.
- 2. Examples: The rich young man; to love excessively our parents, friends, benefactors, our vocation, spiritual exercises.
- 3. They do enjoy the union, contemplation and the repose described in Books 5 and 6, but the excess with which they love good things keeps them from frequent entry into such divine union.
- 4. They have not yet learned to love only in Him and for Him.

C. The Queens – 60 in number – Ch. 5

- 1. They love only that which God wills and which God wills. They love many things together with God, but none of them unless in God and for God, e.g., their friends.
- 2. Example: The young man who wanted to go home to bury his father. He reached this level after Our Lord led him to love his father only in the Lord.

D. The Sulamite – Chapter 5

- 1. Loves only God in all things, so that she loves not many things but one thing alone, which is God Himself. Because it is God alone she loves in all that she loves, she everywhere loves Him equally, according as His good pleasure demands. Since He is always equal in Himself, inequality in our

love for Him can take its origin only from consideration of something that is not in Him.

2. Examples:

- a. There is no one except our Blessed Lady who has perfectly attained to this degree of excellence.
- b. Some souls are in the state of pure love in such wise that in comparison with others, they may take the rank of queens, unique doves, perfect friends of the Spouse. Examples: St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Bernard, St. Catherine of Sienna, St. Catherine of Genoa. However, it sometimes befalls souls in this rank to forget themselves and fail badly, even going so far as to commit great imperfections and annoying venial sins. Example: The Apostles.

†

Questions

1. Prove that love of God is the purpose of Creation.
2. Why did God make love of Him a commandment?
3. When will the commandment be perfectly fulfilled? What brings about that perfect fulfillment?
4. Can there be degrees in the fulfillment of this commandment?
5. When do we fulfill it sufficiently here on earth?
6. Describe the degrees of perfection in which it can be fulfilled.

†

Reflections

1. How gently the Lord treats us! How compassionate He is for our fallen nature! How truly, "My yoke is easy and my burden light."
2. Where would you place yourself in the degrees of perfection? Is it important to push forward? Would you be ready for heaven where the love of God must be perfect?
3. Read Muller on Love and Asceticism, pgs. 146-157.
4. Ps. 85. The happiness of the blessed.
5. 1 Cor. 13:8-13; The supremacy of love for God.
6. Song of Songs 6:8-9. The household of Solomon.
7. Ps. 74:23-28. All things are as naught in comparison to the love of the divine Spouse. Also Phil. 3:8.
8. Ps. 28:15-18. The imperfections of the just.

†

END UNIT 1 - BOOK X

Unit 2: What Would be Contrary to its Fulfillment. Chapters 6-11

- I. To Love God Above All Things. What This Demands
 - A. Essential to a true love of God Chapter 6
 1. Although there are so many different degrees of love among true lovers, there is only one commandment of love which obliges generally and equally each one with a completely similar and totally equal obligation, even though it may be observed differently and with infinitely varied perfection.

The commandment: “Hear, O Israel, your God is the sole God. Therefore you shall love Him with your whole heart, with your whole mind and with your whole strength.”
 2. Love of God is love without a peer, because God’s goodness is goodness without an equal. And love differs in accordance with the diversity of goods we love.
 - B. Consequences:
 1. Love of God must be preferred to love of creatures – Ch. 7
 - a. What good is in creatures that it should draw the human heart into rebellion against God’s supreme goodness? His love must take preference over all other loves.
 - b. Examples of such preference: Joseph’s preference for the love of his master over the love for his mistress; Abraham’s preference for Sarah over Hagar.
 - c. When a heart loves God in consideration of His infinite goodness, no matter how small a portion it may have of this excellent dilection, it will prefer God’s will to all things. To do otherwise, is the one sure indication we can have, that we do not fulfill the 1st commandment.
 2. It must rise above all affections, vanquish all difficulties and put God’s honor and good will above all things. Ch. 8
 - a. It must be willing to suffer death for Christ, but also many other things that charity requires, and requires them so much the more ardently and firmly, in that they are acts more easy, more common, and more ordinary for all lovers, and more generally needed for the conservation of sacred love. Example: Sapphirus being willed to die for Christ, but unwilling to forgive Nicodemus who had offended him.
 - b. Why we fail to give God those other things that charity requires – Chapter 9
 - i. To explain this failure, St. Francis de Sales compares the mandrake, for which Rachel surrendered the love of Jacob to Leah, to the enticements of the world. The mandrake is beautiful to look at and has a delightful odor, but completely insipid and without taste. It is a magical plant – that enchants the eye, and whose odor charms away pain and sorrow and all feeling by putting a person to sleep.

However, to smell it too long is to lose one's speech, and to drink too much of its juice is to die. Similarly, the world's pleasures attract but disappoint. They can bewitch and put us to sleep. They stupefy and destroy those devoted to them.

- ii. Other examples: David's choosing Bathsheba; Peter's fear of the maid servant; Adam and Eve choosing the apple; heretics accepting only certain teachings.
 - iii. To choose anyone thing directly contrary to love of God is to lose that love.
3. It must lead us to love God more than ourselves. Chapter 10
- a. How realized? Although we have this natural inclination to love the divinity above all things, we still do not have the strength to put it into effect unless that same divinity supernaturally infuses its most holy charity into our hearts.
 - b. The inclination itself:
 - i. Of all goods that are not infinite, our will always prefers in its love the good nearest to it, especially its own good. But there is so little proportion between the infinite and the finite that once our will knows an infinite good, it is moved to prefer it, even ~above its own good. As regards God, this inclination is especially powerful because we are in God more than in ourselves, we live in Him more than in ourselves.
 - ii. Even if there were some supreme good of which we were independent, we should still be aroused to love it more than ourselves: i.e., we would make simple acts of desire to love it. But we could not love it, since there could be no union, the object of love; much less could there be charity, which is a friendship that seeks union.

II. The Love of Neighbor. Not contrary to the love of God. ~ Chapter 11

- A. We love God because He is the supreme and infinite goodness. We love ourselves in charity because we are God's image and likeness. Since all men have this same dignity, we also love them as ourselves..
- B. Example: Ragel's love for Tobias, even before he knew who he was; simply because he saw in him a resemblance to his brother, the elder Tobias.
- C. The sacred love of man for man is the true image of a heavenly love of man for God. The culmination of love for the heavenly Father's goodness consists in perfect love of our brothers and companions. The reason, as explained, is that man is God's image.

†

Questions

1. What is the essential requirement for the fulfillment of the 1st commandment? Why is it the essential requirement?
2. Does the first commandment leave room for the love of creatures?

3. Must love for God take precedence in even the ordinary things of life? Why is it important not to offend it, even when there is no serious rejection of its supremacy?
4. How explain any offence against God's love?
5. Why is it so hard to love God more than oneself?
6. Why can St. Francis write that we can be neither true men without having this inclination to love God more than ourselves, nor true Christians without putting this inclination into effect?
7. What could St. Francis have in mind when he wrote about morbid discussions, such as the love of a supreme good with which we had no possibility of union?
8. Why does the love of God not eliminate a love for oneself and for one's neighbor?

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Reflections

1. In one of the Conferences St. Francis says that the love of God is not so difficult. Would you agree?
2. Recall those moments when the love of God overwhelmed your heart. Regret the occasions when other loves took control.
3. Why do you love yourself? How spiritual are the reasons? If it rests on purely human reasons, it rests on sand.
4. Ask yourself the same questions as regards your love for the neighbor.
5. 1 Cor. 15:4. "Star differs from star in glory."
6. Matt. 5:23. Our love for God is flawed if we do not love our neighbor in little ways.
7. Gen. 28:12. Jacob's ladder. It is a beautiful symbol of love for God, the angels ascending; and love for man, the angels descending.

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END UNIT 2 - BOOK X

Unit 3: Zeal and Jealousy - Their Roles. Chapters 12-16

III. Zeal and Jealousy – Their Roles. Chapters 12-16

A. Nature - Chapter 12

1. It is ardent love or loving ardor which produces hatred for any evil that would harm the beloved object of its love, either:

- a. by desiring and seeking to remove the evil if it is already there;
- b. by diverting it and preventing it from coming if it is not yet there;
- c. by not ceasing to hate and detest it if it cannot be averted or removed.

2. Jealousy is a species of zeal. Zeal looks to the complete good of the beloved object with the intention of removing the contrary evil; jealousy looks to the particular good found in friendship so that it may repel anything opposed to it.

- a. Similar to jealousy is Envy. It is an ardent love for worldly and temporal things in their entirety, or which lead us to desire those things at least to a greater degree than we do possess them. Since such goods are limited, we would exclude others from the possession of them.
- b. By a detailed comparison, St. Francis de Sales makes clear the differences between jealousy and envy. Envy would exclude all others from the possession of those worldly goods. Jealousy would exclude all others from possessing a good I have found in an established friendship - e.g., in a marriage.

B. God's zeal (Jealousy) for us - Chapter 13

1. At first it seems to be a jealousy of concupiscence. He desires that we be His in such wise that we in no way belong to any other. Yet in fact must not that good which is supremely worthy of love, namely God, be supremely loved? To love supremely is to love totally. we must be all His.
2. On the contrary, God's jealousy for us is the jealousy of supreme friendship. Our love is useless to Him, but to us it brings great profit. If it pleases Him, it is because it is profitable to us.
3. Extent. He is not satisfied with the affection filling His Sulamite's soul unless it is unchanging, completely pure and totally and solely His. Just as death is so strong that it separates the soul from its own body, so also sacred love that has reached the degree of zeal divides and separates the soul from all other affections and purifies it from all admixtures. He gives as examples the correction given to St. Catherine of Sienna for a brief distraction, and the punishment inflicted on David for his vanity in taking a census. He refers to St. Catherine of Genoa's description of this jealousy of God.

A caution: zeal is powerful, and so must be prudently controlled. Consult always your spiritual director.

C. Our Zeal (Jealousy) for the Lord - Chapter 14

Here we deal with jealousy in reverse.

1. It is not that we feel that our friendship with the Lord has suffered any injury from our side, i.e., that we are not loved totally by Him. God pours His love in no less measure into one soul, even though He loves an infinity of others, than if He loved that soul alone.
2. The injury is on God's side, i.e., that He is not totally loved by us. Hence our jealousy leads us: ,
 - a. to hate, detest, fight against all that is contrary to God, that is, to His will, His glory;
 - b. to ardently desire the purity of souls, the spouses of Christ, so that they can give themselves entirely to God;
 - c. to be fearful that we may not be possessed by Him completely enough. Christian jealousy disturbs us over not loving enough.

D. The Role of Anger in Zeal - Ch. 15

1. Love of God can never be excessive in itself or in the movements and inclinations it gives our souls no matter how strong it is.
2. Anger is an aid given by nature to reason and employed by grace in the service of zeal to put its plans into effect. Still it is a dangerous help and not very desirable. If it gains strength, it makes itself master, and overthrows the authority of reason and the laws love sets for zeal.
3. Anger can turn hatred of sin into hatred of sinners, and gentlest charity into raging cruelty.
4. Holy Zeal does not employ anger except in extreme necessity.
5. Self-love often deceives and tricks us while it indulges its own passions under the name of zeal. I say that it uses the name of zeal, since it cannot make use of zeal itself. It is the property of all the virtues, and especially charity, of which zeal is a subsidiary to be "so good that no one can make a bad use of them."
6. The Saints and Anger - Ch. 16

- a. It is true that Moses, Elias and many great servants of God made use of anger to exercise their zeal. But they were very great men who were well able to control their passions.
- b. Those great saints were directly inspired by God and therefore could employ wrath without peril. The same Spirit that animated them to such great exploits also held back the righteous wrath.

E. How to exercise Zeal towards others - Chapter 16

1. By carrying out acts of justice to repel evil. Performed by those who have the public duty to correct, censure and reprimand others. Because this office is one of honor, everyone takes it upon himself.
2. By doing great acts of virtue in order to give good example, by suggesting remedies for evil and exhorting men to apply them, by doing the good opposed to the evil. This does hold for all of us, but few wish to do so.
3. By suffering and enduring many things in order to prevent and avert evil. Few do so. Examples: Our Lord dying for the sins of men, to remove this greatest of evils. St. Paul desiring to be filled with ignominy, cut off,

abandoned for the sins of the Jews. This does not mean that he desired to be deprived of the grace of our Lord, from which nothing could separate him, but that he be treated as a man cut off from God. St. Paulinus, delivering a slave from bondage by becoming a slave himself.

F. Conclusion - chapter 16

Let your zeal be inflamed with charity, adorned with knowledge, and established in constancy. True zeal, like charity, is patient, kind, without quarreling, without hatred, without envy and it rejoices in the truth. It is diligent, active, industrious, eager in pursuit, but without passion.

False zeal is turbulent, troubled, insolent, arrogant, choleric, and in equal measure impetuous and unstable.

Questions

1. Explain the difference between zeal, jealousy, and envy.
2. Why does St. Francis treat of them at this point?
3. Why is God a jealous God?
4. Why should we be jealous as regards God?
5. Is there a similarity between God's jealousy in our regard and our jealousy in His regard?
6. What is the relationship between zeal and anger?
7. In what way is anger good? How can it become a bad thing?
8. To what kinds of action does the hatred born of zeal lead us?

Reflections

1. Am I a zealous person? Are there actions to which I can point to prove that I am? Do I examine my conscience on this point?
2. The jealousy of God prompted severe punishments for the Jewish people. Some of my suffering probably came from the same source. Do I appreciate the love behind that jealousy?
3. Am I jealous for the glory of God? Again, do I examine my conscience on this point?
4. Do I handle anger well? When I experience anger, is it prompted by true zeal? Am I truly gentle?
5. Matt. 6:24. God demands complete surrender to Him (there cannot be two masters). In that sense He is jealous. To serve another master is disastrous (Jer. 2:13) for us.
6. Ps. 119:129-136. Zeal for the Law. Our jealousy for the honor of a friend.
7. Jn. 2:13. An anger born of true zeal.
8. Rom. 9:1-5. Paul's zeal for the conversion of the Jews.
9. 2 Kings, chapters 18-19. Hezekiah's zeal for the Lord, and how God rewarded it.
10. Luke 9:52-56. Our Lord's disapproval of the anger of John and James, cf. also James 1:20.

Unit 4: Example of Our Lord. Ch. 17

- IV. A Synopsis of Sacred Acts of Divine Love and the Way Our Lord Performed Them - Chapter 17
- A. Confer the text. The first eleven acts are so compact that they could hardly be summarized further.
- B. The twelfth act deals with our Lord's death.
1. He died in love, by love, for love, and of love.
 2. Death could never enter the life of Him who holds "the keys of life and death" unless divine love, which keeps those keys, had opened the gates to death. It was by choice, not by power of evil, that He died.
 3. Our Savior's death was a true sacrifice, a sacrifice of holocaust, which He Himself offered to His Father for our redemption.
 4. This loving death did not take place by way of rapture but of ecstasy, driven and forced on by the abundance and power of love, just as we see the myrrh tree sending forth its first liquor out of sheer abundance, although no one presses it or draws upon it in any way.

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Questions and Reflections

This is a chapter to be read and meditated often, that the immensity of Our Lord's love for us may be better appreciated and move us more forcefully to love Him in return. He would live in us. May we give way to the gentle pressure of His love.

This chapter could very well end the Treatise on the Love of God. It is a beautiful summary of all St. Francis has tried to teach us on the love of God, as he finds those teachings exemplified in Christ. Book 11 deals with Some technical questions; Book 12 offers some very practical, advice.

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END UNIT 4 - BOOK X

BOOK XIThe Supreme Authority of the Love of God**Unit 1: The Value Charity Gives to the Other Virtues - Chapters 1-6**

- I. Purely natural virtues are pleasing to God - Chapter 1
 - A. Definition: They are not motivated by charity. They are human, social virtues, the character of which is not above the powers of the rational soul.
 - B. They are of little value because:
 1. the motivation is poor;
 2. they are unable to withstand serious attacks.
 - C. Examples of God' s pleasure: The Egyptian midwives who would not kill the Jewish babies because they feared to offend God by such barbarous acts were rewarded with children and temporal goods. Nabuchodonosor, who waged a just war against Tyre was given domination over Egypt .
 - D. Why they please God. Because:
 1. They proceed from natural reason and human instinct, and natural reason is a good tree which God has planted in us, and the fruits that spring from it cannot help being pleasing to God.
 2. The soul in sin is sick, but still alive. Consequently:
 - a. It can do certain good deeds, which, if they are natural, are rewarded with natural rewards, or if civil, are paid for in civil and human coin, that is, with temporal advantages.
 - b. It cannot keep all the commandments. It can observe some of the commandments, and perhaps observe all of them for a brief time.
 - c. In difficult attacks, nature without grace cannot save itself from plunging downward.
- II. Love of God adds a value to the virtues which they do not have of their own. - Chapter 2

This point is illustrated by a comparison.

 - A. Virtues as practiced by an infidel or one in the state of sin. Such virtues are :
 1. not infected by association with iniquity. Aristotle: "Virtue is a habit which no one can put to ill use."
 2. But they are not given an eternal reward. Reasons:
 - a. The sinful heart has turned away from God;
 - b. No one can receive the heavenly inheritance belonging to the Son unless he is in Christ;
 - c. The covenant whereby God promised paradise refers only to those who are in His grace.
 - B. As practiced by the friends of God.

In a heart that is God's friend, not only the fruits of charity and the flowers of the works it ordains, but also the very leaves, that is, the moral and natural

virtues, derive special efficacy from the love within the heart producing them. If a heart has given itself, has it not also given all that belongs to it?

- C. Conclusion
- Every virtuous work is to be esteemed as “the work of the Lord”, in that it tends to Him and belongs to Him, even though performed by the unjust, who are not His, but the works of those endowed with holy love not only belong to God, but have been rendered fruitful and precious in His eyes.
- III. The Virtues that Divine Love can raise to a higher degree of perfection than other virtues. - Ch. 3
- A. Some virtues by reason of their natural alliance and correspondence with Charity are much more capable of receiving the precious influence of sacred love and consequently communication of its dignity and worth. Such are faith and hope, which, together with penitence and devotion, is employed in the honor of God.
- B. For this reason, of all virtuous actions we ought to most carefully practice those of religion and reverence for divine things. Such are acts of faith, hope and most holy fear of God. We must often speak of heavenly things, think of eternity and sigh for it, frequent churches and sacred services, read devout books, and observe the ceremonies of the Christian religion. Sacred love is nourished in the way it desires by such services. Note: St. Francis de Sales is here speaking of those virtues, and the exercises of those virtues, that are especially capable of developing the love of God in us, because of themselves they tend toward God.
- IV. Virtues whose exercise is commanded by Divine Love - Chapter 4 and 5
- A. They are sanctified in a still more excellent way by that command. Ch. 4
1. Charity from itself can produce holy deed. These are the most excellent. He compares them to the children Rachel brought forth from her own body: Joseph and Benjamin. Charity does so in two ways:
- a. By elective (effective) love. Here charity subjects and disposes our faculties, powers, passions and affections under God’s will, so that it may be loved, obeyed, and served above all things.
 - b. By affective love: i.e. the ~ ecstasy of wonder and affection. A delicate, tender, pleasing love.
2. It can produce them by commanding other virtues to act. It esteems these acts as its own, since they have been produced by its order and command and by a heart belonging to it; and so are considered great in dignity and worth. He compared these acts to the children born of Bala, but at the command of Rachel, who considered them her own.
- There are, however, acts of virtue not done at Charity’s command that derive their whole sanctity from the mere presence and association with charity. Note: These are acts done in the state of grace, but not directly motivated by charity.
- B. They do not lose their distinctness. Chapter 5
1. Acts take their name and species from the particular virtues from which they spring, but they derive their taste of sanctity from holy charity.

2. Charity so spreads its excellence and dignity upon the acts of the other virtues as still to leave them the particular worth and goodness they possess of their own natural condition.
 3. However, it is the love within a heart that gives richness and perfection to all the virtues and works that issue from it. Hence little acts of virtue done with much charity are found more pleasing in God's sight than great deeds done with little charity and devotion.
- V. The Reason holy love can give great value to its action and to the actions of the other virtues - Chapter 6
- A. By charity we are united to our Redeemer as members to the head. Hence our good works draw their worth from Him and thus merit life ever lasting. Our heavenly Father chooses to see our works as the works of His Son.
 - B. Our works are in no way comparable to the weight of glory they produce. Still they have the vigor and virtue to produce it, because they proceed from the Holy Spirit. By a wondrous infusion of His grace into our hearts He makes our works become His and yet at the same time they remain our own. We are members of a head (Christ) of which He is the spirit. He leaves to us the merit and profit of our good works while we leave to Him all honor and all praise for them, for we acknowledge that the beginning, progress, and end of whatever we do depend on His mercy.

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Questions

1. Why do all acts of virtue have value?
2. Why does the presence of Charity add value to a virtue? Why can it add great value to even insignificant acts of a virtue?
3. Which virtues are more closely related to Charity, so that they receive a special value from it?
4. Which virtuous acts are to be greatly prized?
5. Describe acts that are not born directly of charity, but at its command, born, as it were, of Rachel's servant, Bala?
6. Describe acts born of Charity itself, born, as it were, of Rachel herself?
7. Does the example of the General in his conduct of a battle help to explain the different relationships of Charity to virtuous acts?

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Reflections

1. How carefully must I look to the motive behind my actions!
2. How greatly my union with Christ and my submission to the Holy Spirit give value to my actions!
3. Am I careful to perform those actions that foster the growth of charity?
4. Ps. 92:13-16. How fruitful are the just (i.e., those adorned with charity)! Also Ps. 1:2 & 3.
5. On the great value of faith, hope, and penitence. Cf. Matt. 9:22. Rom 3 & 5.

6. I Cor. 13. Charity alone gives supernatural value to our actions.
7. Eph. 4:7-16. Our value lies in our union with Christ.
8. John 15:1-8. The vine and the branches.
9. John 4:1-10. The living water.

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END UNIT 1 - BOOK XI

Unit 2: Charity Contains All the Virtues - Chapters 7-9

- I. One perfect virtue demands the presence of others. Chapter 7
 - A. All virtues are virtues by their adaptation or conformity to reason. But reason, the life of the soul, is never satisfied or at rest, unless it occupies and possesses all faculties and passions of the soul.
 - B. A man who loves a virtue out of love for the reason and probity that shines in it, will love all other virtues equally, since he will find the same causes in them, and he will love each virtue in greater or lesser degree according as reason appears more or less resplendent in it.
 - C. To conclude, virtues cannot possess their true integrity and sufficiency unless they are all present together.

Note: St. Francis is here speaking of a virtue in its perfection.

- D. Other Conclusions.
 1. Some great souls have no occasion to practice some of the virtues, yet they have all of them in affection.
 2. Isolated virtues can exist, but they are either newborn, or dying virtues. It depends on the degree in which reason controls them. There are also false virtues, that is, virtues in which there is some other motivation than reason.
 3. Certain inclinations are thought to be virtues and are not such, but rather natural graces and talents.
 4. As for vices, we may have some of them without having the others, while it is impossible to have all of them together. Nearly every virtue has two opposing vices which are not only contrary to the virtue but also contrary to one another.

II. Charity includes all the virtues. - Chapter 8

- A. All natural virtues are raised to the supernatural by the infusion of grace in order that “the whole human heart may tend to supernatural virtue and felicity which consists in union with God”.

In an allegorical way he describes the four cardinal virtues as intended to rule the four regions of the soul according to reason and to dominate all virtues “in order that all human acts may be properly formed according to natural virtue and happiness.” Then God causes a supernatural fountain which we call grace to spring up. It includes faith and hope, but consists in charity.

1. It purifies the soul from all sins and beautifies it with most heavenly beauty;
 2. It spreads over all the soul’s faculties and operations, first over the cardinal virtues making them holy, and through them over the all virtues.
- B. Method by which it makes one with itself all natural virtues:
 1. When it encounters existing virtues, it brings them into obedience to itself so as to perfect them;
 2. When it does not find the natural virtues in the soul, then it alone performs all their operations as occasion requires. God has sown in our hearts seeds

of all the virtues; some do not appear at all or very little until the vital heat of sacred delection comes to enliven them. Charity can do this, for it alone has as much and more strength than all other virtues together.

Scripture proof: The Apostle does not say that charity gives us patience, kindness, etc., but that charity is patience, kindness, etc., It is the property of the supreme virtue to be able not only to command inferior virtues to work, but to do what they command others.

III. In Love of God Consists the Perfection of Virtues - Chapter 9

Charity is the bond of perfection, since in it and by it are contained and gathered together all the perfections of the soul. This statement is the conclusion of St. Francis de Sales' teachings on the relation of charity to the virtues as expressed in the previous chapters. He further explains: .

- A. Without charity the virtues can never sustain one another, so as to form a perfect whole. Proof: Our Lord binds the fulfillment of the commandments to charity. If we cannot keep the commandments without charity, for still greater reason we cannot have all the virtues without it. In the keeping of all the commandments is implied the keeping of all the virtues.
- B. "I do not deny that without charity virtues can be born and even make progress. But for them to reach their perfection so as to bear the title of formed, fashioned and finished virtues depends on charity. Charity gives them strength to fly to God, to gather from His mercy the honey of true merit and of sanctifying hearts wherein they are found."

Other virtues can reciprocally and mutually arouse one another in their works and exercises. Still from these combinations cannot issue a finished and perfect virtue, since the final perfection, which is love, is lacking to both.

- C. The perfection of divine love is so supreme that it perfects all the virtues while it cannot be perfected by them, not even by obedience itself, for love does not derive its perfection from obedience, but from the goodness of Him whom it loves.
- D. Conclusion: Hence exactly as God is in equal measure the last end of all that is good and its first beginning, so also love, which is the source of every good affection is likewise its last end and perfection.

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Questions

1. On what basis does St. Francis establish the interdependence of virtues?
2. In what way is it possible to have one virtue without having the others?
3. Why must charity enter into the soul and possess it on all its faculties and actions?
4. In what way are the natural virtues necessary to the reign of charity?
5. Describe the ways in which charity exercises its power over the natural virtues?

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Reflections

1. By establishing the supremacy of charity St. Francis makes clear how truly man was made for God and that his perfection consists in union with God.

2. In recognizing the value of natural virtues and the role of reason in describing man, St. Francis does honor to the human in man, as a man of the Renaissance would, but in establishing the supremacy of charity he declares man's supernatural destiny.
3. Wis. 16:20. The comparison of charity to the manna that fell in the desert, and which was endowed with all delights and conformed to all tastes.
4. 1 Cor. 13. The supremacy of charity. Also Col. 3:14.
5. Muller, pages 101-104.

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END UNIT 2 - BOOK XI

Unit 3: The Merit of Our Actions - Chapters 10-14

- I. Human Acts done without love of God.
 - A. The Virtues of the Pagans – Ch. 10

He gives a lengthy description of the virtues of famous pagans and concludes: those pagan virtues are virtues only in comparison with vices, but compared to the virtues of true Christians, they in no wise deserve the name of virtues.
 - B. Such acts are without value - Ch. 11
 1. Only the acts of roost holy charity or acts that the other virtues conceive and bring forth under command and direction of charity, or at least under its wings and its protecting presence, make us heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.
 2. Whenever in making acts of the moral virtues, the will becomes disobedient to its mistress, which is charity, or when pride becomes the motive - the acts are deprived of the fruit and privileges of charity and as a result are left without value.
- II. The Loss and Recovery of Merit
 - A. The Loss - Chapter 11

The merits and fruits of both moral and Christian virtues most sweetly and tranquilly abide in the soul as long as sacred dilection reigns in it. But as soon as divine dilection dies in the soul, all merits and fruits of the other virtues immediately die. However, the virtuous acts of sinners are not useless for temporal life. They are perceived by God's goodness and rewarded with temporal gifts.
 - B. The Recovery - Chapter 12
 1. It does not hold for sin as for the works of charity. The works of charity are not wiped out by sin, only forgotten; whereas the sins of the evildoer are annihilated by holy penance. Hence a sin committed by a just man does not cause sins once pardoned to live again, since they were annihilated. However, when love returns to a penitent soul, it causes its former works to live again since they were not abolished, only forgotten. This oblivion of the works of the just man once he has fallen into sin consists in the fact that they are incapable of leading to eternal life as long as the sin remains.
 2. It is against reason for sin to have as much power over charity as charity has over sin, for sin issues from our own weakness, while charity proceeds from God's power. Hence, if sin abounds in malice to destroy us, "grace superabounds" to restore us. God always makes the cure far exceed the disease, so bountiful is He to man.
- III. The Merit of our Actions:
 - A. Depends on the purity of our motive - Chapter 13
 1. Man is in such wise master over his human, rational acts that he performs all of them for some end and can direct them to one or more particular ends as seems good to him.

2. Sometimes we add an endless perfect than the end of our action; sometimes we add an end that is of equal or like perfection, and sometimes an end that is higher and more exalted. Hence we can give different perfections to our acts according to the variety of motives, ends and intentions we have in doing them.
 3. “Be good money changers” says the Savior. Let us be very careful not to change the motives and ends of our actions except for the better and with profit.
 4. And let us do nothing except in good order and with reason. When we perform an action with a single reasonable motive, no matter how slight, there is no offense against reason. However, a man who wants to have many motives must rank them according to their quality: otherwise he commits a sin, for disorder is a sin, just as sin is disorder.
 5. To each end we must give its proper rank, and consequently supreme rank to the end of pleasing God.
 6. The supreme motive for our actions, which is that of heavenly love, has this supreme property: since it is more pure, it makes actions that proceed from it more pure.
- B. We must apply the sacred motive of divine love to all our actions - Chapter 14
- Objective: let us purify all our intentions as far as we can. Since we can diffuse throughout all virtuous acts the sacred motive of divine love, why should we not do so? How?
1. On all occasions we will reject every kind of vicious motive and consider all the good motives so as to choose the motive of holy love. In this way we do not act on the motives as good in themselves, but in their character as motives willed, accepted, loved, and cherished by God.
 2. If sometimes we are touched by a certain particular motive - e.g., chastity, we must at once diffuse over it this motive of holy love. In this manner we shall avoid the mistake of those who loved certain virtues above charity - e.g., Origin and Tertullian.

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Questions

1. Is there such a thing as a reward due to actions done without any reference to God? Upon what does it depend?
2. Upon what does a supernatural reward depend?
3. Is the merit due to our actions lost eternally when we sin seriously? If not, why not?
4. What determines the degree of merit due to our actions?

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Reflections

1. How important is the motive behind our actions! How determinately we must strive to purify our motives!
2. Never let zeal for any good action carry you to the point that you would offend God in order to accomplish it.

3. Why did Our Lord condemn the Pharisees? Luke 18:12-14; His condemnation of the church of Sardis, Rev. 3:1.
4. How good God is to those who return to him! Ezek. 18:21-32; Luke 15:11-32.
5. Ps. 51. Repentance; It not only can remove our stains; it can make us whiter than snow. Also Rom. 5:20, 21; grace has far surpassed sin.
6. Luke 13:6-9 – The Barren Fig Tree. The fruit, of course, is love for God. Without it, our life, however beautiful to behold, is barren.

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END UNIT 3 - BOOK XI

Unit 4: The Relation of Charity to the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and Especially to the Gift of Fear - Chapters 15-18

I. The Gifts in General

Charity includes in itself the gifts of the Holy Spirit - Chapter 15

- A. In order that the human spirit may easily follow the promptings of reason so as to attain natural happiness, it needs seven virtues. St. Francis de Sales then describes the virtues of temperance, justice, fortitude, prudence, knowledge, understanding and wisdom.
- B. When the Holy Spirit wishes to make our soul docile to His inspirations so as to lead us to the supernatural felicity of this present life, He gives us seven properties closely resembling the virtues mentioned above. They are called the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- C. They are not only inseparable from charity, but all things being well considered and speaking precisely, they are the principal virtues, properties and qualities of charity. He then describes wisdom, understanding, science, counsel, fortitude, piety and fear.
- D. Charity will be for us another Jacob's ladder made up of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit as of so many sacred steps. Upon them angelic men will ascend from earth to heaven to be united to the breast of God Almighty, and upon them they will descend from heaven to earth to take their neighbor by the hand and lead him to heaven. He describes this ascent and descent.

II. The gift of fear.

St. Francis de Sales recognizes two types of fear as gifts of the Holy Spirit.

- A. The gift of filial fear which is simply the gift of piety. This is the second step on the ladder. - Chapter 16

It is a fear of not sufficiently relishing the divine presence, of not loving God as much as love requires, of not being closely united enough to Him, that the union will not be as pure, as simple, as attentive as love would desire.
- B. Closely allied is initial fear, which contains elements of true love, but a love still young, frail, and only beginning. In it are elements of servile and mercenary fears. This is the first step.
 1. Such fears do not truly issue from love but usually precede it to serve as its agent.
 2. However, they are often very useful in its service - Ch.17
 - a. In this life where our charity will never be so perfect as to be free from dangers, we always have need of fear to drive away those dangers. St. Francis gives many examples.
 - b. In heaven our charity shall be perfect, and so there will be no need of servile and mercenary fear, which will have their reward there for the services they have rendered. Filial fear will remain, not to cause any anxiety or distrust in the soul, but to enable it to reverence in submission the incomprehensible majesty of this Omnipotent Father.

III. How love uses servile and mercenary fear - Chapter 18

- A. It can be a fear of God that has its origin in nature.

Catastrophes and unforeseen happenings arouse fear of God even in the hearts of the most irreligious man. Nature, which precedes reason at such events, calls upon God for help, in keeping with the common feeling of mankind that those who serve God prosper and those who despise Him are afflicted. Such a fear is neither to be praised or blamed, since it does not come by our own choice. However, it is an effect of a very good cause, and it is the cause of very good effects. Francis gives many examples. Divine love often attaches acts of complacency and benevolence to this fear.

B. A fear of God that takes its origin from faith. Types:

1. Servile Fear:

Def. A fear of hell that drives from the heart the affection and will to sin. This salutary servile fear comes from the Holy Spirit, and is part of the first step on the ladder. It is to be distinguished from:

- a. a fear that does not exclude the will to sin and affection for sin;
- b. a fear that produces no change.

2. Mercenary ~. A more noble type.

Def. A fear that leads Christians to labor faithfully, yet not chiefly for love of their Master, but in order not to miss the wages He promises. This, too, is a salutary fear and comes from the Holy Spirit and is part of the first step on the ladder. It is to be distinguished from a mercenary fear that excluded love of the Master. After such fear has led us to obey love, it remains with us to serve both love and the loving soul as occasion requires.

Questions

1. Explain in your own words how the gifts of the Holy Spirit are inseparable from charity.
2. Why is the gift of fear so important?
3. How does the element of true love for God enter it?
4. When does fear become a Gift of the Holy Spirit?

Reflections

1. Can you point to occasions in your own life where fear was the beginning of wisdom?
2. St. Francis' teaching on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit demonstrates how truly God builds on nature. Confer the Introduction, Book 1, Chapters 2 & 3.
3. St. Francis' comparison of the Gifts to the rungs of Jacob's ladder is very striking. How far have you ascended that ladder?
4. Ps. 111. The value of fear. But perfect love casts it out: 1 John 4:17-19.
5. Ps. 19:8-11. The enduring value of filial fear.
6. The story of Jonah and the Ninevites is a good example of the value of servile fear.

Unit 5: The Relation of Charity to the Fruits of the Holy Spirit and to the Beatitudes. - Chapter 19

- I. The Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit
 - A. Charity is truly the sole fruit of the Holy Spirit, but this one fruit has an infinity of excellent properties. Hence the Apostle who wishes to mention certain of them by way of example speaks of this unique fruit as if it were many because of the manifold properties it contains within its unity.
 - B. It is the purpose of charity that our whole being be given over to movements of love as to its fruit, not only interiorly by joy, peace, patience, long-suffering, goodness and fidelity but also exteriorly by kindness, mildness, modesty, continence and chastity. Note: Only eleven fruits are mentioned: The twelfth is charity, in which the others are contained.
- II. Over the Eight Evangelical Beatitudes - Chapter 19

When divine dilection leads us to base all our glory on it as the crown of our honor then it is also most desirable beatitude and felicity. It assures us of felicity in the life to come and also in this life enriches us with a contentment of inestimable value. This contentment is so strong that all the waters of tribulation cannot quench it. It rises above and is enriched by all that might disturb it as listed in the eight beatitudes. Holy dilection is a virtue, a gift, a fruit, and a beatitude. As a virtue it makes us obedient to the exterior inspirations God gives us by His commandments and counsels, in fulfillment of which we practice all the virtues. As a gift, dilection makes us docile to interior inspirations. These are God's secret commandments and counsels, and in their fulfillment the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are employed. As a fruit in our practice of the devout life, it gives us great relish and pleasure. As a beatitude, it enables us to accept affronts as the greatest of favors and a unique honor. .

Questions

1. Where do we find in the Bible the fruits of the Holy Spirit described?
2. Are they the only fruits of the Holy Spirit?
3. What is the relationship between them and charity?
4. How would you explain the difference between the Fruits of the Holy Spirit and the beatitudes?

Reflections

1. We are often told that by their fruits you will know them. Do you see in yourself the fruits of the Holy Spirit?
2. When charity so possesses us that tribulations only enhance it then we are blessed. How do you handle the tribulations of life?
3. Muller: p. 73-75. The identity St. Francis sees between Charity and the Fruits of the Holy Spirit was one reason why he insisted that Joy must characterize our spiritual life.
4. Read Gal. 5:22,23.
5. Read Matt. 5:3-12; Luke 6:20-23.

Unit 6: The Relation of Charity to the Passions and Affections of the Soul and Especially to Sadness. Chapters 20-21

- I. The Passions In Genera! - Chap. 20
 - A. Love is the life of the soul. It gives to the soul whatever movements it has. All our affections follow our love.
 - B. When divine love reigns in our hearts, it:
 1. brings into subjection all other loves possessed by the will, and consequently all its affections, since they naturally follow love;
 2. tames sensual love and reduces it to obedience .
 - C. The Struggle:
 1. Origin: Love of God and self love have great antipathy and opposition to one another and continually struggle within our heart.
 2. Stratagems :
 - a. We must have courage, hoping in the words of our Lord who promises victory for His love. It has been ordained that of the two loves in our heart, the sensual shall serve the spiritual, that is, self-love shall serve love of God.

Note: cf. Langellan pp. 100 & sq. Sensuous love is part of self-love inclining us to seek self. It is this element in self-love that he treats of here.
 - b. Victory will be ours when love is armed and being thus made zealous shall by mortification subdue our passions; and even more so when in heaven beatified love shall possess our soul in peace.
 3. Tactics
 - a. How subdue the passions? By assigning a good purpose to our passions, so that they take on the quality of virtues.
 - b. How assign a good purpose? Either by opposing contrary passions to them or by setting up a stronger affections of the same kind. St. Francis gives many examples.
- II. Sadness - Chapter 21
 - A. It is difficult to graft anger and despair on charity. He spoke elsewhere of what can be done about anger. Despair could be reduced to legitimate self-distrust or to a conviction of the vanity and inconstancy of worldly promises and helps.
 - B. Sadness is as difficult to graft on charity, since it is opposed to joy, the second of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. St. Paul distinguishes two types of sadness.
 - C. Types of sadness
 1. According to God
 - a. That employed by sinners in repentance;
 - b. by the good in compassion over their neighbors temporal misfortunes;

- c. by the perfect, to deplore the spiritual calamities that befall men's souls.
2. According to the world
 - a. That which comes from the infernal enemy who by gloomy suggestions darkens the understanding, weakens the will and disturbs the entire soul.
 - b. Or from a man's melancholic temperament. Such sadness is not vicious, but the enemy uses it to prepare a thousand temptations.
 - c. Or from the misfortunes of life.
- D. How to graft sadness on Charity
1. First Type - According to God.
 - a. In true repentance there is a sadness, but a sadness that does not crush the heart but lifts it up by prayer and hope and causes in it movements of fervent devotion.
 - b. Find consolation in action to help the suffering.
 - c. Again, find consolation in action and in reparation made to the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart.
 2. According to the World
 - a. If it comes from temptation we must open our heart to our Spiritual Director.
 - b. If natural to us, we must repulse it by opposing its movements, turning it aside by practices suitable to our purpose and using such remedies and ways of life as physicians judge fitting.
 - c. If it results from misinformation, we must read Book 8 so as to see how beneficial suffering can be.
 3. In all types. we may be excused for not being always in good spirits, for no one has such control over cheerfulness as to be cheerful at will. But it is inexcusable for us not to be pleasant, agreeable and considerate at all times.

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Questions

1. Why can love of God achieve dominion over all movements of the soul?
2. Will it be easy to achieve that dominion? From whence shall come the main opposition? How can it achieve victory over the opposition?
3. St. Francis gives two ways in which the passions can be brought into subjection. Explain the two ways and give examples.
4. Why is sadness opposed to Charity?
5. Does it always come from a bad source?
6. How are we to handle it?

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Reflections

1. Read Muller p. 65-73. Muller considers Optimism and Joy an outstanding characteristic of Salesian Spiritual Life.
2. Read again St. Francis' teachings on Sadness in the Introduction, Book 4, chapter 14.
3. Have you been bothered by sadness? Has it harmed your spiritual life?
4. Where are you in the struggle against self love? Against sadness, if it bothers you?
5. Are there any particular passions or affections against which you must struggle? Which of the two methods described by St. Francis are you using?
6. Psalms 25 & 42. The Lord is our help, our secure refuge in the struggle.
7. Consider David, St. Peter and St. Mary Magdalen as examples of sorrow that comes from God.
8. 2 Cor. 7:8-13. The good effects of sadness that comes from God.

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END UNIT 6 - BOOK XI

BOOK XIIPractical Counsels on Progress in the Love of God**Unit 1: The Necessary Condition for Progress: namely, and Insatiable Desire to Love God - Chapters 1 & 2**

- I. Does not depend on a loving disposition - Chapter 1
 - A. Sacred Love is not apportioned in consequence of any natural disposition to love still less in virtue of it, nor is it distributed among men according to their natural qualities and abilities. c.f. the Pelagian heresy.
 - B. Reason: The Love of God ~ speak of is a supernatural love which God in His goodness pours into our hearts, and which resides in the highest point of the soul, a point above all the rest of the soul and independent of every natural disposition.
 - C. Evaluation of a loving disposition
 1. It makes souls more ready to desire to love God.
 2. When purified, it increases holy dilection, and spreads it throughout the soul, from which proceeds a pleasant gentleness.
 3. The danger is that such souls are very inclined to fix their affection on attractive creatures.
 - D. Evaluation of a non-loving disposition.
 1. Such a heart can love equally as well, with equal love from God.
 2. It can love more solidly and perfectly.
 3. The outward manifestations will not re as pleasing.
 - E. Conclusion:
It matters little what natural disposition we have when there is a question of a love that is supernatural and practiced solely in a supernatural manner.
- II. What it does depend on: a true desire to love God - Chapter 2
 - A. We must have an insatiable desire to love God, so as always to add love to love.
 - B. As regards natural appetites there are two levels in man: the intellectual, and the sensual. The intellectual can desire food, for instance, knowing its delight and necessity; the sensual might reject it, because of sickness, for instance. As regards the love of God, this is not possible; the desire and the appetite are both in the sane faculty, the will. When we desire God. therefore, we have a true hunger for Him. This hunger does not produce the growth; it only makes it possible. God gives the growth by pouring in His love.
 - C. Spiritual avarice, whereby we sigh for the pure gold of Sacred Love, is the root of all good. One who truly desires love truly seeks it; he who truly seeks it, finds it; he who truly finds it, has found the fountain of love.

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Questions

1. Why does the love of God not depend on a naturally loving disposition? Are there advantages in having such a disposition?

2. As regards growth in the love of God, are there advantages in not having a naturally loving disposition?
3. As regards many of the objectives in man's life, the desire to obtain an objective is not always followed by action to obtain it. Why is this so? Why is this not so, as regards a true desire to love God?
4. Who gives the growth? What does man contribute?

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Reflections

1. How true is it that we must work at growing in love! We must use well the means that can intensify our desire for God. We must pray for the help to run after the Lord.
2. Ps. 119:17-24; Ps. 42:1-6; Prov. 8:33-36. The hunger for God.
3. Matt. 7:7-11. God will satisfy our desire for Him. Also "if anyone loves Me, My Father will love him, and We will come and make our dwelling with him."
4. Muller. The Way of Perfection: pgs. 104-110. We grow in love by loving.

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END UNIT 1 - BOOK XII

Unit 2: What is Contrary and What is Not Contrary to this Insatiable Desire - Chapters 3-5

- I. It is necessary to restrict other desires ~ - Chapter 3
 - A. The Difficulty
 1. Those souls who continually multiply desires, plans and projects never desire holy love of heaven as they ought, nor can they properly sense the amorous track and scent of the Beloved.
 2. If a soul that strives after divine love is deeply plunged into earthly, temporal affairs, it will flower slowly and with difficulty.
 - B. The Solution
 1. Souls who desire for above all to love God restrain their mind from thinking about worldly things so as to employ it more ardently in meditation on divine things. It remains in the world only in so far as its duties require.
 2. One who desires a thing but does not desire it because of God, thereby desires God the less. A devout soul seeks God in everything.
 3. Whoever aims at God's love must sedulously reserve to it his leisure, his mind and his affections.
- II. Our Lawful Occupations do not interfere with this concentration on God. Chapter 4
 - A. Principle: Foolish, vain, unneeded concerns distract us from the love of God. True and lawful exercises of our vocation do not. Reason: Such exercises are God's will for us.
 - B. The Danger: We can become enslaved even by lawful affairs. This danger is so real that many spiritual directors demand a flight from the world. Saint Francis did not. He teaches we can be safe if we:
 1. Keep our heart in the right place. He cites Saint Bernard, as a man of many worldly affairs, who did not take on that of the surrounding place, but always remained wholly united to God, always white in purity, always red with charity, and always filled with humility. In the chapters that follow, Saint Francis will show how to maintain this union.
 2. Do not take unnecessary risks. God takes care of those who do not go to court, the palace or war except as duty demands. In such case a man should be neither so timid as to abandon good and lawful tasks by not going there, nor so rash and presumptuous as to go or stay there without express demand of duty and business.
 - C. An example of this teaching - Ch.5

He relates that Saint Francis of Rome several times left the recitation of the Office of Our Lady to respond to a duty. When she returned the last time she found that the verse she had been reciting had been finished in gold by an angel. He comments: You see that tasks required according to each person's vocation do not lessen divine love but increase it, and gild it as if it were a work of devotion.

Questions

1. What weakens the concentration on God?
2. Why do lawful occupations not necessarily interfere with this concentration? Can they? How avoid the danger?

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Reflections

1. Our Lord has told us that we cannot love God and mammon. Matt. 6:24.
2. The world can help us to make our lives God-centered, but it can lead us also to make our lives very self-centered.
3. Ps. 73:23-28. God alone satisfies the heart.
4. We must listen to Brother Giles' exhortation to make our relationship with God a matter of "One to one, one to One".

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END UNIT 2 - BOOK XII

Unit 3: How to Keep Our Lives God-centered in the Midst of Lawful Occupations. Chapters 6-9

- I. Not by yearning to do great things for God, but by making the ordinary things of life acts of love for Him - Ch.6
 - A. Imaginary ardor very often feed a vain hidden self-esteem at the very bottom of our hearts. Great deeds may not always come our way, but at all times we can do little deeds with perfection, that is, with great love.
 - B. Certain it is that in little, lowly exercises of devotion charity is not only practiced more frequently but for the most part more humbly as well, and as a consequence more usefully and holily.

II. How to make our acts true acts of love for God – Chapter 7

Using the comparison of valid coins, he points out that our acts must fulfill three conditions if they are to purchase heaven for us.

- A. The coin must be of the proper metal. Our act must be a good act in itself, or at least an indifferent act.
- B. The coin must have the proper weight. The good act must be done in the state of grace, i.e., adorned with charity.
- C. The coin must have the proper stamp. The act must be done with a good intention, i.e., in some way intended to please God.

Saint Francis presupposes the first two conditions and concentrates on showing how to purify our intention, i.e., to fix it more completely on God. He starts with the least acceptable degree and progresses to the more loving.

1. An implicit intention - Ch.8

Even though we do not have an explicit and formal intention to do each work for God, yet that intention is implicitly contained in the habit of most Holy Charity - i.e., the state of grace.

2. A more explicit intention. You must not be content only to possess charity and along with it the practice of the virtues: You must provide to practice them by and for charity, so that they may be rightly attributed to it. This is done in different ways.

a. By a general self-oblation to God. - Chapter 8

The motive of divine charity pours forth an influence of particular perfection on the virtuous actions of those who have especially dedicated themselves to serve God forever.

b. By the Morning Offering - Chapter 9 .

To make truly good progress in devotion it is not only necessary at the beginning of our conversion and every year thereafter to direct our life and all our actions to God, but it is also necessary to offer them to Him every day in keeping with the exercise we taught Philothea.

c. By aspirations and spiritual retirements - Chapter 9

At hundreds of times during the day let us join our life to God's love by the practice of saying ejaculatory prayers, of lifting up our heart, and going into spiritual retirement.

d. The Direction of Intention - Chapter 9

The exercise of aspirations is most profitable for the ordinary, little actions of life. For more important works, let us make the direction of intention: "My God grant In: the help of Thy grace. I offer to Thy eternal goodness all the good I may do in this action. I promise to bear with interior peace and meekness of heart all the trials and tribulations I may meet with therein as coming from Thy eternal goodness, whose only intention is to make me merit by such action so as to reward me afterwards out of the abundance of Thy love!"

If the action is long, or the difficulties great, we must very frequently repeat this exercise.

Oh God, what treasures there are in this practice!

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Questions

1. In the Introduction St. Francis tells us that we are to serve God in great ways and in small ways. What special value does he see in the small ways?
2. Explain in your own words how we can make our actions acts of love for God.

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Reflections

1. What a consolation to know that even the humblest of actions can become great acts of love for God! We see in this teaching why St. Francis prized so highly the little virtues – the humble flowers that grow at the foot of the cross.
2. How faithful have you been to your morning exercise, to the practice of ejaculations, to the direction-of-intention. Such practices add so much love for God to what we do.
3. Matt. 10:42. The value of even a cup of cold water. Also Matt. 25: 21-23 the reward of being dependable in small matters.
4. 1 Cor. 10:31-33. Whatever you do, do all for the glory of God. Also Col. 3:17.

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END UNIT 3 - BOOK XII

Unit 4: Union with God - Chps.10-12

I. The Union Achieved By Effective Love - Chapter 10

Using the history of Abraham, he demonstrates the sacrifices one must make to keep one's desires fixed on the Lord.

- A. At the command of God, Abraham left country, kinsfolk and his father's house, to journey into a strange land. we must be prepared to sacrifice even the strongest natural affections.
- B. He was also prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac; and Isaac, in his turn, was willing to be sacrificed. "Ah, Lord Jesus, when shall it be that having sacrificed to you all that we have, we shall immolate to you all that we are? When shall we offer to you as a holocaust our own free will, the only child of our Spirit? When shall we bind it and lay it upon the funeral pyre that is your cross, your thorns and your lance, so that like a little lamb, it may be a victim pleasing to your good pleasure?"

It is this sacrifice that makes us one with God, here and hereafter.

II. The Union Achieved By Affective Love - Chapter 11

A. The motives for loving God

1. God's goodness considered in itself;
2. God's natural providence over us in our creation and conservation.
3. God's supernatural providence over us and of the redemption he has prepared for us;
4. God's care to furnish each one of us all the graces and helps required for our salvation;
5. The eternal glory His divine goodness has provided for us. It is the crown of God's benefits to us.

B. How to draw from these motives a deep, powerful, fiery love. Ch. 12

1. Method

Apply these motives to ourselves in particular. He has loved me such as I am, and has delivered Himself to His passion for me.

2. Application

- a. Consider God's benefits in their original, eternal source. From the depths of His eternity God thought thoughts of benediction in my behalf.
- b. Consider God's benefits in their second, their meritorious source. The Savior's soul knew all of us by name and surname. On the day of His passion He sent up to His Father thoughts of love for each one of us. He merited salvation, not only for mankind in general, but for each one in particular.

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Questions

1. For the development of Chapter 10, review Books 8 & 0 of the Treatise.

2. Chapters 10 & 11 are developed in Books 6 & 7 of the Treatise. The two chapters are very helpful in making our prayers more affective. The emphasis on the personal relationship is very Salesian.

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Reflections

1. The story of Abraham has much to teach us on the ways of God and our surrender to Him. Reflect on it often.
2. How wonderful to know that I was in the mind of God from all eternity, and in the mind of Christ during His passion.

†

END UNIT 4 - BOOK XII

Unit 5: The Mount of Love - Chapter 13

- I. Next to God's goodness considered in itself, the motive of the Savior's death will be the most powerful to ravish the blessed spirits in the love of God.
- II. Calvary is the Mount of Love. All love that does not take its origin from the Savior's passion is foolish and perilous. Love and death are so mingled in the Savior's passion that we cannot have the one in our hearts without the other.

To die - and to love. To die to all other loves in order to live in Jesus' love, so that we may not die eternally. But that we may live in Your eternal love, O Savior of our souls, we sing eternally, "Live Jesus".

†

Here affective and effective love become one. On Calvary we find the strength and the motivation for that complete surrender that can make us one with God. In Christ it can be done. Live Jesus . May we walk the roads of life with Him so as to be able to ascend with Him to our calvaries.

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END UNIT 5 - BOOK XII

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END OF VOLUMES I AND II OF THE TREATISE ON THE LOVE OF GOD