

and a solace in adversity; they are a joy at home and no hindrance abroad; they pass the night, travel afar, or go to the country with us" (*In Defense of Archaïs*).

¹⁰ Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, Scribners, New York, 1960, p. 4.

¹¹ "But even things command a certain kind of respect; they have a nature of their own and a goodness of their own. They should not be slighted as mere 'implements', as nothing other than objects of consumption. Modern man is no longer concerned with the intrinsic goodness or value of things, but exclusively with their capacity to increase comfort" (Rudolf Allers, "Technology and the Human Person," in *Technology and Christian Culture*, Catholic University Press, 1960, p. 31).

¹² An interesting and convincing application of the theory of analytical psychology (Jung) to the sacrament of Baptism is found in Beirnaert's essay, "La dimension mythique dans le sacramentalisme chrétien," *Eranos Jahrbuch*, 1949. Gerald Vann, O.P., and Victor White, O.P., are somewhat sympathetic to Jung, as they interpret him. On the other hand, a noted experimental psychologist, H. J. Eysenck, has this to say about universal symbols: "The main difference is that mental activity in sleep appears to be at a lower level of complexity and to find expression in a more archaic mode of presentation. The generalizing and conceptualizing parts of the mind seem to be dormant, and their function is taken over by a more primitive method of pictorial representation. It is this *primitivization* of the thought processes which leads to the emergence of symbolism. . . . This symbolizing activity is, of course, determined to a large extent by previous learning. To the patient who is being analysed by a follower of Freud, it would not occur to dream in Jungian symbols because he has not become acquainted with them. In general, symbols are relative to the education and experience of the dreamer, although certain symbols, such as the moon, are very widely used because they are familiar to almost all human beings" (*Sense and Nonsense in Psychology*, Penguin Books, 1958, p. 173).

¹³ *The Confessions*, Book 10, Chapter 6 (Trans. by F. Sheed).

¹⁴ *The World as I See It*, Philosophical Library, New York, p. 5.

¹⁵ L. A. DuBridge, "Exploring the Unknown," in *Frontiers in Science*, p. 254.

¹⁶ Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, *loc. cit.*

THE GLORIES OF DIVINE GRACE

IT IS CERTAINLY a great thing that man by grace should rise above all created nature; but it is something greater still that he should participate in the uncreated divine nature. To speak more precisely, man in the state of grace is so superior to all created things because he is so near to God. On account of this nearness he partakes of the prerogatives of

God, just as a body partakes of the light and heat of fire, in proportion to its being close to the fire.

This excellent union with God is taught us, according to the unanimous explanation of the holy Fathers, by St. Peter when he writes that, by the very great and precious promises God has made us by Jesus Christ, we may be partakers of the divine nature. In other words, St. Peter teaches that the prerogatives which are above all created nature and proper only to the divinity, are, as far as possible, communicated to us creatures.

The saints cannot find expressions sufficiently apt to describe this magnificent gift. One early ecclesiastical writer says: "Sanctity or sanctifying grace is a divine gift, an inexpressible copy of the highest divinity and the highest goodness, by means of which we enter a divine rank through a heavenly generation." The holy martyr Maximus writes: "The divinity is given us when grace penetrates our nature by a heavenly light, raising it above its natural condition by the greatness of glory." These and most of the other holy Fathers teach—with St. Thomas—that by grace we are, in a manner, deified. They apply to this mystery the words quoted by our Saviour: "I have said: you are gods, and all of you the sons of the most High." In a word, by grace we are elevated in some measure to the highest order of things, to the throne which God alone occupies in virtue of His nature. We thus ascend the highest heaven.

If we consider the various classes of beings known to us, we perceive that each class differs in its nature from the others and is more perfect than others, so that all together they form a ladder of many rounds, the summit of which is occupied by God. Some things enjoy existence only: lifeless things—for example, stones and metals. Others have a certain kind of life, as the plant, which by its own innate power from the root produces the blossom and the fruit. Animals have, besides this life, the ability to feel and to move. Man, finally, has also spiritual life, so that he may know and love even immaterial things. Above man there is an immeasurable gradation of pure spirits, invisible to us. Each spirit has its own peculiar high perfection. Infinitely above all these natures is that of God, for no other nature is so purely spiritual. No other nature is similarly able to behold God immediately or to unite itself so intimately to His own nature by love. All other natures are darkness compared to the Divine Sun. Other natures cannot, of themselves, adequately represent the peculiar perfections of this Sun.

This sublime divine nature, by the infinite power of its equally infinite love, draws our nature to itself, receives it into its divine bosom, im-

merses it into itself as iron is dipped into the furnace. Thus we belong to God's kind in the same manner as the palm tree belongs to the class of plants, and the lion to that of animals.

If, out of all the millions of men and angels, God had selected a single soul and bestowed upon it this unheard-of dignity, such a soul would, if visible, darken the beauty of the sun, of all nature, and of all the heavenly spirits. It would amaze mortal men. The angels themselves would be inclined to adore it as God Himself. How then is it possible that we despise this same gift when it is so extravagantly lavished upon all? And how is it that our ingratitude increases even as God wills to be more liberal toward us?

Our ambition makes us purchase with immense trouble and large sums of money the society of the great. And yet we despise communing with the great God! If anyone is expelled from the council of a king he can scarcely endure the ignominy. Should we not esteem it a bitter loss, an irreparable injury to our ambition, to be expelled by mortal sin not only from the society of God but from God's family and relationship? In fact, the man who despises this union with God's goodness and divinity hates God Himself; such a man is a deadly enemy to his own honor, his sound reason, his own person and to God. Worldly honors often consist in the opinion and esteem of men rather than in the possession of intrinsic worth. A man may, at the bidding of his sovereign, occupy the highest position of honor, without being on that account more perfect and honorable in himself. But grace communicates to us a divine dignity. We receive not merely a high name, but a real perfection of the divine order, for grace likens our soul to God Himself.

"By the union with the Son and the Holy Ghost," says St. Cyril of Alexandria, "all of us who have believed and have been likened to God, are partakers of the divine nature; and this not only in name, but in reality. For we have been glorified with a beauty surpassing all created beauty. For Christ is formed in us in an indescribable manner, not as one creature in another, but as God in created nature. Christ transforms us by the Holy Ghost into His image, and elevates us to an uncreated dignity."

"What is essential and substantial in God," says St. Thomas, "exists as a quality superadded to nature in the soul which participates by grace in the divine love."

This beautiful and sublime mystery is illustrated by the holy Fathers in various ways. St. Athanasius compares the Divinity to a precious perfume which communicates its fragrance to the objects that come into con-

tact with it. He also compares it to a seal which leaves its own form impressed in the soft wax. St. Gregory Nazianzen says our nature is so intimately united to God and so partakes of His perfections that it may be symbolized by a drop of water falling into, and absorbed by a cup of wine. St. Thomas, following St. Basil, gives us the figure of unrefined iron, which is cold, black, hard, and without beauty. He says that when such iron is put into fire and penetrated by its heat, it appears bright, warm, flexible, and liquid, without losing its own nature. If we remember now that God is the purest spiritual light and the fire of eternal love itself, we can in some measure understand how God, descending with His full glory to His creature, or receiving it into His bosom, can, without destroying its nature, penetrate it with the full glow of His light and warmth, so that its natural lowliness and weakness disappear and it is seemingly altogether absorbed in God.

If we could acquire the brilliant mental activity of the angels as easily as we can merit an increase of grace, we should certainly not neglect the opportunity. But why do I speak of the perfection of angels? Even those of a lower nature attract us: the swiftness of the deer, the strength of the lion, the flight of the eagle. How gladly we should seize such perfections if they were within our easy reach! But the perfection and glories of the divine nature, perfections which not only enrich our nature but ennoble it throughout and raise it up to the divine, these perfections are not great enough in our eyes to call forth a little exertion on our part! Where is our reason, our Christian faith? . . .

Would that we Christians were not less impressed with our dignity than heathen philosophers are with the dignity of man! Heathen philosophers have called man a miracle, the marrow and the heart of the world, the most beautiful being, the king of all creatures. But if man appears so great in the light of reason, how much greater should he not appear in the light of faith! Let us open the eyes of our soul and heed the warning of St. Chrysostom: "I beg and beseech you, do not suffer that the extraordinary gifts of God" (which we have received through the grace of Christ) "increase your guilt and the punishment of your negligence by their infinite greatness."

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