

the imagination. He was the perfect type of the well-balanced, steady man, full of common sense; the enemy of exaggeration and precipitation. His one aim was to do the will of God in all things, and this path he followed with unflinching determination. He made the spirit of faith his guiding chart, which meant that he looked upon everything with the eyes of faith, that he did everything in view of God, and attributed all to God. His idea of perfection was this: 'never to perform a single action from natural impulse, through custom or any human motive, but always to act by the guidance of God, through the movement of his spirit, and with the intention of pleasing him'.

St De La Salle was canonised in May, 1900. Thus the golden jubilee of this event anticipates by only a few months the tercentenary of his birth. For this reason the two occasions are being honoured in one celebration. It was no doubt by a singular dispensation of divine Providence that the Patron Saint of teachers was raised to the altars at the beginning of the present century. Never was it more necessary than in our day to emphasise the necessity of the christian education of youth, and to offer to those engaged in this all-important task a shining light.



## CHARITY AND THE WILL OF MAN (I)

BY

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IN appraising the order and internal correspondence of the faith and human reason, St Augustine had used a phrase, in epigrammatic summary, which not only described his personal discovery and that of every convert to the Church, but also correctly stated the right causal sequence of these correlatives, Faith and Reason, in their continuous development: *per fidem venit ad cognitionem*. The phrase may even provide some explanation how philosophy even within its own sphere, needs and may receive assistance from the supernatural truths revealed by God. The student of Aristotle's metaphysics is often tempted to wonder why it was that the philosopher, who so clearly understood the first principles of reason and causality, and so explicitly deduced from them the existence of the First Mover and the Primal Intellect, failed to realise that all other beings must be moved and directed to the First Being by divine Providence; or again why, after analysing once and for all the principles governing the intrinsic

causalities of substance and its phenomena, he failed to develop these principles to their fullest application in the nature of personality. The philosopher had no *reason to divine* (the phrase is exact and precise) the dogma of creation if this had been known to him, his exposition of causality would have been more consistent and further developed, and he could never have come to ignore the truth of Providence. If he could have known the revealed truth of the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, or the unity of Person in the two natures of Christ, his doctrine of substance might well have developed into a fuller and clearer understanding of the substantial principle which is personality. St Augustine, entering the Church, was quickly enlightened by the faith to understand the innate goodness of all created natures, which pure philosophy of itself could have proved to him, but which his earlier Manichean influences had so darkly impugned. The Fathers and the theologians of the Church were not only guided and protected in the use of the human reason; they were led on by the faith, and they advanced natural philosophy not through knowledge to faith, but through faith to knowledge.

This axiom however asks for and requires further elucidation, especially because in the very definition of faith in the soul there is included the movement of the will under divine grace impelling the assent of the mind. Here we must try to discern the exact rôle of the will in that mental acceptance. The assent of the mind has already been shown to be legitimate in its own intellectual rights, at least from the evident credibility of the authority accepted. But the obscurity which is an intrinsic element in faith, and the introduction of a volitional activity moving the assent of the believer, now require that we should attempt to describe the correlative order of the will moved by grace, the will of man now changed with, or actuated by the charity of God. After analysing the manner of uniting the human will to divine charity, we can afterwards the better understand the principle of obedience by which the unity is achieved, and the development in perfection under the infused dispositions which the Spirit of God grants to the soul.

In the first place it is necessary to have in mind a clear understanding of what is meant by the human will, and what is the formal and proper object to which it is by its nature ordained. Like the mind of man, the human will has its natural correlative which can only absolutely be expressed in terms of the good. As the mind is the faculty ordained to the knowledge of the truth, the will is the faculty in the soul of man ordained to fulfilment in the

good. The activity of the will, therefore, will not be of itself a cognitive activity, but rather act of desire, volitional, appetitive, tending towards the definable fulfilment due to it by its nature. In this wide and general sense the terms 'will' and 'appetitive' were applied by the traditional theologians to all beings in so far as, by their nature, they tended to seek their final purpose. Inanimate as well as animate natures all sought the natural term of their being and this was determined for them, immediately or proximately by the law of their nature, ultimately by the Creator whose definite purpose was stamped within their being. It was but a particular realisation of the absolute first principle of finality, by which every agent is active for the sake of its end or purpose. No principle of activity can escape this transcendental law, whose validity is derived as a necessary determination or application of the first principle of reason, the principle of contradiction or identity.

There is now no occasion to debate this with the materialists of the modern period whose lamentable neglect of primary metaphysics has produced such disorder in their thought, and misled their intellectual speculations into so many trackless wastes. Here we take for granted this primary principle of reason, instinctively and naturally known by the right sense of mankind. But when we apply this principle to the nature of man and consider in him the faculty of desire or appetite, which is the human will, we quickly realise that this faculty in him is a desire bound up with the nature of man, an appetite desirous only of the good as known. In a universal sense it will be true that the rational will inclines towards that alone which the mind has apprehended and which the mind has always apprehended precisely as good; and this will be similarly verified in the case of whatever finite or particular object terminates the act of man's will. The old axiom of the Scholastics is invariably true: *nihil volitum nisi praecognitum*. Daily experience of our action of desire supplies sufficient evidence of the truth of this. In pursuit of particular aims, finite and determined, desire always is dictated by some apprehension or knowledge of the thing desired. The apprehension may be obscured and *in confuso* rather than clear; but no man can desire or will that of which he knows absolutely nothing. If he desires wealth, or power, or luxuries, or fame or whatever it may be, he only desires them according to what he somehow knows of them, or what they appear to be. If of some one of them he knows nothing, that one of them cannot so far be the object of his desire.

But the strange tragedy and nobility of man's nature begins

to be seen when we further grasp that none of these finite, created, limited goods is adequate to the infinite desire which strains at the heart of man. Caught up somehow within the confines of time and space, and pressed forward to local, limited and temporary fulfilments, he goes through his length of years in life, progressively aware, continuously discovering that the attained objects of his desire never fill up the hunger which prompted the pursuit of them. The very pleasures stale, the efforts crowned are hedged around with qualifications and compromise, the nobler things are insecure, and life itself is strictly limited. Wealth, notoriously, is always insufficient, fame is fickle, power unenduring, and the praise of man soon a thing of no savour. Even the love of home and hearth and country seems given only to be withdrawn; and all the time desire is infinite. With an immeasurable word, its object can truly be named, as when we affirm that all men desire happiness. And this happiness they desire instinctively, naturally, necessarily. At least in seeking this man has no freedom. The suicide escaping suffering is vainly seeking happiness, as much as the miser accumulating wealth, or the writer canvassing praise, is vainly seeking happiness. Where shall it be found? How shall it be gained? Who can give it to the hungering hearts of men?

One thing at least is clear: happiness for man must mean first the absolute fulfilment of the mind, before it can fill up the desire of the heart. While the mind does not know, the will must be discontent. And therefore, just as we saw in a preceding article that the human intellect in its adequate extension was coordinate with universal good, so with nothing less can it find its completion. However much man may seek to escape this native vocation, taking refuge in substitutes or oblivion in drugs, he is quickly again, or sooner or later, conscious of the pain which is at the spring of his desire.

From all this it was plain enough for the philosophers to argue to the existence of God; for man instinctively desired to know his Creator, to contemplate the ultimate mind which held the meaning of all things that are. But further, in this instinctive desire we can name again the ledge or basis upon which God, if he deigned and willed and gave, might fulfil even supernaturally this universal want. Yet here again we must beware not to imply that the natural desire to know God the Creator connotes any positive ordination to see God in his hidden mysteries, beyond his creative purpose. The infinite Being must reveal himself in order to be desired according to his own interior communion. In other words, his own will in free act, his own love in free gift can alone plant in the human will the

supernatural source of a love of his goodness in its own mysterious perfection. Yet, as we say: if God does so deign, if he does reveal the supernatural love, if he does pour out his grace, there is then again a receptive capacity within which his very grace can work, where God can by his love raise up supernatural love participating his own divine charity.

One other point must be named to complete this analysis before turning to view the manner of the revealed love; a fundamental question requiring right solution, before the harmony of human will and divine will can be assured. The question was already raised in the thirteenth century, and again today alert theologians in the Church are recalling its importance: whether the instinctive primary love in the human heart is egoistic or altruistic. The opinion had been vaguely suggested that the human desire was essentially egoistic; that man instinctively sought the universal good for the sake of himself, and not to give himself to it. Therefore a conclusion could be drawn that, in the created desire that strove within the heart of men in reference to the absolute good, there was something strangely evil, hostile to a due subordination of the creature to the Creator. From this there could be inferred an extremist theory that the true love for God could only be obtainable through a complete destruction of that egoistic hunger that this created love meant. The human lover who would love God, was to be crushed, consumed, and his natural love wholly destroyed before he could be fulfilled in the uncreated Love.

This theory met with no favour at the hands of St Thomas, and nothing is more illuminating than his reply, that all things, all beings, all created natures are primordially for the universal good, and only secondarily and subordinately for their own particular fulfilment. The point was, of course, quite central to his fundamental theology. The Creator had made all things good, for they were but an ordered hierarchical universe manifesting his own infinite uncreated good. The primary necessity and instinct of the creature was to manifest, according to the manner of its nature, the supreme good who had created it. The Angelic Doctor could take the simplest example and show, for instance, how the part is for the whole, and not the whole for the part; the relative for the absolute and not the absolute for the relative; how, in this wide sense, the part desires or loves the whole, and contributes its own manifestation primarily to the universal manifestation of the whole. St Thomas did not hesitate to apply this absolute principle to every particular activity and appetite, for indeed it must be universally true. He made clear for example that even the demons in hell, in so far

as they have being, are good; and in so far as they have being and so far are good, do therefore in some way retain of necessity this fundamental desire of, and love for God—thus manifesting his justice. Their 'love' is not of course human; and in no sense is it of grace: it is merely the necessary fulfilment of their being, dependent upon his eternal Being, manifesting therefore the eternal Being, even when their will rejecting his rule is tortured by his splendour. So clear was St Thomas in stating the essential goodness of all things that God had done, so completely did he reject any Manichean idea that there could exist anything wholly and in essence evil, that he could calmly consider the contribution of praise which the condemned spirits of hell were by their nature compelled to pay to God. For the part is for the whole, and the desire or natural appetite of the creature necessarily seeking happiness is primarily an essential appetite to manifest the universal good who is God, who made all things to manifest his own goodness and man, by his nature, was made to know him and to love him.

Here again then, as in a preceding article, we have defined the receptive or obediential capacity; now in terms of the will, by which the divine power could raise up to a supernatural status the native desire in man. Again it is correlative not to any definable perfection, but only to the supernatural agent who is God, who can occupy and, by grace, inform the human will, always thereby ennobling and honouring it, giving gratuitous life of himself to the free recipient who wilfully accepts.

Finally, if and when God does by his own divine love move the will of man, energising it with his own divine life, raising it to desires and fulfilments which infinitely exceed every positive capacity that is native to it, such movement of God connotes no smallest derogation to human freedom. The theological school which in the past was unwilling to ascribe to God the ultimate actual choice or determination of the will, has unwittingly denied to God that which is paramount in the achievement of our salvation. To suggest that the human will would not be free under this penetrative movement of grace, and to make therefore that grace ultimately subject to a human initiative on whose election it depended for its efficacy: this in effect not only repudiates primary principles of reason by placing passivity in him who is pure act, making the absolute dependent on the relative, but it also withdraws from God, denying to him the chiefest glory of his mercy, the exact point of its divine efficacy; and it gives ultimate credit of salvation only to the creature who wills. Such an idea is prompted by the mistake of imagining divine causality, whether in the natural or

supernatural sphere, after the manner and the limitations of the causative activities of man. Moreover, in effect, it misconceives the very freedom of the will which it seeks to defend. The human will is not free as by any absolute independence in its own ultimate autonomy. It also is a relative, and therefore determined by nature to an absolute. But it is free by the infinite perfection of the divine power creating and moving it. He who is pure act, first mover unmoved, and Creator of all beings, is the primary cause of every positive act of their being, and of every mode of every act. The necessary effect receives its necessity from him; the contingent effect, its contingency. The free creatures are free by the freedom with which God endowed them; and from the infinite perfection of his causality they freely choose, under his liberating movement. Only by imagining his being and action to be of the same nature and manner as the being and action of created, secondary causes, can it be suggested that this is a Calvinistic determinism. The exact contrary is the truth; for it is a participation of the divine freedom, with which God endows his saints.



## HEAVENLY MANNA & THE HOLY EUCHARIST

BY

THE MONK OF HEILSBRONN

[The author was a fourteenth century monk who wrote the famous poem *Die Tochter Sion*—a conversation between the soul and the Christian virtues—and other allegorical verse. The present extract is taken from the end of his treatise on *The Six Names of the Blessed Sacrament*, and is translated from the medieval German by K. Webber.]



HE sacred food of the holy Eucharist was prefigured for us in olden times by a heavenly bread called Manna, which God rained down upon our forefathers. This heavenly food had six characteristic qualities or properties, all of which are also present spiritually in our eucharistic food.

The first characteristic of the heavenly bread was that God caused it to drop down from Heaven in a marvellous manner, contrary to the laws of nature. Concerning this God said