

# BLACKFRIARS

## SUPPLEMENT

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### THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

Majestas Divina (I) ( <i>cont.</i> ) ...	Erich Przywara, S.J.	33
The Deficiencies of Christ ...	Damian Magrath, O.P.	36
Love for God ... ..	Luis of Granada ...	40
Reviews : Conrad Pepler, Gerard Meath, etc. ... ..		45

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### MAJESTAS DIVINA

#### I. SOLITUDE (*continued*)

BY

ERICH PRZYWARA, S.J.

(*Translated by Thomas Corbishley, S.J.*)

" Eternal Lord of all things  
I offer myself to You  
with Your grace and help,  
if Your Most Sacred Majesty will deign  
to choose and admit me  
to such a life and such a state."  
" Take Lord and receive  
all my liberty  
my memory, my understanding, all my will  
all that I have and possess.  
You have given them to me  
to You Lord I give them back  
they are Yours  
dispose of them according to Your Will  
enough for me Your Love and Your Grace."  
But your way to Him  
is a way forth from the world  
and from yourself  
" a going forth from oneself  
a going forward into one's Creator and Lord."  
" A man grows in love of the Spirit  
in proportion as he goes forth  
from self-love, self-will, self-seeking."  
So long as your eye is held  
by the glory of that which is visible  
how can it become fit for light invisible?  
so long as your ear is deafened

by the din of that which is corruptible  
 how can it fail to miss the "gentle whisper"  
 in which the Lord draws nigh?  
 In fetters were you born  
 clinging to tangible things;  
 helpless kinship with the world and self  
 is your inheritance;  
 a holy detachment is the task that summons you  
 for the things of earth;  
 a holy abstinence is the duty that awaits you  
 "to rid yourself of all inordinate attractions."  
 But if this tendency in its ultimate roots  
 is not something common to you and to other men  
 since it is not so much a tendency which your nature *has*  
 as rather one which your nature *is*  
 —your nature in so far as it lives not in God  
 as its unconditioned life  
 but always regards and treats creatures as somehow absolute;  
 if then in point of fact the whole meaning of this Way  
 is that *your* nature  
 your entirely individual incommunicable nature  
 be assumed into God  
 into God as he is *your* God  
 God—for—YOU  
 in an utterly personal way  
 as *you* see him with the eyes of your unique life  
 since between Him and you  
 that life of all-surrendering love  
 is not otherwise possible  
 —"you alone with God alone"—  
 a life that brings to peace  
 your restless heart . . .  
 clearly then you must be guided by someone who knows you as  
 you are in your most secret and hidden nature—hidden it may be  
 even from yourself—who knows God too even as he is *your* God,  
 the answer to the question of *your* life;  
 if too "in spiritual things there is grave danger when one runs  
 along without the bridle of prudent counsel and wise discretion,"  
 and it is a "deceit of the devil" if one "do not disclose the wiles  
 and temptations of the wicked one to a good confessor or man of  
 spiritual life" who "can give him help in accordance with his  
 smaller or greater spiritual development adapted to the needs of  
 his soul,"  
 yet will not every human director be too ready "to lead you by  
 the way which he himself has gone," thinking that to be best for  
 everybody which is good for himself," and so become blind or at  
 least dim-eyed to the way that is the one suited to *you*.

The purest wisdom for him then will surely be  
 " to let the Creator and Lord Himself  
 deal with the soul that has given herself to Him,  
 that He may receive her  
 into the embrace of His Love and Service  
 and Himself dispose her for the way  
 in which she may the better serve him henceforth,  
 allowing the Creator to work directly with His creature  
 and the creature with her Creator and Lord."  
 Where then after the beginner has " conferred much about  
 his spiritual state with one of spiritual life "  
 the second stage begins  
 in which he rises  
 " in lonely surrender to God alone,"  
 will not the decision here depend  
 on the fact that God our Lord Himself gives  
 what is the better thing for each individual,  
 Himself showing the way which is most adapted " to him "  
 ourselves " with the help of His Divine Grace  
 in divers ways seeking and testing methods  
 always on the look-out for that which most corresponds to our  
 [needs,"  
 clinging to none in helpless attachment  
 but always alert for modifications and alterations in our soul,  
 since " God our Lord who best knows our nature  
 gives us by means of such movements a knowledge  
 of that which is suited to us,"  
 not of a truth under the deceptive influence  
 of a " darkness of soul  
 inclination to what is base and earthly  
 a succession of excitements and temptations  
 a tendency to discouragement  
 without hope, without love  
 so that the soul finds herself utterly dull and wretched  
 as if cut off from her Creator and Lord."  
 At such a time " no change should be made  
 but the person must persevere in his former line of conduct "  
 and of course any change must be directed  
 so as to be a " growing and rising from good to better "  
 a change without strain  
 " soft, gentle, easy, as a drop of water soaks into a sponge "  
 not with " clatter and disturbance  
 as in the nature of the Evil One  
 but in peace  
 a drawing of the whole man to the love of His Divine Majesty  
 in true happiness and spiritual joy "  
 a deeper peace in our Creator and Lord.

But just as a prudent doctor employs one specific at the beginning of a malady, another in the middle and yet another at the end, so at the beginning of a conversion one remedy is necessary, later on another and still later yet . . ."

If only the eye of our soul is single  
 " directed at the end for which I was created,"  
 if only our heart throbs  
 in the restlessness of a sincere desire for Him,  
 if then however many clouds blot our every vista  
 however many raging storms drown the "gentle whispering,"  
 if only prayer and entreaty are never silent within you  
 " that you be not deaf to His Call  
 but eager and ready to do His Divine Will,"  
 that you may desire and recognise  
 what is more pleasing to His Divine Goodness "

" asking His Grace to choose that which is more to the glory  
 of the Divine Majesty "

and the salvation of your soul ;  
 when all your will is a prayer  
 for " that which I desire and need,"  
 then  
 all things  
 lead you " nearer to intimate union  
 with your Creator and Lord  
 in growing love."

*(To be continued.)*

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## THE DEFICIENCIES OF CHRIST

BY

DAMIAN MAGRATH, O.P.

The following lines are offered with all reverence in an attempt at understanding some of the implications of S. Thomas's teaching on the sufferings of our Lord. They are meant to suggest the apparent ineffectualness of the theologian's doctrine in face of the bitter experience of the disciple.

### I

#### THE DISCIPLE PROTESTS

You speak to me of the sufferings of Christ; you tell me to think of them in my pain; to bear my own, and to offer them up with his. They are the penalty of my sins, and Christ's Passion has given them meaning and purpose, if only I accept them as he did for me. Yet what consolation is that to me, for his sufferings cannot compare with mine? You pretend the Passion was a sort of Epiphany: a manifestation of the reality