

THE POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION OF THE
RELIGIOUS LIFE
TO THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

BY

ROBERT STEPHEN CLUCAS

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TUTOR : Professor W.D. Maxwell, Ph.D., D.D.

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SUMMARY OF THESIS

The Positive Contribution of the Religious Life to the Life of the Church as a Whole.

- Preface Presuppositions of an Anglican, with particular view of Ministry, Bible, Church, and Sacraments. Presupposition as regards Friendship. Acknowledgment of Influence of C.S. Lewis.
- Chapter One Prejudices from Outside. The Old Prejudices, their causes and historical foundation. New Prejudices in the present-day world.
- Chapter Two. Misunderstandings from Within. The Religious Life as a Higher way of perfection. False view of Detachment. Celibacy of the Priesthood. Correctives to those misunderstandings.
- Chapter Three The Temporal and the Temporary. Contributions which Religious Life makes continually in a Fallen World. The Temporary Contributions made at different times.
- Chapter Four The Eternal and the Inward. Eternal aspects of the Threefold vow and of the worship of Community Life. Contribution of Religious throughout the ages to Ascetic and Mystical Theology, which builds up inner life of the Christian.
- Chapter Five Conclusions and Speculations. Re-examination of Definition of the Religious Life. Side developments of the Religious Life. Three Protestant Communities. The Religious Life and Present-day problems.

P R E F A C E

The rebirth and growth of Religious Communities within the Anglican Communion during the past century,⁽¹⁾ and experiments and beginnings of the Religious Life in other communions owing no allegiance to the Pope, are evidence of a quickening interest in, and appreciation of this form of the dedicated life among Christians of different traditions and diverse doctrinal standpoints.⁽²⁾

In some form or other, the Religious Life is a feature of all the great religions of the world and⁽³⁾ this shows us that it is at least an universally recognised method of approach in man's search for God. The long history of the Religious Life within the Christian Church, and its sudden flowering and resurgence in different epochs of the Church's History, indicate, if we believe that the Holy Spirit guides the Church, that this form of approach to God is approved by God, and ordained by Him, for in the Church this approach is a "baptised" approach. Although the approach may be similar in many respects to the monasticism of other Faiths, yet it is in essence unique, because it is an approach through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The purpose of this book is to show that the Religious Life is an integral part of the Church's life and to enquire into the nature of its contribution to the life of the Church as a part benefitting the whole. A lesser, but important, aim will be to show that any idea of the Religious life as an aristocracy within the Church must be instantly dispelled, as destructive of the Church's understanding of her own nature.

No book can be written without certain presuppositions. Even if we attempt to start with a basic "Cogito, ergo sum" inevitably unconscious⁽⁴⁾

presuppositions will creep into our work. This need not depress us, for Alan Richardson has shown that complete objectivity is not only impossible but undesirable in Theology, which is the most concrete of the Sciences. (5)

Nevertheless, it is desirable that we should be aware, in so far as it is humanly possible, what are our main presuppositions. These I shall endeavour to describe, so that readers may not weary themselves by regarding some things as unwarranted conclusions which are in fact basic presuppositions which underlie the whole of this book.

First, I write as a Christian, accepting the central fact of Christian Faith that Jesus is Saviour, (around this fact all Christian creeds are built) and believing that the whole duty of man is summed up ⁱⁿ the law "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind: this is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matt 22: 37-9). Secondly, I write as an Anglican, with a particular view of the Bible, the Church, the Ministry, and the Sacraments, which I believe to be both Biblical and Catholic, or rather, Biblical and therefore Catholic, Catholic and therefore Biblical. (6)

The Bible, because it is the record of the Revelation of God to men, a record of His mighty acts in history, culminating in the Death and Resurrection of God incarnate, and because it is established as a canon (7) of Holy Scripture by the Church, is, for the Christian, the supreme authority on doctrine and morals, and it therefore yields a standard by which the Religious Life

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throughout the ages may be judged, so that its positive contribution to the life of the Church may be assessed.

The Church is the interpreter of Holy Scripture, guided by the Holy Spirit. Although the Church is liable to err, it can never completely succumb to error, sin, or evil, because of the promise given by Christ that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matt. 16: 18.)

The nature of the Church is best understood by the names and metaphors used of her in Holy Scripture : The New Israel, the Bride of Christ, the Body of Christ. Saint Paul's metaphor, which is more than metaphor, of a Body, with members, joined to their head, who is Christ, gives us many insights, as we meditate upon it, into the nature of the Church. (8) These insights have influenced and coloured and guided much of the theological thought and conclusions of this book.

The ministry, in apostolic succession, and the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion and, as is implied in the first phrase, of Holy Order, are part of the essential structure of the Church. (9) Within Anglicanism it is permissible to hold three views on the relation of the Episcopacy to the Church. One, held by most Anglo-Catholics, is that it is of the "esse" of the Church, that is, part of the essential nature of the Church, and that without it, no organized group of Christians can call themselves 'The Church' (10) The older school of Evangelicals ^{AND} ~~OF~~ 'Low Church'-men believed that Episcopacy was of the "Bene esse" of the Church, that is, for the well-being of the Church, the most useful form of government, but dispensable (11) A

more recent view is that Episcopacy is of the Plena Esse of the Church, that is necessary to the fullness of the Church (12) While it does not unchurch non-episcopal denominations it maintains that one of the marks of a reunited Christendom will be the historic episcopacy (13) The main thesis of this work is that a similar position must be held about the religious life. It is part of the "plena esse" (full essence or being) of the Church. We do not need to decide that the Church without the Religious Life ceases to be the Church, but we can maintain that it belongs to the "Plena esse" or at the very least, the "Bene esse" of the Church. In other words, that the Religious Life is important to the health and fullness of the Church.

There is one other presupposition, basic assumption, or category to be admitted. It is difficult to know what to call it, because it is the psychological motive which has led ^{to} and influenced much of my research. Friendship has always played a vital part in my life, and early in my Theological reading I encountered books, such as "The Imitation of Christ" which taught that close personal friendships were dangerous and to be avoided by the Christian seeking perfection, and (14) seemed to teach that an uninvolved, passionless charity was the highest form of Love. This set up a conflict in my life, because I empirically knew the value and goodness of friendship, yet wished to be an obedient son of the Church, which seemed to forbid the friendship I enjoyed. Thus I sought a Theological and rational vindication of what I so heartily desired to be true. I believe I have found it. If this be rationalisation, then this whole book is an example of it. But I do not believe that the hope of one answer

to a problem need affect the honesty and integrity of the search for an answer, for the enquirer does not merely desire a warm and comfortable reply "you are so right" but that the answer be true, and fundamentally integrated with all his ~~the~~ological thought which is centred in Jesus Christ, the Word made Flesh.

? But the principle of what has just been said has a wider application. The ~~the~~ologist knows the answer before he starts his ~~the~~ology, for the final and complete answer to every ~~the~~ological question lies in the fact that Jesus is Saviour, and it is committal to this central fact of human existence which is the pre-condition of any ~~the~~ology.

The method I have used in this thesis is one of deduction rather than induction. An historical approach and an inductive method could lead to a variety of conclusions about the necessity and importance of the Religious Life, and the main principles governing it, and these conclusions could be quite wrong. For instance, it is true that throughout the history of the Religious Life, from the Anchorites to the Anglican Community of the Resurrection,⁽¹⁵⁾ the idea that Religious are the aristocracy of the Church, following the "Higher pathway" has repeatedly been held by writers of great reputation, and from this it would be possible, in examining the different writings on the Religious Life, to conclude that this eclecticism was the key to the understanding of the Religious Life, and because it is incompatible with the ethics of the New Testament, a further conclusion would be that the Religious Life is an accretion, a cancerous growth having a life of its own within the life of the Church, but not part and parcel of it. A similar inductive approach could lead to a rejection of the ministry and of the mystics

within Christendom, because unworthy, self-aggrandizing ideas of the ministry have been frequently held, and the mystics have frequently been misunderstood and possibly have themselves misunderstood the true nature of their communion with God. Thus an inductive approach has been rejected, because the maze of Church history is too vast for anyone to attempt to wander through with the hope of reaching the gate of understanding without a golden thread to guide. The thread that has guided my research is the belief that the Holy Spirit is both an ever-present possession, and the ever-present governor of the Church, leading her into all truth. The fact that the Religious Life has existed in the Church throughout the ages is sufficient evidence that it is an integral part of the Church's life, guided and nourished by the Holy Spirit. (6) I have looked to the Bible, and especially to the New Testament for the norms which govern the Religious life, and the key to the interpretation of its function within the Church, and most particularly I have looked for the norms and the key in the life and teaching and example of our Lord.

It is true that the study of the development of Religious Orders in the Church helps us to find the guiding principles of the Religious Life within the New Testament, and thus far our research is inductive, but once they are established, they become the standard by which all forms of the Religious Life must be judged, and other writings, no matter how closely reasoned they may be, nor by what venerable authors they may be written, must be rejected as standards, and departures from the true norm, if they are incompatible with the teaching of the Bible.

Finally, acknowledgements. I will not list the authors who have clarified my thinking on this subject, because I hope that the footnotes and Bibliography will do this adequately, although it is inevitable that some names, whose owners have impressed their thinking on my mind during thirteen years of theological reading, will be forgotten. But there is one acknowledgment I must make - my debt to C. S. Lewis, whose books I have read and re-read over the past twelve years. If at times phrases or whole sentences from his works appear in this book, it will not be conscious plagiarism: it will be because his books have largely become the warp upon which the weft of my thinking has been woven. This of course does not make him responsible for any conclusions which may be drawn in the following pages, for, as far as I am aware, he has not written a sentence on the specific subject which now engages our attention.

T H A N K S

I am most grateful to my friends Mr T.S. Verryn B.A.,L.Th. and Mr A.R. Jones for helping me ^{to} get the footnotes and bibliography into order.

FOOTNOTES OF PREFACE

- (1) See "The Call of the Cloister" by Peter F. Anson, S.P.C.K. 1955 and "Guide to the Religious Communities of the Anglican Communion" issued by The Advisory Council on Religious Communities, Mowbrays 1955 ed.
- (2) The Iona Community, though not a Religious Community on traditional lines is an experiment in this direction in the Church of Scotland. On the Continent, there is a movement begun in the French Protestant Church known as Communauté de Taizé at Somme Loire, under the lead of Max Thurian, and also the German Lutherans have a woman's community growing up since 1947 at Darmstadt under Dr Klara Schlink and Erika Maddaus - now Mother Martyria and Mother Basilea. See article in Time of Sept. 9, 1957. pp 37, 38.
- (3) Present day facts will be too familiar with the reader to need repeating, or to need much elaboration. It is sufficient to mention the Buddhist monks and the widespread monastic system of Tibet, with the Anchorites that are found there, and the Hindu Anchorites of India. In earlier times we have the "Schools of the Prophets" of Palestine, and the Philosophical Communities as were formed after the great age of Greek Philosophy had passed. The Vestal Virgins of Rome are another example.
- (4) "I think, therefore I am" Bertrand Russell points out in his book "A History of Western Philosophy" (George Allen and Unwin, London 1946) that Descartes, who invented the phrase as the basis of his Philosophy unconsciously accepted the categories of scholasticism, and so was not true to his own first principle.

(5) Christian Apologetics by Alan Richardson, S.C.M. London (Fourth Impress. 1950). In this book Canon Richardson shows that even in Physics and Mathematics, there are inevitable presuppositions, and that as the Sciences become less abstract, and impinge more and more on the personal life of man, categories of Value, Mind, and others are essential to differing Scientific disciplines as they develop. Revelation, he says, is the category of Christian Theology. Why objectivity is undesirable is because certain things can only be understood from within, and not from without. This is a new way of saying what St Augustine said long ago "Solvitur ambulando" - or Our Lord's words "They that do the will shall know of the Doctrine".

(6) For details regarding this Anglican viewpoint, the reader is referred to the 39 Articles at the back of the Book of Common Prayer, particularly Articles VI, VII, XIX, XX-XXii, XXiii, XXXVI, XXV, XXVI, XXVII, XXVIII-XXXI, and the relevant pages in F.J. Bicknell's "Theological Introduction to the 39 Articles". Also to the Prayer Book as a whole, and the Prayer Book Catechism. Also the various reports on Lambeth Conferences. However, an Anglican view is perhaps something that can best be understood from within, and a bibliography, though helpful, cannot be completely adequate.

I have stressed the unity of Catholic and Biblical because some Authors and thinkers make a false dichotomy between these words, and give a false meaning to both words.

(7) Canon - "The word which meant originally a "reed" or "cane", later "a measuring rod" and so a "standard" or "rule", signifies here the sacred

books accepted by the Church as authoritative in matters of faith and life." (A.M.Hunter: "Introducing the New Testament", S.C.M. London, Third Edition March 1947) The question of the authority of the Bible is an intricate one for the student who accepts the results of modern criticism. No fundamentalist position is adopted in this book, although appearances may be to the contrary. The Thirty Nine Articles lays down that the Church may not "expound one place of scripture that it be repugnant to another" (Article XX) yet at times we are forced to reject (as Luther did when he called the Epistle of St James an epistle of straw) some passages because they are not in keeping with the whole. This is not the place to enter into a thorough discussion of the authority of Holy Scripture, but here is a brief outline along the lines of which, it is suggested, a solution might be found:- Christ is the absolute authority who in His incarnate life speaks from within the situation to the situation. This speaking, and the background of God's activity in history against which it is spoken, is recorded in the Bible for the purpose of speaking to the situation, and it is recorded by men who are members of the Church, the body of Christ, which is an extension of the Incarnation. It is accepted as a canon (a measure) by the Church, so that it has a permanent, but not absolute (in the sense that Christ's authority is absolute) authority in speaking to the Church and the world in all situations. This is because its focal point is The Incarnation which continues. But because the Church (which is the extension of the Incarnation) comprises sinful men, there must

exist a constant tension, so that though Absolute truth is constantly being presented in human terms, it cannot be completely apprehended even in human terms, until the consummation of all things.

- (8) See "The Gospel and the Catholic Church" by A.M.Ramsay for a book that shows a profound insight into the nature of the Church.
- (9) In other words, they are part of the Ideal nature of the Church militant. We must not unchurch non-episcopal denominations, for two reasons. One, because the historical situation in which non-episcopal groups emerged may have demanded a lowering of the ideal, because of sin or heresy maintained resolutely by that part of the Church which retained the historic episcopate. Two, because it is clear that one result of the recent discussions, re-examination and reassessment of the relation between Confirmation and Baptism is going to be an investigation into the nature of the ministry.

Only three sacraments have been mentioned, not the traditional seven, because it is felt that the number seven is arbitrary, and influenced by the magic completeness associated with the number seven. Baptism and Confirmation now appear to many theologians to be two sides of the one Sacrament, rather than two sacraments. It is also doubtful whether we should include the making of deacons, ordaining of Priests, and consecration of Bishops all under one Sacrament, if we believe that a distinct gift of the Holy Spirit is given in each. The list of seven also excludes the Anointing of Kings, a sacrament of the Old Israel, continued in the New Israel, although it includes

marriage which is a 'natural' sacrament. Also it is obvious that certain sacraments, such as marriage or unction, are not essential to every Christian, or to any particular Christian community at any given time. Because the power to authoritatively declare God's forgiveness is so much a part of the ^SGo^Sp^Sel of Jesus Christ, at the heart of the Church's message, it is unnecessary to include auricular confession, which is one of the ways in which the declaration is made. See "Medieval Handbooks of Penance" McNeill and Gamer (Columbia University Records of Civilization) (No XXIX) Col. ^Univ. Press N.Y. 1939. Introduction, especially page 16.

- (10) See the various essays in the book "Apostolic Ministry" edited by K.F.Kirk.
- (11) For a fairly recent and influential statement of this view see A.C. Headlam's Bampton Lectures of 1920, pp 44, 88 & 89.
- (12) See "The Gospel and the Catholic Church" pp 222-223 and O.C. Quick: "Doctrines of the Creed" pp 340-341.
- (13) There has already been a long discussion on the nature of the ministry, and a list of books on the subject is appended at the end of this note. I am not sufficiently well-versed in this vitally important subject to make any assessment, but I believe a better understanding of the nature of the ministry of the Old Testament will provide us with some of the most important and necessary insights into our understanding of the Ministry of the New Israel; and also that whether the essential ministry of the Church is Bishops or Presbyter-Bishops, it is clear that if it is Presbyter-Bishops the ordaining function was soon

delegated in the pre-nicene Church to one of their number, who became known as The Bishop, while the rest were known as presbyters or Priests, so that Bishops, as we now know them, have been the ordaining ministry in the greater part of the Church for most of its life, and any departure from this, without the consent of a General Council, is at least highly irregular, so that while we may regard the ministries of non-episcopal Churches as valid, we cannot regard them as regular. Further, I believe that part of the Apostles function, as witnesses to the Resurrection, was unique, and this cannot be transmitted to a line of Bishops. If it is delegated at all, it is delegated to the whole Church, which exists as a corporate witness to the Resurrection throughout the ages.

For further reading see:-

The Apostolic Ministry - K.Kirk - editor.

The Church's Ministry - T.W. Manson, Hodder and Stoughton, London 1948.

The Gospel and the Catholic Church - Ramsay
Corpus Christi, and Christ, The Christian and the Church, F.L. Mascall.

Doctrines of the Creed : O.C. Quick

- (14) Examples of this can be seen in Book 1, Chs. 8, 10 and 20, but their effect is somewhat balanced by Chapters such as 16 and 17.
- (15) See footnotes in Chapter 2.
- (16) Although Tertullian, who himself recommends rather fearsome asceticism for all Christians does say : "Among us are no Brahmin or Indian Gymnosophists, no forest hermits or anchorites", nevertheless there are plenty of indications that long before his time, in New Testament days, the

ideals of the Religious life were, in embryonic form, present in the Church. St John the Baptist was a desert solitary. St Paul remained celibate. We hear of the special vocation of widows", and read, in Acts 4: 32 ff. of a very early attempt to live in community.

CHAPTER ONE

PREJUDICES FROM OUTSIDE

THE OLD PREJUDICES

The first two chapters of this book are concerned with clearing and elucidating misconceptions which prevent a proper understanding of the function of the Religious Life within the Church. Part of these misconceptions come from within the Religious Life itself, and appear on the pages of some of the most noted scholars, mystics, and saints who have been members of Religious communities, but the more obvious misunderstandings come from outside and it is with these prejudices that this chapter will attempt to deal.

When I was a little boy I was surrounded by a militant protestantism which taught me to regard the Roman Catholic Church as something dark, mysterious, and evil. I was told of nuns who paced around the grounds outside their monastery reciting the rosary, and the thought of these dark clothed figures reciting what was to me a horrible mumbo-jumbo filled me with dread. At that stage in my life, if anyone had tried to impress on me that these nuns were Christian women, engaged in a Christian occupation, it would have been for me a quite impossible conception.

The root causes of my fear were prejudice and ignorance, and a dread of the unknowable, which is common to man, and which so easily turns into hatred. I regarded the Roman Catholic Church as a citadel of closely guarded secrets, secrets which the uninitiate would never know, and initiation as a weird rite, horrible beyond imagining. Perhaps I was an over-

imaginative child, but I think that the same causes lie at the root of the widespread antipathy both for the Roman Catholic Church, and the Religious Life.

The prejudice against "Popery" and against monks and nuns and friars (and even solitaries)⁽¹⁾ is a carefully nurtured plant which blossomed at the reformation, but its roots go back further than that. The decadence of Western Christendom under the Pope at the time of the Reformation filled the Reformers with a horror from which reformed Christianity has still to recover. No Counter-Reformation can convince the Protestant ~~Man~~-in-the-street that there has been any change. He grasps at the occasional scandal and parades it as a typical example. Irrationally he will admit that many nuns do a great and good work for the sick and the poor, the aged and the orphaned, yet at the same time he will regard these sisters as the camp-followers of the Priesthood joined with them as the tools and agents of a blood-sucking monster centred in the Papacy. Perhaps the position has changed, for many do not think about religion at all, but there are still those who will talk of the "The Scarlet Woman" and "the beast", and identify them with the Roman Catholic Church, and see in the Pope "the man of sin".⁽²⁾

It is dishonest to attempt to whitewash the history of the Church, and we must admit that there have been periods of great decadence within the life of the Church, periods when present-day prejudice could find a firm foundation in fact. Unfortunately "The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones", and prejudiced attitudes persist, even when their root causes are past evils, and not present facts.

The "Decameron" by Boccaccio, written in 1354

has many stories of monks, friars, and nuns which show them in an ill light. Avarice, lust, and hypocrisy are the three besetting sins of which Boccaccio accuses the members of the Religious orders of his day.⁽³⁾

Geoffrey Chaucer in the "Canterbury Tales" presents us with both good and bad.⁽⁴⁾ That these reflect the sickness of the Church of their day it is useless to deny. In almost every age there have been members of Religious orders who have brought the Religious Life into disrepute, but it is not to minor scandals, but to the periods of decadence and corruption and malpractice on a grand scale that we must look for the beginnings of present-day prejudice. At the Reformation that prejudice hardened, because it was linked in the minds of people whose conscience had recently awakened, with false doctrine, and a corrupt hierarchy, and an accidia in things spiritual which enervated the whole life of the Church.

THEIR HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

If we think of the beginning of Monasticism in terms of St Antony of Egypt's flight to the desert, and the subsequent speedy development of solitaries, and later coenobites in these desert regions,⁽⁵⁾ then it is true that right from the beginning there were scandals among the foundation members of the monastic movement. We have cases of fornication, which is among the chief of the sins imputed to members of Religious houses by the prejudiced layman today. We find that the Rule of St Benedict guards against temptations to homosexual relationships, which shows that lapses in this respect were not uncommon among the early monks.⁽⁶⁾

Later, in the penitentials which had their rise⁽⁷⁾ in the monasteries, and particularly in the celtic monasteries of Ireland, we find lists of sins and the

penances imposed for them. The general impression we gain from them is that sins of witchcraft, fornication, homosexuality, theft, and murder were by no means uncommon, and although the penances imposed for them are extremely long, their relative importance, measured by the length of the penance, seems to vary from age to age, and country to country. We ~~should~~ be more extreme in our attitude to murder today than some of the early penitentials were.⁽⁸⁾ From these sins it is evident that the clergy and monks and nuns were by no means exempt. We read of punishment for nuns who renounce their vows and marry, punishments for men who defile one of these dedicated virgins, and the penances to be imposed on monks who commit homicide, sodomy, of fornication.⁽⁹⁾ But the most important evidence is lacking, and that is that the sins of the Religious were worse than the sins of the ordinary church-folk. The fact that in almost every case, the penance imposed on a monk or cleric is more extreme than that imposed on a layman committing a similar offence, is a possible indication that such sins in Monk or Cleric were both more seriously regarded and less common.

There are, however, scandalous periods in the history of monastic orders, and to these we must turn to discover the basis of modern-day prejudice. A penetrating comment on the ups and downs of monastic life is made by J. C. Robertson in his "History of the Christian Church" :- "In the history of monasticism, decay and reformation are continually alternating. This alternation is a natural result of laying down as a permanent rule for a numerous succession of men the system which has been found to meet the particular circumstances of a few. When the rule has been some time in operation, no test that can be established by requiring a profession of vocation will be found

effectual for the exclusion of unqualified persons; and even where there are the same dispositions which originally gave birth to the rule, and won popularity for it, the difference of times or circumstances may render it no longer suitable as a discipline for them. Hence as a great monk of the twelfth century remarked, it was easier to found new religious societies than to reform the old, moreover, as the poverty and devotion of monks never failed to bring them wealth and honour, the effect of these was too commonly a temptation to abandon the virtues by which they had been procured".⁽¹⁰⁾ One is tempted to include the periods of decadence in the monastic life in the following chapter on "Misunderstandings from within" except that it is impossible to believe that any monk, in the periods when decadence was at its height and most blatant, ever seriously thought that these corruptions were part of the monastic purpose and ideal.

Saint Benedict, in the opening chapter of his rule, mentions the decadent monk "The third kind of monks is that detestable one of the Sarabaites, who not having been tested, as gold in the furnace, by any rule or by the lessons of experience, are as soft and yielding as lead. In their actions they still conform to the standards of the world, so that their tonsure marks them as liars before God. They live in twos or threes, or or even singly, without a shepherd, in their own sheepfolds and not in the Lord's. Their law is their own good pleasure : whatever they think of or choose to do, that they call holy; what they like not, that they regard as unlawful.

The fourth kind of monks are those called Gyrovagues. These spend their whole lives wandering from province to province, staying three days in one monas-

tery and four in another, ever roaming and never stable, given up to their own wills and the allurements of gluttony, and worse in all respects than the Sarabaites.

Of the wretched observance of all these folk it is better to be silent than to speak. Therefore, leaving them on one side, let us proceed with God's help to provide for the strong race of the Genobites."⁽¹¹⁾

From this we can see that even in the beginnings of monasticism there were types of monks who were liable to cause scandal and bring the monastic life into disrepute among the layfolk of the Church.

For a long time after Benedict's organisation of Western Monasticism (though of course Celtic Monasticism developed on different lines, and is almost completely independent of Benedictine influence) scandals were few but eventually corruptions began to creep in, and a new Benedict, Benedict of Aniane, called the second founder of Western Monasticism, was raised up to reform and correct abuses. He was born in 751, entered the monastic life at the age of twenty three, and devoted his life to its reform. That reform was necessary is seen from the comments made by contemporaries. Charlemagne himself blames Abbots for seeking only good singers and readers, without regard to character, and with heavy sarcasm questions whether monks can be regarded as having renounced the world, if they are continually trying to multiply their possessions, by any available means, dangling heaven and hell, God and the Saints before the eyes of poor and rich alike, for the purpose of extortion.⁽¹²⁾

"Abbots, as well as bishops, were addicted to war, to hunting and hawking, to games of chance, to the company of minstrels and jesters. There are many

ordinances against irregularities of this kind - some of them extending to abbesses also and there are frequent complaints of gross immorality among recluses of both sexes, with attempts to restrain such practices". (13)

The decay of the monastic life was apparent in England also, and the sins of drunkenness, riotous living, over-concern in clothing are among those of which the monks are accused, while some nunneries are accused of sexual offences. (14)

Benedict of Aniane did much to reform the abuses, but later in history they reappeared. Throughout Church history, almost from the inception of monasticism, we read of canons and laws enacted by councils and synods, attempting to restrict and control a somewhat turbulent spirit in monasticism, which seems part of its inherent nature, and which is both a strength and a weakness, a glory in some periods of history, and a shame in others. It is equally true that alternating with the restrictive measures imposed by Church authority, we read of enormous privileges and exemptions given to certain orders. There is a parallel here between the Old and the New Israel. Just as in the Old Israel the Prophets, which were essential to the structure of the Old Israel, were at times honoured and at times vilified, and false and true prophet flourished simultaneously, and it was not always easy to separate the wheat from the chaff, so in the New Israel, the Church, the Religious Life has been subjected to much the same treatment, and both good and bad recur.

At the beginning of the tenth century, monasticism had again lapsed into a sorry state. This was not entirely the fault of the monks themselves, because an

evil which had crept in was the taking over by laymen of Abbeys as a possession^s and source of profit. We are told that some of the French Kings granted Abbeys to laymen as hereditary possessions, while other rulers claimed the moneys and profits of the abbeys themselves. Under such conditions decline is almost inevitable, and in "many monasteries the Abbots openly lived with wives or concubines". (15)

Berno, the Abbot of Beaume, and the founder and Abbot of Gigni, began by reforming these two societies, and was asked in 912 by the Duke of Auvergne to found a monastery within the dukedom. He chose Cluny, and thus began the great Cluniac reform, which blossomed under Berno's successor, Odo. The discipline was tightened up considerably, and many minute regulations in regard to eating and keeping silence were enforced. So popular did this reform become that many monasteries attached themselves to Cluny, and men flocked to join the order. By the end of the twelfth century, the number of monasteries in Europe and England connected with Cluny amounted to two thousand. (16)

Throughout this period of reform, there was accompanying it a movement away from allegiance to the local diocesan Bishop to the Pope, so that monasteries were granted exemptions from obedience to their Diocesan. The Bishops did not give in without a struggle, although eventually they submitted. It is difficult to pass judgment on this movement. On the one hand, Bishops were often unfair and interfering, but the movement of the monasteries towards the shelter of the papacy encouraged the tendency towards over centralisation which characterises the Roman Catholic Church today, and which Anglicans deplor^e. Our decision will probably be made in accordance with our judgment as to how far the Papacy was a necessar^y and essential institution for

the maintenance of balance in Medieval Society. Perhaps it is true to say that the monasteries, in striving for freedom from the local authority, which limited their prophetic vocation, in actual fact surrendered a deeper freedom by increasing the bonds which tied them to the Pope, and that this surrender, in later years, throttled protest against the deepest evils of those in higher places. (17)

Unhappily, corruptions eventually crept into the great congregation of Cluny, and in 1122 Pontius, the Abbot, who had had a cardinalate conferred on him, resigned, knowing that he had been accused at Rome of dissipating monastic property. (18) The reply to the corruption of Cluny was the foundation of new orders, among them the order of Grammont and the ~~Cathrusian~~ order, that of Fontevraud, and the famous Cistercian Order, which derives much of its fame from Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. The eleventh century also saw the rise of the Augustine Canons, and the twelfth the Premonstratensian order under Norbert. This period also sees the rise of the Knights Hospitaller and the Knights Templar, a curious development in the religious life to which we must return later.

Unfortunately, the increased power, ~~and~~ popularity, and vigour of the religious life at this time led to increased grants and privileges, such as exemption from tithes, jurisdiction of legates, excommunication^c by anyone except the Pope, interdicts on the country in which the monastery flourished, and an equalising of Abbot and Bishop, so that Abbots were permitted the episcopal ring, gloves, and sandals, and were only bound to attend councils summoned by the Pope himself.

Worse than the true privileges granted was the fact that many monasteries used forgery to advance their pretensions. We are told that "Even Monte Cassino

did not disdain to make use of the forgers' arts".⁽¹⁹⁾ Freedom was sought, not as a necessity for the maintaining of the prophetic spirit of monasticism, but because the desire for power, ~~and~~ importance, and influence were weening the monasteries back from their first renunciation to the pomps and vanities of the world.⁽²⁰⁾

But the quarrels between Abbot and Bishop, and the rivalries of different orders, such as the Cistercian and Cluniac, and even the laxity in keeping the rule of poverty, were not such as to cause scandal among the layfolk, or to become part of the memory of the people, and thus a ground of prejudice. In all, the twelfth century was a healthy period in western monasticism, and we hear little of the grosser scandals that infected the monasteries in earlier periods.⁽²¹⁾

This is not the place to discuss the rise of the great mendicant orders of St Dominic and St Francis, in the early thirteenth century, or the needs that they met in the Church of their day.⁽²²⁾ The later Franciscan "Zelateres" or Spirituals, who hover between heresy and prophecy, will engage our attention in a later chapter, as the types of scandal among them were not of the sort to fix themselves firmly in the minds of the people and to create that fixed and hardened prejudice, the historical roots of which we are now trying to discover. What we must investigate are the abuses which rapidly crept into these orders. Ranke, in his "History of the Popes", has said that at the dawn of the Reformation the Franciscans were "perhaps the most profoundly corrupted of all the orders",⁽²³⁾ and a Benedictine of St Alban's Monastery, Matthew Paris, tells us that the mendicant friars degenerated within twenty-five years of coming to England more than older foundations had degenerated in four centuries.⁽²⁴⁾

The knights Templar were perhaps even swifter in their degeneration. Innocent III, in the early thirteenth century, accused them of using a show of religion "to blind the world to their voluptuousness".⁽²⁵⁾ The loyalty they had to their own order led to a contempt of all other authority, in Church or State, and they had been corrupted by their association with the infidels. "To drink like a Templar" became a proverb.⁽²⁶⁾ Stories were circulated against them, accusing them also of 'unnatural vice'.⁽²⁷⁾ Sir Walter Scott gives us a picture of a dissolute Templar in Sir Brian de Bois Guilbert in his book "Ivanhoe".

Philip the Fair, King of France, conceived a violent antipathy for the order of Templars, and was instrumental in bringing about the dissolution of the order on 3rd April, 1312. The Pope, however, did not condemn the order, but dissolved it as a matter of expediency "not by way of definitive sentence, forasmuch as according to the inquisitions and processes which have been held, we cannot of right pass such a sentence, but by the way of provision or apostolical ordination".⁽²⁸⁾ The guilt or innocency of the order will probably be disputed by successive generations of historians. That vice was present cannot be doubted. We do not know the extent to which it permeated the Templars.

In the accusations brought against the templars, of sexual sin and weird and horrible initiation rites, we can see the beginnings of the fixed prejudice which still taints the modern protestant mind. Here are subjects which have a morbid fascination, and although the Templars were dissolved, it is easy to transfer suspicion from one order to another. The inheritors of this suspicion today are the Religious orders of

the Roman Catholic Church, and the Freemasons, because a veil of secrecy covers both.(29)

The Mendicants rapidly became a thorn in the flesh of both the secular clergy of the universities, and the parish priests of the land. They took over professorships which the seculars regarded as their own special preserves, and undermined the authority of parish priests by preaching and hearing confessions in their territory. These tensions were bound to filter through to the laity, and were probably the cause of prejudice against Professors, Parish Priests, and Friars, for bickering and competition in high places is not likely to bring the parties concerned into greater esteem or repute.(30)

Some of the extremists among the Franciscans wandered around the countryside, and we hear of these roving bands, which remind us of the "Teddy Boys" and "Ducktails" of today, instead of begging for their food as their rule demanded, threatening with clubs any wayfarer they met who did not give what they demanded.

A tract on "The Corrupt state of the Church"⁽³¹⁾ written in the early fifteenth century, tells us that any monk who tried to live according to the rule of his order became an object of derision to other monks, and tells us that nunneries had become places of loose living.

The mendicants were also inveigled^h against because of the luxury of their lives, and some lapsed into gross heresy. A strange fear^{here} of the Franciscans is that often the decline from the standards of their founder were accompanied by an increase in veneration for St Francis which almost deified him, and was wild and fantastic in the extreme. The Dominicans were not to be outdone in this respect by the Franciscans, and

Raymond of Capua, in "The life of St Catherine of Siena" tells us that God the Father produced the eternal Son from His head, and St Dominic from his breast, and that Dominic, as an adopted son stood equal to Jesus Christ, the only Begotten.⁽³²⁾

In England, at the time of the Reformation, all was not well with the monasteries, and no doubt some of the accusations in the 'Black Book', which preceded the dissolution of the monasteries, were founded on fact.⁽³³⁾ The numbers in monasteries and nunneries had fallen off steadily. "The nunnery of St Radegund at Cambridge, for example, was dissolved by the Bishop of Ely in 1496, since the number of nuns had been reduced to two, of whom one was living elsewhere and the other was of doubtful reputation".⁽³⁴⁾ "There was probably not as much immorality as is sometimes supposed, but the general picture is one of a number of easy-going communities of men (and of women) who enjoyed their sport, entertained their friends, dressed well and ate well, and looked after their own affairs with the care and attention of trained businessmen."⁽³⁵⁾

But the picture in England is by no means all black. Although the Bill for the dissolution of the monasteries begins "Forasmuch as manifest sin, vicious, carnal, and abominable living is daily used and committed among the little and small abbeys, priories, and other religious houses"⁽³⁶⁾ yet the same bill admits to the healthy state of larger abbeys when it says "there were diverse and great solemn monasteries of this realm, wherein (thanks be to God!) religion is right well kept and observed".⁽³⁷⁾

In fact, the dissolution of the monasteries was due solely to the rapacity of King Henry VIII, and the

fact that they still retained a large place in the people's hearts, particularly the poor, is witnessed to by the risings in Lincolnshire and the "Pilgrimage of Grace" under Robert Aske which begun in Yorkshire in 1536. (38)

Reviewing the history of monasticism, as we have done so rapidly in the preceding pages, it is true to say that although there are scandals in its history, yet this alone cannot explain the great prejudice which exists among many "protestants" against the Religious Life. Scandals arose in different periods, but as great reformers arose, and abuses died out, so the monasteries, nunneries, and friaries won their way back to the hearts of the common people. It is mainly from Britain that the prejudice stems, and we must link this prejudice with the growing nationalism which flowered in England under Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. Although the Reformation in England was justified on Theological and Spiritual grounds, yet it would be unhistorical to deny that the growing nationalism of England played an important part in the breach with Rome. Resentment from all outside interference would magnify any scandals which occurred among the Religious, particularly as they (especially the Friars) were more loyal to the Pope than the seculars or the hierarchy, and the Pope, as an 'Ambitious Bishop' had attempted, and long succeeded, in exerting a spiritual and temporal despotism over England to which he had no just claim. A parallel to British nationalism as a cause of prejudice against the Religious Life can be seen in the prejudice of Afrikaans-speaking Nationalists in South Africa, many of whom foster belief in cruel injustices practised by the British on the Boers in concentration camps.

Tales of ground glass in the bully beef issued to internees and prisoners of war still go the rounds in South Africa.

The basic prejudice of Britain spread over the Empire and later the Commonwealth with the rise of British imperialism, which was another flowering of nationalism in a later age. It is of course true that countries unrelated to Britain have also fostered this prejudice, but often for different reasons. Mexico expelled the Roman Catholics at one stage, ⁽³⁹⁾ and the Philippines, more recently, ^{separated from Rome (40)} ~~expelled the Jesuits.~~

The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, which is not noted for a loyalty to Britain, is noted for its prejudice against what it terms "Die Roomse Gevaar" (The Roman Danger). Yet, having said all this, it is in the birth and growth of Nationalism, and the struggle for freedom and independence, that the prejudice against the Religious Life finds a sustaining and reinforcing power.

The disabilities under which Roman Catholics suffered for years in post-reformation England is an important cause of the widespread ignorance concerning the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, although the hardened prejudice which is unwilling to believe anything but the worst can be advanced as the main barrier to the ^Sdissemination of truth.

With this ignorance of the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church goes ignorance of the principles and practice of the Religious Life. The fact that the Mass is said in Latin, and that during most of the service the Priest has his back to the congregation, has led to many weird interpretations as to what is done, and why it is done. ⁽⁴¹⁾ Because it is not understood, it has come to be regarded as secret and magical.

Popular tales such as "Dracula" and stories circulated about the "Black Mass" have helped to deepen this conviction. Most Religious houses are enclosed, and all the outsider sees are robed figures moving from and to their chapel, he hears bell-rings and perhaps the faint chant of voices singing the offices or the mass in plainsong. It is for him a secret and unknown life, and can easily become surrounded with the lies and inventions of the more imaginative. Possibly the fact the monasteries were the guardians of learning in the Middle ages has left the popular mind the inheritance of believing that monks, nuns, and friars are in possession of secret knowledge, unavailable to the uninitiate. Shakespeare, in "Romeo and Juliet" presents us with an Alchemist Friar, brewing strange and wonderful potions, and Boccaccio, in "Decameron Nights" has a similar incident of a person falling into a death-like sleep as the result of drinking the magical concoction of a monk. (42)

The secret and unknown is almost universally regarded with fear and often with mistrust, and these breed hate. Freemasonry is regarded by many as an evil, and its initiatory rites are the object of the wildest speculation. The Broederbond is regarded in a similar light by many in South Africa. How far these suspicions are justified it is impossible to say, for not more than a handful of people outside these brotherhoods knows what goes on at their meetings. Whether Religious houses can be held responsible for fostering this sense of secrecy it is difficult to say. The present policy seems to be to shed light on the inmost recesses of the monks life, ⁽⁴³⁾ and if this policy is maintained, it will help banish the prejudice and fear lingering in many people's minds, though it will have little effect on those who have shut their

minds and will not hear.

KEEPING THE PREJUDICE ALIVE

The prejudice and fear which springs from ignorance is gradually diminishing, but every now and then a new book is published which does much to prevent the spread of light. Our victorian ancestors were thrilled and horrified at the publication of "Maria Monk's Story of Convent Life"⁽⁴⁴⁾ or "The Awful disclosures of Maria Monk"⁽⁴⁵⁾. Polite young ladies of the time read it breathlessly by the light of a candle in the attic (an Aunt of mine at a slightly later period, smuggled it into her bedroom, and read it unbeknown for years to the rest of her family). At the end of last century, a book by Lancelot Holland, entitled "Walled up Nuns and Nuns walled in" was published. What is amazing is that the same author produced other books, of an entirely different nature, such as "The Bible Hymnal" and "The Beauty of Holiness", although he wrote a tract in similar vein to the first book, entitled "Ritualism in Scotland"⁽⁴⁶⁾. About the same time William Hammond wrote "The Roman Catholic System". This was reprinted in 1941 by the Protestant Association of South Africa, and was banned during the war. About Lancelot Holland I have been able to discover nothing, except that he interweaves admitted fiction with what he claims to be fact, and that the style of the book is poor, and the illustrations horrible. Maria Monk has long been discredited. "She entered a Magdalen asylum for fallen women managed by Catholic Nuns. She was not a Nun but an inmate. After a short stay there she left and began to pose as an escaped Nun, relating horrible charges against the Sisters. She said that she had been a novice there for four years. Judge Robertson exposed her, saying that

she had been in jail at the very time she was pretending to have been in the convent".(47) She wrote her book, but was entirely discredited, and returned to the streets. She died in prison. William Hammond was another poseur. He claimed to be the minister of several different denominations, and was mixed up in some doubtful marriages. He wrote a book "exposing" Rome, but it has been entirely discredited (48). Little weight can be attached to anything the above three writers say, and it is a relief to see that thinking Churchmen of different denominations do not indulge in this scurrilous propoganda today. In 1949, when the Dutch Reformed Church and the Church of England in South Africa passed resolutions against the Roman Catholic Church at a meeting held in Johannesburg, which was reported in the news as coming from all the protestant Churches in South Africa, most denominations were quick to disassociate themselves from these resolutions. The Faculty of Divinity at Rhodes University wrote a letter of protest, signed by all the members of the staff (who numbered an Anglican, a Methodist, a Presbyterian and a Congregationalist among them). I received letters from an ex-moderator of the Presbyterian Church, The President of the Methodist conference and the Professor of Divinity at Rhodes, which all expressed their shock and disapproval of what had happened. Four years ago, in Uppington, a deputation was led by prominent Methodists to the Town Council, protesting against the unfair discrimination shown to the Roman Catholic Church in Uppington.

NEW PREJUDICES

The old type of prejudice, which delighted in

scurrilous tales, is on the wane, but a new type of prejudice has replaced the old. By many the Religious life is regarded as "unnatural", particularly in its vow of Chastity, although the vows of poverty and obedience are also distasteful to many Church folk. There are three marks of western capitalistic democracy which are in direct opposition to the threefold vow of the Religious, and these three strands are woven into the fabric of many people's religion. They are a lust for money, an over-emphasis on individual freedom, and a morbid fascination for sexual activity.

If one pages through almost any popular magazine or newspaper today, ⁺examines₋ the advertisements, the eye is caught by numerous advertisements appealing to the lust for money "Enrol in our Correspondence College and you will soon be getting better pay", "There is still a lot of room at the top of the ladder",. The desire and ability to do the job for the job's sake is not important. ⁽⁴⁹⁾ Man's creative capacity is forgotten in his avarice. Jobs are sought for the wages, not as a fitting medium for man's creative urge. The industrial Revolution has given us mass-production, with a corresponding shoddiness, and has made impossible for many what should ideally be the state of things, that man's work, by which he earns his daily bread, should be his chief recreation, in the exact sense of the term, that he is made anew, by fulfilling a major aspect of his nature, which is made in the image of God, the Creator of all things.

The lust for money also holds sway. It dresses itself up respectably by calling itself "Thrift", "Business acumen" and the like, but it is really the old sin of Avarice, turned respectable. ⁽⁵⁰⁾ To men whose lives are in part dominated by this lust, a man who

voluntarily takes a vow of absolute poverty seems mad. In every age men have sought the riches of the world, but in western civilization today it has become a virtue to do so, and when men's minds are adjusted to a scale of values in which riches and possessions occupy a high place, no wonder poverty is weighed in the balances and found wanting. A man who resigns all his possessions that he may the better serve God must, by this measure, be fanatical and unbalanced, and the object of the deepest suspicion.

It is the same with Obedience. Democracy, Freedom and the Rights of man are all-important and good. As C. S. Lewis says, he believes in Democracy, not because he believes that all men are so good that they deserve equal rights, but because all men are so bad that they must all vote, to prevent power falling into the hands of one man. The many may to some extent cancel out each others' evil. Similarly with Freedom and the Rights of Man. Too many men are concerned with claiming their own rights and preserving their own freedom, rather than striving to set their neighbour free, and being careful not to infringe his rights. Freedom is often interpreted to mean behaviour without restraint, either the internal restraint of moral values or the external restraint of law. Part of the blame for this must be laid at the doors of the Psycho-analysts, who, if they do not themselves teach, are taken by many to teach that behaviour must be without any inhibitions, and that they restraint on the ego causes untold psychological damage.

The Religious Life demands of a man that he resigns his freedom of movement and actions into the hands of his religious superior, or to the rule of the community to which he belongs. When I was at Theological College, a number of persons, in different ways

asked with incredulity, the question "Do you mean to say that you, a grown man, are only allowed out of the college when the Warden permits?" This is an indication of the prejudice against the voluntarily resigning of one's freedom into the hands of another. Yet men can understand the curtailment of freedom which the law demands, and in time of war they have respect and admiration for the volunteer who resigns his freedom to the army. But the resignation of freedom for the sake of the greater battle against the world and the flesh and the devil, for the sake of God and for the sake of one's own salvation, this is not understood, and the Religious life stands condemned on this second charge, that it demands absolute obedience from its members.

The greatest cause of antipathy for the Religious Life is the vow of Chastity. Our generation, to a large extent, believes that sexual activity is not only a right or a privilege or a duty, but a necessity. Psychological adjustment, a freedom from repressions and inhibitions has replaced the Vision of God as the summum bonum of man's desire, and this new form of man-centred worship demands a "full sex-life" (horrible phrase) as an essential part of the cultus. Pick up any second- or third-rate magazine today, and advertisements appealing to the sexual motive will glare from the pages. There are also advertisements of books dealing with sexual technique, books which turn what is meant to be the most deeply personal and sacramental aspect of married love into an impersonal and purely physical science. (5) For many today, pleasure is more important than joy, and it is pursued with a vigour that puts many Christians' half-hearted attempts at worship to shame.

The sexual side of man's nature is a side which it is perilous to disregard, and it is right to welcome

all the information which psychology and biology can give us, but since victorian times, the pendulum has swung to its opposite limit, and man's interest, fascination, and indulgence in sexual activity is a symptom of a decay in western culture. ⁽⁵²⁾ There is an earthy health about Shakespeare's and Chaucer's bawdiness which is lacking in the penny dreadfuls of today.

Many believe that Chastity is an impossible ideal. Because they lack the self-discipline needed, they cannot believe that others possess it, and suspect those vowed to chastity of the sins to which they themselves would most easily succumb. Because mystics use sexual imagery, the world dismisses mysticism as sexual phantasy ⁽⁵³⁾ and insists on explaining the higher in terms of the lower.

Another fault of which the popular mind accuses those entering the religious life is escapism. There may be some truth in this charge, if a man or woman enters this life solely for the sake of their own salvation, and is unmindful of the needs of the world. Later on in this book we ~~shall~~ discuss the tendency in some writers on the Religious Life to concentrate too much on interior perfection and to neglect the duty of intercession. It may well be that many broken hearts find solace within the walls of a monastery, but God uses many different events in human life to call people to Himself, and the fact that some find comfort and the healing of a disrupted human love in a Divine Love will only be belittled by those who doubt the exist^ence of the Divine Lover, who creates, sustains, redeems, and sanctifies us. For many orders, the practical work they do, tending the sick, ~~and~~ orphans, and ~~the~~ poor, evangelising the heathen, educating the ignorant, gives the lie to any charge of escapism. But to those who

enter contemplative orders, the unbeliever will persist in his charge of escapism. Yet to Christians, who accept Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, it must be pointed out that those who enter contemplative orders are not escaping from truth and life, but are escaping to the Truth and the Life, and this, if it can be called escape, is certainly escapism with a difference.

The modern world seems to have lost its sense of the supernatural, caught up as it is in a maelstrom of sudden scientific development which it cannot assimilate, deafened from thought by radio, juke box, and television, its creativity sapped by the ready-made mass-produced entertainment of today. There is a demand for "Practical Christianity" which takes as its key-test the verse from the epistle of James "Pure religion and undefiled is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction" though there is a disregard of the implications of the second half of this verse "and to keep himself unspotted from the world". (James 1:27) This pragmatic approach to Christianity makes the lives of religious houses, with the daily recitation of the Divine Office, Daily Mass, and long meditations, seem pointless, because it does not lead to the sort of "results" which the pragmatists demand. To them prayer is less important than soup kitchens, and a man's soul and its salvation must take a back seat, because his bodily wants come first. Man needs bread, but man shall not live by bread alone. It is true that most of the Christians whose lives have had the most practical and revolutionary effects on the life of the Church on earth have been men and women of prayer, often mystics and visionaries. From the Catholic past we may quote St Teresa of Avila, St Benedict, St Francis and

St Dominic. But this selection is arbitrary, and could be multiplied for pages. In Protestantism there is Martin Luther, who at his busiest knew that he must needs spend longer in prayer, and more recently ⁽⁵⁴⁾ John Wesley, who said not only Mattins and Evensong, but Terce, Sext, and None each day of his life. The practical work of Religious Communities is admirable, but more important is the unceasing prayer offered on behalf of the Church. Yet modern Churchmen all too often reverse the judgement Our Lord gave between Martha and Mary.

Prejudice is on the wane. For some it is because there is a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Religious Life, but for many the cause is worse than the prejudice. It is indifference and boredom, the accidie which saps at the moral fibre of men. This pervasive apathy of modern Laodiceans is summed up in the slang expression "I couldn't care less". (56)

In the opposite side of the scale we must put the ecumenical movement, the world council of Churches, the Liturgical movement in almost every denomination, and the interest in evangelical evangelists such as Billy Graham and Bryan Green. These are hopeful signs of an awakening interest in the Christian Faith. Together they can do much to awaken the Church, and if they continue to increase in strength, and to influence each other, an inevitable result will be a deeper appreciation of the contribution which the religious life makes to the life of the Church as a whole.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER I

- (1) Boccaccio, in the Decameron, includes one tale of a Solitary who yields to temptation and seduces a female disciple, who remains completely ignorant of what is happening, thinking that she is helping her master overcome temptation. Decameron Day 3. Tale 10 (in some editions this is replaced by another story).
- (2) The Book of Revelation has been the happy hunting ground of cranks from very early times. Some knowledge of the way it is used today by sects such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, The British Israelites, and the Seventh Day Adventists should convince the intelligent layman that no weight can be put on interpretations identifying Anti-Christ with the Roman Catholic Church. This would be a simple way of convincing him, without becoming involved in questions concerning "Higher" or "Lower" criticism, or the verbal inspiration of the Bible, or the true meaning of Apocalyptic.
- (3) The main references in Boccaccio's Decameron are as follows :- First day, Fourth Tale: Second Day, Third tale: Third Day, First and Seventh Tale: Fourth Day, Second Tale: Sixth Day, Sixth and Tenth Tale: Seventh Day, Third Tale: Eighth Day, Second and Fourth Tale; Ninth Day, Second Tale.
- In a book comprising mainly salacious tales, it is significant that only eleven are about Monastics etc. It seems that the author's judgement of them is that they are no better than other folk, but also no worse.

- (4) The Reference in Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, the Prologue are as follows:- we hear of a monk "The Rule of Good St Benet or St Maur, as old and strict, he tended to ignore. A Friar "a wanton one and merry" "he knew the taverns well in every town". He also presents a nun, a Prioress, gracious and courtly, but rather sentimental, and he gives us the poor parson of a town "who only knew Christ's gospel and would preach it". (Nevill Coghill's Translation, Penguin Classics. See Knowles comment on Chaucer's monk in "Religious Orders in England": Vol. II Appendix I.) There are tales of Clerks in Holy Orders who commit~~t~~ fornication or adultery in some of the tales of the pilgrims, (See Miller's tale and Reeve's tale). Other forms of wickedness among the Clergy are mentioned in the Pardoner's tale and the Canon Yeoman's tale.
- (5) As scandals in early monasticism are not seen as a main cause of modern prejudice, it is unnecessary to detail all references, but instances are found in the following works:-
 The Lausiac History of Palladius Tr. W.K. Lowther Clark S.P.C.K. 1918.
 The Desert Fathers. Helen Waddell,^z Constable_x 1936.
- (6) The Rule of St Benedict Chapter 22. and Workman's Comment in "Evolution of the Monastic Ideal" page 322, footnote 3.
- (7) Medieval handbooks of Penance, McNeill and Gamer (Columbia University Press 1938).
- (8) Op cit. p 185. From "An old Irish Penitential" "Anyone who kills his son or daughter does penance twenty one years. Anyone who kills his mother or father does penance fourteen years".

Other relatives killed require penances of ten or seven years.

- (9) Op cit. page 250. The Penitential of Columban.
- (10) History of the Christian Church: James C. Robertson. Vol. V p. 29. (John Murray 1875)
- (11) The Rule of St Benedict Rule I. Fr. Justin McCann O.S.B. (Burns Oates 1952).
For a valuable discussion of this rule see "The Monastic Order in England" part one, Chapter One. Knowles. C.U.P. 1950.
- (12) See Robertson: History of the Christian Church Vol. 3 p. 223. Also Knowles: The Monastic Order in England: Pt I pp 25-30 & pp 78-82.
- (13) Robertson. op cit Vol 3. p 224.
- (14) Robertson. op cit Vol 3 pp 228ff. (footnote p 229)
Knowles op cit Pt I pp 78-82 (esp. footnote p 82)
- (15) Robertson. Op cit. Vol. 4 p. 165.
- (16) Robertson. Op cit. pp 168-71.
Knowles. Op cit. Pt I pp 145-8. This gives a clear explanation of the Cluniac System of Government.
- (17) Robertson. Op cit. Vol 4 pp 177-80.
- (18) Knowles Op cit Pt I p 214, and also 280-281.
- (19) Robertson. Op cit. Vol 5 page 64 lines 18 & 19.
- (20) Robertson. Op cit. Vol 5 pp 29-65 for whole of this section.
- (21) Robertson Op cit. Vol 5. pp 383-409.
- (22) Robertson. Op cit Vol. 6. pp 111-130 and 421-439.
Knowles: The Religious Orders in England. Part 2, Ch. XI and XIII.
- (23) Robertson Op Cit Vol 6. p 130 lines 3 & 4, and footnote x.

- (24) Robertson Op cit. Vol 6. p 425.
- (25) Robertson Op cit. Vol 7 p 17. See also Knowles comment on Matthew Parish "Religious Orders in England" Pt. 3, pp 292-298, for example of how prejudice against Friars arose.
- (26) Robertson Op cit. Vol 7 p 19. The Illustrious Order of Good Templars (I.O.G.T.) have a similar accusation levelled against them for the initials are popularly pretended to stand for "I often get tight" - They are a modern Teetotal orgainsation.
- (27) Robertson. Op cit. Vol. 7 p. 19. The terms "Unnatural Vice", "Sodomy" etc are dated, and tainted with emotion. It is sounder to speak of Homosexuality or Inversion. It is recognised today that men and women have characteristics of the other sex in them, and that Homosexuality is probably more often innate ⁷ that acquired, not the result of conditioning but a simple fact, like colour-blindness. If this be so, our moral view must undergo a radical change. The sin of the Templars ^{has} ~~is~~ ~~this case~~ was breaking their vow of chastity, and indulgence in casual relationships. The sex of the partner in these casual relationships does not, I believe, affect the moral issue. See "Psychiatry and Mental Health", Rathbone Oliver (a Priest who was also a Doctor and a Psychiatrist). Also "Sex Life and Faith" by Rom Landau, and "Homosexuality and the Western Tradition", D.S. Bailey; also article by D.S. Bailey in "Theology" of February 1952.
- (28) Robertson. Op cit. vol 7 page 65. Knowles: Religious Orders in England, Vol 2 Pt 3, p 256.
- (29) On the accusation, trial and final dissolution of the Templars, see Robertson, Op cit vol 7,

- pp 1-69. Also Knowles "Religious Orders in England" Vol 2, Pt 3: p 256.
- (30) Robertson: Op cit. vol 7. pp 476-81. Knowles: "Religious Orders in England" Pt 2, p 182-9.
- (31) Robertson: Op cit Vol 7, page 474.
- (32) Robertson: Op cit Vol 7, pp 480-1, but see whole section 471-81.
- (33) "The Church in England": Overton. Vol I p 384 (Gardner Darton, London, 1897)
- (34) "A History of the Church of England": J.R.H. Moorman, p 145. (Adam and Charles Black, London, 1954.)
- (35) Moorman: Op cit. p 146.
- (36) Moorman: Op cit. p 174.
- (37) See Overton, Op cit.
- (38) Moorman: Op cit. pp 174-5.
- (39) Benito Juarez, president of Mexico 1853-72 expelled many nuns and some monks, also Five Bishops and the Papal Nuncio in 1855. In 1895 Porfirio Diaz expelled the remaining nuns - See Cambridge Modern History, Vol XII: p 672 & 677.
- (40) Pan Anglican Magazine, Oct 1954 pp 22-26, gives a brief history of the Philippine Reformation.
- (41) Dom Gregory Dix tells us that his grandmother believed that at the Roman Catholic Mass "The priest let a crab loose upon the Altar, which it was his mysterious duty to prevent from crawling sideways into the view of the congregation (Hence the gestures of the celebrant)" Shape of the Liturgy: 2nd Edit 1945, reprinted 1954, Dacre Press
- (42) See Romeo and Juliet, William Shakespeare, Act II Scene 3 & Act IV Scene 1, also Boccaccio's Decameron Day 3, story VIII.

- (43) See "Elected Silence" by Thomas Merton, and "I Leap over the Wall" by Monica Baldwin.
- (44) "Walled up Nuns and Nuns walled in" by W. Lancelot Holland, 1895. p 141ff
- (45) Radio Replies: Fathers Rumble and Carty, 1938 page 254, question 1260.
- (46) See footnote 44.
- (47) See footnote 45.
- (48) See the extremely well documented refutation of Hammond by F. B.A. Perquin O.P. D.Ph. Published by the Catholic Federation of the Transvaal Vicariate.
- (49) Unpopular Opinions: Dorothy L. Sayers. Gollancz 1946 - Essay "Living to Work", p 122ff
- (50) "Other Six Deadly Sins" Dorothy L. Sayers, section on Avarice.
- (51) Of course there are many good books written on Sex - those by Leslie Weatherhead and Van der Velde. One of the most useful books I have come across is Louis Tizard's "Guide to Marriage".
- (52) Lods "Israel" translated by S.H. Hooke (Kegan Paul, Trench Trubner and Co., Broadway House, E.C.) page 148 gives an example of decadence in Canaanite Society.
Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" Vol I, Ch. VI pp 127-9 and 141. (Penguin Modern Library) gives examples of Roman Decadence, H. Fisher "History of Europe" (Edward Arnold London, 1936) pp 48-9 gives examples of decadence in Greek Civilisation (see also Golden Ass of Apuleius) also "Pagan Background to Christianity" W.R. Holloway (Liverpool University Press) pp 113-4.

- (53) C.S. Lewis: Transposition and other Addresses. First Essay. This draws a parallel between transposing a Symphony into a piece of Music for a Piano - where same notes do the work of several instruments, and the transposition of Spiritual or Mental emotions and experiences into their physical counterpart, which can be the same for different emotions. A "Flap of the diaphragm" for both fear and awareness of God. So also we must use worldly images to translate the awareness of the Spiritual world, thus Sexual imagery is used to describe the relation of the soul with God.
- (54) The groundwork of Prayer. R. Lumb. (Faith Press, Westminster) page 10.
- (55) Luke 10: 41-42.
- (56) Dorothy L. Sayers: Other Six Deadly Sins. Sin of Lust is related to Accidie (Acedia) see sections on Lust and Sloth.

CHAPTER TWO

MISUNDERSTANDINGS FROM WITHIN

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter is the most controversial in this book. Many will disagree with it, for what are here put forward as basic misunderstandings of the Religious Life, are still regarded by many as the chief glories and most distinctive marks of the Religious Life. There are and have been many misunderstandings of the Religious Life from within the religious life. To enumerate and catalogue them all would be a wearisome task, and not make for interesting reading. What I have done is to select the three most serious and widespread misunderstandings, and to deal with them in some detail. They are 1) A False idea of the place of the monk within the Church, which leads to pride. 2) A False idea of detachment, leading to a false asceticism and a denial of human friendship. 3) An attempt to spread monasticism beyond its legitimate bounds, by forcing celibacy on the clergy, and insisting that all Priests be semi-monks^s.

This chapter may be wrongly headed, for its aim is not only negative but positive. Although there have been misunderstandings, not only within monasticism of its own nature, but within the whole Church, of many doctrines in many places and over long periods of time, yet neither in the part nor in the whole has the Holy Spirit failed to raise up witnesses, who witness, in monasticism, to its true nature, and in the Church, to the true doctrine. So in this chapter we will show, by example, not only the misunderstandings, but their correctives. 1. The humble monk, who knows his place in the Church. 2. The true detachment which can blossom in true friendship. 3. Those parts of the Church which

have preserved the distinction between monk and priest, so that in no man's life need they of necessity be identified.

1. "The Higher Path and the Inner Ring"

Ambition, a desire to be a member of a select class, in fact snobbery, has existed in the Church from the earliest times, and this sin, albeit clothed as an Angel of Light, has led to serious misunderstanding within the Religious Life, of its own proper function.

Three of the Apostles were guilty of this desire to be first, and better than the rest. James and John, or their mother, came to Jesus and asked him to grant that they might sit one on each side of His throne in the Kingdom. Jesus asked them if they were able to drink of the cup which he had to drink, and pass through the same baptism, whether, in fact, their love and obedience could stand suffering and death, and they confidently answered "Yes". Yet James, if not John, forsook his Master at the time of the crucifixion. Peter confidently asserted "Though all deny Thee, yet will not I", and Jesus foretells what will happen to this boaster who looked on himself as being of a different calibre from the rest of the Apostles "Before the cock crows twice thou shalt deny me thrice" (1). There was no guarantee of moral superiority, or pride of place, for these three men, even though they had a special intimacy with Jesus during his earthly ministry. These three were the special friends of the man Jesus, but just as the perfection of Christ's manhood found place, within its life, for special friendships, and unique relationships, so the same perfection excluded anything which could by the remotest stretch of the imagination be called nepotism.

Jesus, in each of these demands for, or assertions

of superiority, shows that the path of true glory lies in obedient, humble, and loving service. The Cup and the Baptism of which He tells James and John are the suffering and death that lay ahead of Him, when He went as a Lamb to the slaughter - meek, opening not his mouth, in loving, humble, obedience to His Father in Heaven. The greatest in the Kingdom is the servant of all. Christ demonstrated this in action, when, at the last supper, where Peter made his over-confident assertion, He took a towel and basin, and washed his disciples' feet, playing the part of a slave. (2)

In view of the over-weening ambition of these three Apostles, the following prayer, used by the Anglican Community of the Resurrection today, is of special interest, as it puts forward as its examples of special intimacy, to support its petition, these same three men.

"O Lord, Who didst admit to special intimacy with Thy self the chosen three among Thy twelve Apostles, call many even now, both of men and women, to share the like privilege in the Religious Life: that they, being entrusted with the sight of Thy marvelous acts, with the Secret of Thy hidden glory, and with the inner mystery of Thy Passion, may by example and by deed uphold Thine honour and extend far and wide the dominion of Thy Majesty : Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end, Amen." (3)

This desire to be in the "Inner Ring" is widespread in social and business life, and its effects on the Clergy are amusingly painted in Anthony Trollope's "Barchester Towers". Yet fundamentally

it is a tragic heresy which taints the thinking of many Churchmen today, be they Priest, Religious, or Layman. There is a tendency on the part of some clergy to regard themselves as constituting "The Church", identifying the part, albeit a useful and essential part, with the whole. This attitude is encouraged by the layman when he refers to someone who is entering the sacred ministry as "Going into the Church", or when he complains "Why doesn't the Church do something about the slums?" (or drink, or war, or whatever his particular hobby-horse happens to be). In the Religious Life, this attitude is apparent in some writings, and wherever the quest for the 'inner ring' appears, the seeker finds that he is peeling an onion, for always there is an inner layer awaiting him. He is never securely 'on the inside' or 'one of the people really in the know'. The process is never ending. When the 'inner ring' outlook affects Religious, one finds Friars vaunting themselves above monks, and disagreeing among themselves, Dominicans versus Franciscans. Contemplatives regard themselves as superior to Active orders, while the 'mixed' life claims to be better than any other. All unite in regarding themselves as superior to the mere layman.

One of the main causes of this sense of superiority to the laity is an over-exaltation of the virtue of Chastity. (Chastity, that is, as the Religious uses the term, meaning by it a vow of perpetual virginity.) We find it in numerous writers, from St Paul down to the present day. Before giving the examples of this high praise of Chastity, which often appeals directly to the pride of those urged to adopt the religious life, or to maintain its purity, we must try to extricate ourselves from the theological problem implied in

the opening sentence of this paragraph, because in mentioning the name of Paul, we have shown that there is biblical foundation for this exalted view of Chastity, and if we reject biblical evidence, then we may well be asked "By what norm do you judge the Religious Life?"

St Paul has a number of things to say about the married and unmarried state. "It is better not to marry" "It is better to marry than to burn" "Good if they abide even as I" "The unmarried woman thinketh on the things of the Lord, how she may please God. But she that is married thinketh on the things of the world, how she may please her husband." (4) But Paul admits that these are really private opinions, when he says "But I speak this by permission and not commandment, for I would that all men were even as I myself, but every man has his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that". So that even although they are in the Bible, they are not to be accepted as authoritative pronouncements, but what they were intended for, an expression of opinion.

The opinion of Paul on Marriage and Celibacy must be set in the context of an expectation of an imminent Parousia. Most scholars are agreed that Paul's eschatology developed in his letters, and that the first emphasis of an early return of our Lord was replaced by an emphasis of His presence within the Church, "Realised eschatology" as it is called. This did not of course obliterate from Paul's teaching, as it does not obliterate from Christian doctrine, the belief in a Consummation of all things, but Paul did stop thinking about the time being short - and refused to anticipate a date for the Return. When there is the expectation of an early return, it is easy to under-

stand how Christians felt that there was no time for marriage, and that the urgency of preaching the Gospel and preparing for the coming of Christ made such things as marriage seem almost trivial, and certainly very much of the world, because Christ himself had told them that in Heaven, there was neither marriage nor giving in marriage.

If we allow for a development in St Paul's theology, then the epistle to the Ephesians shows us a change of attitude. Although some scholars deny that this is a genuine Pauline epistle, most agree that it represents Pauline thought. In Ephesians, Paul draws an analogy between the relationship of a man to his wife, and the relationship of Christ to the Church. The epistle to the Ephesians was written at least six years later than the writings of Paul to the Corinthians, and I believe that the anti-feminine attitude of which many accuse St Paul is not an unwarranted judgment, but that as his mind matured, so his attitude changed - how else could he say "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it".⁽⁵⁾

Although Our Lord himself was not married, the marriage service mentions the fact of Christ's presence at the wedding in Cana of Galilee as a sanctification of the state of matrimony. ⁽⁶⁾ The fact that our Lord there turned the water into wine means at least this, (although we may find deeper meanings as well to this same miracle) that Christ approved of the wedding, and made wine, so that the company could make merry and rejoice in the fact that a young couple had plighted their troth to each other.

(The argument has been advanced, although I consider it as erroneous as the argument which places 'Chastity' on a pedestal, that marriage must be a

higher state than that of the vowed Religious, because matrimony is a sacrament, whereas the taking of the threefold vow is not.)

The exaltation of virginity and the vow of Chastity is exemplified in the writings of some of the Church's greatest saints throughout the ages, and we do not propose to give an exhaustive list of references. It will be sufficient to quote representative statements on the state of chastity by recognised authorities in different ages of the Church's life.

Here is a quotation from writings attributed to St Athanasius, who contributed so much to the popularisation and development of monasticism in the west by his "Life of St Anthony":

"How great the bliss that Holy Virginity enjoys in heaven, we learn not only from the witness of the scriptures, but also from the custom of the Church, for we are taught that there is a distinctive merit in that which has the privilege of a special consecration. For although the whole body of the faithful receives similar gifts of grace and all glory in the blessings of the same Sacraments, Virgins have something of their own beyond all others, for they are chosen out of the holy and spotless flock of the Church as being holocausts of more outstanding holiness and purity, singled out by the Holy Spirit on account of the dispositions of their will, and offered up on the altar of God by the Prelate himself. Holy Virginity then possesses all that others have and something also that others have not. It obtains both common and special grace and rejoices, as I have already said, in the privilege of a special consecration. The authority of the Church allows us to call Virgins the Brides of Christ". (7)

To the subject of nuns being referred to as the "Brides of Christ" we will return at the end of these

quotations.

St Jerome, a controversial figure in Church history, writes :-

"When Jesus was crowned with thorns and bore our sins and suffered for our sakes, it was to make the roses of virginity and the lilies of chastity grow up out of the brambles and briars which have formed the lot of women since it was said to them 'In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; and thou shalt be under thy husband's power, and he shall have dominion over thee' (Gen 111:16)". (8)

St Augustine of Hippo, the great doctor of the Church, whose sins of the flesh in his youth may have led him to exalt virginity to such a high degree, in writing to the mother of a girl recently become a nun, says "This child of your house has chosen the better part in drawing down a blessing on your noble family by knowing nought of the marriage bond rather than by increasing its number by bringing forth children, preferring whilst still in the flesh to add still more to the host of human mortals. Hers is the richer and more fruitful state of bliss". (9)

Even St Ambrose of Milan speaks perhaps too highly of the virtue of virginity "Who then can deny that this manner of life has its source in Heaven" "Christ is the bridegroom of the virgin...." yet Ambrose is more balanced, because he adds "I am far from belittling marriage, but at the moment I am discussing the boon of virginity"; yet it does seem that he regards virginity as a 'higher path' when he says "I maintain, therefore, that I do not decry wedlock, I am simply enumerating the rewards of consecrated virginity. For virginity could have no exist^ence were it not brought forth into exist^ence. I am comparing

good things with good things that the more excellent may shine forth more clearly". (10)

In later ages other writers support this view of virginity. St Bernard of Clairvaux says "... that place appointed and set apart by the prerogative of virginity which will surely be yours amid the sons and daughters of the Kingdom". (11) This is of course true - virginity has a glory of its own, but it may be an indication of an over-emphasis. St Alphonsus is another writer who refers to nuns as the brides of Christ: "Behold, Jesus your beloved goes before you and calls upon you, His bride, to follow". (12)

John Mason Neale, who founded the Society of St Margaret in 1855, one of the earliest Anglican Communities, reveals in his writings this same veneration of Chastity. "You know that in the courts of the Lord there is a place and a name better than of sons and daughters; you know of the crown promised to chastity, as compared with earthly love". (13) He clearly regards the Religious as treading a higher path: "Give me also springs of water"; some of you in one way, some in another, you were led on to wish for the more beautiful portion, the more glorious lot, for the nearer and dearer place. 'O glorious lily of chastity' cries St Bonaventura, 'O Fair palm of obedience, O lowly violet of poverty, how many and many a saint have ye formed! How many a time have ye won a passage to the hundred and forty and four thousand! Well did Hiram of Tyre, full of the Holy Ghost, place the wreath of lily work about base, and shaft, and capital, in the pillars of the Lord's house! There they now enter, there they now stand - virgin followers of the Virgin Lamb'. This is what you ask : that your Lord must give you" (14); and later he says :

"They (those of the world) cannot obtain to that garden, reserved only for the elect souls, them whom He has more especially sought out; who by the poverty which he bore, the obedience which He practised, and the chastity which he loves, resolve to enter in". (15)

St Teresa of Lisieux, who died in living memory, and whose writings have been of great benefit to me, is also shadowed by the idea that the Religious Life is a higher way. She compares the Religious state with the state of Mary, and the secular with that of Martha: "We are neither lazy idlers nor spendthrifts; our divine Master took upon Himself the defence of our cause. You recall the scene? how He was seated at table with Lazarus and his disciples while Martha was serving. As for Mary, her whole attention was so concentrated on giving pleasure to her Beloved, that the thought of food never entered her head". (16)

Making Mary of Bethany a type of Nun is really an unwarranted conclusion. Martha, as far as we know, was also an unmarried woman. Dorothy Sayers brings out what I believe to be the true interpretation of this story in her play "Man born to be King". Martha had allowed the cares of the world to crowd out of her mind the desire for things heavenly. She was trying to fill her life with the "busy-ness" of little things. Mary had chosen the better part, sitting at the feet of the Master who came from Heaven. While Martha was 'doing' Mary was 'being' and it is more important to 'be' than to 'do'. (17) But the secular is not of necessity crushed by the burden of worldly things, and his prayer should be "Teach me my God and King, in all things Thee to see, and what I do in anything to do it as for thee". (18)

In the New Testament, one of the chief and most illuminative titles of the Church is the "Bride of

Christ" and it must be partially inspired by Hosea, who saw Israel as the Bride of Yahweh. As members of the Church, we share in the Bridal nature of the Church, and it is quite right and fitting that Religious writers should write, and that we should think, of the soul as the bride of Christ, providing we remember that it is as members of the Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, the Church, that our souls are made Brides, and that this applies equally to men and women, so that it is right that we should all sing "Jesus, my Shepherd, Husband, Friend, my Prophet, Priest and King, My Lord my Life, my Way, My End, accept the praise I bring. (19)

G.S. Lewis thinks that in the hierarchy of creation, the lower is always feminine in relation to the higher, and that male and female as we know them in man are but a shadow and symbol of the true masculine and the truly feminine (at least we must support Dr Lewis in admitting that biologically, and probably psychologically, we are all mixtures). Thus, in relation to the Creator, all created things and persons are feminine. (20) But the sisterhoods have arrogated to themselves the title Brides of Christ in an exclusive sense, and this is wrong, and dangerous, for it can lead to spiritual pride. All Nuns are Brides of Christ, just as you or I are Brides of Christ, and we can see in the beautiful imagery and poetry of many of the mystics much that is spiritually edifying, enriching our minds, and stimulating us to a greater hope and expectation of Heaven, where we will be at one with Christ. But if poetry and imagery becomes hardened into theological principle, whereby the title Bride of Christ is applied exclusively to a Nun, then it becomes a heresy.

The belief that there is a two-fold standard of

perfection within the Church is heretical, even though it has been believed by many illustrious writers, for we are all called to be perfect. Herbert B. Workman, in his great book "The Evolution of the Monastic Ideal" approves this double standard. "Monasticism has always enabled her (the Roman Church) to maintain the norm in the Church itself conveniently low - we use the term without any disrespect - so as to suit the many, while yet providing for those elect spirits who were minded to reach a higher standard" (21). He quotes Ambrose "where he states that provision is made in the Church both "for the soaring of the eagles" and for "the fluttering of the sparrows" and Cassian, who says to monks "Consider that you belong to the few and elect". (22)

The belief that virginity is a higher way than that of matrimony has found its way into the liturgy of the Roman Church, and this is most unfortunate, because a liturgical expression of belief tends to confirm its orthodoxy in the minds of the faithful, and to fix belief in a certain direction more than theological works do, as books of theology are usually only read by scholars, and vogues and emphases in theological writings vary from age to age, whereas what is in the mass is far less fluid, and more fixed and definitive. The Preface in the Mass of the Consecration of a Virgin is as follows "without diminishing in any degree the honour wherewith Thou hast clothed the marriage state, nay rather, confirming the blessing conferred upon the holy union of matrimony, Thou hast nevertheless been pleased to create souls of loftier sort, who have no desire for the human marriage-bond, yet covet the sublime mystery it represents, and whilst declining to emulate earthly nuptials, love that of which the act is but a symbol". (23) Althou this is a more balanced

statement than some, yet in referring to vowed virgins as 'souls of loftier sort' it implies that there is a 'High road' and a 'low road' to the gates of heaven.

The desire to walk along a higher way led to the gnostic and montanist heresies of the early Church, and we find the same type of heresy occurring among the "Spirituals" or "Zelatores" or "Fraticelli" - the extremists who emerged among the Franciscans soon after the death of St Francis. They desired to keep the vow of poverty with extreme rigour, and this led to pride which led to heresy. Gerard of Borgo San Donnino wrote a book entitled "Introduction to the everlasting Gospel" in which successive states of the Church were taught, and this idea was expanded by a leader of the Fraticelli, Peter John of Olivi, in his "Postills on the Apocalypse". He taught that an age of the Holy Ghost was going to supersede Christianity, that there were seven ages of the Church, the sixth having been opened by St Francis, and that the seventh would coincide with the third state of the Church. In modern times we have the Quakers, whose sole authority is the 'inner light'. All these heresies spring basically from pride, the desire to be in an inner ring, and from a false spirituality which denies the body, and has missed the implications of the central fact of the Incarnation.

In the tale of one of the early desert fathers we find the corrective to this attitude of superiority. (24) Paphnutius, after leading a life of holiness, asked God to reveal to him his state of grace, and an Angel was sent to him, and told him that he was equal to a certain man who earned his daily bread by singing to the villagers in the place where he lived. Paphnutius sought the man, and questioned him closely, and found that he had been a robber. After much questioning,

the only good deeds the man could remember were that he had rescued a virgin consecrated to God from the lust of his fellow robbers, and brought her back to her dwelling place unharmed, and that he had given a woman found wandering in the desert sufficient money to free her husband and three sons from the threat of torture and slavery. Later, Paphnutius again enquired of God concerning his state of perfection, and found that he was equal to the headman of a village, who, when he met him, told him that after his wife had borne him three sons, they had lived chastely together, and that he had never neglected to do a kindness to the stranger, or the poor, nor perverted justice as judge of the village, even when it was his own son brought to judgment. He had striven always to be a peacemaker, and never to cause sadness to anyone. The third time Paphnutius enquired, he was told that he was equal to a merchant who at the moment was approaching his cell. This merchant gave all his goods to the poor, and joined Paphnutius in the desert, and before Paphnutius died, "He made known to them all that the Lord had revealed to him, saying to them that no-one in this world ought to be despised, let him be a thief or an actor on the stage, or one that tills the ground and was bound to a wife, or was a merchant and served a trade, for in every condition of human life there are souls that please God, and have their hidden deeds wherein he takes delight: Whence it is plain that it is not so much profession or habit that is pleasing to God as the sincerity and affection of the soul and honesty of deed." (25)

The Religious renounces the world, yet that is what all do at their baptism. The real difference is not even that the Religious is called to a special and particular renunciation, because we are all told to

carry our cross, and our own individual cross is different from all other crosses, and the particular cross we carry now may not be the cross we will be called to carry later in life, or the cross of earlier years. But the three defining characteristics which are common to the renunciation of all Religious, Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, does place them in a group which is more recognisably set apart than the ordinary layman, and this group we believe has its own particular function to fulfil in the life of the Church. The New Testament witnesses to the fact that all men are not called to the same work in the Church. The rich young man was commanded to sell all that he had, and follow Christ(26), yet Zaccheus did not receive a similar command, (27) The fishermen who were called left their nets and followed Christ, (28) but the Gadarene Demoniac was commanded to return to his people. (29) There are recognisable groups other than that of the Religious group. Some are called to marriage, others are not. Some are called to serve God in the Priesthood, clearly all could not. In modern society there are a variety of vocations, professions, and mere jobs. Some, like doctors, nurses, teachers, and social workers, have on them the imprint of holiness more clearly than do others. Yet the professions of lawyer and accountant are vocations demanding integrity, and the streetsweeper fulfils a necessary function in the community.

But in every life there is a multiplicity of vocations. A streetsweeper may also be a father and a husband, and a sidesman in his parish church. Also, each of his friendships makes a particular demand on him, and in each he has a special vocation to fulfil. It is this multiplicity of vocations in each life which

makes each unique, and by them we are being fitted for the unique role God has planned for us in His Kingdom, when all things are brought to perfection in Jesus Christ our Lord. The monk, the Friar and the Nun each in his special and particular vocation has a divine commission to fulfil in the Church militant, and at the same time is prepared for the unique perfection he or she will enjoy in the Church Triumphant. But monks, nuns, and friars do not only make an individual contribution to the life of the Church. Like the ministry, though every Priest has a particular portion of God's vineyard in which to labour, and a unique offering to make, yet the ministry as a whole is a ministry of the Word and Sacraments, with a clearly defined contribution to make as a group make their distinctive contribution. What that contribution is, the following chapters of this book will investigate.

Perhaps we are labouring the point, for Paul, in words we have already quoted, already admits that virginity is not really a higher way, when he says "but every man has his proper gift of God, one after this manner and another after that" (I Cor 7. 6 & 7) and he is more explicit in the twelfth Chapter of first Corinthians, in which he expounds some of the implications of the Church as the Body of Christ. We are all members. Paul does not fall into the danger of saying that we are all equal. He says we are each unique, and necessarily so "If the whole body were an eye where were the hearing" (vs 17) and he will not allow an inequality of honour or of status "Nay much rather, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary, and those parts of the body which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour". (30)

We must not veil from our thinking a clear recognition of the glory which belongs to those who have taken and faithfully kept the threefold vow. The particular type of Chastity, Poverty and Obedience demanded of the Religious will have its own peculiar and unique glory in heaven (there is a type of Chastity, Poverty and Obedience demanded in every Christian life). But we must guard carefully the honour and glory that belongs to other spheres within the Christian Church and Christian life. It is the weighing and balancing, the comparison and element of competition which we must erase from our theological thought, for it leads to discontent and envy, and also is heresy. The Prayer of the Church in the South African book of Common Prayer tells us that the glory of God has been declared in all his saints "and chiefly in the Blessed Virgin Mary". (31) Our Lord pointed to what that glory is - not in her virginity, not even that she was the Mother of God incarnate, but that she "Heard the word of God and kept it" (32) and, if we make the one command she gave which is recorded in the gospels, of general and not particular application, she summons us to share in her glory, for she says "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it". (33) It is true that in heaven there may be great ones, and little ones, ^{+ there also} Our Lady is called the Queen of Heaven. (34) The Apostles were told that they would sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, but the little ones of heaven will rejoice in their own littleness, and in the greatness of the great ones, while both great and little will be filled full with the perfection and love of God, and unite in saying, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give the praise". (35) We conclude this section by repeating what we wrote at the beginning,

that He that is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven is the servant of all. Our Lady sings magnificat, but she does not magnify herself, but the Lord. The Religious Life must not claim a higher privilege than others, but find and constantly seek its true greatness in the service of the Whole Church, the Body of Christ, of which it is called to be a living ^{and} vibrant part.

2. Detachment and Friendship

If this section of this chapter seems unduly long to the reader, I make no apology, for in it I have tried to state the solution to a problem, which, as I have indicated in the preface, ^{has} exercised my mind for years. It is vitally important for the Christian to be able to distinguish between true detachment and false detachment, for misunderstanding can lead to great unhappiness and misplaced effort. The fact that a misunderstanding of detachment is found in some of the greatest classics on the Spiritual and Ascetic life is another reason why we should examine the subject thoroughly, and be sure that we are walking on firm ground. The examples of both false detachment and true detachment, of the unnecessary denying of family ties, and the growth of true friendships, will be mainly selected from the histories of the early desert fathers, with only brief references to its recurrence in later ages. This is for two reasons. First, because I am best acquainted with this section of monastic history, and secondly, because I believe that almost all the seeds of monasticism, the misunderstandings of its nature, and the correctives to these misunderstandings, are to be found in the lives and teachings of these men and women from whom the whole of the monastic movement descends. The whole of the monastic movement can learn much from desert

fathers, both from their excesses, and also from the sound commonsense and penetrating insight which frequently characterises their utterances and their lives.

We do not need to discuss at length the three-fold vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience. We have already dealt with the world's objections to them. Together they form the basic renunciation of the religious life, the groundwork of detachment. There have been misunderstandings of the true nature of these vows, and perhaps the reader will be able to fit the examples of false detachment related below under the headings of a misunderstanding of Poverty, or Chastity, or Obedience. This I do not propose to do. False Poverty may renounce not only material possessions but spiritual gifts of God. False Chastity can become both proud and scrupulous, with a sordid attitude to sex, and False Obedience can render obedience to man which should only be rendered to God, and in such a way as to deny the basic commands of God.

Poverty, Chastity, and later obedience, became the norm of the life of the early monks of the desert, as they are of most Christian religious communities today. These are the elements of which renunciation is made. These must go unquestioned and unexamined. It is the other methods of detachment - fastings and mortifications - that we must examine. Of these methods, some were good, some bad, and some seem to have increased the temptations which they aimed at conquering.

In leading the moral life, the maxim "discretion is the better part of valour" frequently applies. The early solitaries, in fleeing from the cities, fled from the centres of vice, and sought to put themselves

beyond reach of divers kinds of temptations, particularly those of lust and avarice. It is a commonplace of moral theology that we must avoid the occasions of sin, and this, in a characteristically drastic and thorough manner, the desert fathers sought to do.

Some have a duty to remain in the city; that is their vocation; but these men received a special call from God. If they had responsibilities in the cities or villages from whence they came, their responsibility to God clearly had first place, and normally we read of them fulfilling their family responsibilities adequately as an initial act of obedience to God. They did not return to bury their father and so delay response to God's call. The fulfillment of their duties to their families is part of their response. Antony provided for his sister by placing her in a nunnery. Amoun of Nitria, (36) although he persuaded his wife to live with him in chastity, fulfilled part of his marriage vow to her by staying with her as long as she desired. However, not all showed this prudence. Jerome exalts Paula, who abandoned her son to heathendom, and was so prodigal with her money (37) in doing good works, that she left her daughters vast debts when she died.

Man cannot escape himself, and all too often the imaginations of the monks were still filled with the attractions of the city, and they spent hours in deadly combat with demons, who tempted them to the whole gamut of the deadlier sins, but especially found them vulnerable to the temptation of lust, though the temptation frequently did not result in sin. Experience has taught the Church that temptations to lust are best relieved by companionship. In their struggle for

detachment from the flesh, many monks made the mistake of struggling on alone, instead of seeking the counsel and companionship of a friend. Here then is an error of method, an error corrected by the community life begun by Pachomius and consolidated in the west by St Benedict. (38)

The mistaken idea that lust could best be conquered in loneliness, was, in the main, a mistake which only experience could rectify, yet we can see in it a tendency, which becomes clearer as we examine other forms and methods of detachment, to regard the Christian life as one lived in relationship to God alone. The Christian Church is a brotherhood, each of us is made a member of Christ in our baptism, and we are members one of another. God's grace and presence is mediated to us through the sacraments, at the hands of his priests, the stewards of the mysteries of God, and also through the fellowship of the Christian community, and the affection, love, and counsel of our Christian friends. We find that many of the desert fathers abandoned the use of the sacraments, cut off from themselves all ties of natural affection, and sought to escape the community life, regarding the solitary life as a higher way. Solitariness was a mistaken method, which may have had its roots in a basic misunderstanding of the Christian life, but was more probably simply a wrong experiment. It is different with the rigorous mortifications practised by the monks. In them we see both a manichaean attitude to the body, and a competitive attitude in trying to out-do each other which *has its source & impetus in* ~~stemmed from pride.~~

But in fairness it must be said that the desert fathers did not allow their bodies to be idle. Even though their attitude to the body has more in common

with the Buddhists than the Christians, they kept their bodies busy. This they did by weaving baskets. When they could not sell these, they often unravelled their weaving, and began all over again, occupying their minds with prayer and meditation while their busy fingers plied their craft. (39) At least their bodily activities were useful, although it was more to set their minds free from their body that they engaged in their tasks. It was not that their bodies might have a share in glorifying God, but that they might be kept in subjection, in a neutral activity, so that their souls and minds might be set free to soar to the throne of God.

An exhaustive survey of the various excesses of bodily mortification engaged in by some of the desert fathers and later monks, would be interesting only to the morbidly curious. We ^{shall} ~~will~~ give some typical examples to illustrate the manichaeian attitude which they held towards their bodies. There is the monk who subsisted on only five figs a day, others who lived in swamps, their only drink being muddy water. There is the tale of a monk who having killed a mosquito, in penitence immersed himself up to his neck in a swamp, so that the mosquitoes could feast on him. () Another applied a burning coal to his body, so that the fire from it might quench the fire of lust raging within him. We have our arch-ascetic in St. Symeon Stylites, who sat on a pillar for years. (40) Of many of these early men, it was said with admiration, that the vermin dropped from them as they walked. (41) Influenced as they were by the corruptions of the public baths of the cities, they went to the opposite extreme, and regarded washing as a habit inculcated by the Devil. The body for them was the arch-enemy, to be beaten and kept

in subjection, only kept alive by the bare minimum of food because suicide was against the will of God. The body was a punishment imposed on them by God which they had to endure, until He chose to release them from its bondage. It is never regarded as the temple of the Holy Ghost, to be held in honour, and used in its full powers for the glory of God.

One curious aspect of the desert fathers' attitude to their bodies is their antipathy to laughter and smiling. Of Antony, it is written that he never smiled or laughed, but remained in undisturbed peace continually. (42) This is an erroneous conception of the Peace of God. Christ, our example, wept over Jerusalem and at the grave of Lazarus. (43) He desired to eat the passover with his disciples with great desire, (44) and suffered mentally and spiritually in the Garden at a level which we cannot reach. (45) Saints, like St Thérèse of Lisieux, have told us that in all their physical and mental agony they were at peace in the centre of their lives. (46) This peace is an essential God-centredness which characterizes the life of God's greatest Saints. Yet their internal joy can bubble forth in smiles and laughter. (47) Perhaps it was because there was so much wrong laughter in the world. Alan Paton, in his book "Cry the Beloved Country" talks of this wrong laughter, without explaining it. (48) It is not clearly evil, but it is never wholly innocent. Perhaps it is a laughter that rises from a frivolous and empty-headed attitude to life, and this the monk condemned, and so, like the ancient prophets, he cut himself from it completely, and did not laugh at all. ()

There is also a strong element of competition in the asceticism practised by some of the desert fathers. Macarius of Alexandria, going to the monks of Tannisi, did not disclose who he was, and Pachomius told him he

was too old to be an ascetic. However, Macarius outdid all these monks by standing and praying and weaving palm-leaves for the whole of Lent, only eating a few cabbage leaves. The other monks were so annoyed at being beaten in their own game, that they came to Pachomius and delivered the petulant ultimatum "Either get rid of him, or we ^{shall} ~~will~~ all leave". When the identity of the stranger was revealed to Pachomius, he summoned Macarius and told him that he had edified the brethren sufficiently, and that they would not so easily be tempted to pride in their own achievements in future, and then bade him go. Yet there is pride in Macarius too, and a sly humour in the remarks of Pachomius. (49) In other writings we find this pride condemned, and tales are told of monks, puffed up with their own ascetic powers, falling suddenly into fornication. For all that we have said about the prophetic and extremist attitudes of the desert fathers, there is also to be found a great deal of sanctified common-sense, and a kindness and gentleness which we do not expect from these austere men.

With pride often went a pelagian attitude towards salvation, that a man could climb the summits of heaven using the ladder of his own good works. Of this type of monk "certain old men said 'If thou seest a young man ascending by his own will up to heaven, catch him by the foot and throw him down upon earth, for it is not expedient for him'". (50)

Ascetic discipline is not the only virtue commended in the writings concerning the desert fathers. They were very hospitable, and often relaxed their own fast so that their guests could eat freely, without embarrassment. (51) One old man, who joined the fathers in the desert, was too old to practise the stern discipline of

his companions, and so he spent his time, and the money he had, in buying medicines and going round from cell to cell, ministering to the wants of the monks, and especially to those who were ill. (52) Yet his story is recorded, and stands out with its own peculiar glory against the background of more austere, but certainly not holier, lives. Great Humility is found among them as well, and they confess their faults one to another, at times the elder to the younger, so that they might not acquire a false sanctity in the eyes of men, and also might encourage the weak and stumbling by a confession of their own weaknesses. (53)

Perhaps it was the loose morals of city life which led many monks into a peculiar and unchristian attitude towards friendships. There are many odd tales of their attempt to cut themselves off completely from all knowledge and awareness of the opposite sex. We are told of one brother who remained with eyes closed during a brief interview reluctantly accorded to his sister at his Bishop's command. (54)

There is another ^{example} ~~case~~ cited of a monk who wrapped his mother in a cloak when he was carrying her across a stream, lest contact with his mother's body should remind him of other feminine bodies, and cause an assault of temptation on his chastity. To this excessive scrupulosity a rebuke is administered in the following tale : "A monk met the handmaids of God upon a certain road, and at the sight of them he turned out of the way. And the Abbess said to him "Hadst thou been a perfect monk thou wouldst not have looked so close as to perceive that we were women". (55) But more simple and effective is the story of Nonnus and the Harlot Pelagia. When she passed by "bare of head and shoulder and limb" the bishops turned away from the sight "as from great and grievous sin" but Nonnus "did long and most

intently regard her", and then, when she was out of sight, turned to his fellow bishops "'Did not' said he 'the sight of her great beauty delight you?'"

True, the saintly Bishop goes on to draw the moral that we should adorn our souls for God with as much care as this harlot adorns her body for her lovers, but in his remark is the reminder that creation is the work of God's hands, and we may take delight in all the beauty He has made for us. (56)

But I do not think that this fear of sexual temptation was the main or basic cause of the isolation of so many of the desert fathers. Rather, they believed that detachment from friends, relatives, and even disciples was necessary if they were to become completely purified and attached to God. They feared lest the sight of the faces of men should cloud their vision of the face of God. Surely they should have rather believed, as followers of God incarnate, that they should learn to discern the image of God, however defaced, in the faces of their brethren, for whom Christ died.

It is true that Our Lord said "If any come to me, and hate not his father and mother and wife, and children and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (57). Christ does demand a willingness to renounce all natural ties if they conflict with a true following of Him, and this includes any affection liable to lead to sin. One would-be disciple who desired to return to bury his father is told "Let the dead bury the dead" (58) and Jesus himself said to his mother "Woman what have I to do with thee?", and when told that his mother and brethren were outside the house desiring to speak to him, said that His mother and brethren were those who did the will of God. (59) We must, in God's strength,



brush aside anything and everything which hinders us from obedience to God's will, no matter how deeply we may love whatever it is. But Christ also promises that those who do renounce these natural ties shall have them restored within the family of the Church:

"There is no man that hath left house or parent or brethren or wife or children, for the Kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting".

(60) Human relationships must only be denied if they hinder our walking in the way which Christ demands. They were never meant to be cut out of our lives completely - our relationship to God is not one of isolation. Religion for the Christian must never be "the flight of the alone to the Alone" - in the spiritual sphere we are "encompassed by a great cloud of witnesses"

(61) and our worship, whether we believe it or not will always be "with Angels and Archangels and all the company of Heaven". (62) Furthermore, the new commandment Christ gives is "that ye love one another" (63) and the old law, not superseded but fulfilled, commands us "to honour our father and our mother". (64) In His ministry, our Lord had an especial human friend in John, the beloved disciple, and this friendship in no way marred the perfection of Christ, but shows his sanction of intimate and close relationships of love, within the Body of Christ. In the lives of the desert fathers, and all later monks, friars, and nuns, when the severing of all human ties of affection was necessary, we must applaud it, but when this severance is plainly arbitrary and due to a false understanding of God's nature and God's demand, we deplore and regret it. Unfortunately, this false notion of detachment had persisted in the monastic life through the ages. It is the

creation of a false dichotomy. The love of God and the love of neighbour are bound up together in the New Testament, and they cannot exist truly if they are separated. To love God with all our hearts, minds, souls and strength, and our neighbour as ourself is not only meant to be our chief duty, it is also our highest privilege, and meant to become our chiefest joy. Often one hears that God loves us all equally. That is not true, for anyone knowing anything about the nature of love, even on human levels, knows that equality is a word that cannot be used in reference to it. If we love at all, each relationship of love is unique. God loves us utterly and completely and uniquely. It is this unique love of God for us, and our response to it, that will fit us for the unique perfection we are meant to enjoy in heaven, where we will each play an essential part in the perfection of the whole.

The misunderstanding of the true nature of detachment, and a consequent denial of human friendship is found in later writers, who have been and are regarded as masters of the spiritual life. St Teresa of Jesus says "The sister who wishes, for her personal pleasure, to see her relatives, and who does not weary of their society on their second visit, unless they are spiritual persons who help her soul, must recognise that she is imperfect, and not detached - she is not well, and will not obtain liberty of spirit not perfect peace - she needs a physician. I affirm that unless she changes and is cured she is unfit for this house. So far as I know, the best remedy is that she should have no interview with her relations until she feels emancipated from this bond, having obtained the grace of God by many prayers. When receiving her kindred has become a cross

to a nun, by all means let her see them sometimes, as she will certainly profit them and do herself no harm: (but if she is very fond of them, if their troubles affect her deeply, and if she is delighted at their success in the world, let her be sure that she will injure herself and do them no good)". (65)

Thomas à Kempis, in perhaps the most famous of all works on the spiritual life, "The Imitation of Christ", writes "Desire only to be familiar with God and His holy Angels, and shun the acquaintance of men". (66)

And even St John of the Cross says :- "The first caution is that for all persons thou shalt have equal love and equal forgetfulness, whether they be thy relatives or no, withdrawing thy heart from these as much as from those; more so indeed, in some ways, from thy kinsmen, lest flesh and blood quicken with natural love, which is ever alive among kinsfolk, the which thou must ever mortify for the sake of spiritual perfection. Hold them all as strangers to thee think not of them at all, be they good things or evil things, flee from them in so far as thou fairly canst" (67)

Workman, in his book "The evolution of the Monastic Ideal" comments on this attitude "The reader may dip into these survivals of another age and thought will be conscious at once of something that chills, apart altogether from his aversion to the Theological attitude. The cause, he will find, is the social selfishness with which the whole matter is considered, so complete that at times it becomes sublime. . . . The question is argued from the standpoint of spiritual Robinson Crusoes; no conception even of a possible Man Friday to whom the Christian may owe a love that is something more

than charity, ever seems to cross the mind." (68)

Yet in the lives of these men are instances of love, which show a deeper understanding of the nature of the Christian Life - and it is from the actions of these men that monasticism should model itself. We find frequent tales of friendship, love, hospitality, and kindness among the communities that sprang up in the desert. Advice is sought and counsel given. Mutual confession of sin and weakness. There is one story that shows a depth of natural affection deepened and enriched by spiritual love, where no antagonism is found between the love of God and the love of kin. It is the story of Saint Mary the Harlot, by St Aphraem of Edessa. (69) It tells the story of a monk Abraham, who was left a niece of seven to care for when his brother died. She eagerly joined this holy man in his spiritual exercises, and made his way of life her own. But after twenty years of purity, she was ensnared by a lust-crazed monk, and yielded her virginity to him. In shame she left the cell for the city. Her uncle, troubled by a dream of a dragon devouring a dove, prayed, and was given another dream in which the dragon's belly burst open, and the dove came out unharmed. Seeking his niece, he found her cell empty, and for two years he prayed daily to God for her, while she led a wanton life in the city. At length he found where she was, and disguising himself as a military man, sought out the tavern where she was prostitute. The holy monk acted the part of a profligate, and persuaded the innkeeper to introduce him to Mary. But when she began to beguile him with her kisses she "smelt the fragrance of austerity which his lean body breathed", and the enormity of her sinful life came suddenly upon her, and she began to weep. But her uncle did not reveal his

identity until he was alone with her, and then, in words that breathe the love of God and the affection of the human heart, he began to speak "Why when thou didst sin, didst thou not tell me? - Indeed I would have done thy penance for thee. --- Why didst thou desert me and bring me into this intolerable sorrow? For who is without sin save God himself?" (70) Then when she could not speak for sorrow and shame, he continues even more tenderly "Mary, child, wilt thou not speak to me? Wilt thou not speak to me, half of my heart? - upon me be this sin, O my daughter. It is I that shall answer for thee to God at the day of judgment". Mary the Harlot at last took courage, and leaving behind all her finery, returned to the cell she had deserted two years previously, and lived the rest of her life in holiness and penitence, so that she became Mary the Saint.

Yet in later ages we find that great and holy friendships have grown up, and Montalembert, in his great work "The Monks of the West" protests that monasticism never fetters the true flow of human affection. This is a somewhat over-optimistic view of the history of monasticism, but nevertheless he does cite examples which show that many great souls have risen above the false detachment taught not infrequently in manuals of the spiritual life. We are to forget the temporal, and fix our hearts on the eternal. But many forget that friendship is not part of the passing nature of things, but part of the eternal order, for we will retain and complete our personality in heaven, we will recognise each other, and our mutual love will not be ironed out to a flat uniformity, but within the body of Christ there will be many relationships of love, each with its own particular beauty, conformed to the love of Christ, animated by the Holy Spirit, and united in the worship

of God the Father.

Montalembert writes (71) "And if inanimate nature was to them an abundant delight and source of pleasure, they had a delight still more lively and elevated in the heart, in the double love which burned within them - the love of their brethren inspired and consecrated by the love of God." He quotes a Spanish abbot of the eighth century as saying "I have left but one brother in the world, and how many brothers have I not found in the cloister" and the words of a nun who after death appeared to a sister nun in a dream, and said "Understand my love, that I am already in great peace, but I know not how to enter paradise without thee; prepare then and come at thy quickest, that we may present ourselves together before the Lord." He tells of St Barnard suddenly, in the midst of his sermons on the Song of Songs, pausing to express his grief at the loss of the companionship of a recently departed brother monk. He mentions Geoffrey de Vendome, Pierre le Venerable, as showing in their correspondence their great affection for their friends. He quotes from St Anselm, who found great joy in friendship and in particular in his friendship with Gundulph.

Of more recent times, we can quote an example of holy friendship in that which existed between St Thérèse of Lisieux and her sister Celine. (72) In these letters, and those mentioned above, we find a great extravagance of expression, but we must remember that the age in which they lived was less inhibited than our own. In the English-speaking world today there is far less freedom in the expression of emotions than in almost any other nation. But we must not let our sense of taste marr our appreciation of the depth and sincerity of friendships found within the Cloister. Friendships

which were sanctified and deepened by the Love of God.

But let us return to the desert fathers, and listen to the sane and balanced words of one of their number, as he speaks to us of friendship. The abbot Joseph speaks in an ordered and rational manner, without emotion but with deep sincerity and careful thought in every word. (73.)

"There are many kinds of friendship..... among all these then there is one kind of love which is indissoluble, where the union is owing not to the favour of a recommendation, or some great kindness or gift, or the reason of some bargain, or the necessity of nature, but simply to similarity of virtue. This I say, is what is broken by no chances, what no interval of time or space can sever or destroy, and what even death itself cannot part. This is true and unbroken love which grows by means of the double perfection and goodness of friends, and which, when once its bonds have been entered, no difference of liking, and no disturbing opposition of wishes can sever." He then goes on to say that often friendships which begin well are broken through pettiness, and gives us guidance on how to order our friendships --- "For this reason we said that the full and perfect grace of friendship can only last among those who are perfect and of equal goodness, whose like-mindedness and common purpose allows them either never, or at any rate hardly ever, to disagree, or to differ in those matters which concern their progress in the spiritual life" --- "the first foundation of true friendship consists in contempt for worldly substance and scorn for all things that we possess. For it is utterly wrong and unjustifiable if, after the vanity of the world and all that is in it, had been renounced, whatever miserable furniture remains is more

regarded than what is most valuable; namely, the love of a brother." He goes on to distinguish the love which we must have for all men, and the special love which we have for our friends: "It is possible then, for all to show that love which is called Agapé, of which the blessed Apostle says: 'While therefore we have time, let us do good unto all men, but specially to them that are of the household of faith.' and this should be shown to all men in general to such an extent that we are actually commanded by our Lord to yield it to our enemies, for He says: 'Love your enemies'; but Diathesis, i.e. affection, is shown to but a few, and those who are united to us by kindred, disposition or by tie of goodness, though indeed affection seems to have many degrees of difference. For in one way we love our parents, in another our wives, in another our brothers, in another our children---". He goes on to show that although our Lord loved all the Apostles, yet there was an especial bond of friendship between him and Saint John the Evangelist, the disciple whom Jesus loved. In a previous passage, on which we end, he quotes Saint John, the friend of Christ "Finally, so highly is the virtue of love extolled that the blessed apostle John declares that it not only belongs to God but that it is God, saying: "God is love: he therefore that abideth in love, abideth in God, and God in him". (74)

Father Trevor Huddleston C.R. gives a true account of the virtue of detachment in his book "Naught for your comfort". "Spiritual writers spend quite a lot of time talking about 'detachment', The lives of the saints are full of instances of this virtue, which indeed is a vitally necessary one in the Christian life.

But generally the impression that such writers give is of a negative and cold quality : a refusal to allow oneself to become 'attached' for fear lest in some way such attachment would mean a base disloyalty to Christ. No doubt there are souls who, for their own protection, must eschew all human affection if they are to cleave to God in purity of heart. I am not one of them. For me, detachment is only real if it involves ~~loving~~ loving to the fullest extent of one's nature - but recognising at the same time that such love is set in the context of a supernatural love of God. Then, when the moment of surrender, of parting, comes, one has a worthwhile offering to make : an offering which is the love and affection of all the years, for all those one has known; it has some meaning, like the precious ointment poured out on the feet of Christ. And it is costly too."(75)

3. The Attempt to make all Priests and Clergy into Semi-monks.

While it is true that many men have been called both to the Priesthood and to the Religious life, and found that for themselves these two vocations are complementary, yet it is not true that all clergy of necessity have a vocation to the celibate life, for we are told that Peter was married, and Paul tells us that some of the Apostles travelled with their wives.(76) Yet the Roman Catholic Church in the west enforces celibacy on almost all its clergy as a rule of discipline, though not requiring vows. In Germany there have been one or two instances of Lutheran Pastors becoming Roman Catholic Priests, and being allowed to retain their wives, while the Uniate Churches of the East, which recognise the Pope, have the rule that a Priest must either be married before his ordination, or become a

monk. This rule is that of the Eastern Orthodox Churches. Evidently the great part of the Catholic Church frowns on a Bachelor-Priesthood!

The history of the struggle of the Priesthood to resist the imposition of Celibacy, and of Monks and their sympathisers to impose it on them begins early and continues for a long period in the west. The scene of perhaps the fiercest struggle in pre-Reformation times is Milan, where the Priests had to finally admit defeat. (77)

The teaching that clergy should be celibate began early in the Church, Tertullian and Epiphanius strongly recommend it, and the Council of Elvira (295-302 A.D.) in its 33rd canon commands that Clerics may not marry, and the third prohibition of the Council of Nicea (325) forbids a Priest to have any women in his house but a close blood relative. Generally, before absolute celibacy was enforced, a person married before his ordination was allowed to retain his wife, while the decrees of the council of Ancyra, in 314 allowed that if a deacon protested at his ordination that he had not the strength or gift of continence, he could marry subsequently. The present rule in the Eastern Orthodox Churches is that if a married Priest is elected Bishop (an extremely rare occurrence) he must separate from his wife before consecration. At Nicea, we are told by Socrates that an attempt was made to enforce celibacy but Paphnutius objected strongly to this imposition, and so no legislation was passed beyond that mentioned, which may only have applied to unmarried clergy. (78)

In the early years of monasticism, there was a tension between the cleric and the monk, but gradually and armed neutrality became an alliance, which culminated in the election of Gregory the Great, the monk who

became Pope. After his time, monks gained ascendancy over the Church, and Priest-monks began to occupy the highest offices in the Church, and soon the attempted enforcement of celibacy on the Clergy became a major issue in Church politics and culminated in the rigid discipline which we have in the Roman Church today. Gregory the great was undoubtedly one of the most gifted men that have occupied the see of Rome, but we find it strange that he should have sanctioned the practice of placing boys and youths in monasteries by purchasing English lads of 17 or 18 years old, to be "bred in monasteries for missionary purposes". While lauding his missionary zeal, we find it difficult to condone this method.⁽⁷⁹⁾ Here is another case of the arbitrary imposition of the Religious life.

Concerning the influence of the Monk in enforcing celibacy on the clergy, Milman, in his "History of Latin Christianity" writes in a somewhat biased fashion, yet his words have in them much of truth :- "The Monastic principle, admitting, virtually at least, almost to its full extent, the Manichean tenet of the innate sinfulness of all sexual intercourse as partaking of the inextinguishable impurity of Matter, was gradually wrought into the popular feeling. Whether marriage was treated as in itself an evil, perhaps to be tolerated, but still degrading to human nature, as by Jerome, and the more ascetic teachers; or honoured, as by Augustine, with a specious adulation, only to exalt virginity to a still loftier height above it: the clergy were taught to assert it at once as a privilege, as a distinction, as the consummation and the testimony to the sacredness of their order. As there was this perpetual appeal to their pride (they were thus visibly set apart from the vulgar, the rest of mankind), so they

were compelled to its observance at once by the law of the Church, and by the fear of falling below their perpetual rivals, the monks, in the general estimation"(80) and he adds "Throughout the whole period, from Pope Siricius to the Reformation --- the law (of the celibacy of clergy) was defied, infringed, eluded. It never obtained to anything approaching to general observance". (81)

In non-episcopal groups, marriage of the clergy has become the rule. An unmarried minister of the Methodists or Presbyterians is regarded by the people as something of an oddity, and I doubt whether more than one percent of these ministers ever seriously consider celibacy as a vocation, though the circumstances of their life, or their psychological make-up may cause them to remain in a state of bachelorhood. In the Anglican Church it is much the same, although there are a growing number of celibate priests, who have chosen celibacy as part of their unique vocation, ^{but} ~~though~~ they remain unallied to any religious community. The Anglican Church has, I believe, the most balanced attitude ~~as regards~~ ^{to} marriage of the clergy. It neither exhorts its clergy to marry, nor does it attempt to impose celibacy on them (though some celibate bishops attempt, largely unsuccessfully, to prevent the clergy they ordain from marrying for as long as they dare). The rule of the Anglican Church in this matter is to be found in the thirty-nine articles and it goes to the heart of the matter. Article XXXII, 'Of the Marriage of Priests' states "Bishops, Priests and Deacons are not commanded by God's law, either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage : therefor it is lawful for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they

shall judge the same to serve better to godliness".
The key phrase in this article is "As they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness."

But it is not only in the imposition of celibacy that the Roman Church has attempted to "monasticise" its clergy. One of their own clergy has some penetrating comments to make on the faults in the training of Parish Priests in seminaries, where the idea of "Interior Perfection" is so stressed that many emerge with the idea that the parish is going to be a hindrance, and not an essential to their sanctification. This idea of "Interior Perfection" is one of the basic misunderstandings of the Religious life from within. We find it stressed in so many books. It is an over-concern with the salvation of our own souls to the neglect of other souls. In Bonaventura's book, "Holiness of Life" meant to be an outline of the way of perfection for the Poor Clares he does not mention the duty of intercession.⁽⁸²⁾ This wrong attitude to perfection has penetrated to the Clergy, and the clergy have even tried to foist it on the laity, as the following quotations from Abbé Michonneaux's book "Revolution in a City Parish" will show :- "If we were to believe some authors The spirituality they write about is a thing apart from the grossness of the world; the seminary's purpose, as they see it, is a frantic building up of a reserve of holiness against the day when we shall have no time for spiritual exercises as we know them in the seminary. (83) Later he continues "We know priests who are good, and even holy men; and yet these same priests can preserve an astonishing tranquility of conscience even though faced by the vision of thousands of souls who live and die around them without the faintest knowledge of Christ, and even

though they themselves have been chosen from among men to bring him to such as those These priests are regular in their prayers they keep up a schedule of religious exercises such as they learned in the seminary. Maybe they are too rigid, they are certainly unreal in their spiritual life" and later "such a man does not reach this state because of his spiritual life; it is the result of a lack of one, or the possession of a misguided one" it is "not priestly, it does not know the meaning of caritas Christi urget nos" (The love of Christ constraineth us).⁽⁸⁴⁾ "Seminarians still have their orders held up because they smoke or talk in violation of the rule, but we do not know of any who are so treated for their haughtiness, bad temper or anti-social attitude.⁽⁸⁵⁾ We can only wish that spiritual writers would begin to outline the practical and ascetical value of the active ministry." (86)

Earlier in his book, the Abbé shows how Priests throttle apostolic zeal in the youth by this false perfectionism "We tell them that their own soul is the most important thing in the world, that they must not go with anyone who might endanger their salvation, that there are persons, places and things that they must avoid for their own good. Everything that we tell them seems pointed to the question of personal salvation. Everything is accepted or rejected according to whether it will advance or retard this. On that basis it is hard to see why we should be surprised at their lack of zeal for the conversion of the mass of men. We have given them instead an instinct for spiritual self-preservation". (87)

Although the Abbé does not say in so many words that these false ideals are an importation from the misunderstanding of the Spiritual life which has infec-

ted much of the teaching of spiritual writers, and springs from within the cloister, yet it is obvious that this is so. But we must add a word of caution. Much that is said can apply to some Anglican Theological colleges, and the training given in them, but it does not apply to the training of the Protestant groups, who could learn much of value from the discipline involved in the daily mass and offices of the Catholic clergy, and the guides to meditation which great writers from within the Religious life have given us. Discipline in prayer, as well as in study and visiting, is required of all clergy. Our own sanctification is bound up with that of the parish, and we can all learn much from the great spiritual writers. What we must guard against, however, is the tendency to become self-centred spiritual hypochondriacs on the one hand, and popularity-seeking, emotional pulpit-actors on the other. Books such as St Francis de Sales' "The Devout Life" and St Thérèse of Lisieux's "Collected Letters" and "The story of a soul" will help us to achieve a balance and conformity between the proper love of self (which the twofold command of Christ implies is our duty) and the love of neighbour, because they set both within the context of the Love of God.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 2.

1. Matt 20: 20-23.
2. John 13: 3-11
3. Used in cards sent by the Community of the Resurrection to members of the "Fraternity of the Resurrection" - laymen or secular priests who support the Community in various ways, and pray for increased vocations to the Religious Life, using these words.
4. 1 Cor. 7: 1-11.
5. Eph. 5: 25.
6. John 2: 1ff.
7. Any Saint to any Nun: letters selected and arranged by a Benedictine of Stanbrook. Burns Oates and Washbourne. (Quoted from Migne, PL 18, Exhortatio ad Sponsam Christi)
8. Op cit page 16 (From Migne PL 22 Ep. CXXX)
9. Op cit 14 (Migne PL 33 Ep CL)
10. Letter IX, pages 36, 37, 39 (Migne PL 16, Extract from treatise "De Virginibus" addressed by St Ambrose to his sister, St Marcellina)
11. Op. cit. 8-9 (Migne PL 183 Ep exiii To the Virgin Sophia)
- 12 Op cit 27 (From 'La Vera Sposa Gesu Christo; Vol 11 Discorso familiare ad una fanciulla de prende l'abito di monaca)
13. Some principles of the Religious Life: from the writings of John Mason Neale S.P.C.K. 1956 page 5.
14. Op cit pages 2 & 3.
15. Op cit page 3.
16. Any Saint to any Nun: page 5 (Histoire d'une Ame, Appendix, Lettre xx, A sa seur Celine)
- 17 The man born to be King: Dorothy L Sayers, Victor Gollancz London 1946 pages 188-189 (I have not mentioned the self-righteousness of which Martha accuses herself in the play) see also Luke 10: 38ff.
18. English Hymnal Hymn no 485.
19. English Hymnal No 405.
20. Voyage to Venus (Perelandra) C. S. Lewis. Pam books 1953. pages 168-170. and "That hideous strength" C.S. Lewis, The Bodley Head 1946. Chapter 15.
21. Evolution of the Monastic Ideal: Herbert B Workman (Charles N Kelly London) 1913 page 333
22. Op cit pages 333, 334, 335.
23. Any Saint to any Nun: foreword xix-xx.
- 24 The Desert Fathers: Helen Waddell page 66.

25. The Desert Fathers (Constable and co 1936) page 73.
26. Matt 19: 16-22.
27. Luke 19: 1-10.
- 28 Matt 4: 21-22.
29. Mark 5: 18-19.
30. 1 Cor. 7: vs 6, 7, 17, 22, and 23a.
31. A Book of Common Prayer, South Africa. O.U.P. p 238
32. St Luke 1:38, & 2:51.
33. John 2:5.
34. Rev. 12, 1ff. Although the woman mentioned here may also be the Church, yet she is the mother of the Son who is caught up to God. Although the Biblical evidence for the title "Queen of Heaven" is slight, there is no need to dispute this traditional title of our Lady.
35. Psalm 115.
36. Lausiae History: Palladius. Tr. Lowther-Clarke. page 59ff also Ecclesiastical History, Sezomen Bk 1 Ch 14.
37. Evolution of Monastic Ideal, Workman p.60.
38. Lausaie History p 32.
- 39 Lausaie History Ch 10 sec 5.
40. The Monks of the West: Montalembert Vol 1, p 342.
41. Evolution of the Monastic Ideal pp 64-66.
42. Other sources however mention him as being full of joy, and smiling.
43. John 11: 1-45.
44. Luke 22:15
45. Luke 22: 41-46.
46. Collected Letters of St Therese of Lisieux, Sheed and Ward, 1949 p.328.
47. Rule of Benedict Ch 7. Tenth degree of Humility.
48. Alan Paton: Cry the Beloved Country. See also Screwtape Letters; C.S. Lewis, Letter XI.
50. Desert Fathers p 150
51. Cassian's Institutes Bk V Ch XXIV.
52. Sezomen, op cit. Bk VI Ch 29.
53. Desert Fathers p 9.
54. Sezomen op cit. Bk VI Ch 29.
55. Desert Fathers p 104.
56. Desert Fathers, pp 285ff.
57. Luke 14:26.
58. Matt 8 :22
59. John 2:4 and Matt. 12: 47-50.
60. Luke 18: 29ff.
61. Heb. 12:1.
62. This is a feature of

62. This is a feature of most of the Liturgies of Christendom, it forms the conclusion of the preface to the Canon.
63. John 15:12.
64. Gen. 20: 12.
65. The Way of perfection. St Teresa of Avila Ch.8, section 2. (see also Ch 4 section 4.)
66. Imitation of Christ, : Thomas a Kempis Ch 8.
67. Complete works of St John of the Cross, Vol 3, p200
68. Evolution of the Monastic Ideal p 59, see also Sezomen, op. cit. VI:29.
69. The Desert Fathers p 289.
70. The Desert Fathers, 297-8
71. The Monks of the West, pp72-3
72. Collected Letters of St Therese of Lisieux, see all letters to Celine.
73. Cassian's Conferences XVI
74. 1 John 4: 16.
75. Naught for your Comfort: Trevor Huddleston, Fontana Books 1957. p 15. Fr. Huddleston was recalled to England to be novice master to the C. R. It is evident that the novices under his care will not be taught a false view of detachment by him.
76. 1 Cor 9:5.
77. History of Latin Christianity, Milman Vol 111, pp 439-447.
78. Catholic Encyclopaedia - Published by Robert Appleton N. Y. 1908. Vol III article on Celibacy.
79. Latin Christianity, Milman Vol 2, p 118.
80. Latin Christianity Milman Vol 1, pp 98-99
81. Op cit 100
82. Holiness of Life St Benaventura.
83. Revolution in a City Parish: Abbe G. Michonneau Blackfriars 1951, page 154.
84. Op cit pp155-156.
85. Op cit 165
86. Op cit 158.
87. Op cit p 66.

CHAPTER THREE

THE TEMPORAL AND THE TEMPORARY CONTRIBUTIONS

The title of this Chapter may be somewhat confusing, and at first I had thought of separating the subject-matter of ~~this chapter~~ into two separate chapters, but that would have made confusion worse confounded, as the Temporal contribution, and the temporary contributions, which the Religious Life makes to the life of the Church as a whole are inextricably linked, and the temporary contributions are in fact only particular applications, to meet the needs of the time, of the temporal contribution which the Religious Life continually makes. In the history of the Church, the dangers and needs of one age are not those of another, and the answers to them are therefore different. The Church brings out of its treasury things new and old (1) yet both the new and the old are only new and old when viewed from the time-angle, because they all spring from that supreme Gift of Jesus Christ to His Church, which comes from outside of time into time; the Gift of the Holy Spirit, who guides us into all truth, and who teaches us what to say in our hours of need. (2) The gift of the Holy Spirit is a gift to the whole Church, yet within the Church there are "diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit". (3) There is the particular gift of the Holy Spirit to the ministry, the gift which enables them to preach the word and administer the sacraments, and this gift has eternal, temporal, and temporary characteristics. In its eternal aspect, preaching the word and administering the sacraments have as their main purpose that all men should come to the knowledge of God, through Jesus Christ (4) and that they should be united to Jesus Christ, and feed on him, so that they might be

fitted to enjoy heaven, where their lives and their loves will be set within the heart of the Life and Love of the Holy Trinity, by, through, and in Jesus Christ, God made man. But the temporal order is marred by sin and evil, and so the temporal aspect of this ministry of word and sacraments is to free us from bondage to Satan and his demons, and to bring us the forgiveness of our sins. But sin and evil take on new forms, and although Christ has conquered sin, death, and Satan, yet on earth the warfare continues, and must be fought on new fronts in different ages, so that the ministry, while retaining its essential structure, is continually adapted by the Holy Spirit to meet the different situations as they arise. Pastoral methods change with different times, and in different places, and the Liturgy, while retaining its fourfold shape, ⁽⁵⁾ is adapted to meet the needs of the people. Here is the temporary aspect of the gift of the ministry.

The Religious Life is the same. It too has an eternal, a temporal, and a temporary contribution to make to the life of the Church. We leave a consideration of the eternal contribution to the next chapter, and will attempt to deal with the temporal and temporary contributions in this.

The three vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience each have a temporal aspect. They witness to needs which are always present in the Church militant, although they will not be present, and are not present, in the Church Triumphant. The Church in its warfare against sin and evil has three enemies which it must continually subdue. They are the World, the Flesh, and The Devil. The three temptations of our Lord (6) can be placed under these three heads. The temptation

to make the stones bread was a temptation of the Flesh. The temptation to throw Himself from the pinnacle of the temple was a temptation of the world, for it would have been a demonstration of mere power and not of goodness. The temptation to bow down and worship the Devil came direct from the Father of Lies, without using the medium of the world or the flesh, for it was a temptation to compromise with evil, but our Lord resisted this, for a good end can never justify an evil means.

In our baptism we are 'signed on' as soldiers in this struggle, for the Prayer Book has this prayer after Baptism "We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock, and do sign him with the sign of the Cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end" (7) and before baptism the Godparents are asked, on behalf of the child "Dost thou --- renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with the covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow nor be led by them?" and they reply "I renounce them all". (8)

But within this general renunciation made by every member of the Church, the particular renunciation of the Religious finds its setting, and the three vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience are prophetic witnesses to the whole Church that the renunciation in Baptism is a real one, and must be kept in purity. The Prophets of the Old Covenant were a constant witness to Israel of the absolute nature of God's commands, and

this temporal function gave rise to the temporary contribution which the Prophets made to Israel in their times of need, meeting the situation with a Word of God, thundering forth their message "Thus saith the Lord". The new covenant fulfill~~s~~^s the old, and in the New Israel, the Religious takes the place of the Prophet. Just as there is a similarity and homology between the Aaronic Priesthood and the Christian ministry, between the Old testament Sacrifices and the Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross continually represented in the Eucharist, yet this similarity and homology never becomes mere parallelism, because the New Covenant both fulfill~~s~~^s and transcends the Old, so with the Prophet and the Religious. We can see similarities between the lone prophets of the Old Testament and the Solitaries of the Religious life, and also similarities between the "Schools of the Prophets"⁽⁹⁾ and the Religious orders of the Christian Church, yet the Prophetic function of the Religious resides more in the life of renunciation he leads, than in any particular message he may utter.

Before going on to discuss the temporal contribution of the Religious life more fully, we must for the moment digress, to obviate an objection which may have arisen in the minds of our readers. There have been many bad periods in the history of the Religious Life, times when the three-fold vows have been neglected, when life within the cloister has been a compromise with the world, the flesh, and the devil, and an indication of the low ebb of the whole ~~of~~^{of the} Church (life) of the period. How then can it be argued that the Religious Life has a continual prophetic function to fulfill~~l~~^l, when it is obvious that it has so often lamentably failed to fulfill~~l~~^l this function? This question is the result of

incorrect thinking. The Old Testament tells us that at times the prophets have prophesied falsely, and the people have loved to have it so (10) - that there have been times when an unholy alliance of Prophet Priest and Ruler has led to the suppression of the people and the diminution of the Religion of Yahweh into a hypocritical cult. (11) Yet no-one will deny that the Prophets had a function to fulfill in Israel. That they failed to fulfill it at times is no disproof of this, but merely an historical proof of the fact of sin and the fall : that man was made (to freely) love God, but that he frequently uses this freedom to disobey the commands of God. In the Church, the New Israel, we are not promised safety from all dangers. We are warned that grievous wolves will enter in, (12) that there are false, hireling shepherds, (13) but we are told that the gates of hell will not prevail against the Church. (14) We have a guarantee of ultimate victory in Christ for His Church, but we are not told how the battle will go in any particular age or generation. The Religious Life has a temporal function to fulfill, though at times it has almost completely failed to fulfill its function. Yet never, in any age, does God leave himself without witnesses, and we find, in examining the History of the Religious Life, that even in the blackest periods there have been saints of the cloister who have witnessed to the true prophetic vocation of the Religious Life.

The Temporary Aspects of the Threefold Vow.

The special renunciation of the Religious, the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, are prophetic witnesses to the renunciation, demanded of every Christian, of the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Not everyone is called to make the particular renunciations made by the Religious, but everyone is called to have the will to make any and every renunciation which God

demands of them in their particular life and situation. "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out" (15) there is no compromise in these words of Our Lord. They do not mean of course that all men are meant to be one-eyed, but they do mean that anything which becomes clearly and absolutely a barrier between the soul and God must be plucked, root and branch, from our lives. One of the gifts of God to us is "wine that maketh glad the heart of man"⁽¹⁶⁾ but this gift the Alcoholic, because of his weakness, should not enjoy. He must become a total abstainer, just as others have made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom's sake. (17) The Religious Life, circumscribed by the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, is a witness to the fact that God is not always ready to take the will for the deed, for if that was so then the will of man to renunciation would soon wither and die, but that God does demand of some men a renunciation of things which are in themselves innocent, and even good, and even the duty of other men. The Religious communities are an ever-present witness to this fact, and remind us that at any time God may make a similar or quite different demand on our own lives. The main temporal purpose of the Religious life in the life of the Church is to teach the whole Church, and every member of it, to be able to say "The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord" (18) and to have the faith which is able to respond "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him". (19)

The vow of poverty is a particular and drastic method of dealing with the temptations of the world. When a man willingly and fully abandons the hope of all material possessions, so that not even his garments or his crucifix can be called his own, then the cares of

this world cannot rise up and choke the seed which God has planted in his heart (20). When the greatest of all physical pleasures is voluntarily renounced by taking a vow of absolute chastity, then the sins of the flesh, to which this pleasure so often leads in our fallen world, cannot gain a foothold in the soul of the man or woman who keeps this vow. When the vow of obedience is freely accepted, so that not only is obedience rendered to God, but to a Rule of Life as God-inspired, and to a Superior as set by God in his seat of authority, for the sanctification of the souls in his care, so that even innocent pleasures are not enjoyed unless they have the express sanction of the Rule of the Superior, then the Devil cannot tempt a faithful Religious to sin, because all sin is simply disobedience to the known and accepted good.

Of course this does not mean to say that Religious do not sin, but it does mean that whenever they do sin, they are also breaking their vows, and any sin therefore becomes more serious, just as adultery is more serious than fornication, because adultery involves the breaking of a solemn vow, as well as a sexual offence.

Other Aspects of the Temporal Contribution.

From this point the Temporal and the Temporary contributions tend to merge, and it is difficult to keep a clear-cut separation between them although we ^{shall} ~~will~~ endeavour to do so. In the temporal sphere, where our "adversary the devil goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (21) and where, although Satan has been conquered by the death and Resurrection of Christ, the results of the fall of man are not eradicated, and ~~will not~~ be eradicated until the consummation of all things; the Church must wage constant warfare against ~~sin~~ and all the other results of the

fall, and the Religious Life is called to be in the forefront of this battle.

The results of the fall, of man's disobedience to God, are manifold. It is possible that none of us are fully aware of all that has been lost by man's rejection of God, just as we cannot be fully aware in this life, of the glory that awaits us in heaven as a result of the redemption wrought by Jesus Christ. But the bible, and our own observation from within the Christian life, do teach us some of the results of the fall. Among them is death "The wages of sin is death" (22) and with death goes sickness and disease. Another result is poverty. Our Lord reminded his followers of this when He said "The poor have ye always with you" (23). Another result is ignorance. This our Lord recognised when He prayed "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do" (24) and ignorance is not only in dullness of the intellect, but also of the moral and aesthetic understanding. Nature too is fallen. No thinking Christian can seriously claim that it is part of God's will that nature should be "red in tooth and claw" (25) or that the floods and droughts which cause so much havoc in nature and to the lives of men are in accordance with the Divine purpose. St Paul tells us "That the whole creation groaneth and travaileth" and the Old Testament prophecy looked forward to the time when man and nature should be reconciled, when "the lion would lie down with the lamb", and children could play carefreely near snakes and scorpions, when they would not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain "and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea". (26)

To almost all these results of the fall, the

Religious life has, practically from its inception, waged constant warfare, although it is true that they both entered in to other men's labours, and others have entered into their's. And this is where the temporal and the temporary merge, for although there is this continual battle, the contribution in some fields have been greater in past ages than they are today, and social services, secular hospitals, government controlled education, ~~and~~ soil-erosion committees, and the S.P.C.A. take over much of what was once almost the exclusive prerogative of the Religious Orders.

Yet Religious orders from very early times began the battle against the results of the fall. In the time of the desert fathers we read of them tending the sick, and defending the faith against errors which sprang from ignorance as well as pride. Under them, the desert blossomed like a rose, (27) and the monks of Egypt were able to supply corn to starving cities. Benedict made work in the fields part of his rule, and in later ages the missionary monks did much to make the barren earth bring forth abundantly. In the dark ages the monasteries were the guardians of learning and the creators of the greatest works of art, and from their ranks have sprung some of the greatest of the Church's scholars. The poor always looked to the monasteries for protection, and in most ages the monasteries supplied it. The title Sister, now given to trained nurses of ability, shows the monastic origin of this care for the sick. The redemption of nature, which is shown in the great agricultural work of so many monasteries, was given an additional facet in the coming of St Francis, the patron saint of animals. Always, throughout the ages of the Church, whenever the need was great, and the

monasteries sufficiently numerous, we find members of Religious Communities helping the poor, tending the sick and the aged and the orphaned, educating the ignorant, and in the forefront of the quest for truth. Although they renounced the world and the flesh and the devil by their vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, yet this did not mean that they retired from the battle against these powers. In the fight against sin, the early monks did much to mould the weapon of auricular confession, which has benefitted countless numbers in the life of the Church, and from the cloister and the early 'abbots' of the desert, as well as from the communities of Ireland, the manuals of devotion, ~~and the~~ homely advice, and the penitentials have done much to illuminate the study of moral theology, and aid pastors in the cure of souls.

These may all seem temporary contributions, rather than temporal contributions, yet although others take over the work which the monks began, the Religious life is ever ready to enter once more into these labours should the need arise. State education has limited their field in one direction, just as the tyranny of Soviet Russia prevents the Church engaging in any social work, yet the spirit is still there, and only needs the opportunity to express itself, and when opportunity and need coincide, then the Religious life is ready to make its contribution to the temporal needs of the Church and the world.

In the "Constitutiones Societas Iesu" (28) there is a section entitled "Formulae Instituti Societas Iesu" which was submitted to Pope Paul III and later to Pope Julius III as an outline of the aims of the Society of Jesus, in order to gain official sanction for the order, before the Rule itself was written. Its first

chapter which we now quote completely, gives an excellent summary of the temporal contribution of the Religious Life to the life of the Church.

"Whosoever in our Society, which we desire to honour with the name of Jesus, wishes to fight for God under the banner of the cross, and to serve the Lord only, and the Church his very spouse, under the Pope of Rome, the Steward of Christ on earth, after the solemn vow of perpetual chastity, poverty, and obedience, let him know that he is part of a Society instituted for this purpose above all, that it should aim for the defence and propagation of the faith and the advancement of souls in Christian life and doctrine, by means of public preaching, reading, and whatsoever other ministry of the word of God, and spiritual training, the instruction of boys and of the ignorant in the Christian Faith, above all the spiritual consolation of the faithful ones of Christ, in hearing confessions and in administering the other sacraments: and none the less for the reconciliation of the dissident and of those who are in prisons or hospitals, let him show himself of service in pious help and ministry, and other acts of charity, to be carried out as will have seemed to redound to the glory of God and to the common good, absolutely free and for the reward of no payment in any respect at all, of his work aforesaid: and he should look to God firstly, secondly to the conduct of this his order (or, ordering of this his constitution or rule) which is, as it were, a path to keep before his eyes for as long as he shall live, and to follow with his whole strength this end set before him by God, one and all howbeit according to the grace given to him by the Holy Spirit, and the stage which belongs to his

calling." (29)

But the main temporal contribution which the Religious life makes, not only to the Church, but also to the world, is in her continual intercession on behalf of both the Church and the world. The recitation of the Divine Office, of lauds, prime, mattins, terce, sext, none, and compline, together with the daily offering of the Holy Sacrifice, are the inner core around which the whole of the Religious' life is built, (this is not true of all Religious Communities, but it is true of most) and this means that a continual stream of intercession is rising day and night from Religious Communities all over the world that the temporal needs of the Church may be met.

The Divine Office is built around the recitation of the psalms, and these by the frequent recurrence of "I" may at first glance seem individualistic. (30) But the "I" refers to the whole of Israel, viewed in different aspects, and we must not forget that the Psalter was the hymn-book of the old Israel, continually used in public worship. The addition of the Gloria transforms these psalms into Christian hymns, and the petitions made in them are not only for the individual who recites them, but for the whole Church. The Eucharist, apart from all its other glories, is of course the greatest act of intercession that the Church can make, and this act of intercession is made daily in most Religious Communities.

The Temporary Contributions

To make this chapter complete, it is necessary to give a brief survey of the way in which the Religious Life has met the needs in the Church in different ages. The needs have differed, and the ways in which they

have been met have differed. We hope that we ^{shall} will be able to avoid giving merely a potted history of monasticism, and if that is the impression conveyed, it is not intended. What we are trying to do is to recount history, ~~but~~ not the whole of monastic history, but only those aspects which deal with the different situations as they arose, and the answer found in these situations within the religious life. If what follows ~~sounds like potted history, remember it is but~~ ^{This is a} brief review of history from a special angle, and with a limited purpose - to show the temporary contributions which the Religious life has made to the life of the Church.

Before the Desert Fathers, we have glimpses of the monastic movement, but no clear or ordered history. There were evidently societies of widows in New Testament times, and Philip the Deacon had ~~seven~~ ^{four} daughters who prophesied. St Paul advocated celibacy, and it is possible to regard St John the Baptist as the first Christian solitary. (31) But with the desert fathers the Monastic movement had its greatest impetus, or perhaps it is better to say that what was to become the monastic movement as we now know it receives its greatest impetus for the desert fathers were not strictly speaking the founders of the Monastic movement and the Religious Life as we know them today. They were rather the precursors of the movement, prophets of the monks that were to be, rather than monks themselves, and like the prophets of old, they were men of extremes. Seeking to escape one error they often fell into the opposite error, and the calm and peace and ordered life that is the norm of monasteries today, is not often found among these startling Jeremiahs and

John Baptists of the Wilderness.

The age of persecution had ended with the placing of Christ's symbol on the standards of Constantine. Thenceforth the Church had been flooded by the world. Its newly-discovered popularity led thousands to the waters of baptism, without any clear understanding of what they were doing, and the total committal to Christ which their immersion implied. True, many, like Constantine himself, delayed baptism till the point of death, desiring that their feet should be firmly planted both in the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of man, and some, more honestly, because they feared the consequences of post-baptismal sin. Though the Cross led the Roman legions into battle, and was raised on high, yet its imprint in the hearts of the new converts was weak, at times almost invisible. The world by its false affection was beginning to swamp the Church. The thorns had sprung up to choke the seed. It looked as if the Church was triumphant and victorious on every side, but in reality, it faced a test more severe, because more subtle, than it had faced in the age of persecution and the martyrs. So God raised up the desert fathers, to prophecy, by word and life, against the New Israel. The age of prophecy had not ended with the coming of Christ, but in His mystical Body, The Church, it takes a new form.

Among the faithful Christians were many who had longed for the privilege and crown of martyrdom. Now the opportunity was past, but they found an answer in leading a disciplined and ascetic life in protest against the Church which was being corrupted. Can we suggest that they were the first protestants? or the prophets of protestantism? These early ascetics were composed almost exclusively of laymen. It was not to

be the only time, though perhaps it was the first on a large scale, when a faithful laity were to bring back the Church to the path it was ordained to tread. (It is this recurring fact of the laity at times taking the lead both in godliness and orthodoxy which is a practical disproof to theories which allow authority on faith and morals to reside solely in a pope, or in the episcopate, or even in the cleric.)

In Rome, when it was being pillaged and plundered by the arian Barbarians, Churches were respected, and the dedicated lives of holy virgins were not in many instances, violated by the lustful invader. Holiness of life has in it the power to call forth a response of admiration and respect, even from those whose lives are apparently not governed by any standard of morality (32). In the midst of barbarian invasions, and a church torn by the heresy of arianism, the monks remained unafraid and orthodox, they were bulwarks of the Church, and after the fifth century monasticism was destined to emerge more completely from the retreat which it had found in the deserts, and which had largely been a preparation, to conquer and capture for Christ the overthrowers of the Roman Empire. (33) Although they were not a clerical but a lay movement, yet many had been almost forcibly ordained, and from their ranks came most of the greatest Bishops of the Church, such as Basil, Chrysostom, Augustine, and Martin of Tours, and many of the early doctors of the Church.

With the coming of Benedict of Nursia, monasticism became regularised and ordered in the west. St Athanasius had done much to make it popular, and St Martin of Tours had caused it to spread widely, and restored monasticism to public favour, but there was no rule that was universally accepted or obeyed in the west. The Celtic monasteries had ^{developed} a rule, and had engaged

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in missionary activity far and wide. Among the most famous of the Celtic Missionary-Monk-Saints are Patrick, Columba, and Ninian. Gradually, however, the rule of Benedict became universally accepted in the west, just as St Basil had ordered monasticism in the East. Although the aim of many of the early monastic foundations was not primarily missionary, but rather the seeking of solitude, yet they were as beacons set on a hill which could not be hid, and crowds soon flocked towards and settled near these monasteries, so that Christianity was often spread and heresy checked not by the monk seeking the heathen and heretic, but by the heathen seeking out the monk. But the contribution made by the monk was not only in the sphere of conversion from heathensim or heresy - Toynbee comments "The Benedictine order not only turned the tide of economic life in Italy, it also performed in medieval Transalpine Europe that strenuous pioneer work of clearing forests, draining marshes and creating fields and pastures which was performed in North America by the French and British backwoodsman. (34) Here is that redemption of nature of which we spoke earlier.

One of the greatest temporary contributions which monasteries made to the Church and the world during the period between the Fall of Rome and the Renaissance was the preservation of learning.

Apart from the scholars it produced, it preserved the literature of the Bible, and painstakingly copied out manuscripts, ^{many of} which were beautifully illuminated. With the invention of printing this temporary contribution of the Religious life ceased, but the works of its scholars ^{was then able to} could now reach a wider group. Among these ^{the great medieval scholars before} were Alcuin, who was the main intellectual force in the ^{the age of printing}

revival of learning in the days of Charlemagne; John Scotus Erigena, a product of the Irish monasteries; Anselm, a product of the monastery of Bec, whose great work "Cur Deus Homo" is still discussed at length in modern books of theology. Whether we agree with it or not, it cannot be ignored; Abelard, who, though not originally a monk, became a monk after being robbed of his manhood as a result of his love for Heloise. He was ^{one of} ~~undoubtedly~~ the most acute intellects of his age; yet perhaps the work of William of Champeaux, his defeated rival, was ultimately of more lasting worth, as it produced, from the Abbey of St Victor, the famous Bernard of Clairvaux, who ~~dominated his age~~. Later we have Albertus Magnus, and Thomas Aquinas, both Dominicans, and Alexander of Hales, and Bonaventura, from the Franciscans. Duns Scotus, is the Franciscan rival to Aquinas in fame as a Theologian, but they also produced William of Ockham, beloved of Anglicans for his appeal to a general council as of more authority than an Pope. All these scholars, and the many others which the monasteries and friaries produced, interpreted the unchanging truth of Christianity to the Church of their day. Part of what they have said remains as a permanent contribution in the Theology of the Church, while other parts met the difficulties of the day; and as ~~both~~ knowledge increased and conditions changed, their work was superceded. (35)

The monks did much to spread Christianity. Latourette (36) feels that they would have achieved more if missionary activity had been their primary purpose, but I doubt it. In the old Israel, exclusiveness was a necessary pre-condition to Universalism. Although in the old Israel, it became self-centred, hard, and

narrow, yet in the New Israel exclusiveness must remain. The purity of the gospel must be maintained if the gospel is to be spread. Yet some of the monks had a definitely missionary purpose, such as those which came from Ireland, and also, when Hildebrand became Pope Gregory, monasticism was marshalled in the spread of Christianity, and St Augustine came to Britain, for the specific conversion of the Britons. Gregory also sent youths to monasteries to be trained as missionaries. The orders have throughout the ages done much of the pioneering missionary work of the Church, but of course, this is a temporary contribution, as once a land embraces Christianity, the work there becomes pastoral and not missionary, although of course there is always a missionary element in all pastoral work.

The Pope in a dream saw Francis upholding a tottering Church, and the great mendicant orders, the Franciscans revitalised the Church, witnessing to poverty when the hierarchy had become rich and luxurious. They were intensely missionary-minded. The Dominicans helped stamp out the growing heresies of the Church. The Military Orders, which sprung up as a result of the crusades inspired by Peter the Hermit, revitalised the concept of the Christian as a soldier of Christ. Part of what they aimed at achieving was realised later in the foundation of the Jesuits, but alas, one of their contributions seems to have been only temporary - the growth of Christian chivalry, because we live in an age which has largely forgotten that tact and winsomeness, politeness and gentleness, are Christian virtues.

The Jesuits, under the teaching of their rigorous founder, St Ignatius Loyola, did much to stem the tide of heresy which was growing on the continent. From

our own viewpoint we may believe that the Reformation was a 'vital outpouring of the Holy Spirit' or an 'Unmitigated Tragedy'. I do not think either view ^{can be wholly defended (with doubt held water)} will hold water, but it is certainly true that with the correction of abuses, there also went the rapid spread of heresy and antinomianism and a complete disregard for authority. The Church needed a band of absolutely dedicated men, and it found them in the Jesuits. The Jesuits have been much abused by protestant historians, and indeed the Pope closed the order for a period, and has recently issued what sounds like a rebuke to them. This is because the fourth vow of the Jesuit (of utter obedience to the Pope), and their teaching that if their superior says that something is black that appears to them as white, they must say it is black, and that their senses deceive them. Here the vow of obedience goes wrong, because it gives to men what can only be rendered to God, and opens the way to all the errors that the adjective "Jesuitical" has come to connote. Yet their utter obedience was a means of stemming the tide of heresy in the age in which they lived.

This last century has seen the rebirth and growth of monasticism in the Anglican Church, and it sprang out of the growing consciousness of the Anglican Church of its catholicity, a consciousness inspired by the Oxford movement, and Anglicans owe a great debt to the monastic movements within their communion for spreading the knowledge of the true nature of their Church. Of course, within the Anglican Communion, since the re-establishment of the Religious Life, all the temporal contributions made by the Religious Life throughout the ages is once again being made within the Anglican

Communion, The poor are helped - this is a work particularly dear to the Franciscans at Cerne Abbas. Continual intercession rises from the Abbey of Nashdom, where the Benedictines are established. The Community of the Resurrection does much in the field of education and missionary work. At its headquarters in Mirfield there is a Theological College, and also in Rosettenville, South Africa. It began St John's Diocesan College in Johannesburg, and has done much missionary work in South Africa and the Rhodesias. The Prophetic spirit of monasticism, which has largely waned in the Roman Catholic Church, has had a remarkable resurgence in our own day from within the Anglican Communion, for Father Trevor Huddleston of the Community of the Resurrection is nothing if not a Prophet, bringing the message of God to the people of South Africa, with a courage inspired by Truth. (37)

But there are signs of a resurgence of the religious life within ^{the wider} protestantism ~~itself~~, for we have at least a semi-monasticism in the Community of Iona, and more clearly in the Communauté de Taizé, founded by Max Thurian, in France, and the group of German sisters, who are all protestants, yet have a great veneration for Our Lady, and live to make reparation for the cruelty of the Germans to the Jews. ~~But~~ these contemporary movements carry implications which are best left till the last chapter of this book. But there is one tentative prophecy which I cannot help making at the end of this chapter. It may be, if the Religious Life takes firm hold in the protestant Churches, that it would be one of the greatest forces for the Re-union of Christendom, and that may be the greatest of the Temporary Contributions which the Religious Life has to make in our world today.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 3.

- (1) St Matthew 13: 52.
- (2) St John 16: 13; and St Mark 13: 11.
- (3) Corinthians 12 : 4.
- (4) 1 Timothy 2: 4.
- (5) I am assuming, for arguement's sake, that Dix's hypothesis of a 'Four Action Shape' of the Liturgy is correct, as most scholars in fact do. See 'The Shape of the Liturgy' Dom Gregory Dix, Dacre Press.
- (6) St Matthew 4: 1-11. St Luke 4: 1-13.
- (7) South African Book of Common Prayer, Page 404
- (8) Op. cit. p. 401.
- (9) 2 Kings 2: 3, 5, 7, refers to 'sons of the prophets' who doubtless made up 'schools'.
- (10) 1 Kings 22: 10-19. is an example of this.
- (11) As in the times of Amos. See Ch. 2 : 4-8 and Ch. 8: 10-14 especially.
- (12) Acts 20: 29 of St Matthew 7: 15.
- (13) St John 10: 12.
- (14) St Matthew 16: 18.
- (15) St Matthew 5: 29.
- (16) Psalm 104: 15.
- (17) St Matthew 19: 11-12.
- (18) Job 1:21.
- (19) Job 13: 15.
- (20) St Matthew 13: 7.
- (21) 1 St Peter 5: 8-9
- (22) Romans 6: 23.
- (23) Matthew 26: 11. Mark 14: 7. John 12: 8.
- (24) St Luke 23: 34.
- (25) 'In Memoriam' by Alfred, Lord Tennyson. ptI v. 1.
- (26) Isaiah 11: 1-9.
- (27) Isaiah 35: 1.

Much older than Dix!

- (28) "Constitutiones Societas Iesu auctore S. Ignatio de Loyola. Romae Typis Vaticanis MDCCCXVIII" -
I am grateful to the Father Rector of St Aidan's College, Grahamstown, who gave special permission for me to borrow this book, which is in Latin, not translated nor intended for general reading. I must also express my gratitude to Mr T.P.O'D. Bredin, Classics Master at St Andrew's College, Grahamstown, who translated the passage quoted.
- (29) Op. cit. pages xxi - xxii.
- (30) The fact that the 'I' of the psalms ^{used} represents Israel as a corporate personality can be seen by an examination of Psalms 14, 17, 102, 118, 121, 123 and 129, where at times 'I' is interchanged with 'we' and the 'I' of some verses is identified with 'Israael' in others in the parallelism of Hebrew poetry.
- (31) See footnote: and Acts 21: 8, 9 for St Philip the deacon and his four daughters.
- (32) Milman, "History of Latin Christianity" Vol. I p. 134.
- (33) Montalembert "The Monks of the West" Vol. I p 501 - 510.
- (34) "A Study of History" Arnold J. Toynbee - Abridgement of Vols 1 - 6 by D.C. Somerville. O.U.P., 1947. page 226.
- (35) "The Great Schoolmen of the Middle Ages" W.J. Townsend. Hodder & Stoughton. London, MDCCCLXXXI.
- (36) "A History of the Expansion of Christianity" Vol: "The 1,000 years of uncertainty" Eyre & Spottiswood, London 1939, page 17 f.
- (37) "Call of the Cloister" by Peter Anson and "Naught for Your Comfort" by Fr. Huddleston.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ETERNAL AND INWARD CONTRIBUTION

This is the most important and at the same time the most difficult chapter of this work. It is the most important, because it deals with the enduring contribution which the religious life makes to the life of the Church as a whole. The contribution which continues when this age is past; and yet it is difficult, because it is impossible to dissect the Religious, the monk or nun or friar, from the rest of the Church, and say "here lies your contribution, and it is a contribution which the rest of the Church cannot make". We have here a tension, if not a paradox. We believe in a sacred Ministry, and also in the Priesthood of all Believers. We believe in the Sacraments as the ordained channels of Grace, and yet we believe that God is not bound nor limited by them. Such then must be our attitude to the Religious Life. While we believe and know that it has an eternal contribution to make, yet we will not seek to find in the Religious Life any exclusive rights. The inward and eternal contribution of the Religious Life to the life of the Church is not a contribution which it alone is empowered to make, or which it makes exclusively, but which it makes pre-eminently, or in a distinctive fashion. Because it is a contribution, it ceases to be a possession, it is something made over, offered, for the enrichment of the whole Church, and it calls forth response in the lives of many members of the Church, so that we find mystics, solitaries, ascetics, continual intercessors outside the monastery walls as well as within.

In the last chapter we outlined the sort of contribution which the Religious Life makes to the Church

and the world in the temporal order, an order in which sin, evil, and death are continually present realities. And we dealt, very briefly, with the different contributions which the Religious life has made, through the ages, to meet the Church or world-situation of the time. We now come to assess its contribution in the eternal order. There is much we do not know about the eternal order. We do not know, although we doubt strongly, whether Sacraments and the ministry abide. We do not even know whether sexuality remains, and we also cannot know whether members of religious orders will be a special group in heaven. It does not seem likely, but we must beware of judging what the life of heaven will be like from a priori concepts and categories of thinking, culled from Greek Philosophy. Our standard of judgment must be the Bible, and in particular the accounts of our Lord's resurrection, for He is the first fruits, and we know that our Resurrection bodies will be like His Body, and that if we are faithful the life that awaits us when all things are consummated, will be like His life. It does seem obvious however, that there will be no need for prophecy, or for the prophetic ministry of the Religious life, for they are suited to the temporal order of incompleteness, imperfection, and sin. Yet there is a way in which all contributions made in the Church's life here and now are eternal. Our Lord made one all-sufficient sacrifice for sin in time, when He, in loving obedience, suffered death upon the cross, and yet that sacrifice is eternally offered and shewn forth in Heaven, and we unite with that eternal offering at every Eucharist. By the mercy of

God it is the same with our actions. God will forgive sins and destroy sin, so that it will have no eternal significance, but our good actions, and any sacrifice we make, is joined with Christ's sacrifice, because it can only be done IN Him - so that even the littlest act of human kindness done in Christ's name gains eternal significance "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye did it unto me". (1) But this is not the sort of question we are trying to answer in the first part of this chapter. The question we pose can be phrased in different ways - "How far does the Religious Life reflect the life of Heaven?" "What is there in the life of the Religious which will abide when this age is passed, what in his daily life and discipline will remain and be necessary when sin shall be no more?"

First it is necessary to say that virtues do not cease to be virtues, but vice ceases to exist. Virtue is a positive value which does not need its opposite to give it significance and meaning. When sin is no more, then we ^{shall} will be able to fully appreciate, and not merely ^{to} understand with the intellect, what virtue really is. Virtue is the characteristic of the natural mode of life for man, the law of man's natural life; but because the world is fallen, man is unnatural. The cardinal virtues are simply the natural response of man (that is a true man, and the only true man we know is Christ,) when he is confronted by evil. He is immediately prudent, courageous, just, and temperate, and in Heaven, these virtues are merely facets of the Divine Love in which we shall live, the Love which on earth must be called not only Love, but Love, Faith, and Hope. Love, our present

possession, faith, which looks back to the redemption wrought by Christ, and hope, which looks forward to the life of heaven. (If, as I believe, Eternal life in heaven will still be mediated to us through time - perhaps multi-dimensional time (2) then there may be a place for hope and faith, but the greatest will be love. ()) 1.COR.13.13.

But all this is too general. We are trying to narrow it down to a specific contribution, which, if not made only by the Religious, is made by them par excellence, or in a way which is of particular and peculiar worth to the Church. This eternal contribution is twofold. First, the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience have an eternal aspect; and secondly, the community life, centred as it is in the worship of God, bears witness to the eternal worship of God in heaven, and the nature of that worship.

Up till now we have been looking at the Religious Life largely from outside, or the effects they produced on the historical situation of the outside world and the church around them, except when we investigated the misunderstandings from within the Religious Life, and yet even then, we were looking at poisons of an external origin, which had been subtly filtered into Community-life by the Father of lies, and we only paused briefly to gaze at some of the Champions in different ages who were raised up from within the ranks of the Religious to protest, by word or deed, against these errors. It is now necessary to go inside the monastery, so that we may see the eternal contribution, wrought out in the daily life of the community, and witnessed to in the threefold vow of poverty, obedience, and chastity.

And to conclude the chapter we ^{shall} will think about the Inward contribution of the Religious Life, ^{is} their contribution to the ascetic and the mystical way of life. But we must severely limit our field, so as to get but an indication of what is then normal routine ^{is} of an average monastery, and look for a while at a few of the writings of some of Christendom's greatest Saints and mystics who found their inspiration within the religious life. To do more than this would need volumes, not one short chapter, but first the threefold vows.

The Three Vows

We have said in an earlier chapter that the vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience were part of the temporal contribution made by the Religious Life to the Church, because it was a constant witness to the need for renunciation in the life of the Christian, a witness to the fact that all must be willing to take up their cross and follow Christ. But this is a temporal contribution, because in heaven there will be no Cross - the need for renunciation and the carrying of the cross is made necessary by the fact of evil, and that fact will be no more when this age is past. But the threefold ~~vow~~ have an eternal aspect too; in heaven we ^{shall} will be rich, not poor, but the vow of poverty teaches us that we possess all things when we acknowledge that we have nothing - and in heaven our possession of all things will be possession, but possession by gift of God. We ^{shall} will never claim our rights in heaven - because in heaven we ^{shall} will have no 'rights' - God owes nothing to us, we deserve nothing from God, and yet he freely wills to give us all things, and the free and humble acceptance of his Gift of all things to

us should begin to be one of the chief aspects of our joy on earth, as it will be in heaven. This then is the eternal contribution of the vow of poverty which shapes the life of the Religious. It is a witness to the Pauline truth "As having nothing, yet possessing all things" (3) and to the words of Our Lord "They that save their lives shall lose them, they that lose their lives for my sake and the gospel's shall save them". (4)

The vow of Chastity. The vow, which in its temporal aspect, is there to keep lust at bay, in its eternal aspect witnesses to purity and singleness of heart. If there is neither marriage nor giving of marriage in heaven, it is equally true that there is neither spinsterhood nor bachelordom, but we, as members of the body of Christ, are woven into that relationship of Love, Lover, and Beloved which is the inner life of the Holy Trinity. And that love is a Unity in Trinity, and in the Godhead a unity in Multiplicity, in the members of the Body of Christ. There is no dross or tarnish in that Love - no taking without giving, no possession without being possessed, no victory without surrender. So it is chaste, because it is pure, but not in Heaven pure by abstinence, but pure because it is whole, single, direct, and complete.

The vow of Obedience has its eternal aspect too. On earth, there are times when obedience must be accompanied by stress. Even in the life of our Lord we find this stress. In the Garden of Gethsemane, he prayed "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt be done", (5) and he was bathed in bloody

sweat, the anguish was so great. But in heaven, obedience is the law of our life, and it is part of the Sonship which we have by adoption and incorporation into Christ it does not inhibit freedom, but is the very condition of freedom. Even in this life we discover that law and freedom are two aspects of the one thing. The anglican collect expresses it well when it says "O God who art the author of peace and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom; defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies, that we surely trusting in thy defence, may not fear the power of any adversaries, through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord."⁽⁶⁾ or as Christ says in the Bible "Take my yoke upon you, for it is easy, and my burden is light", (7) It is this freedom through obedience to which the Religious Life is a witness in the Church throughout the ages, and it is exemplified in the lives of many of the Saints of the cloister. It is also true of many of the members of Religious orders whom we meet, their lives seem characterized by a peace which is lacking in the hustle and bustle of secular life. The cares of this world do not choke them, because they have been so largely freed from those cares by the vow of obedience which they have taken.

So down through the ages, at first by solitary anchorites, and later and more fully by the communities, by monk and nun and friar, the threefold vow of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience has been faithfully kept; and in keeping it, the Religious life has drawn attention to an aspect of that eternal life, the consummation of which we look forward to after death, but which begins for us now, because we have already been made new in Jesus Christ Our Lord.

THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE

It is true that the recitation of the daily office is a matter of obligation for all Priests of the Church, and that many Priests try to celebrate the Mass daily and that neither in the recitation of the office, nor in the celebration of Mass are they in reality alone, although no visible congregation be present, for what they do is done on behalf of the Church, and in doing it they are united with the worship of the whole Church, in paradise, on earth, and in heaven. Nevertheless, the 'private' recitation of the office, and 'private' masses (not allowed by authority in the Anglican Communion) do not always bring with them the consciousness of a corporate activity as do the office said in choir, and the public celebration of Mass.

In heaven, our worship will be a corporate one, and consciously corporate, for we will respond in mutual love to the love of God the Father, poured out to us by the Holy Spirit on us, who are united and live in Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son. The members of Religious Orders, in uniting together to recite the office and to offer the sacrifice of the Mass, witness to the worship of Heaven, for the Worship of Heaven is not disembodied worship, for we believe in the Resurrection of the Body, and it is not invisible worship.- it is only invisible to us, who live on earth. The offices in choir, and the daily Eucharist which all attend, are a visible and embodied symbol and sharing of the visible and embodied worship of Heaven.

Priests are not obliged to say their offices in choir, that is as a visibly corporate act of worship, and neither are a number of Religious Orders - such as

the Jesuits and some of the Franciscan Communities. But the Benedictine Rule clearly visualizes that the norm of worship will be corporate, although allowances are made for those that work a great distance away from the monastery (Rule of Benedict Chapter 50) and Augustinian Canons have this same obligation, The little hours, of terce, sext and none can be said in Choir. It is of course true that the whole Church is duty bound to assemble from time to time in public worship, and this is not only a witness to, but a foretaste of the worship of heaven. Nevertheless, the daily public recitation of the office within the cloister is a reminder of unceasing nature of the worship of heaven. Though the whole Church shares in witnessing to the corporate nature of the worship of heaven, when we gather together for worship, and the clergy, by their daily recitation, witness to the unceasing nature of this worship, nevertheless it is within the Religious Life that this witness is made pre-eminantly, by those Orders who follow the Benedictine norm. (8)

We do not intend attempting a history of the growth of the office, or a detailed analysis of its structure, as that is not the purpose of this section (9). All that is important is that we should examine those facets or aspects of the office which reflect facets or aspects of the worship of heaven.

The Divine office, which includes Prime, Lauds, Mattins, Terce, Sext, None and compline, consists of the recitation of the psalter, certain canticles and hymns, and the reading of Holy Scripture and other sacred books, as well as prayers and collects appropriate to the hour.

In heaven, our worship of God will be primarily Praise, which is the glorying in Him who is utterly love-worthy, and every aspect and facet of our nature will be expressed in this everlasting Sacrifice of Praise. The psalter is peculiarly fitted to express on earth the everlasting outpoured praise of heaven, for in it every aspect of man's nature and need, both individual and corporate, finds expression. This Hymnbook of the Old Testament is made Christian by the Gloria, with which each psalm ends, and the Church has added to her psalter in the lovely canticles of the New Testament, such as the Magnificat, the Nunc Dimittis, and the Benedictus, and also one of the greatest hymns of the Church, the Te Deum. Although many of these hymns focus attention on ourselves and our need, yet the underlying theme of them all is "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven." (10) and in Heaven God's name is everlastingly hallowed.

The praise of God in heaven is eternally answered by the Vision of God, and as the Psalms and hymns and canticles are our converse with God, so in the readings from Scripture, God speaks to us, and as we follow the Church's year, the whole of God's revelation of Himself in History is presented to the Faithful, and we meditate on and are confronted by the Truth of God, which is uniquely revealed in His only begotten Son, made Man for us and our salvation, for the lessons were originally designed (and the Anglican Offices of Mattins and Evensong have restored this) so that the Old Testament was read through once a year, and the New Testament twice. The Christian year, from Advent to Pentecost, presents us with the

great facts of the Christian Faith, for in Advent we prepare for the Incarnation and think of the Last things, death, judgment, Heaven and Hell, and at Christmas we glory in our Lord's incarnation. Epiphany, Christ's manifestation to the Gentiles, reminds us that God's salvation is meant for all, Septuagesima, Sexagesima and Quinquagesima prepare us for "The Holy Feast of Lent" (11) when we join with Our Lord in his forty days fast and in Paschaltide walk with Him on the Via Dolorosa, and gather at the foot of the Cross to watch the King of Glory die. Eastertide brings the triumph and glory of the Resurrection, and for forty days we praise God for the Resurrection of His Son, and look forward to the hope of our own resurrection. We gather with the early Christians to watch Our Lord ascend into heaven, where He went, both to prepare a place for us (IN 14.2) and that He might be with us always, and then join in prayer in the upper room to await the outpoured gift of the Holy Spirit, which comes at Pentecost. And in all these great mysteries of the Faith, the eternal shines through time, and the glory of Heaven is revealed.

From Pentecost to Advent, the Church devotes its lessons to instruction in the building up of the Christian Life, so as to fit us for the worship of Heaven.

But interspersed in the Church's year are the festivals of the Saints, those in whose lives the grace of God has shone with brilliant clarity, and they serve to remind us that we are 'encompassed about with a great cloud of witnesses' (12) and that we worship with the whole Church, uniting with the

Church in Paradise and in Heaven, for we believe in the Communion of Saints. Though God is, in one sense, a jealous God, for nothing must be allowed to separate us from His love, yet He wills that we should glory in the lives of the great heroes of the Church, and love and honour them, for the honour we render them redounds to the glory of God.

In the responsories and collects, the truth of God set forth in the lessons or by the season find an answering response in our worship, and serve to unite more closely together the Praise of God and the Vision of God.

The offices have been described as the lovely setting for the jewel of the Mass, and it is in the Mass that the height of the Church's worship is achieved for we unite with that sacrifice continually offered in Heaven by Jesus Christ, and it is only through Him our mediator, that we can approach the Father, and when we receive His Body and Blood, we pray that we 'may ever live in Him and He in us' (13) and the fulness of this mutual indwelling is the Life of Heaven.

All that has been said to elucidate how the Divine Office and the Mass reflect the Worship of Heaven applies not only to monasteries, but also to all Churches throughout Christendom where this worship is offered. Nevertheless, the Religious Life is dedicated in a particular way to the worship of God. In the office (which means duty) and the Mass lie the chief work and duty of the monk, and it is a work he does on behalf of the whole Church, and the enclosed monastery provides a unique opportunity for making this worship more glorious and beautiful than the exigencies of Parish Life often will allow, so

that the ceremonial, vestments, and plainchant of the cloister can reflect more fully the ordered beauty of the worship of Heaven, and in many monasteries almost nothing is allowed to interfere with the perpetual offering of the Sacrifice of Praise, just as we ^{shall} will worship God in heaven without let or hindrance.

For the office is a sacrifice as well as the mass, for in it we offer ourselves to God through Jesus Christ, and the breath we use in singing psalms and canticles is a symbol of the principle of life, which is continually given by God, and continually offered back to Him. (14)

The Inward Contribution of the Religious Life.

"Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" said Our Lord (15) and that is the first duty of man, and it is explicated in the twofold command to love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves, and in our Lord's sermon on the mount, and shown forth in His life of compassion to men and loving obedience to the Father. Perfection must be the goal of every man, and it is in striving after this goal that all the struggle against temptation and growth in virtue, which go to make up the inward life of the sincere Christian, consists. In the struggle and the victory we need, above all, that Grace which is the personal power of God in our lives. Writers from among Religious Communities have made a great contribution to this inward life in their writings, for the aim of perfection is foremost in the rules and ordered life of every religious community, and from this background of particular renunciation have sprung some of the greatest classics on the spiritual life, which illuminate the ascetic and mystical path.

It is true that many Religious have thought of

themselves as treading a higher path, their goal a higher perfection than that available to the ordinary Christian, and this view has become popular; and in many circles goes unchallenged and unquestioned, accepted as the authoritative declaration of the Church inspired by the Holy Spirit, that many may be scandalised by the denial that the Religious Life is a higher path and an inner ring, which we made in Chapter two. However, in denying that the perfection which the Religious seeks is a higher perfection, we do not deny that the way of the Religious is a way to perfection, and a way of perfection which will have a unique and dazzling glory of its own, when the final goal of the inward life of the Religious is achieved in Heaven. The cult of a particular perfection is the characterising mark of the inward aspect of the Religious life, but of course if it is merely a cult of perfection which has become individualistic and self centred, then it ceases to be Christian, and our understanding of the contribution which the Religious Life makes in this sphere will be seriously limited if we remain bogged down by individualism. This contribution is important just because it is not simply selfish or merely inward, but points continually to that which is outside and above it - a goal to which it constantly presses, the Perfect worship of God and all the fullness of the life of Heaven.

The fact that monasticism has from time to time misunderstood itself need cause us no alarm, nor need it detract from the main thesis of this section. It is seldom that a Saint regards himself as possessed of heroic sanctity, and this is a truth of experience in other ways of life. Doctors, Nurses and Teachers

(and even Priests) are not infrequently given to complaint and grumbling, and levity and what appears to be frivolity about their high calling and its nature. Yet they continue in their self-sacrificing work, at times unaware, and at times half ashamed of that impulsive and compulsive love, and the high ideal, and indeed the grace of God, which keeps them at their often thankless tasks. In these monks who believed that to love God in purity of heart, and with single-mindedness, all inferior loves must be rooted from the soul, the Spirit animating them proved wiser than they, and brought to their feet kings and heathen, who listened to their words of wisdom in awe and love. The Spirit made the monks as beacons set on a hill, and their light could not be hid, and inspired an affection in the hearts of the masses for these dedicated men, an affection by which they could not but be moved.

Although manuals of Ascetic and Mystical Theology have been mainly written for a select group within the Church, the brothers and sisters who share the authors' dedicated way of life, yet they have proved of inestimable worth to Christians of every calling and avocation.

One great difficulty which confronted me once when I read books of moral, ascetic, or mystical theology was that they seemed to be presented as sciences - books which professed to give the 'know how' of the ways of purgation, illumination, and union (16) and all this seemed to me to be tinged with gnosticism. This is because I read the books without understanding. These books do not claim to provide a hidden knowledge, they are the imparting and relating of a personal experience in relation to God,

a personal experience which is set within the context of the life of the cloister and the Church. They do not say "This is the only way" they say "This is the way I have trod." They are not books which could be advertised in a magazine under the heading "Become a Saint - in six easy lessons" (even though the title of the book by Jan van Ruysbroeck "The seven steps of the ladder of Spiritual Love" may seem to carry this implication). They are the hands of a brother stretched out to help us over the stony pathway of temptation. In the pages of their books our brothers and sisters company with us, though they no longer belong to the Church militant. They proffer advice in love, they do not schematise a fixed and detailed route to heaven, and the advice of their books is useless unless the reader is illumined by the Holy Spirit as he reads, unless his reading becomes part and parcel of his response to, and personal encounter with Christ as Saviour. These books are not necessary in the sense that Christ is necessary, - they are not even helps in the sense that they can quicken our growth in perfection and our union with Christ sooner than Christ could do it alone, but they are necessary, and essential in so far as they form part of the way along which the Holy Spirit moves us towards Christ, part of the path towards perfection which the Holy Trinity has ordained that we should tread. If God has chosen them for us, and deigns to use the offerings of His servants, then like the loaves and fishes offered by the little boy were made adequate to feed the bodies of a hungry multitude, so these books become spiritual sustenance to the pilgrim.

Another difficulty, which confronts us particularly in moral theology is its legalism. It is true

that a pharisaic legalism is constantly trying to worm its way back into the Church, in spite of all that St Paul has said. Kenneth Kirk in his Vision of God quotes the Didache, where the words of our Lord are twisted into a Pharisaic formula, and made a minutia of regulation rather than a general principle "Let not your fasts be with the hypocrites; for they fast on the second and fifth day of the week --- but do ye fast on the fourth and on Friday" (17)

Reading the Celtic Penitentials, one gains the impression that the long penances imposed were almost regarded as work ~~almost~~ of supererogation, and that by his own effort expressed in penance, a man could wash away his own guilt. But if we reflect all the valuable works on Moral Theology, so many of which have sprung from the cloister, as being merely the influx of legalism into the Church, then we misunderstand them. Codification, Rules, and Discipline are necessary in any organised Society, and this applies to the Church (18) where we, and others, go wrong is when we begin to regard these codes, rules, and disciplines as fixed, immutable laws. They are not, they are guideposts to right action. I have not ^{space} ~~time~~, nor is it appropriate to discuss at full length the following statement, though I am sure of its truth: There is no action done by man which in every instance, and under every possible circumstance can be condemned as sinful. The twofold law of Love, the motives of action, and the situation in which man finds himself are the three ingredients from which moral decisions and moral action arise - but this is not impersonal, for the law of Love can only be understood by knowing Christ, and that knowledge is personal knowledge.

Casultry, properly understood, is the applying of the personal law of love to particular and different persons and groups in the situations in which they find themselves. Personal does not mean merely individual, it has two aspects, the individual and the corporate. Just as we believe God to be personal, and that He is three Persons in one God, so the Christian is not merely an individual. He is a member of the Body of Christ, part of a redeemed corporate personality whose Head is Jesus. Codes of Rules, and Disciplinary regulations are useful and necessary for the Church as a whole, and their importance is not lessened, but only properly understood, when we see that to almost every rule and discipline there are exceptions, exceptions to which no set of rules, however detailed, can take full account, for the life of man is greater than the thought of man, and formulæ cannot comprehend the whole of life. But having said all this, our debt to the Religious life in their contribution to the inward life of the Church and its members is immense, for by their renunciations, the choir offices, and the life they live in community, has come, under the inspiration of God and the guidance of His Holy Spirit, a deep insight into the nature of man, his duties and his privileges, and his responsibility to God and to his brother man.

THE BOOKS OF DEVOTIONAL THEOLOGY

To attempt to summarise the contribution of the Religious life in the field of Moral, Ascetic, and Mystical Theology in any adequate manner would take volumes, and it seems presumption to attempt it. What I propose to do is to give but the briefest outline, in the hope that the reader will turn to the classics

of devotion and read them for himself.

St Paul can be regarded as coming from within the monastic circle, as his writings show that he had decided on perpetual chastity. (19) He has much to say on mortification, poverty, obedience and chastity, and the moral life. Apart from the Gospels, it is to St Paul that later writers on Monasticism have found their chief sanctions for their way of life.

But apart from the Bible, which has a unique authority, St Athanasius is probably the first great author to deal with what we broadly term "Devotional Theology" from the specifically monastic viewpoint. For it is not only in works of Theology, but also in the Books written on the lives of the Saints, and in their collected letters that we can find rich material which illumines the inward life of the Christian soul. St Athanasius, though not a monk in the strict sense of the term, ~~yet~~ spent a long period with the monks of the desert during his periodic exiles, and it was their way of life which he popularised in his "Life of Antony". We may not find all that is said congenial, but Antony still shines as a Saint through the pages of this book, and the great driving motives of his life are the glory of God and the Vision of God (20)

Jerome spent at least part of his life as a monk, and although we see in him an extremist, and a bitter satirist, yet his writings do witness to the fact that it is necessary to be willing to leave all things to follow Christ, although he sometimes cites examples of renunciation which we cannot regard as necessary, but rather as wrong. Apathy towards men is not a pre-condition of loving God. (21) Among

these early writings, we have Cassian's Institutes and Conferences, and Palladius' Lausiac History where much is recorded concerning the Desert Fathers which is of assistance in leading the devout life - their lives are one of virtue, and their advice has frequently a gentleness, humility, and a firm basis in sound common sense which we may find surprising when we think of the extreme rigour of their austerities.

Before the arrival of the great Benedict, the saintly life of Martin of Tours did much to popularise monasticism, and his life, written by his devoted Disciple, Sulpitius Severus (21) became very popular, and did much to teach people the ways of holiness, for we often learn more by example than precept. St Augustine, although not exactly a monk, nevertheless inspired the foundation of the Austin Canons, and his life, after his conversion, was one of dedicated celibacy. Perhaps he could rightly be regarded as a Solitary, forced by circumstance to live in daily contact with the world. He was profoundly influenced by the life of Antony, and his books, particularly the "Confessions" show a deep knowledge of the inmost life of the soul, and its relation to God. It is to him we owe that wonderful sentence, which is so frequently quoted "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in thee" (23).

Saint Benedict of Nursia, in his Rule, which was influenced by Pachomius' rule, regulated monasticism in the west. He stresses the need for work as well as prayer, and of love of neighbour as well as love of God, though his chief contribution is in his demand of unswerving obedience to the superior of the order, for this, interpreted to those outside the

monastery, states the basic demand of the devout life, that of obedience to God, for while moods, emotions and opportunity for prayer and service vary, the demand for obedience to God does not, and this demand for obedience to God demands of us a lesser obedience to be rendered to men whom God has set over us in the hierarchy of both the Church and the State, an obedience which must always be rendered, unless it comes into direct conflict with the obedience which we owe to God. (24) Benedict was also influenced by the Rule of St Basil, and these three Saints in their works showed that an excessive rigorism towards the body is not an essential pre-condition or concomitant to the service of God, - a lesson which extremists of all ages, inside and outside the monastery would do well to learn. (25)

The Penitentials which spring from the Irish monks, although they do not analyse the nature of sin, nevertheless, in the length of penances they impose do stress the seriousness of sin. The Christian must never have the attitude characterised by the French expression "Le Bon Dieu" or the cynical casualness of the Frenchman who said "God will forgive - it is his *métier*". Although the Church has progressed since the time of these early penitentials, and we do not impose the severe disciplines of this early age, it is not because the Church has a light attitude to sin. Sin is serious, and forgiveness costly, but it is costly to God, and a free gift to man. (26)

The Pseudo Dionysius the Areopagite, who wrote in the fifth century, exerted a profound influence on mysticism, and although we do not know whether he himself sprang from the cloister or not, he influenced

many later mystics in the religious life (including Jan van Ruysbroeck). He stresses a negative approach to God, and although this is one-sided, yet it still stresses an important aspect of the inward life, and our approach to God. God is infinite and unconditioned, and we are not, and although He has expressed Himself in human terms, when the second person of the Holy Trinity became incarnate, yet still in one sense He remains the unknown God, for we can comprehend the incomprehensible(27) and at least in this life, the burning depths of God's infinity, which is eternal and unquenchable light, must remain darkness, and the Christian must be prepared to enter into this darkness in faith. (28).

Although some writers of the Spiritual life have had an almost purely negative approach, and denied nature that they might affirm supernature, yet this is corrected in the writings of others. St Basil revelled in the beauty of the scenery around his hermitage, and even Jerome extols the beauty of the country-side (29). In them we see foretastes of St Francis, but it never descends to the near-panteism of a Wordsworth. The Christian must delight in all the good gifts of nature which God bestows, but must ever look beyond them or rather see in them a reflection of both the Glory of God, and the glory that awaits us in Heaven, where the whole creation will be made new. Although we are told that Bernard of Clairvaux, perhaps the most famous of all the saints which the Cistercian order has produced, rode along the shores of Lake Geneva so deep in meditation that its beauties went unnoticed, (30) yet he is responsible for the wonderful sermons on the Song of Songs, which abounds in nature imagery,

all of which he presses into the service of God, who is God of Nature and of Grace.

St Augustine's platonism helped him towards a deep understanding of the natural order. Although it was temporal and passing, yet it mirrored the eternal, and "The City of God" had an outpost on earth in the Church militant (31). Although the Christian renounces the World in his Baptism, and the Religious' vow of Poverty is a renunciation of the world in a particular manner, yet it is the world as defaced by Satan that we renounce, with all its temptation for us to possess without being possessed. Yet as in man, so in nature, and in the structures and institutions of society, Satan is not able to erase completely from them the image of God, or the reflection of His glory, and it is this image which we must constantly seek in man, and the reflection of his glory and his attributes, such as justice and order, however faultily presented, in nature and the structure and institutions of Society.

To return to Bernard, Kenneth Kirk tells us in his book "The Vision of God" (32), (to which I am greatly indebted for this section) that some of his writings are "prophetic of the mendicant orders rather than reminiscent of the older monasticism" (33) for the older books urged monks to stay in their monasteries, whereas Bernard says that to go abroad is allowable, if it is love that is the motive "For love is like a smile and full of joy" and Bernard urges his monks to realise that their chief task is service. Here is at any rate the seeds of hope for the laity, who had for centuries regarded themselves as unable to approach the higher path trod by devout monks. It is the lesson, found indeed in the lives

of the desert fathers, but not emphasized sufficiently in many later writers, that the inward life of the soul must not be a hothouse culture, but must, to be complete, be conscious of its vocation to serve its neighbour, the Church, and the world, and it carries with it the corollary that if the layman remains in the world, because of Love, then he treads a path of glory no whit less glorious than that taken by the cloistered monk, and both seek the same end - the Vision of God. Kirk concludes what he has to say on Bernard with these words "For sanity and saintliness combined, - for all the distinctive lessons of Christianity in ethics, - a Christian could scarcely find a better teacher than St Bernard". (34)

Among the laity there were forerunners of St Francis, who bound themselves together in a type of Religious Life - with a common, though simple, rule, with 'evangelical simplicity and community of goods' (35) but without the vow of Chastity, and they often settled near monasteries to minister to the monks. This seems a strange reversal of the order of service, yet it is true that every member of Christ's Church should strive to become what in title is reserved for the Pope "The Servant of the Servants of God". (36) But the stress on Service, to which the inward life must lead found its chief expression in Dominic and Francis, and their respective orders, as well as in the military orders of the Templars and the Hospitallers. St Francis' "Fioretti" (37) is filled with this service and the love of the brethren, though some of the stories are slightly bizarre to modern tastes, though we can see two faults in this period of devotional literature - which Kirk says were the keynotes of the age "restless activity and uncontrolled sentiment" which went to extremes in the

followers of Dominic and Francis, each exalting their leaders to a place in heaven which can hardly be legitimately held by even the greatest of Saints, but by God alone (38) yet if we believe that "Love covereth a multitude of sins" (39) then we must surely agree that the love of God, of man and of nature that shone in the life of St Francis, the most popular and beloved of all the saints, must cover his errors of practice, in his extreme rigorism, and of theology, in his denial of learning. St Francis teaches us that Love, Agapé, is not merely a barren passionless charity of the will, though it must centre in the will, but that it must, in its fulness, canalise all our emotions, so that in this life it is at times an unutterable agony, and at others a joy and sweetness which are a foretaste of the life of heaven. (40) The agony was visibly shown in the stigmata he undoubtedly received, and the joy in his poems, and in gaiety of the troubadour of God. (41)

Unfortunately, the right emotionalism of Francis degenerated into a disregard for fact, and a willingness to believe anything. The mendicants had taught the Church anew that Christ was the Way and the Life, but there was a neglect of the fact that Christ is also the Truth, ^{JN} (14.6) and that to live the Life and to walk the Way demands intellectual integrity and the full use of all our reasoning power. (42)

The great work of teaching men anew that the inward life demanded not the service to God of will and emotions, but also of reason, was done by St Thomas Aquinas, (43) though he had precursors in

Abailard, and in William of Champeaux, and in the Theologians which sprung from the priory of St Victor as a result of William's teaching. (44) Although St Thomas's herculean achievements go far beyond the purpose of making the intellect play its proper part in the life of the devout Christian, this was one of its results, so that the Summa can be fittingly mentioned in this rapid review of devotional literature through the ages. That Thomas did not divorce the intellect from the emotions, nor obscure the Vision of God in mere speculation, is shown in the "Summa" where he says he goes "from faith to faith" and in the treasury of his hymns which the Church has preserved for us, such as :- "Lauda, Sion Salvatorem," "Pange, Lingua, gloriosi Corporis mysterium", "Verbum supernum prodiens, nec Patria" - and the endings of these two hymns, sung at Benediction, or Devotions to the Blessed Sacrament "Tantum ergo" and "O Salutaris" as well as "Adoro te devote" (45) where his devotion to Christ finds its highest expression in glorying in the Sacrament, of Christ's Body and Blood, where the Incarnation, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ are continually commemorated, and the Holy Sacrifice made once for all on the Cross continually re-presented, and united with its eternal offering in Heaven. (46) And it is by this most holy Sacrament that the inward life of the Christian is nourished and sustained, and strengthened and fitted for the life of Heaven. It is "The Medicine of Immortality". It is fitting that St Thomas, one of the greatest of all teachers, should have been a member of the great Teaching order, the Dominicans.

} not St. Thomas's words

Although it is true that we must approach God often in the "dazzling darkness" (47), and we find

mystics, of the fourteenth century, such as Eckhardt, Tauler, Suse and ^R Ruysbreeck (48) stressing this element in the soul's approach to God, yet our meditation and contemplation do not consist entirely of darkness, but are lit by the mysteries of our Lord's Incarnation, Death and Resurrection, and the Holy Eucharist, in all of which eternity breaks through into time. This Aquinas stressed in his writings, and in Holland we find this contribution, which links the inward life essentially with the sacramental life of the Church, further developed in the writings of Gerard Groot and Thomas à Kempis, who were members of "The Brothers of the Common Life" which are an offshoot of the Austin Canons. This community also produced what is perhaps the most famous of all books of devotional Theology, "The Imitation of Christ" (49) attributed to Thomas à Kempis, but probably not written by him (~~✗~~) which has had a great influence on many subsequent writers, including St Francis de Sales.

Yet the influence of the "Imitation of Christ" has not always been good, and it is inadvisable to place it in the hands of those who have a somewhat melancholic temperament, and are easily inclined towards scrupulosity. A great friend of mine said, after reading it, that she felt she dared not look at the clock, to find out the time, in case she committed a sin in doing so.

Ignatius Loyola, who founded the Jesuits, was profoundly influenced by the thought which came from the "Brothers of the Common life" and he wrote "The Spiritual Exercises" which is extremely rigorous in the intellectual discipline it demands in Meditation.

It shows that all man's faculties must be used to their fullest extent in his approach to God, yet its demands are too great for those not intellectually gifted, and we are told that not even the Jesuits knew what to make of it. (50)

Although he was profoundly influenced both by the "Imitation of Christ" and the "Spiritual Exercises" yet St Francis de Sales has an approach more suited to the melancholic temperament, for a sweet reasonableness abounds in his writings. Although not himself a Religious, he founded the "Order of the Visitation" and so comes within our field of study. (51) His "Introduction to the Devout Life" (52) was written for the laity, which was a startling departure from tradition. Here the contribution to the inner life of the Christian, which the Religious life has made to the whole Church, is purposively directed to the whole Church, whereas before it had largely filtered through from the monasteries to those outside them, at least during the medieval period. Yet the sweet reasonableness of St Francis de Sales is not only for the laity - it is also for the Religious. Writing to a Sister, he says "Leave your guidance to God and do not worry so much about yourself". (53) Also, his method of meditation is much simpler than that of St Ignatius.

St Ignatius brings us to the Reformation, and we must speak briefly of Martin Luther, the founder of protestantism, who came from the cloister. He has been accused of an^tinomianism, not without some justice, although he invented the word (54) when he denounced his friend Johannes Agricola, who claimed that the ten commandments had been abrogated. Yet

there is an important truth in Luther's teaching about the inner life, for we must not care for our souls as if they were delicate hothouse plants. This leads to spiritual hypochondria. Luther said "Sin boldly, but love more boldly still" and this is but an expansion of Augustine's famous sentence "Love God, and do what you like" and harks back to the New Testament "Love covers a multitude of sins". It reveals to us that the whole Christian life is comprehended by the word Love, when we understand its true meaning, (though to do that will take eternity) and rigorism and mortification are nothing if not animated by Love "Though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, ^{it profiteth me} ~~I am~~ nothing". (55)

The Religious life disappeared in Protestantism for hundreds of years, (56) and so the contributions which they may have made to the Inward life of the Christian may not engage our attention here. Instead we turn to two contemporaries of Luther who remained within Catholicism. St Teresa of Jesus, and her friend and disciple and helper, St John of the Cross. By their lives they showed that there is no necessary disharmony between the contemplative and the active life (57), for Teresa spent a great deal of her life, after her conversion at the age of forty, in reforming the Carmelites, and founding new houses, and John helped her. Both were embroiled in affairs of the day, and jealous factions had them imprisoned. Their works, among which are St John's "Dark Night", and "The ascent of Mount Carmel", and Teresa's "The way of perfection" and "The Castle of the Soul, are literary as well as spiritual masterpieces, "Contemplation is 'infused' in so far as it comes from God,

and the soul is 'passive'; 'acquired' in so far as the soul prepares for it or achieves it by its own activity" (58), and what they did not make clear, at least to contemporary readers, is whether they were talking of two aspects or two types of contemplation. Contemporaries, living in an age suspicious of mysticism, decided it was two different types, and identified the active contemplation with meditation, and the passive with the special illumination to souls given occasionally by God (59). I think our own theological age, with its emphasis on "Personal encounter" is better able to understand the contribution of these Saints to the understanding of the Inner Life than their own age, which viewed them with suspicion. For if the soul meets God in a personal encounter, for that encounter to remain personal requires activity from man, for it requires both reception and response and although, on the rare occasions when the Christian feels enraptured by the love of God, in his reflection on that experience it may seem to him that he was purely passive, yet the love of God did call forth in him a response of love which was freely and joyously given. At other times, when the Christian strives to pierce the darkness, it may seem that he was mainly active, and yet he will realise that it is God who calls him to pierce the darkness. The initiative always remains with God, but he calls us into an active, and not passive relationship with Himself, for we are sons, not slaves. ()

Many of the works we have briefly reviewed are difficult for the average layman to follow. But there are two works which the simplest Christian (60) can understand and profit by reading. They are "Thê

practice of the Presence of God" by Brother Laurence, and "The Story of a Soul" the autobiography of St Thérèse of Lisieux. (Her collected letters have also that sweet and direct simplicity which characterizes her autobiography.) In the Anglican Communion, we find that Father Andrew, of the Society of the Divine Compassion, breathes this same simplicity in his works.(61)

In the wide range of literature on the inward life of the soul which has sprung from the Religious life, and has the background of a special renunciation as the channel of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, there is something of help for every Christian seeking God. There is the bracing vigour of St Ignatius Loyola's intellect, the God-centred emotion of St Bernard of Clairvaux, the commonsense of St Francis de Sales, the tenderness of Thérèse of Lisieux, and the simplicity of brother Laurence. Although the path of every Christian is a different one, yet we all tread one way, for Christ is the Way, and the saints stretch out their hands to help us, as we walk from the clutches of the world the flesh and the devil into a fuller knowledge and love of God, and of our neighbour, and look forward to the time when we will dwell, with all the Saints, in that Heart of Love which is the Centre and the Ground of all the universe, the Holy Blessed and most Glorious Trinity. This is the way of purgation, illumination, and union which all the Saints have trod. (62)

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 4.

- (1) Matthew 25: 40.
- (2) In one dimensional time we can only concentrate completely on one thing, person or group at a time. In multi-dimensional time we may be able to give our complete and utter attention to God, and to our particular friends, and to the whole company of heaven, at once. But we are in deep water, and we will not speculate further on it.
- (3) 2 Corinthians 6: 10.
- (4) Mark 8: 35.
- (5) Matthew 26: 39.
- (6) One of the Collects at the end of Anglican Mattins.
- (7) Matthew 11: 29-30.
- (8) See Sacrifice of Praise: Vilma G. Little. Longmans Green and Co. It is important for the whole of this section.
- (9) For growth of office and analyses of structure see Sacrifice of Praise, Vilma G. Little, : An outline of Worship, William D. Maxwell. Chapter on Choir Offices in Liturgy and Worship edited Lowther Clarke and Charles Harris.
- (10) There are of course psalms such as 58 and 69 and 109 whose language sound sub-Christian. The South African Book of Common Prayer brackets the whole of psalm 58 and the offensive versés in other psalms. But the traditional Christian way of treating the 'Imprecatory' psalms is to read into them a 'Mystical' meaning, referring the curses to the devil, our real enemy. Philo of Alexandria treated in this way Scripture passages which would not fit with his philosophy.

J.M. Neale's 4 volume commentary on the psalms gives very many instances of this treatment from the Fathers. Psalm 58, which occurs in Gregorian Matins for Wednesday and Ambrosian Nocturn for the first Friday of the month, as well as in other less famous rites, is commented on in this manner in Vol. 2 of the Commentary, page 270 f.

"A Commentary on the Psalms" J.M. Neale.

Joseph Masters & Co. MCCCCLXXIII

- (11) From a poem by George Herbert.
- (12) Hebrews 12: 1.
- (13) From the Prayer of humble access in the Holy Communion Liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer.
- (14) That is why Private Offices, though they can be said silently, must always be said with the lips forming the words, so that our breath, our life goes forth in the service of God, the work of God, the Opus Dei.
- (15) Matthew 5: 48.
- (16) The Art of Mental Prayer. Bede Frost, O.S.B. page 41. S.P.C.K. 1954. This book has sections dealing with the different types of Mental Prayer or Meditation. The Ignatian, Franciscan, Salesian, Liguorian and Oratorian.
- (17) "The Vision of God" p.130. Bampton Lectures of 1928 : Longmans Green & Co.
- (18) See Misunderstanding of the Church, Emil Brunner - He adopts the opposite point of view, regarding Organisation as a corruption of the Church.
- (19) 1 Corinthians 7 esp. vs 7.
- (20) Life of St Anthony, St Athanasius, tr. Robert T. Meyer, Newman Press, 1950.
- (21) Vision of God : Kenneth Kirk, page 174ff
- (22) Works of Suppitiu Severus in Nicene and Post-

- nicene Fathers. New Series Vol. XI. The Christian Literature Co. N.Y.)
- (23) "Confessions of St Augustine" Bk. I Ch. 1.
'Fecisti nos ad te et inquietam est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te.'
- (24) The Rule of St Benedict. Justin McCann. Burns Oates 1952.
- (25) Vision of God. Kirk. pp 257-275.
- (26) Vision of God 275-300. Also Medieval handbooks of Penance. McNeill and Gamer.
- (27) See The Creed of St Athanasius, otherwise known as the Quicumque Vult.
- (28) Vision of God. Kirk. p. 303. Kirk shows the negative aspect of the Pseudo-Dionysius, but there is something of value for the Spiritual Life in his approach.
- (29) Op Cit. 308-9.
- (30) Op Cit 311 also 346ff
- (31) Op Cit 330ff
- (32) Op Cit 346ff
- (33) Op Cit 348
- (34) Op Cit 356.
- (35) Op Cit 360
- (36) Externals of the Catholic Church. John F. Sullivan. Page 7. Longmans Green & Co.
- (37) "The little flowers of St Francis" tr. by Franciscan Fathers of Upton, revised by Thomas Okey, (Hollis and Cater 1947.)
- (38) See chapter Two, which refers to this veneration given to Dominic.
- (39) James 5: 20.
- (40) Vision of God. Kirk. 362-3.
- (41) See Life of St Francis of Assisi. Fr. Cuthbert, O.S.F.C. Longmans. Jan. 1948, and "The Perfect Joy of St Francis", Felix Timmermans tr Molly

- Bird. Mowbrays 1954, "St Francis of Assisi"
G.K. Chesterton. Hodder & Stoughton, 1946.
- (42) Vision of God. Kirk. 363-71.
- (43) Although St Thomas contribution has an important temporary aspect, meeting the needs of his age, yet he made a definite contribution to the Inward Life.
- (44) Vision of God. Kirk. 371-8.
- (45) See English Hymnal, nos 317, 326, 330, 331.
- (46) Vision of God. 379 - 94.
- (47) "Dazzling Darkness" by Guy Bowden: Lognmans Green & Co.
- (48) Vision of God. 394.
- (49) This work is attributed to Thomas á Kempis, but probably not written by him - see Kirk: Vision of God. 394-6.
- (50) Vision of God 396-404.
- (51) Encyclopaedia Britannica: Eleventh Edit.
Vol. 10, page 940ff.
- (52) Introduction to the Devout Life: St Francis de Sales. Longmans 1898.
- (53) Any Saint to any Nun. p 22. The whole letter should be read. (From Ouvres de Saint Francis de Sales Tome xii Lettre clxxiv)
- (54) Vision of God. 418.
- (55) 1 Corinthians 13: 3.
- (56) Chapter Five. has short notes on the revival of the Religious Life within Protestantism in the Twentieth Century.
- 57) See articles in Encyclopaedia Britannica.
11th edit.. Also Chambers Encyclopaedia 1950.
- (58) Vision of God. 434.
- (59) Vision of God. 434-5.
- (60) Under the term simplest Christian, I do not include the mentally deficient or the Insane.

They present a problem in Theology with which this book does not attempt to deal.

- (61) Some of Fr Andrew's best loved works are :
- "Meditations for Everyday": A.R. Mowbray & Co, London.
 - "In the Silence" 4 retreat addresses : A.R. Mowbray & Co. London.
 - "Adventure of Prayer" : A.R. Mowbray & Co. London.
 - "The Garden" a passion play. Plaistow Press, London.
- (62) Kenneth Kirk's book "The Vision of God" is a monumental piece of research into the eternal quest of man to see the face of God, and the answers that have come from within the Christian Church to this quest. I have relied on it for the sequence of the last section of this chapter, and it will be apparent that I have adopted many of his ideas, but I cannot agree with all of them - particularly his last chapters on disinterest and unselfish love. I think he treads on very dangerous ground, and that his arguments are neither philosophically nor theologically sound. I hope to elaborate this in a later book, but briefly, I would replace his chief category of "self-forgetfulness" by a somewhat germanic phrase "Suffer-willing, Joy-desiring Love". For Love is in its true nature, transcends and includes both selfishness and selflessness, both self-knowledge and selfforgetfulness, it is always willing to give, but it always desires to receive. It suffers in obedience until death, but it always desires joy, and this desire is two-fold. It desires to joy in the well-being, the goodness, perfection and beauty of the Beloved, and that is selfless joy, but it also desires to joy in the love which the Beloved

returns, and if to desire the love of the Beloved is selfish then this selfishness is not wrong, and even in desiring the relationship of love to be unique, it is not wrong. Where human affections err is that our hearts become embittered when there is no return, and we cease to give when we do not receive, and this Love never does, however deep the pain.

The love to which I refer is the Love as it is manifested in Christ's incarnate life, for in it is every aspect of Love revealed in human terms, and our apprehension of it grows as we come closer to Christ. In Christ's life we see God's love for man, and the proper love of man for God, and the love of man for man. We see the self-giving aspect of love in the Miracles, and the desire to receive in the tears of Christ shed over Jerusalem and in His cry "I thirst" from the cross. It is a suffer-willing Love, because Christ goes to the cross, although He says "If it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not my will but thine be done". It is joy-desiring, and Our Lord's High Priestly prayer (John 17) is filled with joy-desiring Love, and the anticipation of Union with the Father and the joys of heaven - at least it is anticipation for us, and desire for us, although with Christ desire and its fulfillment were one. Verse thirteen of this great chapter says "But now I come to thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves."

I think the trouble with Kirk is that he analyses the problem overmuch, and divides in thought aspects of Love which are a unity in

experience, and then sets these aspects of the one reality in opposition to each other, whereas in Love there is no opposition between the selfless and the selfish, although in our poor imitations of this Love there often is.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND SPECULATIONS

In the last four chapters there has been a lot of material omitted, which is important to the understanding of the development of the Religious life, but this omission has been necessary, for the purpose of this book is neither historical ~~not~~ to provide a glossary of terms and definitions which are peculiar to the Religious Life. We have said nothing of closed and open orders or of vows temporary and final, or their dispensation. We have hardly touched the subject of the Rules of the different great communities, (|) but this is because our purpose is purely theological, an attempt to contribute something to the understanding of the Doctrine of the Church by showing that the Religious Life is an integral part of the Church, and has a positive contribution to make to her life in her temporary, temporal, eternal, and inward aspects. Although the Bible has not been quoted or referred to as extensively as it might have been, I hope that it has been made sufficiently clear in the ^eforgoing chapters that the Biblical Revelation has been normative in the assessment of the Religious Life and its role in the Church.

Definition of the Religious Life

There is one criticism that might be legitimately made, and that is that the definition of the Religious Life, that of a community of men or women bound by the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, has been too narrow and confining. But it is necessary to first get a clear view of the mainstream of the Religious Life (and the mainstream comes under this definition) before we can understand or appre

ciate the legitimate side-developments and adaptations of the Religious life in the past, or speculate on the adaptations which might take place in the contemporary world, so as to be of benefit to the life of the Church.

The Anchorites or Solitaries, whom we regard as the precursors of the full Religious Life, cannot be excluded from the Religious Life if we broaden our definition, and they do not disappear from the scene after the appearance of Religious Communities, such as were organised by Pachomius, Benedict, or Basil. Indeed many of the Saints whom we claim for the Religious Life lived in community have alternated between the solitary and the community life. St Francis of Assisi, to cite but one example, spent long periods of his life after his conversion in separation from his brethren. St Benedict himself had been a solitary, and his rule implies that Solitaries are of a higher order than coenobites, for he regards long years in a monastery as a necessary preparation for the solitary life of the Anchorite.

(2) A useful task which could be attempted is a history of the solitary monk throughout the ages, and an attempt to assess his place in the life of the Church. One solitary of particular interest to Anglicans is the Lady Julian, anchoress of Norwich, whose writings "Revelations of Divine Love" are becoming increasingly popular in recent years. It is difficult to assess the place of the solitary in the Church today, for two obvious reasons. On earth, the value of a Solitary's life, apart from the crowds that are attracted to him, and interfere with his solitude, can only be assessed by his writings or sayings, which usually only become widely known after

his death, and the value of his intercession on behalf of the Church will only fully be known in Heaven. However, the Church knows the value of prayer, and from time to time has set a group of contemplatives - who are but a step removed from anchorites - in the heart of a missionary area, not to do any "practical" work, but to engage in the most important work of all, the worship of God, with a special emphasis on intercession for the conversion of the heathen of the land in which they live. (3)

Although the definition of the Religious Life was confined to the Community life lived under the vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, yet we have tried to show that the chief, the essential function, of the Religious Life in the life of the Church is a Prophetic one, and if we expand our definition of the Religious Life to include all those whose lives have been marked by a particular and peculiar dedication or renunciation (though not necessarily all or any of the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience) which sets them apart from other members of the Church, and whose role in the life of the Church has been primarily prophetic, then this will give us a standard by which to judge different movements in Church history as side-developments or adaptations of the Religious Life. The manner in which the prophetic role is fulfilled is the test as to whether these side-developments and adaptations are legitimate or illegitimate, as it is the test of the health of the mainstream of the Religious life in any age.

Throughout the ages, the Religious Life has been to the Church what the Prophets were to Israel. When the prophets fail, then Israel is in a bad way; when

the Religious Life ceases to be in some way a rebuke and admonition to the Church, then the Church is in grave if unsuspected compromise with the world. From the Religious life Prophets arise in each generation. We have seen that St Antony of Egypt played a Prophetic role, and so centuries later did Peter the hermit, preaching the crusades with blazing sincerity. It is also true that the Religious life has been the breeding ground of some heresiarchs, notably Pelagius. Martin Luther was a monk, and today by thousands he is regarded as a prophet, and by thousands as an heretic. But today the Religious life seems to have abandoned the role of Prophet, a function which it must fulfil in the future, if it is to be true to its role in the life of the Church. Of course there are exceptions, and as we have already mentioned, among them, for Christian South Africans, the figure of Father Trevor Huddleston emerges, boldly rebuking a Non-Christian Government.

Prophet and False Prophet are not so distant from each other, and neither is a Prophet of the New Israel and a Heretic. Both all too often believe that they have a message from God, both have a truth which they must preach, although the Heretic preaches it at the cost of central truth. But if the dividing line is thin, then we see in the puritan and evangelical movements of the last few centuries, the phenomenon which we may summarize as Protestantism, a movement which is inherently and basically the same as all the great Religious movements and foundations of past centuries. If we see in John Wesley an adapted Saint Francis, and in General Booth a bearded and heretical Ignatius Loyola, then, although we may regard the sects which have sprung from both these

men as inadequate, and even heretical (4) we must not deny to them a prophetic function, for by their existence they are a judgement on the Church, pointing to an inadequacy in its teaching, or its way of life. Just as in the past the early fathers of the desert fled from a secularised Church, so in the past few centuries a similar flight has taken place. The glory of the first movement was that it was incorporated as a living part into the life of the Church, the tragedy of the second movement is that it has separated itself, or been separated, from the Life, the ministry and the Sacraments of the Historic Church. It is not for us to weigh out guilt, but to admit the tragedy, and to labour to bring men back, and to restore the breaches, so that we may be one fold under one shepherd.

One of the grave errors of puritanism, or what we today describe as puritanism (exemplified in South African Baptists and other sects who do not permit smoking, drinking alcoholic beverages, attending the cinema or dancing) is that it makes what may be a legitimate renunciation on the part of individuals with a particular vocation, into a standard of discipline for every member of the group, and the group claims to be the Church. Here is an illegitimate development of the Religious Life, for it legislates for all Christians where it should only legislate for the few. Yet the emphasis of this narrow puritanism could find a legitimate expression within Catholicity, by becoming the discipline of a particular Religious Order, and the discipline would be even stricter than the puritan's discipline, because it would include chastity as well as poverty and obedience. (5)

The Methodists, who began by emphasizing disci-

pline, (6) now, to a large extent neglect it. They may have kept, throughout their history, the Church's feasts, but almost all today disregard the Church's fasts. They still retain Mattins and Evensong in some Methodist Churches, but this is not a discipline imposed on their clergy for daily recitation. Perhaps this is the view of a biased Anglican, who was once a Methodist, but I think that there is far too great an emphasis on 'Conversion' in the Methodist Church, and insufficient emphasis on Sanctification, discipline and the Blessed Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood. If the Methodists had become a franciscan-type movement within the Church, their special emphasis on conversion could have been retained, and have made a particular contribution to the life of the Church, and what they lacked would have been made up by the life of the whole Church in which they moved.

General Booth founded the Salvation Army on military lines, and in it we have at least an echo of the military orders of the Templars and the Hospitallers, and of the Jesuits (γ) but they have abandoned the sacraments of the Church, and so have put themselves outside the visible Church, for the Sacraments are an essential part of the structure of the Church. Yet if they had been a movement within the Church (like the Church Army of the Anglican Church) their energies could have been canalised, without their theology becoming heretical.

The Quakers are a similar group. Inside the Church they may have become a great contemplative order. But in separating from the Church, they have abandoned both Sacraments and ministry, and even creeds, or any standard of orthodoxy (including the

Bible) other than that of the 'Inner Light'.

We cannot deny, and do not attempt to deny that good work is done by Methodism, the Salvation Army, and the Society of Friends, and the puritan groups, but good work and intentions and sound character are not the only tests of truth, and in emphasizing one aspect of the truth, they deprive their members of the whole truth, which is in the treasury of the Church. Yet they also judge the Church, and prophesy against her, so that she may be provoked and challenged to bring out of her treasury into the light of day the aspects of truth that she has allowed to be obscured, and so meet the situation and the problems of the contemporary world.

Legitimate side-developments and adaptations of the Religious Life in the past.

In widening our definition of the Religious Life to include not only those who live in Community under the threefold vow, but also those whose lives are characterised by a peculiar renunciation and dedication, and whose lives are a prophetic witness to the Church, it is possible to be accused of blurring the edges of the Religious Life, and making it melt imperceptibly into the life of the whole Church, for earlier it was shown that the Religious Life cannot claim to be a higher way or an inner ring, and that every Christian has a unique vocation from God. It is also true that in every Christian's life renunciation must play its part, for we are told to take up our cross and follow Christ (8). Christ is Prophet, Priest, and King, and each member of His body has some share in the priestly, prophetic and pastoral life of Christ. All this is true, and

the edges are blurred. It is seldom that life, even the life of the Church, can have the clear-cut distinctions of logic. In fact, the blurring of the edges is necessary, for if the Religious life was completely separate from the rest of the life of the Church, so that those who did not belong to Religious Communities in no sense shared in the duties and privileges of that life, then the Prophetic role of the Religious Life would disappear, for there are two aspects of Prophecy. First it is a message from God, secondly the message is to the present situation. If the Religious life was completely cut off from the rest of the life of the Church, so that the vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience were only relevant to the inhabitants of the cloister, and were not in some sense obligatory for all Christians, the Life, which is the prophecy (the words and teachings of members of Religious houses is not primary, but a necessary result of the life) would not be relevant to us, here and now. The Prophets were Hebrews speaking to Hebrews, and on the rare occasions when they spoke to other than their own nation, they were still men speaking to men. They spoke of a common duty, shared by the whole of Israel, and all the nations of the earth. Christ our Lord is man as well as God. As man he speaks to our needs and our duties, as God he can satisfy our needs and enable us to fulfil our duties.

Because the Religious life shares in the life of the whole Church, and the whole Church in some sense shares in its life, the Religious life can perform its prophetic function, and an almost inevitable result of this is a two-fold movement. One, the breaking out from the rigid confines of the Religious

Life as it is circumscribed by the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and its communal worship, in order to become more like the life of the rest of the Church, but all to the greater glory of God, and because the Holy Spirit has directed it along this path, and Two, the imitation of the Religious life on the part of the laity, to conform its life by rule and discipline so that it accords more fully with the life of the Religious. The result of this two-fold movement is that the edges are blurred, and neat definition and logic cannot be our guides, but rather the Christian virtues of commonsense and reasonableness.

Throughout the History of the Church we have instances when there was an overlap between the Religious Life and the General life of the Church. The "Spiritual Marriages" (9) of St Paul's day were in 'neither one thing nor t'other' and later we find a spiritual marriage in the life of Amoun of Nitria, who lived in chastity with his wife for eighteen years before taking on the full monastic life - yet I think his chroniclers would have regarded him as being a monk for the first eighteen years as well as the last years which he spent alone. St Benedict in his rule condemns the "Gyrovagues" (10) and yet the Franciscan and Dominican movements, by wandering around Europe, unconfined by any fixed abode, had much in common with the Gyrovagues. What Benedict regarded as an illegitimate extension of the Religious life is seen by the Church today as a legitimate development, and Franciscan and Dominicans and similar orders, are regarded as part of the Religious life - though the communal aspect of that life is not stressed. The military orders were another new departure,

for whereas once men had escaped to monasteries to avoid military duty, now the soldier monk emerged on the field of battle, and so influenced the idea of knighthood that the vigils and other preparations for receiving knighthood were reflections of the final vows taken by a Religious in his community.

The Jesuits, in their own day, broke down traditional views of the Religious Life, by insisting that all full members of their order be Priests and in not requiring the office to be recited communally, as did other monks. They are neither Friars nor Monks, but something new. The Augustinian Canons recited the office communally, and yet are not officially regarded as being members of a Religious order,

St Francis not only founded the Friars minor, and the second order, the Poor Clares, but also the Third Order, which imposes on its members a rule of life, but allows them to marry and continue in the world. Yet Francis called it his third order, and regarded it as a part of the whole Franciscan movement. It is here that the line of demarcation between the Religious Life and the general life of the Church merges completely, because although the rules imposed on the third order were stricter than the rules imposed on all Church members, there are rules which every faithful member of the Church is obliged to keep. (11)

With the third order of St Francis in mind, the community founded at Little Gidding by Nicholas Ferrar is not as strange as it appears when we regard it as an almost isolated phenomenon within the Anglican Communion, set in history between the dissolution of the monasteries in Henry VIII's time, and the revival of the Religious Life under the impetus of the

Oxford movement. (12)

The Community of Little Gidding was not bound by vows of Chastity, Poverty or Obedience. Nicholas and two of his sisters voluntarily decided on the celibate life, and the obedience given to Nicholas was entirely voluntary, and not obligatory. The spirit of poverty was kept by a renunciation of many worldly pleasures, which were replaced by pleasures of a more spiritual nature. Nicholas left his books of poetry locked up in his trunk, and commanded that they be burnt on the spot where he was buried. In the evening edifying story-telling replaced the card games so prevalent in the world. It is in the "Little Gidding Office" that we see a striking resemblance to the hours kept in monastic houses, though Little Gidding has a more rigorous round of offices than has conventional monasticism. Instead of a weekly recitation of the psalter, Little Gidding recited it daily, and there were in addition vigils which lasted through the night. The community had no self-centred perfectionist ideal which it followed, but was always conscious that its life was lived in the context of the life of the whole Church. Nicholas Ferrar was always a faithful Anglican, though his continental travels helped him to set the Anglican Communion in the wider fellowship of the whole Church. Though influenced by the works of Laurence Suppli and Francis de Sales, and possibly by the Oratory at Padua, inspired by St Philip Neri (13) he was never a romanist, for all the puritans suspicious, for he regarded the Pope as antichrist (this belief can only be explained by reference to the limits imposed by the conditions of Nicholas Ferrar's day). Intercession on behalf of the whole Church was a constant feature of the life

of the Community at Little Gidding. The daily recitation of the litany was begun as an act of intercession for plague-stricken London, but was continued as a general intercession after the danger had passed. Although set in a somewhat remote spot, the Community did not cut itself off from the life of the Church. The Parish Priest ministered to its needs (for Nicholas refused to be ordained Priest, being content with the office of Deacon like St Francis) (14) and the community attended the Parish Church frequently to join in the worship of the Parish. The neighbouring children were educated at Little Gidding, and Nicholas' sisters visited and nursed the sick.

Little Gidding is a unique combination of some of the best aspects of the Religious Life and Family life. Due to prejudice, it disappeared, although I believe it to be a legitimate development and adaptation of the Religious life. It has inspired no imitators (although the Moravian brethren have something in common with Little Gidding). (15) Perhaps it stands in history as a witness to this type of life, and when the time is ripe the Holy Spirit will inspire the Church to develop a new form of the Religious Life built on the lines which Nicholas Ferrar demarcated in the Community of Little Gidding.

The Religious Life outside the Anglican, Roman and Eastern Orthodox Communions.

In the preface, mention was made of the development of the Religious life from within what we may broadly term Protestantism. (16) And here we shall deal briefly with three such movements, although there may be others of which I have not heard. I believe that these movements, indicating as they do a greater appreciation of the Sacraments and the disciplined life, are perhaps the most hopeful signs within

Christendom today, and will prove ultimately more significant to re-union than even the World Council of Churches.

The Community of Iona (17)

The Iona community was founded by George McLeod and others in 1938. It now numbers one hundred full members, and approximately seven hundred associates. Its main purposes are the rebuilding of the Abbey on Iona, the training of its members in the theology of Divine healing, the search for an answer to the political and industrial problems of today, and the revival of appreciation and understanding of Liturgy and the Sacraments in accordance with the Reformers intentions.

The discipline imposed on its members is a light one. Full members, comprising laymen and craftsmen, work on Iona during the summer months, restoring the abbey and attending lectures. During the rest of the year they work as assistants in industrial areas, and meet regularly in the mainland of Scotland. After this initial discipline, which lasts two years, and may be called the novitiate of the members, most retain a connection with the Community, and try to realise, in the parishes to which they are called, the lessons which they have learnt. The Iona community is a group within the Church of Scotland, and under its discipline, but a part of its ministerial members can belong to other denominations.

The main aspect of the Iona Community which links it to the mainstream of monasticism is its attempt to restore one of the greatest Abbeys of Christendom, where St Columba founded his great monastery. Although it has groups within it, Full members and associate members, the whole community is really similar to a

third order such as the Franciscans began, for no permanent vows are taken, and communal worship can only play a small part in the lives of its members; for they only spend two summers at Iona. But they do have a prophetic function in the life of the Church of Scotland, recalling it to a greater appreciation of the Sacraments, and reminding it that the ministry of healing is an essential part of the ministry of the Church. The Restored Abbey witnesses to the fact, so often forgotten by some members of non-episcopal communions, that Christianity did not die with the Apostles and resurrect with the Reformers, but that it has been an abiding fact in the world since the moment of the Incarnation. This prophetic function of the Community makes it a legitimate development of the Religious life, although its aims are confined mainly to a temporary situation which it seeks to rectify, and it will no doubt gladly cease to be once that temporary aim is achieved. (18)

The Sisterhood of St Mary at Darmstadt, Germany.(19)

This protestant sisterhood was founded by two Bible Teachers, Dr Klara Schlink (now Mother Basilea) and Erika Maddaus (now Mother Martyria) in 1947. During the war they had continued with Bible classes in spite of Hitler's interdict, and the same courage manifests itself in the establishment and continuance of their community, in spite of the luke-warm reception it has had in some quarters of Protestant Germany.

In only one way do they differ from the mainstream of the Religious life, they do not take vows, but pledges, because they follow Martin Luther, who believed that the members of religious communities should not require papal dispensation, but should be

free to leave the community at any time (20). The fifty eight sisters who belong to the community wear the habit of nuns, and wedding rings symbolizing their status as brides of Christ. They have a special devotion to our Lady, and make their confessions regularly.

The active work they engage in includes performing religious plays, doing social work, and manufacturing statuary. Their 'office' includes a "stiff schedule of devotions" (21) and vigils of prayer. They have a rule of silence which is only broken between 1.00 p.m. and 3.00 p.m. Every Friday they make an act of reparation for the persecution of the Jews by the Germans, conscious that they share in the corporate responsibility of the whole German nation for this sin.

We noticed that the Community of Iona allows its ministerial members to come from denominations other than the Church of Scotland. The Sisterhood of St Mary, Darmstadt, is completely undenominational, although most of its members are, as one would expect, Lutherans. (22) If its undenominational^{al} character grows, and its Catholic discipline remains, this community may serve as a bridge to unite continental protestantism, and also bring back to continental protestantism some of the aspects and emphases of the Faith which it lost at the Reformation.

The Reformed Community of Taizé-Les-Cluny, France. (23)

This Community within the French Protestant Church has a true understanding of the nature of the Religious Life, as the following quotations from an article by its founder, Max Thurion, and one of its members, Roger Schutz, will show :-

It is conscious of the Prophetic Function of the

Religious Life, for the members of this community "have as their aim - the essential goal and sole object of their life - to plant in the Church ... a sign. This sign is to be a community of brothers ... where the love of Christ reigns ... a community where the praise of God and intercession for all men have the first place." Later the article returns to the Prophetic role of the Religious life "The nature of a regular community belongs to the order of signs. The essential thing for it is not preaching or the doing of good works, it ought first of all to exist as a sign in the Church and the world".

There is no self-centred perfectionism "this life ... is lived not at all for its own sake but for God and other people", nor is there a false detachment "The joy of living as a child of the Father and friend of Christ gives us brothers and friends to love in Him, through Him and for Him" and before profession a novice is asked "What are you asking?" and he replies "The mercy of God and the community of my brothers". Nor does this community regard itself as treading a higher path "The parish community, too, has a meaning which completes the other (the regular - meaning religious - community) without being opposed to it. It shows that it is possible for the Gospel to take flesh in common, conjugal, family life.... And by the presence of this double tradition, each recalling its truth to the other, a balance is created".

Except for the fact that this community springs from a Protestant background, it is in every way a community modelled on the traditional lines. A three-fold vow of "poverty, celibacy and obedience" is taken. There is a daily Eucharist, and it regards

its office as an extension of the Eucharist, and the practical work in which its members engage, as "an act of liturgical worship", for it is a mixed community, combining the active and the contemplative life. "Intercessions and praises sung to God are but the privileged moments which set the tone and rhythm of the whole".

The Community sees in itself living under the threefold vow both a particular renunciation of the World, the Flesh and the Devil, and also a witness to the Eternal order, which it names "The Kingdom of God". "In this poverty, celibacy and obedience the only thing they are looking for is a particular conformity to Christ" and "at the same time it is a sign of the coming of the Kingdom - by its having all things in common, which proclaims the universal community - and by the demands of celibacy which proclaims the fact that the Kingdom will be the fulness of the love of God", the article does not add, as it well might, that the vow of obedience is the sign of the Kingdom where God's will is perfectly done.

It is strongly opposed to shallow emotionalism, as a test either of the value of prayer or as the basis of 'conversion' techniques. Of the Eucharist and offices, which it describes as "Joyous offices ... The symbols - lights, colours, actions - these all invite (sic - unite?) in a reverent harmony, for the same act of worship, the human spirit, mind and body which Jesus Christ willed to reunite with his divinity in His Incarnation" - it also says "These are well ordered offices, where prayer is not always easy, spontaneous, and fervent, but where the regular obedience is pleasing to God,

even if there is a certain aridity of heart". Of Conversion techniques it says "'one should ... not desire individual victories, gained sometimes in an unhealthy and morbid psychological complex'"

"'This spirit of loyalty and peace is a much better way of preparing the visible and organic unity of the Una Sancta than a certain "evangelisation" (now happily out-of-date) which takes the number of "converts" gained often over a rival Church, as the yardstick of fidelity.'"

Intercession for the Unity of the Church has a prominent place in the prayer-life of the Community, it is interested in Ecumenicism, and keeps on cordial relations with the Roman Catholic Clergy, but refuses to indulge in "a Protestant Proselytism", preferring instead to pray, and witness to unity in its life.

Each of the three communities described above are fulfilling an important temporary function in the Church, Iona, on a small scale, by trying to recall the Church of Scotland to a sounder liturgiology and sacramentalism, Darmstadt, by constant intercession for the whole of Germany, and Taizé by its prayer for re-union. The sisters of Darmstadt, however, perform a temporal function in their social work, as do the Brothers of Taizé, for these needs will always be with us as long as the fallen temporal order endures. But Darmstadt, by its pledges, and Taizé by its vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience witness to the Eternal Order, as do their daily offices of prayer, which also nourish the inward life of the Christian.

The Religious Life in the Church and the World today.

Earlier it was shown that the forcing of celibacy on the clergy was an illegitimate extension and de-

velopment of the Religious life, which was repudiated by the Anglican Church at the Reformation, and never adopted by the Eastern Orthodox Church. But there are lessons which the Clergy may learn from the Religious life, and enrich their ministry thereby. In Abbe Michonneau's parish, the Rector and curates live a community life which is an adaptation of the life of the Religious, and the Roman Catholic Church, although it enforces celibacy in the west overcomes the dangers of loneliness by normally sending two or three priests to staff a parish. This is a lesson which the Anglican Church could well learn. Although it is true that staffing problems are a constant headache to our Bishops, the general principle of the Anglican Church seems to be one parish one priest, particularly in the vast scattered mission districts of South Africa. This may work with a married Priest, but there are a growing number of Anglican Priests, who, for one reason or another, have chosen celibacy or remain bachelors. For them, the loneliness of a large and scattered parish can be a terrifying ordeal, and in a Mission parish there is the added danger of them forgetting that they are the servants of the people, and becoming little dictators, because of the humble obedience of the folk they minister to. (25) Two or three Priests together in such a Parish could use their varying gifts for the benefit of the whole Parish, they would be a check on any tendency to pride or laziness which might show itself in one of their brothers, and their friendship springing from a community of purpose would keep their zeal and enthusiasm aflame, while the minor irritations which are almost bound to grow up in such a community would be a help to sanctification and prevent a sel-

fish self-centredness which is often the result of a lonely life. A Priest on his own can get slack about saying his offices, or practising regular meditation, and in some mission parishes, a Priest on his own finds it impossible to have a daily Mass. All these difficulties could be largely overcome by learning from the community life of the Religious, and adapting it to Parochial life. We must remember that our Lord sent out His Apostles and Disciples in pairs, (26) and that on most of his missionary journeys St Paul had a companion, and when he was alone, he yearned for companionship and friendship. (27) It is of course true that a Priest should make his parish his community, but with a lonely Priest, what could be a profitable discussion of Parish problems with a fellow Priest can descend into mere gossip with some selected friends in the Parish, a temptation hard to resist when problems loom large, and yet, if yielded to, exceedingly dangerous to the unity of Parish life.

Let us see whether the Religious life has anything to teach the Priesthood in the large Cities. One experiment which for a time was most successful in France were the worker-priests (28) but these priests, who adopted the garb of their fellow workers in the factories often allowed the world to get into them instead of the gospel being spread in the world, and cases are cited where Priests became communists, and lapsed into the sins of their companions. The Pope restricted this movement in France, but I believe that in essence it was based on sound principles, and that if it could begin again, but as a new Religious movement, it could achieve great results.

If the worker Priests could be sent to the factories for a period, and then return to their religious house, or if small groups of Priests could be united in a small house in the slums, go out to their daily work in the factories, and return each night to a house ordered by the discipline and rules of a Religious Community, then their roots would remain in the life of the Church, though they branched out into the world each day.

Of course there is the staffing problem, and the shortage of clergy to be born in mind, to keep our feet on the ground while we make tentative suggestions for the present day world. But I believe that even with the shortage of clergy such could be done. Where there are two or three large scattered parishes, each manned by a single and unmarried Priest, - unite them! There will be increased transport difficulties, but three Priests together can live more economically than three Priests apart, and there may be added revenue from letting Rectories which they once occupied. Also each Priest has different gifts, and these could be complementary if they worked together. One may be a Preacher, another an organiser, and the third a spiritual councillor. With the humility to recognise each others gifts, they could work together in harmony. We must remember that the early Church concentrated on the main highways and the great cities. We have the duty of preaching the Gospel to all nations, but this can better be done by building up a strong centre, than by so scattering our manpower that a Mission Priest becomes a sacramental sausage-machine rather than a Priest and Pastor. A Community of worker-priests in a City would probably be used by God to call other workers to the Priesthood, and this would help overcome the shortage of Priests, and give us a

Priesthood who knew at first hand the problems that beset the average worker in the modern city.

Among the laity we could imitate the Jocist movement in France. This is a youth movement which has as its main purpose the bringing of the Gospel to young workers. It could be a third order of a community of Worker-Priests, with a rule that strengthened their boldness in the faith. We are too often inclined, as the Abbe Michonneau warns us, to impose a clerical culture on our converts, and rob them of their understanding of, and contact with their fellow workers. This flame must not be quenched, even if it is distasteful to our aesthetic sensibility.

The Regular community, bound in community by a rule and the threefold vow of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, has often been criticized from outside as a haven for the weak, and from within it has robustly proclaimed that it is for the strong, and I think it has made good its claim. Rather than admitting the weak to membership of a community, it has ministered to them - the poor, the sick, the orphaned, and the ignorant. But I think there could be a change in the attitude of at least some Religious houses, and that they could cease proclaiming that they are a fortress for the strong alone. In the increased tempo of modern civilisation, there are many social misfits, men and women who try but fail to integrate themselves with contemporary society and its demands. We have all met such people. Surely the Religious life could open its doors to them, not in patronage but in humility, for it is possible that these men and women could find a real work to do, and blossom and grow, in the haven of a Religious Community,

surrounded by love and understanding. Of course, they must not be admitted on sufferance, or even as a special group, but the community must recognise that each of us has weaknesses, and besetting temptations, and that we are members one of another, each there to help and to be helped. If the social misfits were initially helped, in time they may become sources of help and inspiration to other members of the community. (30)

The great problems confronting the Church in the world today are the loss of the sense of sin, the dangers of Communism and Capitalism, and the widespread heresies of collectivism and individualism. The whole Zeitgeist of the modern world has produced these problems, and we cannot trace cause and effect in any accurate manner. A misunderstanding of modern psychology may have helped the loss of a sense of responsibility, which leads to a loss of the sense of sin, while the industrial revolution herded people together and treated them as units and gave rise to much of the collectivism of today. But mass-produced entertainment has also helped in the attempt to iron men out to a flat uniformity. Psychology talks of the danger of suppressing the ego, and this may be cause or effect of the rampant individualism of today, though the Capitalistic slogans of "Private enterprise" and "Plenty of room at the top" increases the natural self-centredness of man. Communism is atheistic and materialistic, yet draws much of its positive strength from the Christianity it denies. (31) To all these dangers which confront the Church the Religious life has a particular contribution to make towards overcoming them. If the Church and the world could regain its sense of Corporate Personality, then these dangers would be

largely overcome. If the world, outside the Church, recognised its corporate guilt, this would increase the sense of individual responsibility among its members, and as knowledge of sin increases, so awareness of the need of salvation will also increase. The Church is the Body of Christ. It provides for the perfection of its members in the perfection of the whole. Neither is or can be complete without the other. The individual is not subjected to the community, nor the community subjected to the individual. Collectivism makes man into a unit in a machine, a cog in a wheel. The Church makes man the member of a Body. Individualism stresses man's superiority to Society - and makes him seek his own end and perfection apart from Society, or using Society as a means as long as it will serve him, Christianity proclaims that man cannot be perfect apart from a particular Society, the Church, and that it is more than a Society of the passing world, but the Body of Christ, with an eternal destiny. Communism and Capitalism can be seen as expressions of the heresies of Collectivism and Individualism, although because Communism and Capitalism are living realities, they are not to be completely explained by reference to these two heresies, nor separated in complete opposition to each other. Communism has elements of Individualism in it, while Capitalism has a large amount of Collectivism.

The Religious Life, in living out its ideals, united in Community, praying and worshipping and interceding, ordered and disciplined, and controlled by love, is a type and a sign of the whole Church, and a witness to the life of the Church Triumphant. Within the Community a consciousness of the Corporate

Nature of the Church must inevitably grow, and by its life it is a prophetic witness to the Church, reminding her of the true nature of her own life, for she is the New Israel, the Bride of Christ and the Body of Christ.

The main prophetic function of the Religious Life in the life of the Church today is to recall her to a consciousness of the corporate nature of her life for through this the heresies of individualism and collectivism will be overcome within the Church, and the Church will be enabled with renewed vigour to combat the cancers of Communism and Capitalism. In South Africa it will teach men that they are brothers, the lesson South Africans need to learn above all. With the consciousness of her Corporate nature the Church will become conscious of her corporate guilt in being unfaithful to her Head. From this springs repentance, and with repentance, forgiveness and strength, and the Church can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth her. ⁽³²⁾ And the Religious Life must constantly intercede for the Church, and unite in our Lord's high-priestly prayer "That they may all be one; even as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they may also be in us". ⁽³³⁾ And the corporate unity of the Church, set in the life of the Holy Trinity, is a unity of Love, for God is Love.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 5

- (1) A book which helps to fill in some of these gaps is "Called of God" by Lucius Cary. (Mowbrays, 1937).
- (2) Rule of St Benedict: Chapter One.
- (3) On Ascension Day this year (1957) Mass was celebrated for the first time in the Priory of Our Lady, Mother of Mercy, Masite, Basutoland, and 5 nuns from the Anglican Society of the Precious Blood began straight after with their perpetual chain of adoration and intercession for the church in that Diocese and in the whole of South Africa. Any member of the Church may send the Society a request for their prayers at any time.
- (4) The Methodist Church is an inadequate Church, because it lacks a ministry in Apostolic succession, and for other reasons given later in this chapter. The Salvation Army has abandoned the use of the Sacraments, and to admit members to its organisation without baptism is Heresy if it claims to be part of the Christian Church.
- (5) At the moment of writing the Jesuits are about to add to their discipline by giving up smoking. The Pope recently said they might well consider this, and, according to one Jesuit I have talked to concerning this matter, it will probably be formally promulgated very soon, if it has not been promulgated already.

It is not a well-known fact that an Irish Roman Catholic Priest started the Teetotal movement. I imagine that some Puritans will be surprised by the above two facts.

- (6) See "Enthusiasm" by R.A. Knox. Oxford: Clarendon Press. Pages 430-436, for the most interesting and provocative writing on this stage of Wesley's career. The Holy Club at Oxford fasted Wednesdays and Fridays. Wesley rose at 4 in the morning. The "club" went regularly to the Eucharist and offices, and gave regulated amounts to the poor. These methodological practises earned them the name "Methodists"
- (7) A member of the Salvation Army reading this might find it offensive particularly, in the parallel between his society and the Jesuits, who have come to be regarded as the most dreaded foes within Roman Catholicism by many people.
- (8) Matthew: 16: 24.
- (9) I Corinthians 7: 36-38.
- (10) Rule of St Benedict: Chapter One.
- (11) The Anglican Church binds its members to communicate three times a year, and godparents are made to promise that their godchild will be taught the creed, Lord's prayer and Ten Commandments, and brought to the Bishop to be confirmed. The S.A. Book of Common Prayer lists Holy Days which "are to be observed" (p.XIV) and days of fasting and abstinence (p.XV). Roman Catholics, if within three miles of a Church, must attend Mass on days of obligation (including all Sundays) other rules are to fast before Communion, and to make their confession once a year.
- (22) "Flame touches Flame": Margaret Cropper. Longmans, 1949.
 "Nicholas Ferrar of Little Gidding": Maycock, 1938.
 "Call of the Cloister": Peter Anson.
- 13) "Flame touches Flame" states this, but the "Call of the Cloister" tells us that the Oratory was

begun in Padua ten years after Nicholas Ferrar had visited it. (It suggests, however, that he may have read the Rule of the Oratorians.)

- (14) "Flame touches Flame" points out that the Mendicants are not mentioned by Nicholas Ferrar in any of the writing we still have.
- (15) See Encyclopaedia Britannica 11th Edition Vol 18. Article on Moravian Brethren, also "Great South African Christians", Horton Davies, O.U.P. 1951, Chapter One, and "South African Missions 1800-1950", Horton Davies and R.H.W. Shepherd (Nelson 1954) pp 134-136.
- (16) The title Protestantism may be unsatisfactory, but it is difficult to find an all-embracing term which causes no offence. To say Reformed Churches would seem to imply that the Anglican Church was not reformed, whereas we believe that part of the nature of the Catholic Church on earth is to be in a constant state of reformation. The term Non-conformists applies only in England, where Presbyterians and Roman Catholics are non-conforming members of the Church of England. "Free Churches" would imply a lack of freedom within Catholicity, and Non-Catholic would raise a storm of protest, and not be strictly accurate, for every baptised person is, by virtue of his baptism, a member of the Catholic Church, no matter to what Religious group he belongs. Although the Church of Scotland ^{just like the Anglican Ch,} does not use the term protestant in her formularies, I have reluctantly decided on this term for want of a better one.)
- (17) "Only one way left": George Macleod, also "We shall Rebuild" by same author
- (18) The Community of Iona is in many ways similar to the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament

in the Anglican Communion. Its main purpose is to restore right believe and reverence concerning the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament of His Body and His Blood. Once this aim is achieved, there will be no reason for its continued existence.

- (19) "Time" Magazine, Atlantic Edition, Sept. 9, 1957 pp 57-8.
- (20) Op cit. See footnote to this article.
- (21) Quoted from article - The Americanese gives a right impression, without conveying much information.
- (22) An undenominational society is something we would expect to find only within protestantism, yet such a society has been founded by the Roman Catholic Church. It is hardly of the status of a third order, and more like the Tee H or similar groups. It is called the Society of St Christopher, and each of its members strives to be a Christopher, i.e. a Christ-Bearer in his life.
- (23) The Annual, Church Service Society. May 1953. Article: The Reformed Community of Taizé-les-Cluny by Frères Roger Schutz et Max Thurion, pages 12-17. Though short, this is one of the most important references of this Thesis, as it summarises almost all that I have tried to say on the relation of the Religious life to the life of the Church. That is why I have quoted it so extensively.
- (24) Revolution in a City Parish: Abbé G. Michonneau
- (25) I am drawing on my own experience as Priest-in-charge of the Prieska Parish and Mission District, where I spent three years.
- (26) Luke 10: 1-20. We assume a similar method was used with the Apostles as with the Disciples.

- (27) Acts 13: 2 and 15: 40 are examples of St Paul taking companions. 2 Timothy 4: 10-11 is an example of St Paul's loneliness.
- (28) "France Pagan?" - The Mission of Abbe Godin by Maisie Ward. London. Sheed & Ward, 1949.
- (29) "Revolution in a City Parish": Abbe G. Michonneau.
- (30) Psychiatry can be of great help to many Social misfits, but it cannot help those whom society will not accept, and also, we must remember that Psychiatry is a young science. However, certain Monasteries might be able to absorb into their life people who are repulsive to the world - Lepers, for example, who are cured but deformed. Here in the Monastery such people could develop a fuller life, and a happier one. Criminals, or reformed criminals, may also "find their feet" in a Monastery where everybody would not be "against" them. In the story "My Six Convicts" there is an instance of a man who committed crime in order to go to prison, as he could no longer face the hostile world. Such people may well find sanctuary in a Religious House.
- (31) The Christian Significance of Karl Marx: Alexander Miller S.C.M. 1947.
- (32) Philippians 4: 13.
- (33) John 17: 21.

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