

SUMMA OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

SUMMA OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

SELECTED TEXTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF
VENERABLE LOUIS OF GRANADA, OP

THE EXISTENCE AND PERFECTIONS OF GOD
THE MARVELS OF CREATION

TRANSLATED AND ADAPTED BY
JORDAN AUMANN, OP

TAN Books,
North Carolina

NIHIL OBSTAT: James R. Gillis, O.P., S.T.M.
James J. McDonald, O.P., S.T.B.

IMPRIMI POTESST: Edward L. Hughes, O.P., S.T.M.
Provincial

NIHIL OBSTAT: Thomas G. Kinsella, O.P.
Censor Librorum

IMPRIMATUR: Edward A. Fitzgerald, D.D.
Bishop of Winona
June 1, 1954

Summa of the Christian Life: The Existence and Perfections of God, The Marvels of Creation © 2025 TAN Books

Originally published in English by B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, Missouri in 1954. Copyright © 1954 by B. Herder Book Co. Published by TAN Books in 1979. This translation was made from the Spanish edition of *Obra Selecta: Una Suma de la Vida Cristiana*, published by La Editorial Católica, Madrid, Spain, 1947, under the auspices of the Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos.

All rights reserved. With the exception of short excerpts used in critical review, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, without the prior written permission of the publisher. Creation, exploitation and distribution of any unauthorized editions of this work, in any format in existence now or in the future—including but not limited to text, audio, and video—is prohibited without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Cover design by Jordan Avery

ISBN: 978-1-5051-3519-0

Kindle ISBN: 978-1-5051-3599-2

ePUB ISBN: 978-1-5051-3598-5

Published in the United States by

TAN Books

PO Box 269

Gastonia, NC 28053

www.TANBooks.com

Printed in India

To Mary, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary

Contents †

Translator's Prefaceix
Forewordxi
General Introduction	1

BOOK ONE

THE EXISTENCE AND PERFECTIONS OF GOD

PROLOGUE	77
1 GOD'S EXISTENCE	84
2 THE ONE GOD	94
3 GOD, INCOMPREHENSIBLE AND INEFFABLE	96
4 DEVOUT MEDITATION ON GOD'S INCOMPREHENSIBILITY	102
5 THE DIVINE PERFECTION.	109
6 THE DIVINE BEAUTY.	115
7 THE DIVINE GOODNESS AND MERCY	121
8 GOD'S LOVE FOR US	138
9 THE GRANDEUR OF DIVINE JUSTICE	146
10 THE DIVINE OMNIPOTENCE	154
11 GOD'S PROVIDENCE OVER MEN	157
12 THE BLESSING OF PREDESTINATION.	162
13 THE MYSTERY OF THE BLESSED TRINITY.	167

BOOK TWO

THE MARVELS OF CREATION

14	CREATION OF THE WORLD	187
15	THE SPLENDOR OF THE FIRMAMENT	192
16	BENEFITS OF AIR AND RAIN	201
17	THE GRANDEUR OF THE SEA	206
18	THE BEAUTY AND FERTILITY OF THE EARTH.	211
19	VARIETY AND PERFECTIONS OF ANIMALS.	225
20	GOD'S CARE OF THE ANIMAL KINGDOM	235
21	WONDERS OF THE HUMAN BODY	252
22	MAN'S LOWER FACULTIES	261
23	THE LIFE OF THE SENSES	267
24	THE PASSIONS	277
25	GOD'S IMAGE AND LIKENESS	284
26	MAN'S GRATITUDE TO GOD.	294
27	CREATION OF THE ANGELS	303
28	GOD'S CARE FOR ALL HIS CREATURES	306
	APPENDIX	313

Translator's Preface †

LOUIS OF GRANADA stands without a peer among Dominican ascetical writers and his works are known and loved throughout the Christian world. Both as a writer and a preacher he dedicated himself with apostolic zeal to the task of transmitting sacred doctrine to the common people. He is par excellence a theologian for the laity.

The *Summa of the Christian Life* is not a mere anthology; it represents a careful selection of passages from the works of Louis of Granada. Moreover, in order to avoid a haphazard assortment of texts, the passages have been arranged in the order of the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas, thus giving the entire collection a theological unity.

The Spanish edition of this work was compiled by Father Antonio Tranco, O.P., of Almagro, Spain, who was the first to realize the possibility of using the masterpiece of St. Thomas Aquinas as a framework for the spiritual writings of Louis of Granada. But Father Tranco did not live to see the fulfillment of his dream; with twenty-six fellow Dominicans he gave his life for God and for Spain when he was shot down by the Communists in the early days of the Spanish Civil War. The work was completed at last by the Most Reverend Francisco Barbado, O.P., Bishop of Salamanca and a son of the Dominican Province of Bética.

The present translation is made possible through the gracious permission of Bishop Barbado and the Very Reverend

Father Provincial of the Dominican Province of Bética in southern Spain. Although the original Spanish edition has been the basis of this English version, adaptations and deletions have been made with a view to the utility and benefit of American readers. The passages in the Spanish edition of the *Summa of the Christian Life* are taken from the critical edition of the works of Granada, made by Father Justo Cuervo, O.P., at Madrid, in 1906. For the convenience and satisfaction of the reader, the various passages which make up this *Summa* are identified in an appendix at the end of each volume.

JORDAN AUMANN, O.P.

Foreword †

THE VENERABLE LOUIS of Granada is one of the writers who has contributed most to the formation of the Christian character and spirit of the Spanish people. With clarity and precision he wrote of the most exalted doctrines of Christianity. No one knew as well as he did how to combine loftiness of thought and profundity of doctrine with a clarity and transparency of style that is within the grasp of all.

If the Spanish people merit the title of a theological race, it is not only because Vitoria, Cano, Bañez, and Suárez were Spaniards, but because the Spaniards are interested in the theological principles that govern the Christian life and for this they are greatly indebted to Louis of Granada. Without the diffusion of his books it is hardly probable that the *autos sacramentales* and the theological comedies of López, Lope, Tirso, and others would have enchanted the people with a poetry which today astonishes us by its profundity and theological precision. In spite of the greater human culture of our times, relatively few people are able to appreciate them.

That Louis of Granada wrote for the “wives of carpenters” was the unfortunate expression of disdain used by one who apparently had forgotten that the wife of the carpenter was full of grace and blessed among women. But the phrase that was intended to be an insult, contained within itself a lofty tribute. Even St. Paul, who wrote for those who were recently initiated in the Christian life, explained the most lofty mysteries of

divine wisdom and attempted to place them within the grasp of all.

Like St. Paul, Louis of Granada aspired to bring the plenitude of the life of grace to the greatest number of souls, leading them by the hand in the ascent from virtue to virtue in their journey to the kingdom of heaven. There resounded constantly in his heart the echo of the words of the Apostle: "You are fellow citizens with the saints, and the domestics of God."¹ "Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. For you are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God."² "The mystery which hath been hidden from ages and generations, but now is manifested to His saints . . . is Christ, . . . whom we preach, admonishing every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."³ "Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly, in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing in grace in your hearts to God. All whatsoever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him."⁴

It was the selfsame pedagogy of Christ, who made use of comparisons and parables to teach people the mysteries of the kingdom of God. This was not appreciated by those who reproached Louis of Granada, as they reproached his contemporary saints and friends, St. Teresa of Avila, Blessed John of Avila, St. Francis Borgia, and Blessed John de Ribera.

¹ Eph. 2:19.

² Col. 3:2-3.

³ *Ibid.* 1:26-8.

⁴ Col. 3:16-7.

The security of doctrine found in Father Granada leaves nothing to be desired nor is it necessary that one use a certain benevolence in order to give his expressions an orthodox sense. Those who are intent on finding mistakes, as a wise Master of the Sacred Palace once said, could find them even in the *Pater Noster*.

Moreover, Louis of Granada has the merit of combating the spiritual exaggerations of his time, both those of the so-called intellectualists and those of the Illuminists. In much the same way, Francisco Vitoria combatted the influence of the Nominalists and the followers of Erasmus and established at Salamanca a glorious theological school. Granada, like Vitoria, possessed a brilliant intellect and a generous heart and he had mastered in an exceptional manner the great doctrinal synthesis of St. Thomas Aquinas. Louis of Granada is no eclectic; in his writings there are no affectations or adherences to the exaggerations mentioned above. He is firmly rooted in the principles of Thomistic theology and possesses a solid biblical, patristic, and metaphysical foundation.

Louis of Granada also overcame the tendencies to separate asceticism and mysticism, which were started in his day. Both aspects of the mystical life were evaluated by him and he coordinated them in such a way that both the ascetics and the mystics can look to him as a master. Undoubtedly, he gives greater emphasis to ascetical matters, for the simple reason that he directs his words in a special way to the great number of simple faithful who need above all to become enamored of virtue and holiness of life so that they will eradicate evil inclinations and rise steadily to a higher life. Granada attempted to lead souls to the threshold of contemplation and the mystical life, and because he himself lived that life intensely, his soul frequently

soared to the regions of intimate communion with God and at times seems to move entirely in the planes of the mystical life.

Granada's vast classical and ecclesiastical culture, his absorbing spirit, and the perfection of his literary style, place him, together with Vitoria and Louis of Leon, among the creators of Christian Spanish humanism. With good reason has he merited the title of the Spanish Cicero. The dominant idea of humanism was a true evaluation of man but in some countries it was carried to the inadmissible extreme of a pagan anthropomorphism. For Granada, man is king of creation and attracts the glances of divine love and mercy and providence, but man is not to contemplate himself or take complacency in his own perfections; rather, he must direct himself to his Creator, returning love for love.

The appreciation that was expressed for Granada even during his lifetime is evidenced in many documents and written testimonies. In a benevolent and friendly letter, Pope Gregory XIII encourages the Dominican friar to continue his apostolate of the pen, especially now that his advanced age prevents him from sharing in the arduous labor of preaching. The letter is also a confirmation of the approval of the works of Granada which had been issued by the Council of Trent and countersigned by Pope Paul IV. St. Teresa of Avila, who had the astuteness to know and make friends with the holy souls that were her contemporaries, seeing that it was unlikely that she would ever meet Granada in person, at last decided to write to him and express her gratitude for the great amount of good he had done for souls through his writings. St. Peter of Alcántara held the *oración y Meditación* in such high esteem that he made a new edition and wrote a commentary on it.

St. Charles Borromeo, another contemporary of Granada, had frequent correspondence with him and asked him to send copies of his books as soon as they were published. So greatly did he esteem the works of Granada that he wrote a letter of commendation to the Pope, saying: "Of all those who have written on spiritual matters up to the present time and which I have known, there is no one who has written books in greater number or better selected and more profitable than Louis of Granada."

St. Francis de Sales likewise recommended the books of Granada to a bishop friend, saying: "I beseech you to hold fast to Louis of Granada in his entirety and let his works become to you a second breviary." Father Leonard Hansen, an English Provincial and biographer of St. Rose of Lima, states: "With equal diligence the glorious St. Rose of Santa María read and persuaded others to read the pious books that best treated of prayer, and among these she gave first place to the erudite work, *Oración y Meditación*, by Louis of Granada."

The high place that the works of Granada have held up to our own time is evidenced by the fact that they have passed through four thousand editions in various languages. In France alone there have been forty-eight editions of the complete works and in Italy there have been twenty-eight. It is evident from all this that the statement of the Spanish bibliographer, Nicolás Antonio, is a well-deserved tribute: "Our nation has never had a greater or more useful man and perhaps it will never again have one to equal Louis of Granada."

Francisco Barbado, O.P.
Bishop of Salamanca, Spain

General Introduction †

LOUIS OF GRANADA is the writer of the Spanish Empire. His life courses through a luminous arc which, with an almost mathematical exactitude, runs parallel to the greatest century of Spanish history. Born at a time when Spain began to advance steadily toward becoming a world empire, he reached his maturity in the days of the Council of Trent and the Battle of Lepanto, when Spain had reached the zenith of her imperial greatness. He died in 1588 when the splendor of Spain's golden century was beginning to pale. It was the year of the defeat of the Armada.

The exalted figure of Louis of Granada is bathed in glories. His works and his doctrine were the spiritual food of imperial Spain. Preacher, literary stylist, and spiritual writer: such are the three dimensions of his dynamism, a dynamism that has left a glorious path in Spanish and Christian culture. He is the preacher of Spain. He it is who brought the Spanish language to its classical perfection. He it is who began a new period in the history of Spanish spirituality, a period that produced St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross.

His influence throughout Europe and throughout the world is amazing; it is one of the most stupendous of historico-literary phenomena. His works have been translated into all languages; they have been read by princes and kings (Charles V and Philip II), saints and literary figures (St.

Teresa, Shakespeare, Molière), pontiffs and the ordinary laity, Protestants and pagans.

The Man

In the heroic impatience of Spain's reconquest, the city of Granada had become an epic dream of Spain. On the second of January in 1492 the lances that had been unsheathed for so many centuries were raised in exultant jubilation and the arrows of the Spanish Catholic rulers, Ferdinand and Isabella, now united under a common yoke of love, were placed point downward as a symbol of peace. It was the day of the conquest of Granada and with this conquest was re-established the geographic unity of Spain, which had been divided for eight centuries, since the Mussulman invasion of Andalusia in the year 711. In that same year of 1492, Christopher Columbus, commanding the three vessels, the Niña, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria, and invested with royal powers from the Alhambra, discovered the New World on the twelfth of October. In that year also the King and Queen created a school of humanities for the nobility and named Peter of Anglería its first rector.

These three facts are the key that opens the door to the golden century of Spain. But there were also other events of great importance. Ferdinand and Isabella, whose marriage had effected the political union of Spain, had achieved geographical unity of the nation by the reconquest of Granada. Their next objective was unity of religion. To that end, they founded new convents, reformed religious orders, and expelled the Jews, who were a constant threat of disintegration. They inaugurated the Inquisition to watch over the orthodoxy of the Catholic faith amidst the fanatical and proselytizing Jews

and Moors who yet remained in Spain. They fostered enterprises of great political and religious significance, such as the discovery and expansion of the New World and the conquest of new kingdoms for Spain and for Christ.

The conquest of Granada was not only a joyous victory, but it also presented a problem: the problem of making the city Spanish once again. The difficulty was a complex one because at the same time that it was Christian, Granada continued to be in great part a Moorish stronghold. The rulers allowed the Moors to preserve their religion, their temples, their language and customs. The political, civil, and religious life of the city was reorganized under the double standard of Spanish and Moorish. But such a situation, if permanent, would have proved a constant threat to peace and unity. Consequently, Ferdinand and Isabella granted free entrance to any Spaniard from the provinces who desired to go to Granada and settle there. It was a great opportunity for citizens from poorer sections of Spain and it would at the same time hasten the blending of the Moorish population with the Spanish people.

Among the numerous immigrants was a young married couple from Sarriá, a hamlet in the province of Lugo. The Galician is by temperament and by necessity an eternal pilgrim, although forever after he carries in his heart a nostalgia for his own province. At that time the district of Lugo, like the rest of Galicia, had reached the peak of its poverty. The reconquered cities of southern Spain offered a magnificent opportunity for turning the wheel of fortune, and thousands upon thousands of *gallegos* played that wheel.

Shortly after settling in Granada, the two young immigrants from Galicia were blessed by the birth of a son in 1504 and they gave him the name of Louis. But fortune did not smile

on that home. The father, Fancis Sarriá, died in 1509 and the little boy of five had to eat the bitter bread of a begging orphan. History would have forgotten those years if Louis himself had not had the great humility to recall them. In 1582 he wrote to his great friend and admirer, Cardinal Borromeo: "I was the son of a woman who was so poor that she lived on the alms that were given to her at the gate of the monastery." Louis also, barefoot and in tattered clothes, used to beg alms at the Dominican convent of Holy Cross.

Those years of suffering and privation had a great influence on the soul of Louis of Granada. He loved poverty as an eternal spouse, ardently, and like a Franciscan. He loved the poor like brothers and his great joy was to help them whenever he could. Even as a little boy, Louis acquired an ascetical sense of contempt for the world which was to be for him a norm of life and a stepping-stone to the higher world of the spirit where the passions do not challenge and fickle fortune does not deceive.

The sad years of orphanage and hunger that he endured with his beloved mother, whose name is unknown to us, were to end very shortly. The biographers have woven a colorful legend concerning the occasion on which fortune changed for the young orphan. Louis was fighting with a street urchin bigger than himself who had insulted Louis' mother. Nothing would have come of the fight had not the Count de Tendilla, Mayor of the Alhambra, passed by at the moment. As the Count approached, the bully fled but Louis stood his ground unafraid. When asked why he was fighting, Louis defended himself so ardently and with such courage that the Count was favorably impressed and took Louis under his patronage. Almost eighty years later, when a granddaughter of the Count, the Marquise

de Villafranca, wrote to him from Naples for advice on the sanctification of her married life, Louis recalls the virtues of her "holy grandfather . . . who nourished me from tender years, giving me food from the very plate from which he himself ate."

Louis received his early training in the doctrinal schools founded by the first archbishop of Granada, Ferdinand de Talavera, formerly a professor in the University of Salamanca. The Archbishop had established these schools so that the children of both the Moors and Spaniards could be taught the rudiments of Christian doctrine, reading, writing, and music. The Archbishop had almost unlimited power in Granada and he had engaged a man to gather the children from the streets of the city and place them in the schools. Louis studied in such a school either before or after he had entered into the service of the Count de Tendilla as a page. He also became an acolyte in the royal chapel that had been installed provisionally in the Church of St. Francis of the Alhambra.

It is not certain that Louis studied the classical humanities under Peter Martyr of Anglería, as some biographers maintain. Although he gave evidence of a profound humanistic training, he could not have received it in the lecture hall of Peter Martyr because the master was not in Granada during the time that Louis devoted himself to these studies. However, the works of the famous master were available at the Alhambra and Louis and the sons of the Count must have spent many hours in delightful and formative reading. They also studied and practiced eloquence and Louis succeeded so well that he was given a prophetic nickname: the preacher.

As a result of his humanistic studies, a burning zest for the contemplation of nature was enkindled in Louis' fervent soul. It was a flame that would never be extinguished. Granada and

its environs lay before his eyes like a vision in a dream. On the balconies of the Alhambra, deliberately placed so that they command a complete panorama of the city, Louis could pass delightful hours, feeding his spirit on a grace and beauty the like of which are to be found nowhere else in the world. Louis of Granada could be considered the creator of physical esthetics in Spain and one who knew best how to read the divine in the beauty of nature.

The hour came at last when Louis was faced with the problem of the choice of a vocation. At that time three professions beckoned to Spanish youth: the Church, the sea, or the barracks; that is to say, the clerical state, adventure across the seas in the New World, or service as a soldier of the king. Louis decided in favor of the Church and the religious life. To that convent where he had so many times begged "an alms for the love of God," he now went to ask "the mercy of God and the Order" and the black and white habit of a Dominican. He was, therefore, no stranger to the friars; poor of fortune, yes, but rich indeed in physical and moral qualities. On June 15, 1524, in the presence of the community and to the joyful tears of his beloved mother, he received the habit of a Friar Preacher. Few would wear it with as much dignity and triumph as he.

From that moment a new life began for Louis de Sarriá. The year of novitiate was lived under a rule of austerity and religious formation by a Father Master who instructed the novices in monastic observances and the exercise of religious virtue. The novices served the community in the refectory; they could not speak with strangers or even with the professed religious. It was a year of testing and preparation. The soul of Louis was nourished and enlarged by the Dominican spirit throughout that year and at its end he was judged suitable for

profession, which he made into the hands of Fray Christopher de Guzmán, patriarch of the province and prior of Holy Cross.

At religious profession the Dominican enters into a new environment, that of the university; but it is an environment in harmony with his religious life. Constant study and a deep spiritual life: such is the theme of the Dominican student. Fray Louis was to pass four years as a student in Holy Cross Convent; years filled with dreams and labor.

The Convent of Holy Cross was founded by Ferdinand and Isabella shortly after the conquest of Granada, as a testimony of their great devotion to St. Dominic and a reward for the services of Fray Thomas de Torquemada. But it was also meant to be a stronghold from which the Dominicans, with their traditional vigilance, would watch over the orthodoxy of the Faith. By express will of the King, the convent belonged to the Congregation of Observance which, by means of study and religious observance, had reformed Dominican life in Spain. When Fray Louis was professed, the Convent of the Holy Cross was, intellectually and spiritually, one of the best in the Province of Andalusia. Known today as the Province of Bética, it had been separated from the Province of Spain in 1515 and the progress and vitality of the new Province were amazing. As frequently happens in new communities, it enjoyed great religious fervor and showed a keen interest in university studies. It expanded in many directions. The General Chapter of 1530, for example, records the foundation of no less than six new convents in Andalusia; its missionary zeal is attested by a rapid expansion in Africa; and the General Chapter of 1518 had annexed to Andalusia all the convents founded or to be founded in the Americas.

Holy Cross Convent in Granada was a House of Studies from the very beginning of the Province in 1515. Its first prior, Fray Albert de Aguayo, translator of Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, imparted to the convent a vigorous university atmosphere. In surroundings so conducive to study and religious observance, Fray Louis reviewed Latin and then spent three years on philosophy and three years on theology. Such was the regulation of the Dominican *Ratio studiorum* at the time.

The texts used were the grammar of Nebrija, the *Summae* of Peter the Spaniard, and the works of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. Fray Louis was brilliant in scholastic disputations and had no equal in mental capacity, application to study, and exact observance of the monastic life. Consequently, it was no surprise when he was named for a scholarship at the celebrated college of St. Gregory in Valladolid.

Fray Louis was twenty-five years old when, in obedience to his superiors, he arranged his meager effects and began the tedious journey to Castile. At the beginning of June, 1529, he arrived at Valladolid, then the capital of Spain, and was received with fraternal warmth at the College of St. Gregory. For Fray Louis it was like arriving in a new world. Despite the cordiality of superiors and companions, he was completely disorientated and nostalgia struggled with obedience.

The day after his arrival, an older student was assigned to teach Fray Louis the statutes of the College and to acquaint him with the glorious history of those walls and lecture halls. The eight days of rigid apprenticeship were like the eight days of watching and vigil before being admitted as a knight of Thomistic truth. Always a good disciple, Fray Louis studied the statutes, page by page and word by word, and listened

attentively as his pedagogue and companion recounted the history of the College.

St. Gregory's had been founded by Fray Alonso de Burgos, confessor of the King and Queen and Bishop of Córdoba, for the diffusion and growth of Thomistic doctrine. The College was completed in 1496 and was a marvel of plateresque architecture. The sensitive and contemplative soul of Fray Louis never wearied of admiring the cloister walk and the facade of delicately carved stone set against the austere and ascetical Castilian countryside. But all this was nothing when compared to the prestige that the College enjoyed as a center of learning. The lectures in theology and the arts were not surpassed by any other university in or outside of Spain. The pedagogue told all these things to Fray Louis very slowly so that the new student would never forget the responsibility and dignity of a student of St. Gregory's.

After the eight days of matriculation were passed, Fray Louis solemnly took the oath to the statutes of the College on June 11, 1529. With the taking of the oath, Fray Louis was formally invested in the College, a much coveted distinction but an honor laden with duties and obligations. In the mind of the young friar his first duty was worthily to represent Holy Cross Convent of Granada. Grateful for the confidence placed in him by his fellow religious of Holy Cross, he changed his name from Fray Louis de Sarriá to Fray Louis of Granada.

Let us reconstruct a typical day in the life of a student at the College of St. Gregory in 1529. We can do so by reviewing the statutes that governed the College, for they regulated the life of the students with a mathematical precision. The two most important occupations were study and prayer. All heard Mass daily, with the exception of the priest students who celebrated

their own Masses. After Mass a prayer was recited at the tomb of the founder. Choral Office was fulfilled with rigorous regularity. Matins, Lauds, Vespers, and Compline were chanted in choir in a subdued voice; the minor hours and the Office of the Dead were recited in private. In the afternoon all attended the singing of the *Salve Regina* at the Dominican convent of St. Paul, which was adjacent to St. Gregory's.

The meals were another community act that no one was permitted to miss. The bell for meals was rung at eleven in the morning and at eight in the evening. Passages of Scripture were read at the noon meal; Dominican writings or excerpts from the *Moralia* of St. Gregory, at the evening collation. No one was permitted to enter the room of another student without permission and then the door was to be left open during the visit. Study was done by candlelight and lest a student fall asleep over his parchment books, one of the friars was appointed to go from cell to cell and extinguish all the candles that had not been put out within a quarter of an hour after Matins. The students rarely left the precincts of the College except for an occasional group walk.

There were lectures in logic, natural philosophy, moral philosophy, theology, exegesis, and cases of conscience. Moreover, there were public disputations in theology and public lectures in philosophy on every lecture day and the student had to assist at the one assigned by the rector. The official language was Latin, except on vacation days when Spanish could be spoken.

Fray Louis of Granada followed this schedule of life for five years. In the ascetical surroundings of Castile his spirit was gradually acquiring a temper of steel, the temper of the *conquistadores*. He was assiduous in scholastic disputations and

solicitous in the fulfillment of his duties when it was his turn to officiate in choir, to read in refectory, to extinguish the candles in the cells, or to sweep the corridors. He was a religious without vainglory, possessing a great capacity for work and blessed with an open mind. Without seeking to do so, he won the admiration and sympathy of his fellow religious and professors. The fellow students of Fray Louis are almost entirely unknown to us save for Peter Sotomayor, who followed Dominic Soto in the professor's chair at Salamanca, Bishop Francisco Cerda, who attended the Council of Trent, and Melchior Cano.

What were the questions that interested the students and gave zest to collegiate life in the time of Fray Louis? Three trends dominated the intellectual life at St. Gregory's. The first was medieval scholasticism. Disputations were always held in the classical syllogistic form and the doctrine was always that of the great master, St. Thomas Aquinas. Secondly, there was the pious humanism that Vitoria had brought back from Paris, where he had taught from 1523 to 1526 and had initiated the attempts to modernize theological methods and apply theology to contemporary problems. The third trend was what we may call "Savonarolism" or a zeal for the apostolate. All three trends left a deep impression on the soul of Fray Louis.

In the Thomistic scholasticism that served as the framework for all the intellectual activities of the College, the figure of greatest prestige was that of the master, Astudillo, the Regent of Studies. A man of austere temperament and training and given entirely to speculative studies, he was a typical theologian of the Middle Ages by reason of his profound analysis, the ordered clarity of his exposition, and the dryness of his literary style. At the request of his students he agreed

to publish his lectures and commentaries, and he entrusted the work of editing to Fray Louis of Granada. Not content with the merely material aspect of the editing, he adorned the work with two compositions: one in prose and another in verse, and both in Latin, wherein he sings the praises of Master Astudillo. The book was published in 1532 and is a commentary on Aristotle's *Physica* and *De Generatione et Corruptione*. In the first fruits of his pen, Fray Louis appears to us as one enamored of philosophy and an authentic man of the Renaissance as well as one capable of perfect Latin prose and verse. Astudillo had other manuscripts in theology and Sacred Scripture but he did not edit them. However, there is no doubt that under the tutelage of Astudillo, Fray Louis penetrated deeply into scholastic theology.

What Astudillo did for Fray Louis in the intellectual order, Carranza did for him in the spiritual order. Under Astudillo his vocation to be a man of letters was vivified, while Carranza evoked his apostolic vocation. His native goodness was a fertile field in which to plant the seed of aspirations and longings for a renewal of Christian society, a central theme in the life of Carranza. It was inevitable that there should be a struggle between the dry study of medieval parchments and the glowing zeal for the apostolate. Which would triumph? Ultimately Fray Louis prepared himself for a future apostolate of preaching—for which he had extraordinary ability—by means of study, prayer, and penances.

Five busy years passed, laborious years. The hour was approaching for the apostolate, but there would be disillusionment. Letters, scholastic disputations, much study—all serve to make one fruitful in the apostolate, but it is God who converts souls.

We now enter upon one of the most interesting periods in the life of Louis of Granada and yet it is the most obscure period for biographers. During his college days no one doubted that Fray Louis had magnificent qualities that fitted him for a life of teaching nor was anyone ignorant of his ardent longings and zeal for the apostolate. Fray Dominic Betanzos, on his return from America, had obtained permission to establish a Dominican Province in Mexico and he passed through Valladolid to recruit friars for the new foundation. Fray Louis was among those who stepped forward and generously offered themselves for the new venture. Louis had not yet completed his eight-year course of studies but he was willing to abandon the lecture halls.

On August 3, 1534, he was in Seville with twenty other Dominicans to inscribe his name as a missionary at the Office of Trade and Commerce with the Indies. King Charles V had given orders that the missionaries were to be provided for, both as to payment of passage and other necessities. On September 26 the boat was chartered that was to carry the missionaries to the New World. The departure was imminent. But when the time for embarking actually took place, Fray Louis remained on shore and another took his place.

What had happened? The privileges of volunteer missionaries had ceased. Pope Adrian VI had granted permission to all missionaries to go to foreign lands without doing any more than advising their superiors. The superior, under pain of excommunication, could not prevent the departure. But abuses had arisen in this regard and Pope Clement VII revoked the privileges in 1533. Consequently, the Dominican Provincial, Fray Michael de los Arcos, not wishing to lose a friar of such value, commanded Fray Louis to cancel his departure.

Another mission, more strenuous and bristling with difficulties, awaited him: the restoration of the abandoned convent of Escalaceli, near Córdoba.

The longing for the mission field remained a thorn in the soul of Fray Louis, but he accepted the sacrifice. Fifty years later, when his eyes were weary but his spirit still alert, the octogenarian Dominican friar would recall the days when he, too, had his foot on the gangplank of a ship bound for America and, overcome with this remembrance of disillusion and obedience, would take up his pen to write his *Catechism* for teaching religion to the Indians. "Seeing that in this age so many doors are opened for the spread of the faith among the Gentiles and desiring to have some small part in this work, . . . I wished . . . to serve with my small talents by writing this brief treatise in which I attempt to show how one can teach our holy faith to the infidels."

Escalaceli is a Dominican convent situated amid the pines and olive trees in the Sierra de Córdoba, about eight miles from the city. It was founded by Blessed Alvaro de Córdoba with the help of the King and Queen of Castile, whose confessor he was, in order to begin the reform of the Dominican Order in Spain after the general state of decadence that followed the repression of religious orders. There also he established the first outdoor *Via Crucis* in Europe, as a remembrance of his pilgrimage to Jerusalem. He filled that solitary place with biblical names and soon a life of sanctity began to flourish there.

A century later the spirit of the founder had been extinguished and the religious abandoned the convent to take up residence in a new convent in the city of Córdoba itself. By the spring of 1530 the abandonment of Escalaceli was complete. Some religious were not in favor of the move and instead of

going to the new convent, they went to the Convent of St. Paul where the prior received them kindly. Later that same prior was elected provincial and it was he who gave Fray Louis the task of restoring Escalaceli.

Fray Louis was thirty years old when he embraced his assignment. In the spring of 1535 the Master General, Fray John Fenario, arrived and gave assistance to the task of Fray Louis. The material restoration of the sanctuary was effected through courage and sacrifice, but more important was the spiritual revival. With warm unction Fray Louis promoted devotion to Blessed Alvaro, whose remains rested in the church, and to the *Via Crucis* that he had established there. Escalaceli was converted into a center for pilgrimages and soon the faithful could be seen making the Stations of the Cross in the hills where Alvaro had erected them.

But the talents and zeal of Fray Louis were not restricted to the Sierra de Córdoba. He also dedicated himself to preaching and the direction of souls in other localities, first in Córdoba and its surroundings and later in all of Andalusia. The nobility vied with one another to secure his presence and in 1538 he was selected as the Lenten preacher in the cathedral of Córdoba.

Meanwhile, his former master, Astudillo, had died, but Carranza continued to triumph and in his glory he did not forget his beloved friend. In 1539, while attending the General Chapter of his Order in Rome, Carranza was granted the title of Master of Sacred Theology by express permission of the Pope. It was the opportune moment to realize a hope he had long cherished. He asked and obtained the assignation of Fray Louis to the College at Valladolid. But Fray Louis declined the

honor. He did not wish the professor's chair. He preferred the theology of the heart to the theology of the mind.

As a result of his thwarted attempt to go to America as a missionary, a profound spiritual crisis arose in the soul of Louis of Granada. The writings of the famous Master John of Avila also had a great influence on the change of Fray Louis' attitude toward intellectual and spiritual problems. Fray Louis acquired a new appreciation and knowledge of the "mystery of Christ"; a knowledge that was not speculative but vital and concrete. He began to have a distaste for study because study gives no more than a skeletal knowledge of that mystery. Prayer, not study, is the way to understand and live the mystery of Christ in our souls. Fray Louis seems to believe that he had made a mistake in dedicating so much time to study heretofore. What really matters is to know our own nothingness and to know the supreme good that Christ has given us through redemption. To live Christ within us, as St. Paul teaches, and then to preach Christ.

The life of Fray Louis gradually acquired a strong orientation toward such ideas and in order to live them more fully, he withdrew as much as possible from the affairs of a world that so readily tempts a man with its vanities and vainglory and gave himself to prayer and meditation. A consequence of this new evaluation of life was the awakening in him of his vocation as a spiritual writer. He desired that the riches of the spiritual treasure should be imparted and shared by all and the means by which he would diffuse them was by preaching and writing.

The first literary fruit of this period is a small tract on the method of prayer, sent to a student at St. Gregory in Valladolid who, at the suggestion of Carranza, had written Fray Louis for advice. The little tract is entirely different from what

Fray Louis had previously written as a prologue to the works of Astudillo. The man has changed and also his style. The former was a Renaissance literary style; the latter is spirituality pure and simple. It is the first lecture of Fray Louis from the chair of Spanish spirituality. That same little tract was later to be transformed into a work that would make the name of its author immortal: *El Libro de la Oración y Meditación*.

Fray Louis was by this time advancing in giant strides in his fame as a preacher, a holy friar, and a man of administrative ability. Fray Augustine Salucio, a young Dominican of twenty-one who later became preacher to Philip II and whose sermons were especially liked by St. Teresa, never missed a sermon by Fray Louis. Later, in a book of advice for preachers, he was to give interesting details concerning the sermons of Fray Louis. At the Dominican Chapter celebrated at Osuna in 1544 Granada was granted the title of Preacher General. On this occasion Master Avila wrote him the first letter of their spiritual correspondence and it is one of the most beautiful letters ever written by Avila. In the summer of 1545, perhaps at the suggestion of the Duke of Palma, Fray Louis was named prior at Palma del Río, a beautiful town situated on the Guadalquivir river in a plain filled with lemon and orange groves between Córdoba and Seville. The city of Córdoba sent various commissions to the Dominican Provincial, begging that Fray Louis be left in that city, but to no avail. It is another proof of the high esteem in which he was held.

On September 21, 1546, at the suggestion of Fray John Alvarez, Cardinal of Burgos and formerly Bishop of Córdoba, Fray Louis was granted the privilege of going anywhere in Spain to preach in the company of a companion of his choosing and no superior could prevent his preaching. Two

months later the new Master General of the Order, Romeo di Castiglione, who assisted at the sessions of the Council of Trent, renewed the privilege.

In January of 1547 the Dominicans held a Chapter at Jerez de la Frontera. As prior of Palma del Río and a preacher general, Fray Louis took part in the Chapter. Likewise in attendance were Fray Augustine de Esbarroya and Fray Dominic de Baltanás, two great theologians, and Fray Alphonse de Montúfar and Fray Martin de Mendoza, later Archbishop of Mexico and Bishop of Córdoba respectively. The Duke de Medina Sidonia, accepted by the Chapter of Osuna in 1544 as a patron of the Province, was also in attendance. He was a descendent of the family of St. Dominic Guzman. Fray Louis preached the sermon at the Chapter and the Duke, completely captivated by the preacher, asked that he be sent as chaplain for his estates. Fray Louis accompanied him to Sanlucar de Marrameda, to Niebla, and to other castles of Andalusia. But other nobles also asked for Fray Louis; thus, the Marquis de Priego and the Count de Feria obtained permission from the Master General for Fray Louis to come to their estates.

Fray Louis did not spend much time with the Duke de Medina Sidonia. He did not like palace life and the Duke had to let him leave, in spite of his own wishes. Fray Louis was then prior at Badajoz. In that section of Estremadura, the home of the two great figures in the conquest of Mexico and Peru, Pizarro and Cortés, Granada dedicated himself to preaching, spending many days in the Castle of Zafra, the property and residence of the Count of Feria.

In his apostolic journeys Fray Louis frequently crossed the frontier into Portugal, for in those days there was no such thing as customs and visas and the Spanish language was spoken

and understood by the Portuguese. The fame of the Dominican preacher had reached the ears of the Cardinal Infante, at that time Archbishop of Evora. The Prince Cardinal—son of Don Manuel I of Portugal—had heard him preach on a few occasions and eventually he selected Fray Louis as his confessor and preacher. The first time that we notice this is at the end of 1551 in autumn, when the Archbishop had asked him to explain to the people the vocation of the Jesuits, who had recently arrived at Evora. From that time on they were counted among Granada's friends.

Practically the rest of his life was spent in Portugal, with occasional return visits to Spain. At the invitation of the Cardinal, Fray Louis arrived at Lisbon and Queen Catherine, the sister of Charles V, selected him as her confessor and adviser. In the midst of such occupations, neither sought nor desired, Fray Louis never forgot that the pen is a mighty instrument in the apostolate. He continued to prepare his notes, to arrange his material, and to read the books of spirituality that came to his hands. In this way the little tract on the method of prayer that had originally been written for the student at Valladolid gradually became a book on prayer and was addressed to all. On August 21, 1553, the Bishop of Salamanca granted permission for the printing of the book, after it had been approved by Fray Peter Sotomayor, a former classmate of Fray Louis at St. Gregory's in Valladolid.

The success of the book was a complete surprise and the most surprised of all was Fray Louis. His success confirmed him in the vocation of a spiritual writer. From that time forward he dedicated himself with a divine impatience to writing on spiritual themes for all. In the serene brightness of Lisbon, situated on the banks of the Tajo River, and in a countryside

that has constant springtime, he wrote and wrote. He wished to make the best possible use of his apostolate, leaving for a later time the final and best masterpiece from his pen. Hence the provisional character of some of his early writings. Between 1554 and 1559 Fray Louis published twelve books, one of them in Portuguese. For a man occupied with the duties of the pulpit and the court and later with the cares of a provincial, it was an extraordinary activity.

On the 14th of April, 1556, Fray Louis was elected Provincial of the Dominican Province of Portugal. The Master General, Father Usumaris, confirmed the election, but since Fray Louis was still formally affiliated with the Andalusian Province, the Master General assigned him to the convent at Evora and thus Fray Louis officially became a member of the Portuguese Province.

Louis of Granada was a model provincial in his diligence for the progress of the province. He founded two new convents, that of Montemayor and that of Ansede, and he laid the foundations for the convent at Setubal. All loved and revered him for his goodness and energetic spirit. He preached a great deal and wrote a great deal, although he had a secretary to assist him in the latter.

Fray Louis governed well. He had scarcely completed a year in office as provincial when Queen Catherine, who was acting as regent for the young Prince Sebastian, offered him the miter of the archbishopric of Braga, which would make him Primate of Portugal. It was a reward for his services to the court and a proof of the esteem in which he was held. Many clergymen aspired to this position, especially from among the nobility, and the Queen was so tired of their pleas that she once wrote: "God grant that during my reign all the prelates will be

immortal so that I shall never again find myself in such difficulties." Nevertheless, she remained firm in her intention to give the miter to the humble and learned religious, although he was a foreigner. But Fray Louis did not aspire to the episcopacy and he suggested an alternate candidate, Fray Bartholomew de los Mártires. The Queen could not persuade Fray Bartholomew to accept the office and it was left to Fray Louis to settle the matter. He called Fray Bartholomew to the chapter hall and in the presence of the entire community he gave a sermon and issued a formal precept that Fray Bartholomew accept the office. The latter made a prostration and accepted. Very shortly he was to give evidence of his ability in the ruling of the archdiocese and as a member of the Council of Trent.

The Dominican Order celebrated an elective Chapter at Rome in 1558. As a provincial, Fray Louis had the duty to assist, but he did not go. It was easy for him to obtain a dispensation through the Court. Rome in those days did not have the power of attraction that it has today. A general decadence had reached even the Roman Curia and a phrase used by the Archbishop of Braga, Fray Bartholomew de los Mártires, while he was at Trent, became famous because of its sharpness and daring: "The most reverend and eminent Cardinals need a most reverend and eminent reform."

Meanwhile, the books of Fray Louis were receiving wide popular acclaim. Saints and sound theology were flourishing in Spain but there were also false sects of spirituality under the guise of mysticism. The Inquisition was established. Far away, over the Pyrenees, half of Europe was ablaze with the tragic fire of Protestantism. With Charles V there came to Spain a deluge of books with the message of a new spirituality that advocated a trend to the interior life, a disdain for all

the external formalism of laws and ceremonies, an exaggerated insistence on faith for justification, and an almost complete nullification of good works. These exaggerations and errors readily infiltrated into the thought of some Spanish spiritual writers.

In 1525 the Inquisitor General, Alonso Manrique, published an edict against the Illuminists and a syllabus of false spiritual doctrines. Various cases were reviewed, but neither the edict nor the trials could destroy the evil seed. The Illuminists used various books as sources and some of the books by Fray Louis were found in their collections and libraries, for he was at the time the most popular spiritual writer. As a result, the name of Fray Louis was suspect.

To add to the mischief, the inquisitors knew very well that Fray Louis was an intimate friend of Carranza, now archbishop of Toledo, whose ruin they were seeking. The inquisitor, Valdés, charged Melchior Cano to censor the books of Fray Louis and the *Catechism* of Carranza. Cano, an irreconcilable enemy of Carranza, accused Fray Louis of heresy. Blinded by passion and prejudice, he could not distinguish between Christian perfection and the state of perfection and accused Fray Louis of attempting to make all Christians perfect, although all do not have the vows of religion. It was an unpardonable deviation for a theologian of Cano's stature, especially when it was a matter of judging his own brother in religion.

Fray Louis learned that his books were under censorship and were about to be placed on the Index. Knowing that Cano was the censor, the evil could not be remedied except by going to Valladolid. By the middle of August in 1559 Fray Louis was in Castile and he found the inquisitor, Valdés, resolved to place his books on the Index. But he was encouraged and

heartened by the Princess, the ambassador of Portugal, and many admirers and friends, among them Francis Borgia. But the tempest was not to be quieted. Valdés signed the introductory letter to the catalog of indexed books and among the lists of condemned books were the works of Fray Louis.

A few days later the agents of Valdés arrested the Archbishop of Toledo, Fray Bartholomew Carranza, and brought him to Valladolid. He arrived in the city, riding on a mule and surrounded by archers and constables. He still wore his archbishop's hat but his eyes were a sea of tears and he aroused the pity of all who looked upon him. Among the crowds stood Fray Louis, convinced that nothing could be done, for there in Valladolid Cano and Valdés were omnipotent. Crestfallen, he prepared for his return journey to Lisbon.

In the eyes of the world Fray Louis continued to be suspected of heresy. He had seen the shipwreck of his books, which is equivalent to saying that he had witnessed the ruin of his vocation as a spiritual writer. But soon the dawn would break for the humble and apostolic Dominican.

Fray Louis was approaching the end of his term as provincial and was preparing his summary report on the state of the province and the account of his term as provincial. This done, he proceeded to Evora, where the Provincial Chapter was held on June 14, 1560. Fray Jerome de Azambuja, who had gained renown at the Council of Trent, was elected provincial and Fray Louis again took his place in the ranks.

But the labors of Louis of Granada were not to go unnoticed. On June 20, 1562, he received the title of Master of Sacred Theology by direct concession from the Master General. It was an unusual privilege and honor because Fray Louis had not fulfilled the requirements stipulated by his Order for the

reception of this title: he had never taught. But at Trent and at Rome Fray Louis was evaluated in a manner far different from that in Valladolid. His book, *Libro de la Oración y Meditación*, was formally approved and the approbation was confirmed by Pope Pius IV. It was a well-deserved exoneration.

When the Chapter was ended, Granada fixed his residence at Santo Domingo in Lisbon. He could not live far from the Court because he was summoned there almost every day. It was the autumn of 1560 and Fray Louis was fifty-six years of age, although ascetical practices and the constant work of the pen and pulpit made him appear older than his years. His cell was poor and his possessions few: a wooden bed, a crude table, a few books, reams of colored paper (so that the eyes would not tire as he wrote), and a collection of various penitential instruments. Fray Louis could have lived in the palace but since childhood he was espoused of poverty and he disdained the delights and comforts of the world. He received many alms and he earned much money from his books, but all went to the convent or to the poor. He dressed in such poverty that he wore the same hat for forty years and his black cappa was worn and patched with twelve years of use. Although he was a frequent visitor in the royal palace, he paid no attention to the courtly atmosphere; his spirit rose above all the things that fascinate the worldly ones: gold, coaches, love, silk, and power. To subdue the rebellious flesh, he wore a penitential belt. He excelled in meekness, native and acquired humility, an exquisite distinction in his bearing, and good counsel for all who needed it.

Such is Granada's moral portrait. The physical portrait is given to us by one of his oldest biographers.⁵ "He was of large and majestic stature, with a well-distributed weight. He had a face of angelic affability and his flesh was delicate and of good color. His eyes were happy but modest; his forehead, wide and serene; his teeth, white and in good order; his nose, stately and aquiline and somewhat large; his mouth, of good proportion; his head, large and somewhat bald. Most cordial in conversation, he was a friend to all, although no one became too friendly with him. He had an indescribable gravity in his appearance, as if he were always absorbed in spiritual contemplation."

This affable and simple religious, entirely given to the things of God, was very active and even dynamic. He rose at four in the morning and spent two hours in prayer. At six o'clock he celebrated Mass with remarkable solemnity and devotion. In those days priests were not accustomed to celebrate Mass every day but Fray Louis never omitted this spiritual banquet and stated that the best preparation for the celebration of Mass was to celebrate daily. After Mass he devoted himself to a lengthy thanksgiving and then returned to his cell where his secretary read to him for an hour. The reading completed, Fray Louis would begin to dictate as he paced up and down. His inspiration was fruitful and easy; the secretary wrote rapidly. At ten o'clock the secretary would be tired and Fray Louis would give him permission to leave. Then he would take up the pen himself and continue working, sometimes on a matter distinct from that which he had been dictating. At noon the bell summoned the friars to the refectory. Fray Louis would

⁵ Giovannini da Capugnano: *Vita del P. Fr. Luigi di Granata*, published at Venice in 1595.

go to eat and was not only content with the food provided, but would always leave a little for his friends, the poor. If the business of the Court prevented him from eating the common meal in the refectory, he would go to the second serving and as he ate, he had the material read to him which he had dictated in the morning so that he could correct and perfect it. After eating, he would visit the sick, chatting with them, inquiring about their health, and asking whether there was anything they needed. From the infirmary he went to the community recreation where he conversed affably for a half hour. The conventual bell would ring for solemn silence and the cheerful conversation was no longer heard in the cloister walks. Fray Louis would relax for fifteen minutes to half an hour and after this brief siesta, go to choir to chant Vespers with the community and remain some time in silent prayer. He would then summon his secretary and dictate until nightfall or Compline. He never missed Compline. The friars made the nightly procession to the statue of the Virgin Mary, singing the *Salve Regina*. Then they would say the concluding prayers and march in orderly fashion from choir to the refectory where there was a light collation or supper. Fray Louis remained in choir, wrapt in prayer. At ten o'clock in the evening, after the community had retired, Fray Louis would leave the church and go to his cell. For some time he worked by candlelight, writing or reading until his eyes would tire. In the season of fasting, he would then take the discipline rigorously; in the period of non-fasting, he would prepare a frugal meal for himself by candlelight. At eleven o'clock, after a brief period of prayer, he retired to a well-earned rest.

Fray Louis had now reached his zenith. He dedicated himself to the revisal and correction of the books that had been

listed in the catalog of the Inquisition. He did it slowly and definitively. The confusion prevalent in spiritual matters had been clarified by the Council of Trent. Only then did the Inquisition release the books by Granada. The *Libro de la Oración y Meditación*, which reflected his most loved spiritual doctrine, was scarcely touched. The *Guía de pecadores* suffered a notable transformation. In addition, Fray Louis began new and difficult tasks: he wrote six volumes of Latin sermons, a work of ten years; he composed a book of rhetoric, apologetic works, and biographies of persons eminent in sanctity. In succeeding pages we shall analyze this array of varied writings. At this point we should like to delineate the three psychological phases in the life of Granada the writer.

The first phase is that of his years in Granada and Valladolid, years of study and love of letters, a period in which Fray Louis manifests himself—as is evident from the prologue that he wrote for the works of Astudillo—as a *homo sapiens*. The second phase begins with his departure from Valladolid and his futile missionary venture and ends with the Council of Trent. This period comprises the eleven years at Escalaceli, where he underwent a kind of spiritual conversion from intellectual interests and study to an appreciation for the “mystery of Christ.” It is the beginning of an apostolate of preaching and writing that is nourished more by the spirit of prayer than by the cold speculations of the lecture halls. In this phase Granada is characterized as a *homo spiritualis*. The third and definitive phase extends until his death and here he reaches doctrinal and stylistic maturity. His spirituality grows in perfection, precision, clarity, and amplitude. Letters and the spirit give each other the kiss of peace. It is a period of synthesis between the *homo spiritualis* and the *homo sapiens*, between the *theologia*

mentis and the *theologia cordis*. Now there is no struggle, only peace and tranquillity. There will always be letters and human science, Fray Louis confesses, and they will always be a great help in the apostolate. The *homo sapiens*, if he places himself under the guidance of the *homo spiritualis*, is not an enemy but a faithful collaborator in the life of the spirit.

The circumstances surrounding Granada's activities in the latter years of his life were harshly adverse. First, his health began to fail and he was incapacitated by almost total blindness; secondly, he was obliged frequently to intervene in worldly and religious politics and this was always a bitter cross for him. Fray Louis was not a man of the world; he did not want dignities; he had refused the much coveted office of an archbishop. In the last years of Granada's life St. Charles Borromeo and Cardinal Paleotti were most interested in seeing that this humble friar should receive the cardinal's hat, but he refused it. He was a contemplative at heart and his apostolate was the diffusion of sacred truth by word and writing. Nevertheless, a series of historical events obliged him to go out into the world and become embroiled in the affairs of men.

The first instance was a dangerous situation that arose in the Portuguese Court itself. Toward the middle of 1568 the Court intriguers provoked a serious discord by convincing the youthful monarch, Don Sebastian, that Catherine and the Cardinal Infante, Don Enrique, wished to usurp the royal power. Disgusted by such connivings and accusations, Philip II sent the Duke of Feria as an extraordinary ambassador to the Portuguese Court. His mission was fruitless, but he advised Philip II of the influence of Fray Louis at Court. Philip wrote to Louis and asked him to intervene. Granada went to the convent at Almeirín, which was near the Court,

and eventually drew up an agreement and signed it in the name of the Portuguese royal family while the Duke of Faria signed in the name of Philip II.

Unfortunately, the rupture was not so easily healed; misunderstandings arose again and the pact was in danger of being broken. Catherine was prepared to flee to Castile and Philip II was ready to receive her in a manner befitting the sister of his father, Charles. But Pius V intervened and sent his nephew, Cardinal Alexander, as legate to Lisbon. He likewise sent a brief to Fray Louis, asking that he assist the Cardinal Legate in settling the dispute. Ultimately, through the conjoined efforts of the Cardinal and Fray Louis, the unpleasant matter was settled.

Another cross for Granada in his later years was a second attack on his *Libro de la Oración y Meditación*. It was the book best loved by Fray Louis. Formerly condemned by Cano and Valdés and later approved by the Council of Trent and Pius IV, it was once again in circulation and doing great good for souls. But in 1576 Fray Alphonse de la Fuente discovered a group of Illuminists or *alumbrados* in Llerena and he learned that a dominant factor in the growth of this heterodox movement was Granada's book on prayer. The news was immediately transmitted to Rome by the Nuncio, Ormaneto. Fray Louis intervened unwillingly but energetically by going to his friend, Zayas, the secretary to Philip II. The inquisitors at Llerena answered the interrogation of Zayas in a manner favorable to Fray Louis and the event passed without causing too much damage, although it disturbed his monastic peace and tranquillity.

But now more serious conflicts arose, more crosses for Fray Louis. Queen Catherine, a great admirer and protector of Fray

Louis, died on February 12, 1578. On the fourth of August of the same year, the youthful monarch, Don Sebastian, was cut down in the flower of his life during the fierce battle of Alcazarquivir in Africa. The Cardinal Infante was successor to the throne, but he was an old man of sixty-seven and his health was weak. Moreover, by reason of his ecclesiastical position he could have no descendants and the question arose concerning successors to the throne.

There were at the time three pretenders to the throne: Catherine of Braganza, who relinquished her claim; Anthony, the illegitimate son of Infante Louis and a converted Jewess whom the people maliciously called "the Pelican"; and Philip II, who was the legitimate nephew of King Emmanuel and had the greatest claim. Philip was determined not to surrender or lose his claim, but the Portuguese nobility was equally determined not to have a foreign king. The nobles asked the Cardinal to seek a dispensation from Rome in order to marry. They proposed it to him as a sacred obligation.

The Cardinal, a truly virtuous man, was sorely perplexed amid such insistence. His nephew, Philip II, sent an ambassador to persuade the Cardinal to ignore the outrageous request of the nobility. The ambassador, Christopher Moura, also had instructions to make full use of Granada's influence with the Cardinal King. After discussing the matter with Fray Louis, the ambassador wrote to Philip II: "I have had a long conversation with Fray Louis of Granada. He is, as we know, a holy man, and from all appearances he is withdrawn from the world and pays little attention to what goes on in it. He says that on certain feast days he visits the King [the Cardinal] and speaks of spiritual matters with him. . . . We spoke of this matter of the possible marriage of the King but Fray Louis does not

believe that the King will do it, although some religious persons persuade him to do so. . . . Moreover, Fray Louis says he has not spoken to the King of this matter nor does he intend to do so. . . . He speaks with such simplicity that one can see that there is no duplicity in what he says."

A short time later a secret ambassador, Fray Hernando Castillo, arrived from Spain, ostensibly paying a visit to his fellow Dominican, but actually bearing instructions from Philip II. Again Fray Louis was obliged to speak of a matter so distasteful to himself. He recognized that Philip II had all the rights and claims to the throne but, being a Spaniard himself, Fray Louis could not declare such sentiments publicly. No solution was reached before the Cardinal's death on January 31, 1580, and nothing had been determined as to the succession. Anthony, the son of the *Pelicana*, proclaimed himself king at Santarem, and as a result Philip II commissioned the Duke of Alba to invade and conquer Portugal.

Crosses increased in number and weight as Granada approached his last years. Perhaps the greatest cross was the gradual ruin of the Dominican Province in Portugal, for which Fray Louis had labored so hard. The greater part of the religious were staunch defenders of Anthony's claim and they went about preaching a national war, saying that to fight against the Spaniards was to fight against the Lutherans. They disobeyed the prohibitions of their superiors, under the pretext that such commands were against the natural law of defending one's country. Many of the friars even took up arms and, what is even more censurable, became involved in political intrigue.

The principal victim was Fray Louis. At a moment when the situation was at its worst, they composed a false papal brief

in which Granada was named Vicar Provincial. Philip II began to suspect Fray Louis and commanded him to appear at Court to render an account. The command was given under pain of death, but the Duke of Alba dared to intercept the order of the King and to plead in behalf of the old friar who was his confessor. Philip II listened gravely to the arguments of the Duke and finally conceded that Fray Louis was too ill to travel. Eventually it was discovered that the papal brief was a counterfeit and Fray Louis was exonerated. The humble Dominican wrote later to the Spanish King: "You can understand how easily one who knows not how to deceive can be deceived by others. I testify to your Majesty that although the brief had been in my hands a thousand years, it would never occur to me to think that a religious would falsify papal letters . . . and nevertheless continue to say Mass every day."

Fray Louis soon regained his good name and reputation. Philip II was convinced that the friar was easily duped because he was so good and simple. When he went to Lisbon, Philip honored the Dominican by visiting him in his cell and he invited him to preach in the royal chapel. Fray Louis accepted and Philip was so enchanted that he wrote to his daughters, the Infantas Isabel and Catherine: "Since it is late, I have no time to tell you more than that yesterday Fray Louis of Granada preached here in the chapel and he did very well, although he is old and has no teeth."

One last cross and a heavy one. A Dominican nun, prioress of the convent of the Annunciation in Lisbon, testified that she had received the stigmata on March 7, 1584. Even the Inquisition believed her and sent a memorial to Rome in order to inform the Pope. Gregory XIII then addressed a brief to Cardinal Albert, Archduke of Austria, Inquisitor General, and

Viceroy of Portugal. The case of the stigmatization aroused great wonder and admiration in Rome and no one doubted her sanctity. The Dominican Provincial commanded Fray Louis to write a biography of the nun and when Granada asked for documents, he received the accounts that had been written by the nun herself and her confessor, Fray Peter Romero. Granada wrote the biography and incorporated this material.

Later, in the autumn of 1588, it was discovered that the whole affair was a deception or delusion. Amazement was universal and the case has come down through history as an error on the part of Granada. He doubtless suffered a great disappointment, not for himself, but because of the great scandal to the simple and credulous faithful. This event occasioned the writing of his last sermon which, since it was written on a bed of pain and of death, can also be considered his spiritual testimony. It is a sermon on sinners in public life.

In Advent of 1588 Granada's health was unusually poor. Nevertheless, he prayed more, fasted every day, and took his discipline. In December he began to have serious attacks of nausea and vomiting which left him extremely weakened and by December 15 his fever began to mount steadily. On December 30 all hope for his recovery was abandoned. Death was imminent and the religious were deeply grieved at the inevitable loss of one they loved as a father.

On December 31, 1588, in the bare and humble cell at Santo Domingo, where monarchs of the world had visited him, Granada's lamp of life was extinguished. With tears of joy he had received the last sacraments. The novices knelt at the door to his cell for a last farewell, realizing that the inexorable gasp of death would come at any moment. Fray Louis also sensed its approach and he asked that they place him in

the coffin. His life was failing, but without pain or effort. At nine in the evening he breathed his last and exchanged the counting of years for eternity.

Fray Louis of Granada had passed eighty-four years on earth and his death was considered one of the greatest losses to Christianity. Lisbon became a city of mourning. As soon as news of his death spread abroad, streams of people came to see him who in death seemed yet to be alive. He was buried at four in the afternoon and so many people were assembled that it was only with difficulty that the ceremony could be carried out. People surged to the coffin to touch his clothing, to kiss his hands, to touch his body with religious articles. As the body was carried out for burial, people tried to cut off pieces of his habit.

The General Chapter held in Rome in 1589 communicated to the entire Dominican Order the news of the death of Fray Louis and the following terse comment serves well as his epitaph: *Vir doctrina et sanctitate insignis et in toto orbe celebris*. Such was the earthly journey of Fray Louis of Granada, a journey filled with triumphs and crosses. He was, in the words of St. Teresa of Avila, truly a “man given to the world by God for the great and universal good of souls.”

His Work and Doctrine

Fray Louis of Granada published his first work when he was fifty years old, a rather advanced age for a writer but nevertheless mature and balanced. His long life enabled him to dedicate himself to writing for thirty-five years and to leave us a legacy of works that have made him immortal. His works are

numerous and we shall seek to classify them in a manner that is scientific, ordered, and practical.

Three standards of classification are available: linguistic, chronological, and thematic. The fact that Fray Louis wrote in Spanish, Portuguese, or Latin is accidental to our purpose, which is to give a general view of his work and doctrine. Therefore, we reject the basis of a linguistic classification. The fact that Granada published a work in a certain year has its importance for the historian and for a knowledge of the evolution of his spiritual thought, but it is not to our purpose to consider the chronological aspect of his works. Consequently, the criterion most suited to our purpose is the classification according to subject matter. But in order that we may not exclude entirely the other two criteria, in mentioning each work for the first time we shall also give the date and place of its publication. We shall not give the complete title of each work (which is of interest only to the specialist) but merely the principal title.⁶

Spiritual Theology

1. *De la manera de orar* (*How to Pray*), an expository letter written to Fray Louis de la Cruz in 1539; ed. by A. Huerga in *Hispania*, vol. X, pp. 331–35.
2. *Dos meditaciones para antes y después de la sagrada Comunión* (*Two Meditations for before and after Holy Communion*), (Evora: 1555).

⁶ In the days of Granada it was customary to give a double title to a book: the principal title, which was usually printed in large type and sometimes elegantly, and the explicative title, which was an explanation or brief description of the theme of the work. Bibliographers can find all these minutiae in the critical editions of the works. For the ordinary reader it will suffice to give the briefer title and the year of publication.

3. *Tratado de la Oración, Confesión y Comunión* (*Treatise on Prayer, Confession and Communion*), (Evora: 1555).
4. *Libro de la Oración y Meditación* (*Book of Prayer and Meditation*), (Salamanca: 1554; re-edited and augmented in 1555; definitive text in 1566).
5. *Tratado de la Oración* (*Treatise on Prayer*), (Lisbon: no date given; published under the name of Fray Peter of Alcántara).
6. *Recopilación breve del Libro de la Oración y Meditación* (*Brief Summary of the Book of Prayer and Meditación*), (Salamanca: 1574).
7. *Guía de pecadores* (*Sinners' Guide*), 2 volumes, (Salamanca: 1556–7; definitive text in one volume, 1567).
8. *Manual de diversas oraciones y espirituales ejercicios* (*Manual of Various Prayers and Spiritual Exercises*), (Lisbon: 1557).
9. *Manual de oraciones* (*Manual of Prayers*), (Lisbon: 1559).
10. *Compendio de doctrina cristiana* (*Compendium of Christian Doctrine*), written in Portuguese, (Lisbon: 1559).
11. *Memorial de lo que debe hacer el cristiano* (*Memorial of the Duties of a Christian*), (Lisbon: 1561).
12. *Tratado de algunas muy devotas oraciones para provocar el amor de Dios* (*Treatise on Certain Devout Prayers for Arousing the Love of God*), (Lisbon: 1561).
13. *Vita Christi* (*Life of Christ*), text in Spanish, (Lisbon: 1561).
14. *Memorial de la vida cristiana* (*Memorial of the Christian Life*), 2 volumes, (Lisbon: 1565).
15. *Adiciones al Memorial* (*Additions to the Memorial*), (Salamanca: 1574).

16. *Doctrina espiritual, en cinco tratados* (*Spiritual Doctrine, in five parts*), (Lisbon: 1587).

Apologetics

17. *Introducción del Símbolo de la Fe* (*Introduction to the Creed*), (Salamanca: 1583).
18. *Compendio de la Introducción del Símbolo de la Fe* (*Compendium of the Introduction to the Creed*), (Salamanca: 1585).
19. *Breve tratado de la manera de proponer la doctrina cristiana a los nuevos fieles* (*Brief Treatise on the Manner of Expounding Christian Doctrine to Converts*), (Salamanca: 1585).
20. *Diálogo entre S. Ambrosio y S. Agustín sobre el Misterio de la Encarnación* (*Dialogue between St. Ambrose and St. Augustine on the Incarnation*), (Barcelona: 1605).

Hagiography

21. *Vida del Mtro. Juan de Avila* (*Life of Master John of Avila*), (Madrid: 1588).
22. *Vida de Fray Bartolomé de los Mártires, arzobispo de Braga* (*Life of Fray Bartholomew of the Martyrs, Archbishop of Braga*), (Valladolid: 1615).
23. *Vida del Card. D. Enrique, arzobispo de Evora y Rey de Portugal* (*Life of Cardinal Henry, Archbishop of Evora and King of Portugal*), in ed. Cuervo, *Obras Completas de Fray Luis de Granada*, vol. XIV, pp. 367–97.
24. *Vida de Sor Ana de la Concepción* (*Life of Sister Anna of the Immaculate Conception*), ed. Cuervo, vol. XIV, pp. 499–509.

25. *Vida de Doña Elvira de Mendoza* (*Life of Elvira de Mendoza*), ed. Cuervo, vol. XIV, pp. 411–22.
26. *Vida de Melicia Hernández* (*Life of Melissa Hernández*), ed. Cuervo, vol. XIV, pp. 423–34.
27. *Vida de Sor Maria de la Visitación* (*Life of Sister Mary of the Visitation*), unpublished.

Sacred Oratory

28. *Ecclesiasticae Rhetoricae sive de Ratione concionandi libri sex* (*Ecclesiastical Rhetoric*), (Lisbon: 1576).
29. *Partes que ha de tener un Predicador del Evangelio* (*Qualities of the Preacher of the Gospel*), (Madrid: 1588).
30. *Collectanea Moralis Philosophiae* (*Disquisitions on Moral Philosophy*), 3 volumes, (Lisbon: 1571).
31. *Silva Locorum Communium in Concionibus* (*Common Source Material for Sermons*), 2 volumes, (Salamanca: 1585).
32. *Trece Sermones de las principales fiestas del Señor y de la Sma. Virgen* (*Thirteen Sermons for the Principal Feasts of Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin*), (Lisbon: 1559).
33. *Concio de officio et moribus episcoporum* (*Sermon on the Duties and Qualities of Bishops*), (Lisbon: 1565).
34. *Conciones de tempore* (*Sermons for the Liturgical Year*), Volume I, from the first Sunday of Advent to Lent (1575); Volume II, Lent (1575); Volume III, from Resurrection to Corpus Christi (1576); Volume IV, from Corpus Christi to Advent (1576), (Lisbon).
35. *Conciones de Sanctis* (*Sermons on the Saints*), Volume I, from the feast of St. Andrew to the feast of St. Mary Magdalen (Lisbon: 1578); Volume II, from the feast

- of St. Mary Magdalen to the end of the liturgical year (Lisbon: 1578).
36. *Sermón de las caídas públicas* (*Sermon on Public Sinners*), (Lisbon: 1588).
 37. *Discurso de la Pasión del Salvador* (*Discourse on the Passion of the Savior*), ed. Cuervo, volume XIV, pp. 197–209.
 38. *Sermón del Santísimo Sacramento* (*Sermon on the Blessed Sacrament*), ed. Robres, *Boletín Castellonense de Cultura*, XXIV, pp. 41–52.

Translations

39. *Contemptus mundi* (*Contempt of the World*), (Seville: 1536).
40. *Escala espiritual de San Juan Clímaco* (*Spiritual Ladder of St. John Climacus*), (Lisbon: 1562).
41. *Filomela del pseudo-Buenaventura* (*Philomela*, by pseudo-Bonaventure), (Salamanca: 1574).
42. *Comentarios de Astudillo a Aristóteles* (*Commentary of Astudillo on Aristotle*), (Valladolid: 1532).
43. *Suma Cayetana* (*Summa of Cajetan*), (Lisbon: 1557).
44. *Compendium doctrinae spiritualis* (*Compendium of Spiritual Doctrine*), (Lisbon: 1582).
45. *Stimulus pastorum* (*Exhortation for Bishops*), (Lisbon: 1565).
46. *Treinta y dos sermones sobre los mandamientos* (*Thirty-two Sermons on the Commandments*), (Lisbon: 1558).
47. *Meditaciones y homilias del Card. Enrique* (*Meditations and Sermons of Cardinal Henry*), (Lisbon: 1574).

48. *Tratado de los Votos* (*Treatise on the Vows*, by Savonarola), (Lisbon: 1556).
49. *Carta de Euquerio* (*Letter by Euquerius*), (Lisbon: 1567).

We have given the list of the works of Fray Louis in the order of their publication. Hundreds of other works can be found which bear the name of Fray Louis but they are summaries or selections taken from his works. A few smaller works could have been added to the list but since they are unpublished and are not of great importance, we have omitted them.

Seen in its totality, the literary production of Granada is overwhelming both by reason of its quantity and the diversity of subject matter. One's admiration is increased when he reflects that the works of Granada have been translated into more than twenty-five languages and have gone through some six thousand editions. Let us consider briefly the literary style, the sources and documentation, the spiritual methods of Fray Louis, and his spiritual doctrine.

The basic reason for the success of the works of Fray Louis can be found in his masterly ability to coordinate many didactic and literary elements and put them at the service of a doctrine as robust as is the Thomistic doctrine. The austerity and rigor of the Scholastics is softened and vitalized by the pen of Fray Louis so that their doctrine appeals to every type of reader.

There are, in my opinion, three outstanding qualities in the literary style of Fray Louis: beauty, simplicity, and emotional tone. They are not separate entities, however, but are always united and mutually blended. The pen of Fray Louis was steeped in beauty and from it come some of the most brilliant metaphors to be found in rhetoric. His metaphors are so clear,

so luminous, and so simple, that all readers understand them, both the learned and the ignorant. Fray Louis did not write for a select group of devotees, for he realized that the great truths can also be savored by the simple and unlettered.

Lastly, the prose of Fray Louis is so intuitive that the reader is captivated by the intimacy and fondness with which it speaks to him. It speaks to the heart. It is a prose that persuades and convinces. Fray Louis has such an affinity for souls that he becomes sorrowful when the soul requires it and lyrical when the soul begins to sing spiritually. The simple and emotional beauty of his style clothes a succulent and profound doctrine which is true spiritual theology. But Fray Louis does not consider literary style as an end in itself, as it is for the rhetoricians; it is nothing more than a means. He used it as such and he cultivated it with such energy that even in his lifetime he was considered the best of Spanish stylists.

Where did Granada get his inspiration? This is an interesting problem which we can only suggest. The honest writer is never content with his own opinions, his own observations on persons and things, his reasonings and findings. He seeks sources, books, authors, and he makes a judicious selection. Fray Louis was no exception. One of his biographers has made a detailed enumeration of the authors cited in the works of Granada and the result is truly astounding when one considers the possibilities of research in the fourteenth century.

Yet Fray Louis was not merely a voracious reader who read for the sake of reading, as do those who pass the time by perusing endless streams of novels. Fray Louis was very selective in his reading. No one has been more eclectic nor more facile than he in selecting the gems of classical and contemporary literature.

We can reduce to two general classes the sources used by Fray Louis: those which are basic or fundamental to the body of his doctrine, and those which are secondary and are used to give external adornment, to clarify some special point, or to give a modern setting to ancient and classical doctrines. Thus we find that Sacred Scripture is a basic source because it is the revealed truth of God. Fray Louis cites Scripture so often that he seems to know it by memory, and he transcribes its passages with such dexterity that one could say that he possessed an unusually fine critical sense. In difficult passages he usually had recourse to St. Jerome, the Doctor of Exegesis.

After Sacred Scripture come the Fathers of the Church. Of all the Spanish classicists, Fray Louis manifests the most profound love for those first theologians of Christianity. He strives to project himself into the mentality of the Fathers and into their age which, as he says, should be the model for modern times. He was especially partial to St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, St. Gregory, St. Basil, St. Cyprian, and St. John Chrysostom.

But what gives solidity and stability to Granada's doctrine is his Thomistic training. He is faithful to the tradition of his Order. He is not a theologian of the lecture platform but a theologian of the people, yet the doctrinal basis of his writings is as secure and firm as a syllogism. The problems of the spiritual life are always viewed from the theological height of perennial principles and developed with an exactitude of concepts that astounds us today. Sacred Scripture, the Fathers, St. Thomas: such are the cornerstones of the inspiration of Fray Louis. Sacred Scripture as the revealed word; the Fathers and St. Thomas as the rational theology of the revealed word.

Among the secondary sources used by Granada we must mention St. Catherine of Siena, Savonarola, and Bautista de Crema as preferred authors. Fray Louis also studied the spirituality of the North: Tauler, Herp, and Louis de Blois, and he was interested in new biographies of spiritual persons and was familiar with most of those that were available. Before writing a book, he would acquaint himself as well as possible with what had been written on the theme and would select what seemed best to him and most suitable to his purpose. This was not servility or plagiarism, but good practical sense. Yet Fray Louis never adopted the spiritual methods of any of the other authors; rather, he was an innovator in spiritual methods.

Fray Louis wished to teach all the sublime truths of Catholic theology and to show that the life of Christ in souls is not a sweetmeat for the chosen few, but is meant for all the souls redeemed by Christ on Calvary's Cross. Departing from this fundamental principle, it was necessary to explore all the ways that lead to God. This is a basic theme in Granada's spiritual writings. Each book that he wrote fills some definite need and teaches a different method, thus opening new horizons to the soul for living the life of the spirit. Fray Louis realized that man is a creature wounded by sin and for that reason infirm, weak. Man does not always reach the goal to which his desires impel him. That should not be a source of discouragement, however, but one of confidence. "Do the best you can," Fray Louis would say, and in those five words we find a perennial and optimistic norm of action for the ascetical struggle.

We are not obliged actually to be perfect here and now, but to strive for perfection according to our powers and means. Grace perfects nature and if nature itself possesses a variety

of ways for attaining its ends, how much more so will this be true of divine grace? The end is one and the same for all but the means to that end are multiple. Each Christian will seek the common goal by the means best suited to his temperament, his occupations, and his particular vocation.

Man is a creature made to the image and likeness of God and redeemed by Christ. In passing through this world, man merits by his actions either eternal salvation or eternal damnation. But life's journey is not the same for all. For some it is a pleasant walk, a journey without thorns; others find it a terrifying struggle in which man must conquer in order to emerge victorious. Some see the social life as a field of the apostolate, others see it as a danger to be avoided; some delight in a Christian contemplation of the beauty of the created world and see therein a reflection of the divine attributes, while others see in it nothing but danger and temptation. Fray Louis is familiar with the various ways of facing the spiritual problem. It is not feasible for all to travel by the same path; therefore, he does not deny to anyone the liberty of choosing that path which is most beneficial. He points out and explains all the possible ways, he shows how to conquer the difficulties in each one, and then he says with all confidence: "Now, make your choice."

The principal ways or spiritual methods expounded by Fray Louis are seven in number: 1) the direct way of prayer; 2) the positive and joyous way of virtue as opposed to the negative way of vice; 3) contempt of the world or the spiritual ladder; 4) contemplation of the works of God in the natural order and to ascend by them to the works of grace; 5) the royal and painful way of the Cross; 6) the simple way of the commandments and the sacraments; and 7) the example of the lives of the saints.

We should observe that the various ways or methods are closely interrelated among themselves, in spite of the fact that a superficial glance would reveal them as apparently diverse. The end that is common to all makes them blend and intermingle frequently, so that a Christian will rarely travel by only one path, to the exclusion of the others. When Fray Louis speaks of one way or method in particular, it is to give it emphasis but not to create an exclusion or dichotomy. They are simple ways by which the soul, cooperating personally and meritoriously with the impulse of grace, can arrive, joyful and trembling with love, at the end of the journey where he will receive the definitive laurel of glory.

Fray Louis has made the spiritual life attractive to all, both great and small, learned and simple. It was this fault—if one can call it so—for which he was censured in his day by some narrow souls. “He wants to make all Christians perfect!” exclaimed Melchior Cano. But we could ask him, in turn, “Is Christian perfection, then, the exclusive right of a select class?” “He is trying to make everyone live the Christian life! He is writing sublime truths for the wives of carpenters,” was the sarcastic remark of the inquisitor, Valdés. But, as Fray Francisco Barbado, Bishop of Salamanca, points out, Valdés seems to have forgotten that “the wife of a carpenter” was full of grace and blessed among women.

We observe, finally, that Granada’s solid doctrinal and theological formation enabled him to avoid the errors of contemporary spiritual trends, such as Quietism, the extravagances of the Illuminists, or the Protestant justification by faith alone without man’s cooperation. Moreover, the fact that he himself lived an intensely spiritual life enabled him to avoid the cold intellectualism found in other writers on spiritual subjects.

Fray Louis is all fire and affection because he lives what he writes. His doctrine is not a humanistic or literary writing; if it is anything, it is life. Nevertheless, Fray Louis could appreciate and rightly evaluate all the good qualities of Humanism to give color and attraction to his doctrine. In this respect he is modern, psychological, and an astute observer of human nature.

Perhaps the best synthesis of the spiritual doctrine of Fray Louis is this *Summa of the Spiritual Life*. It is not merely a collection or anthology of selected passages, but a practical and spiritual exposition of the *Summa* of St. Thomas Aquinas, almost article by article. Only after reading this work can one appreciate the full sweep of the spiritual doctrine of Fray Louis. He has written a spiritual theology that is within the comprehension of all and has treated of theological questions which range from the nature and attributes of God, the mystery of the Trinity, and the creation of the world and man, to man's last end and the means to that end. His doctrine, therefore, gives muscle and bone, color and beauty, emotion and tears to the skeleton of St. Thomas' dogmatic and moral theology. Some questions he does not treat because they are purely speculative and matters of the School, but in other more practical questions he shows an advance over the teaching of St. Thomas, as when he links devotion with prayer.

Thomistic exhaustiveness and orthodoxy: this is what we wish to emphasize as characteristic of the spiritual doctrine of Fray Louis of Granada. We would add that the fact that he wrote for all classes of people sometimes clips his mystical wings. Undoubtedly he lived a profoundly mystical life but he seldom brings the reader beyond the gates to the mystical way. He leaves the soul there, for then the Holy Ghost is the Master who leads souls onward. Fray Louis makes no attempt

to explain the phenomena of the mystical union between God and the soul, for not all are capable of understanding these things. Nor was the *milieu* of his time propitious to such a treatment, given the ill-will that had arisen against mysticism because of the abuses and errors of certain pseudo-mystics who called themselves *alumbrados*. Nevertheless, mystical touches and passages are not totally lacking in the works of Fray Louis. When they occur, they are luminous and rapid as a lightning flash and almost spontaneous and unconscious, for he quickly recovers himself and returns to the purely ascetical attitude. But the way is prepared—and souls also—for the flowering of Spanish mysticism which was especially personified in St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross.

The theme of the ascetical writings of Fray Louis is ever the same: that the Christian lives the life of Christ and is identified with Him through the grace that He merited for us by the redemption and is communicated to us through the sacraments. It is a development of the Pauline concept that the true Christian lives in and for Christ. To be a genuine Christian it does not suffice merely to profess the Catholic faith passively and indifferently; it is not enough to believe dogmas; one must also practice the virtues. Our profession as Christians is a militant profession; we are knights of the Lord.

Consequently, Fray Louis attempts to awaken and arouse the Christian from the state of lethargy and to convert him to God, leading him little by little to a life fully lived in the mystery of Christ. To accomplish that, the first thing to be done is to win the good will of the Christian so that he will truly desire to live in conformity with his title as a Christian; the second is to teach him what he must do to arrive at the perfection of the supernatural life; the third, to teach him the sources from

which the soul acquires the power to overcome the world and the passions, and the means placed at his disposal for advancing in the spiritual life.

Let us observe the way in which Fray Louis develops his magnificent program of the spiritual life. The first step, we have seen, is to convert the Christian. Presupposing grace, conversion is effected through a consideration of contrasts. On the one hand, there is the mystery of man's earthly existence, vexed by the seven arrows that cause the seven wounds of human life: brevity, uncertainty, fragility, inconstancy, deceit, sorrow, and death. Human life is like a flower that opens its bud in the morning and then languishes little by little, to die at the close of day. Death is a fact that no one can avoid; it approaches us as inexorably as a naked sword. This truth should provoke in the soul a deep nausea for all things earthly.

On the other hand, one considers the numerous divine benefits given to man by God, benefits that reach their culmination in the work of redemption through which Christ offers us eternal life and a happiness that can begin even in this life through the intimacy of the soul with God. Here is a grand and consoling truth that gives wings to the soul and courage to the heart of a man. Confronted with these truths—the frailty of our earthly existence and the love of God that elevates us to a new life—the shock is tremendous. The Christian man determines to bid farewell to the world and its deceitful pleasures and, encouraged by hope, takes refuge in the cross of Christ, where peace, love, and salvation can be found.

The second step is to teach the newly converted Christian what he ought to do to live the Christian life. It does not suffice for him to remain in a state of sterile passivity; the world would soon draw him again into its whirlwind. He who has

resolved to be a Christian in very truth must begin to fulfill with exactitude the commandments of God and the Church and to practice the virtues. It is characteristic of Fray Louis that he always touches the inner core of a man and his insistent longing for happiness. But true happiness is not to be found in pleasures, power, or the vanities of the world; it is to be found in God, and Christ has merited that divine happiness for us through the Cross. Therefore, mortification and penance—the cross of life—are necessary if we are to identify ourselves with the Redeemer, so that the temptations of the world will not overcome us and grace will encounter no obstacles in its sanctifying work.

The third step is to teach the converted Christian the sources from which his soul can acquire the strength to overcome the obstacles encountered by a human nature corrupted and weakened by sin. The primary source is grace, which heals and elevates nature and was merited for us by Christ. Fray Louis never tires of repeating this fact; it is, as it were, the central theme and cardinal truth of his doctrine. Grace is given to us in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, which makes us vital and physical participants in the mystery of Christ.

Another efficacious means for progress in the spiritual life is the practice of prayer. Prayer begins by being vocal, asking God for the necessary favors and mercies and, above all, uniting the heart with Him and raising man to the divine presence. Then it becomes mental and recollected as it ponders the divine benefits. But whether vocal or mental, it soon becomes a prayer that is devout, affective, and effective, arousing in the soul a promptness for the fulfillment of the divine and ecclesiastical precepts and the exercise of the virtues. But even this does not suffice. God's love for man is not restricted to assisting him

with His grace and promising a reward for all the good works meritorious of eternal life. God gives us something more; He gives even in this life an anticipation and foretaste of the perfect happiness of glory. Therefore, prayer should also be unitive. The soul should arrive at an intimate union with God through that ecstatic prayer which is a prelude to the eternal embrace which God will give the soul in the happiness of heaven.

"Prayer," says Fray Louis, "is the rising of the soul above and beyond itself and all created things, to unite itself with God in a deluge of infinite sweetness and love. Prayer is an emptying of self to receive God when He comes in a new grace, bringing Him into the soul as to His kingdom and placing Him there as in His temple, to possess and love and enjoy Him. Prayer is the soul's presence in God and God's presence in the soul; God gazing on the soul and the soul gazing on Him. . . . Prayer is a spiritual chair where the soul, seated at the feet of God, hears His doctrine and receives the sweet impulse of His grace. . . . Prayer is a festival between the bridegroom and the spouse, a spiritual sabbath on which God rests in the soul. . . . Prayer is a royal gate through which the soul enters into the heart of God; a foretaste of the glory to come."

In the above passage, Granada has become enraptured in a spiritual canticle which is pure mysticism. This is the goal to which he desires to lead all souls. Then they can say that they are true and perfect Christians. This paragraph, which is one of the most beautiful mystical passages in all Christian literature, was suppressed by Fray Louis when he was told that it did not please Melchior Cano and the Inquisitors. Nevertheless, it compares favorably with the degrees of prayer outlined

by St. Teresa, who was an assiduous reader of the works of Granada.⁷

We should not be surprised that Fray Louis gives such importance to prayer, for in a wide sense it is nothing other than the conversation of the soul with God, a communication that admits of various degrees as the soul passes from the purgative to the illuminative way and from the illuminative to the unitive way. In truth, Fray Louis is one of the most profound writers on prayer in the entire history of Christian spirituality.

In the list of Granada's literary works we can easily distinguish between those that pertain strictly to spiritual theology and those that treat of it only in a wide sense or are somehow connected with it. However, we are interested only in those works of Granada that can be called masterpieces of spiritual theology. These are four in number: *Libro de la Oración y Meditación*, *Guía de Pecadores* (in its definitive redaction, for in the first edition of two volumes it was written provisionally and even Fray Louis did not consider it a finished work), *Memorial de la Vida Cristiana* and the additions to this work, and *Introducción del Símbolo de la Fe*.

The first work, *Book of Prayer and Meditation*, was conceived in the solitude of Escalaceli where Blessed Alvaro had erected the first outdoor *Via Crucis* in the West. It has a marked autobiographical character and an internal structure

⁷ In her *Life* St. Teresa treats of meditation, the prayer of quiet, of recollection, the sleep of the faculties, the prayer of union, of rapture, and flights of the spirit. In her *Way of Perfection* she repeats the same doctrine. In the *Interior Castle* she perfects and clarifies her doctrine, distinguishing between vocal prayer, mental prayer or meditation, the prayer of recollection, the prayer of quiet, and the prayer of union, which eventually terminate in the mystical marriage.

remarkable for its theological orthodoxy and luminous clarity. It has served as a manual of prayer for countless souls. St. Peter of Alcántara confessed: "It is the best book that I have read in our language because it best expounds the practice and exercise of prayer. It contains good meditations and helpful counsels for beginners, the advanced, and the perfect." It is also renowned for its literary beauty, so that Azorín could say of it that "the Spanish language has never reached such fierceness or such angelic suavity" as it does in this work.

The second work, *The Sinners' Guide*, is a work of Aristotelian symmetry, possessing a structure as harmonious as that of a classical palace. Doctrine prevails over the empirical and the autobiographical elements. It is without a doubt the most scholastic work of Fray Louis. Its title reminds us of a similar work by the Spanish Jew of Córdoba, Moses ben Maimón: *Guía de Descarriados* (*Guide for Heretics*). Maimón wrote his book to lead the erring Jews back to the law of God, as Moses had led them through the desert to the Promised Land. Fray Louis wishes to lead the sinner—another errant—from the sad bondage of sin to the sweet way of virtue, which is the straight road to the promised land of heaven. Although there is a certain likeness in the books by the Dominican of Granada and the Jew of Córdoba, there is a radical difference in method and doctrine. Maimón is a rationalist and a narrow-minded skeptic; Granada is all peace and sweetness and theological hope. The only real similarity between the two books is the general theme; all else is essentially different.

The third work, *Memorial of the Christian Life*, is of a definitely Platonic flavor both in its title and method of development. The author aims to do no more than to remind the Christian of his obligations, leading him through seven

enjoyable tracts to the true spiritual life which corresponds to the name Christian. Later, Granada added two more tracts called the *Additions*, the second of which is a treatise on the love of God and is of such Platonic beauty that Menéndez y Pelayo says that it surpasses everything that has ever been written in Spanish. It is so exquisite a doctrine on love that St. Francis de Sales remarks in his *Theotimus* that it is all that could be said or that one could wish to say.

The fourth and last masterpiece, the *Introduction to the Creed*, is a gigantic work. Fray Louis wrote it in his old age but it manifests the youthfulness of his soul. It is a work that shows his preoccupation with the conversion of the Jews and Mohammedans. Fray Louis knew the Oriental mind very well. While his book on prayer is a lament over the miseries of life and a spiritual contempt for the world, the *Introduction to the Creed* is a canticle of praise. Its schematic structure is most beautiful. Beginning with the doctrine of creation, he leads men to a knowledge of God, whose goodness and providence are manifested through the works of His hands. This method is justified in Sacred Scripture and in the writings of the Fathers of the Church. After demonstrating that God is the Creator and is provident and wise, he concludes in the second part that only the Christian religion can give Him due worship. In the third part he passes from the work of creation to the work of redemption and shows that only the Catholic religion can plumb the depths of this mystery. This third part is a tract in rational theology; the fourth part is a tract on the positive and Biblical theology of this mystery. This is undoubtedly the most admirable book of Fray Louis and modern literary critics never cease to be amazed at the genius that produced it.

Influence of Fray Louis

To Fray Louis is very rightly applied the title "Catholic," a title that we prefer above all others in classifying him in the history of culture. He merits this title in the double meaning that the word connotes: firm orthodoxy that never deviates from true dogma, and universality. With the appearance of his first book, he easily crossed the frontiers of national lines to become first a European author and then, through many translations, a universal author. Both by extension and penetration his influence in the world of the spirit is a phenomenon of extraordinary value in the history of Christian spirituality. An analysis of this historical phenomenon would require a work of such amplitude as would exceed the limits of this introduction; nevertheless, we shall give a synthesis and summary of the world-wide influence of Fray Louis.

The great men of the world visited the cell of Fray Louis to seek counsel, to satisfy their curiosity, or to admire the humble friar who lived the vocation of a religious and a writer and was completely detached from the things that fascinate the world: bishops' miters, royal palaces, riches, and fame. Philip II, monarch of the world, could not resist the urge to visit the Dominican whose writings had become the event of the century. We have already seen how he at one time suspected Fray Louis as the cause of the political intrigues that arose at the time of the disputed succession to the Portuguese throne, but after that period the sympathy and admiration of the Emperor for the Dominican friar were increased more than ever. When the Emperor first came to Portugal, he paid a surprise visit to Fray Louis and afterwards asked him to preach the sermons in the royal chapel. A year later, confined to a bed of suffering

which was also to be his deathbed, that monarch on whose empire the sun never set, meditated on the brevity of life and the vanity of earthly glory by reading Granada's *Book of Prayer and Meditation*. We know also that Emperor Charles V prepared himself for death by retiring to the monastery at Yuste and reading the works of Fray Louis.

But it was not only Philip II who disturbed the monastic silence and solitude of the religious. The young King, Don Sebastian, had visited the cell of Fray Louis, as had John Andrea Doria, the admiral of Philip II. The Duke of Alba, captain general of the Spanish regiments, chose the Dominican as his spiritual director. Fray Louis later closed the eyes of the Duke in death and then wrote to the widow one of the most beautiful panegyrics in existence.

Scarcely a legate, ambassador, nuncio, or important person neglected to visit Fray Louis while in Lisbon. So great was the fame that had come to him through his writings that everyone wanted to meet the humble religious who could write so beautifully and whose life was so much in conformity with his doctrine. The great Teresa of Avila, whose sandals had been covered with the dust of most of the main highways of Spain and whose spirit dwelt in mystical heights, felt the strong desire to meet Fray Louis personally. Since she could not do so, she took her pen and wrote to him: "Of the many persons who love Your Reverence in the Lord . . . I am one. I am convinced that for no work or effort would I have desisted to try to see him whose words would be such a comfort to me, if it were in conformity with my state and my being a woman."

Italy also was filled with the renown of Fray Louis. St. Charles Borromeo, the model of prelates and the genial promoter of Catholic reform, was one of the most sincere admirers

of Granada. On March 7, 1582, he wrote a letter to Pope Gregory XIII in which he stated: "Of all those who up to our time have written on spiritual matters . . . it can be stated that no one has written books either in greater number or of greater selection and profit than Fray Louis of Granada. . . . In fact, I do not know if in matters of this type there is today a man more beneficial to the Church than he is." At the request of St. Charles, the Pope directed a brief to Fray Louis and it is one of the most eulogistic that the Pontiff wrote during his reign. "Beloved son," he says, "health and apostolic benediction. Your extensive and continuous labor has always been very acceptable to Us. . . . You have preached many sermons and published many books filled with doctrine and devotion. . . . How many souls have profited through your sermons and writings! . . . How many sons have been engrafted on Christ! You have done them much more good than if, they being blind or dead, you had obtained for them from God sight and life."

As is to be expected, Spain was the first beneficiary of the writings of Fray Louis and that from the very first moment. His first work, *Book of Prayer and Meditation*, went through eight editions in the first year. Since that time the presses of Lisbon, Amberes, and Salamanca have not ceased to give to the world new editions of the works of Granada. A historian of those times tells us: "Water girls carried his books under their arms and the market women read them as they waited to sell their merchandise." Kings read them, and the richly ornamented volumes were looked upon as the best and most profitable nourishment of the hearts and minds of the members of the royal families. Nuns were greatly attached to them and in reading them were inflamed with a greater love of God. In

some religious rules and constitutions they were mentioned as almost obligatory spiritual reading for the novices.⁸

Everyone read the books of Fray Louis. St. Teresa read them and commanded her nuns to do the same. Fray Louis of León, while working at Salamanca on one of the best of all Castilian books, *Los Nombres de Cristo*, fed his spirit with the words of Fray Louis of Granada. Years later, confined to the prison of Valladolid, he asked for no other books than those of Fray Louis because they brought a ray of light in the midst of such human bitterness.

The literary and educated people likewise read Granada's books and were often inspired by them, as were Quevedo and Espinosa. Especially did orators read his works, for Fray Louis is an outstanding figure in Spanish sacred oratory. It is not strange, therefore, to find great sections of Fray Louis

⁸ The reading of the books of Fray Louis is mentioned in the instruction for the Discalced Carmelite novices which had been approved by St. John of the Cross. The statutes of the collegiate students at Valencia, redacted by Blessed John Ribera state: "All the time that students are eating, both at dinner and at the evening collation, one of the students will read to them from some book. We especially desire that the books of Fray Louis of Granada have first place because of the devotion we have had and do have for the doctrine contained in his books."

The regulations that govern the famous choir school at Montserrat—where one can hear the most beautifully sung *Salve Regina* in the world—command that the young students read the works of Granada in order to keep aflame the fire of the spirit. The same is true of the Hermits of Córdoba and of the desert of Tardón where the Basilian fathers live. Likewise, the synodal rules of the Archdiocese of Santiago de Compostela commanded, in the year 1579, that the books of Granada be read. There was no bishop in Spain in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who did not eulogize, recommend, and even grant indulgences to those who read the works of Fray Louis.

in the sermons of Cabrera, Salucio, Lanuza and others. And when Spanish oratory began to become pompous and ornate, once again Fray Louis was taken as the model to remedy the extravagances.

It is also worth noting how much Fray Louis of Granada has contributed to the theological and Christian formation of the Spanish people. Before the sixteenth century the Spanish theater was profane and worldly and the priest had no part in it except in the role of a buffoon or comedian. But toward the end of the sixteenth century and through the eighteenth century the Spanish theater was perhaps the best in the world. The theater was by that time profoundly theological. It was the age of the *autos sacramentales*, allegorical plays based on religious themes, written by such great literary and dramatic figures as Calderón, Lope, Tirso, and others. Even today they amaze one with their dramatic beauty and theological profundity. Did the generality of the Spanish people of the time grasp the meaning of these *autos sacramentales*? Yes; and the proof lies in the clamorous success of their presentations. It is not possible to gauge exactly the influence that the works of Fray Louis had in those plays, but he was the theologian of the people and the fact of his influence is undeniable.

Even Spanish heretics and atheists were admirers and readers of the works of Fray Louis. It is true that in Spain the heretics have never risen "two inches from the ground," as Gavinet states so graciously and ironically, either because they had been completely overwhelmed or because no one paid any attention to them. If they wished to prosper, they had to go to a foreign country. So the famous Quietist, Molinos, in his *Guía espiritual*, made use of citations from the works of Granada to give special weight to his unorthodox doctrines.

More notable yet is the case of Marchena, atheist, revolutionary, liberal, and the sworn enemy of all spiritual writings. On one occasion the bookseller, Fauli, went to Marchena to reprimand him for corrupting his son with his revolutionary and atheistic ideas. Entering the room of Marchena, he found him reading Granada's *Sinners' Guide*. He could not repress a gesture of astonishment. Marchena noticed it and then made this extraordinary confession: "Do you see this volume, which by its tattered condition seems to have been as used and read as much as an old breviary which the priests use every day? Well so it is, because I have carried it with me for twenty years and not a day passes but that I read some part of it. It accompanied me in the time of terror in the prisons of Paris, it followed me in my sudden flights, it came with me to the shores of the Rhine, to the mountains of Switzerland, and all over. This book has a power over me that I cannot explain. I cannot read it nor can I stop reading it. I cannot read it because it convinces my understanding and moves my will in such a way that while I am reading it, I feel as much a Christian as you or any nun or as the missionaries who go to die for the Catholic faith in China or Japan. I cannot stop reading it because I know of no book more wonderful in our language."

In the present-day Catholic and cultural renaissance of Spain, after the tragic obscurity of the centuries, the figure of Louis of Granada is being re-evaluated. Formerly his books were praised with well-deserved panegyrics, but today we are witnessing the beginnings of a truly scientific study of his works. Azorín, one of the most worthy contemporary figures of Spanish letters, has dedicated voluminous essays to the subject; Laín Entralgo has written a masterly monograph on the anthropology of Granada's works; Llaneza has constructed a

monumental bibliography; Cuervo has edited a critical edition of his works in fourteen volumes; and the *Biblioteca de Autores Católicos* has published the *Suma de la Vida Cristiana*. All this has served to make educated people realize, as Pemán observes, that Fray Louis is "in some ways the creator and in every sense the exponent and greatest reflection of Spanish devotion and piety. The *Summa of the Christian Life* is not merely a beautiful solo, it is a great Spanish chorale, made up of the voices of the children who chant the catechism answers, the pastors who preach in the rural districts, the old women who attend evening devotions, and the canons who dispute in the seminaries. Spain praying and speaking and manifesting itself as thoroughly Catholic, that is Father Granada."

Analogous to the influence of Fray Louis in Spain is that which he had in Portugal. There he spent the most fruitful days of his apostolate. He was a counselor at the Court and the adviser of kings but he was above all a spiritual educator of the people. A Jesuit of the time wrote to Rome that the people were visibly moved by the preaching of Fray Louis. The same success met his books in Portugal as in Spain and we need not look for a historian to tell us that they were carried under the arms of children and market women. Fray Louis himself states that the first edition of the *Memorial of the Christian Life* appeared in Lisbon in 1561, "with the favor of our Lord and her Highness [the Infanta Doña Maria to whom it was dedicated], and was so well received that in the city of Lisbon alone almost the whole edition was exhausted." Although the people read and understood Spanish, Fray Louis was also able to write in Portuguese. Thus, his *Compendium of Christian Doctrine* was written in Portuguese and printed at the expense of

Queen Catherine. In the rural sections of Portugal it was read at Sunday Mass.

Martins has proved that a work attributed to the famous nobleman and ascetic, George de Silva, is for the most part a translation of selections from Granada. Father Getino has studied Granada's influence on Portuguese writers and orators and has compiled a series of comparative texts wherein it is clearly shown that Hector Pinto, Mendoza, and Coutiño drank from the limpid stream of the writings of Fray Louis.

The enormous influence that Fray Louis had in France deserves a study from a triple point of view: the divulcation of his books among the French people, his influence on the spiritual writers who gave France her glorious pre-eminence in spirituality during the seventeenth century, and the debt that the great French orators, with Bossuet at their head, owe to Fray Louis. As to the divulcation of the works of Granada in France, Llaneza lists 500 editions of the works of Fray Louis in French. Naturally, this means that they were read in that quantity because books that are not read are not sold and books that are not sold are not published. The historians of French spirituality are in accord in stating that Granada was for many centuries the irreplaceable master of the spiritual life. "French literature of the seventeenth century," says Father Getino, "has a Granadine scent and can be taken as the most notable example of personal influence in all literary history." Such was the general diffusion and popularity of Fray Louis that not even the masters of French literature or French spirituality had as many editions as he did during the golden age of France in the seventeenth century. It is curious to note that Granada was quoted or referred to even in the theaters. Thus Molière has Sganarelle recommend the reading of the *Sinners'*

Guide to his daughter in order to cure her of sentimentality and frivolity.

Secondly, in regard to the influence of Granada on the French masters of spirituality, we can safely say that there is no French spiritual writer in the seventeenth century who did not read Granada. Bremond, in his history of religious sentiment in France, relates a beautiful anecdote that touches on this point. John Baptist Romillon was the son of a Calvinist and, moved by the religious-political zeal of that sect, he took up arms. What could be expected from a youth who becomes a soldier to defend heresy, but every kind of vice proper to his age—vices fomented by war and authorized by his error? Thus he lived, a victim of his passions, vicious as a soldier and blasphemous as a heretic, until the age of twenty-seven. Then he had occasion to visit a relative, Madame Chateauneuf, and after the customary polite greetings, he revealed the sadness of his soul, weighted with sin and disillusioned by heresy. Madame Chateauneuf advised him to read the *Book of Prayer and Meditation* by Louis of Granada and actually gave him a copy which her husband had just brought from Paris. This, comments Bremond, is an interesting detail that gives us a glimpse of the France which the historians of the religious wars do not know: a man who brings from Paris a book of devotion for his wife and she, instead of wearying her nephew with words of controversy, gently offering him the book. So John Baptist Romillon meditates, sometimes on the book of Fray Louis, sometimes on the *Institutions* of Calvin. Page by page he compares the teaching of the two authors. In 1579 he publicly adjures his heresy before the Bishop in the church at Cavaillon. Thanks to the iron quality of his provincial mind, he later became a priest and then the founder of a religious institute.

Among Catholics the reading of Fray Louis was more fruitful still. St. Louise de Marillac, an outstanding example of the blending of the contemplative life and apostolic action, had a profound love for the books of Granada; the reformer of Montevillier, Louise de Hospital, read Granada in his own tongue for she knew Spanish very well; St. Vincent de Paul preferred him above all spiritual authors and today his sons, the missionaries of Saint Lazare in Paris, make their retreats from the books of Granada; Cardinal Berulle, founder of the Oratory, held Granada as a master unsurpassed.

St. Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva and Doctor of the Church, published his *Introduction to a Devout Life* in 1608. From a literary aspect it is often called an introduction to the French language; as a spiritual work it is the most widely read of all the books by St. Francis de Sales. This work was to a great extent inspired by Fray Louis, for the meditations in the first part and the content of numerous chapters in the second part are taken from the *Memorial* of Fray Louis. This is not surprising if we remember that St. Francis de Sales, on June 3, 1603, wrote to Anthony Revol, Bishop-elect of Dol: "I urge you to have on hand the complete works of Fray Louis of Granada and to use them as a second breviary. In my opinion you should begin by reading the *Sinners' Guide*, secondly the *Memorial*, and then all the rest. But to derive profit from them, they should not be read rapidly and in gulps, but you should ponder over them and savor them, chapter by chapter, meditating in your soul with much attention and prayers to God. They must be read with reverence and devotion as books that contain the most useful inspirations."

Thirdly, we must mention the influence of Fray Louis on French orators. As we know, Fray Louis was a great

orator—the best in Spain—and he also wrote much concerning oratory. His *Ecclesiastical Rhetoric* was composed in Latin and had gone through sixteen editions in France when Joseph Climent, Bishop of Barcelona, had it translated into Spanish in 1770. The didactic character of the work and its diffusion in France show that the French knew how to profit from it more than the Spaniards did. It contributed efficaciously to the flowering of French oratory in the seventeenth century, as Climent tells us. The literary ideal that Granada proposes in his *Rhetoric* is the same as that of Bossuet. Actually, Bossuet, Fenelón, and Bourdaloue often quote Granada and the French themselves admit that in the works of the French orators sermons of Granada can be found, copied word for word.

The Italian spiritual writers, Savonarola, St. Catherine of Siena, Crema, and Fermo were sources of inspiration for Granada. But he paid back in abundance what he had received from Italian writers and became, in turn, a spiritual master in Italy. The editions of the works of Granada, says the bibliographer, Toda, were the most numerous of all the Spanish spiritual works published in Italy. In the very year of the appearance of the *Book of Prayer and Meditation*, two Jesuits, Gaspar de Loarte and James de Guzmán, who lived in Italian colleges, were busily occupied with its translation. Bernard and Bremond point out that in the early days of the Society of Jesus the works of Fray Louis exerted a greater influence than did the *Exercises* of St. Ignatius. The first edition of the works of Granada appeared in Italy in 1556, while in Spain the works were banned because of a temporary ordinance of the Inquisition. In Italy also appeared the first biography of Granada. Thomas á Kempis was translated into Italian, not from the Latin text, but from a Spanish version redacted by Granada.

Father Gianetti collected all that Fray Louis had written on the Rosary and in 1572 published a book entitled *The Rosary of the Glorious Virgin Mary*. It met with tremendous success and very shortly passed through twenty editions. Two other books based on selections from the works of Granada are: *Instructions for Pilgrims who go to the Madonna of Loreto and other Holy Places* and a life of St. Clement, taken from the *Introduction to the Creed*.

The most devoted admirers and friends of Granada among the Italians include Bascapè, Spaciano, Doria, Cardinals Riario, Alessandrino, and Paleotti, and St. Charles Borromeo. The last-named, in imitation of St. Francis de Sales, frequently preached from the books of Granada. Of the religious congregations founded in the sixteenth century special mention should be made of the affection that the Barnabites had for the works of Fray Louis. Their rule states that they should strive diligently to provide good books for their subjects and especially the books by Fray Louis of Granada. In the section that treats of the instruction of novices, it is advised that their principal study should be the books of Fray Louis.

Three Spanish authors have awakened a lively interest in England: Guevara, Louis of Granada, and Cervantes. The appreciation for Cervantes, however, did not develop until almost the eighteenth century. By the sixteenth century the most widely read Spanish author in England was Antonio de Guevara, whose writings are colloquial, jesting, and ironic. But when the works of Granada appeared in the middle of the sixteenth century, he became the preferred Spanish author. The *Book of Prayer and Meditation* was especially popular among English Catholics. Selections from this work immediately passed into the sermon books of the age, prayer books, and

books of meditation. As in France, the ideas of Granada were reflected even in the theater. In the scene of the burial of the beautiful and tragic Ophelia in *Hamlet*, ideas and phrases are repeated from the *Book of Prayer and Meditation*.

The English refugees in the Low Countries and in France exercised a tremendous influence on the profane and religious literature of their country. In 1579 religious, priests, and laity began a period of great translation which lasted until the end of the seventeenth century. The outstanding among them are Stephen Brinkley, John Fenn, Thomas Lodge, and above all, Richard Hopkins, who published his translations of the Spanish mystics at Louvain, Brussels, Liège, Ambert, and Douai. His versions were as faithful as they were literary and were read and admired in Great Britain not only by Catholics but also by Protestants. His translation passed through fifty editions in less than a century. Even Puritan ministers, such as Francis Meres, who translated the works of Granada, did not find it paradoxical to dedicate their translations to outstanding Protestants such as Thomas Egerton, the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England. The Granadine influence is more surprising because it was prevalent, not in a period of Catholic reaction, as happened during the passing influence of the Stuarts, but at the very moment when Elizabeth and her ministers, Buckley and Walsingham, were using every means to rid England of all traces of Catholicism. It is not necessary to explain this attraction to Granada by the English love of rhetoric and the heroic; it can be explained by the fact that in spite of the political and religious upheaval, the souls of the English remained essentially Catholic.

The works of Granada were also translated and diffused in the Low Countries. Despite the fact that the Protestant Revolt

later ignited the flame of rebellion and obliged the Spanish troops of the Duke of Alba to unsheathe the sword, many translations of Granada's works were made into Dutch and Flemish. In Germany the Protestant Revolt made the diffusion of the works of Granada very difficult. At the end of the sixteenth century the Jesuits petitioned Rome for permission to establish colleges in Germany and to translate the works of Granada. In spite of the difficulties encountered, more than seventy German editions of Granada's works finally appeared. It is worth mentioning that the most beautiful editions of the Latin version of the complete works of Granada were made by the Germans, especially in Cologne, Mainz, and Frankfurt.

Even more limited was the diffusion of the works of Granada in Poland, a nation which is Catholic by essence and a martyr by the tragic destiny of its history. In the midst of so much suffering and the brutal assaults of her enemies, Poland kneels at the sanctuary of her patroness, the Virgin of Czestochowa. We have record of a fairly large number of Polish versions but we know nothing more than that, and a curtain of darkness now prevents one from making further investigation.

In central Europe, especially in Czechoslovakia and the country of St. Stephen, Hungary, we know that there are editions and readers of Granada's works. In Greece, also, we find a beautiful edition of the *Sinners' Guide*. But of necessity our information on these countries must be scarce and partial, as is the information on the works of Granada in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Syrian. However, the Vatican Library possesses a rare and precious Syrian version of Granada's tract on Communion and confession, printed in two tones of ink. The biographer Diago and the bibliographers Galiana and Llaneza also report a translation of the *Book of Prayer and Meditation*

in Turkish. As to Persian, Fray Augustine de Gobeia, O.S.A., states in his *Viaje de Persia* that he saw the King of Persia receive a translation of the *Introduction to the Creed*, richly bound in calfskin. Father Buck gives much information on Arabic translations and describes various editions in that language.

In the Orient it was principally the missionaries who made the works of Granada known. Fray Santa Cruz, O.P., the founder of the missions at Tonkin, translated many of Granada's books for his Christians. More recently a new translation of the *Sinners' Guide* was made into Anamite. There are also versions in Chinese as well as Tagalan, the language of the natives of the Philippines.

But the Oriental versions of Granada's works that are most interesting are those in Japanese and they have aroused great curiosity on the part of bibliophiles. Many translations are extant and it is probable that many more are buried beneath the dust and forgetfulness of time. It is known from tales brought back by the missionaries themselves that the Japanese version of the *Sinners' Guide* did much to preserve the faith of the Christian Japanese when the fierce winds of persecution were blowing over the entire Japanese empire. A modern Jesuit missionologist, Father Bayle, has said: "It fills one with a holy joy to see that the *Sinners' Guide* was one of the bulwarks that sustained a hidden but vital Christianity for two centuries, while both in Europe and Japan it was believed dead." The Portuguese Jesuits had brought the works of Granada to Japan and to them falls a good measure of the glory for the good that this book has worked in souls, nourishing the flame of their faith and heroism when persecution had deprived them of all priestly ministration.

Latin America has always manifested a great admiration for the books of Fray Louis. Some of Granada's books were almost always to be found in the modest and frugal equipment of the early missionaries. There were also editions of his works in the cargo of the ships that set out from Seville for the New World. But many missionaries, filled with a divine impatience, did not wish to wait until the Indians had learned Spanish; they translated some of Granada's works into the native dialects.

Among the Latin-American readers of Fray Louis we must mention the Flower of the Americas, Rose of Santa María, known as St. Rose of Lima. Father Leonard Hansen, O.P., her biographer, relates the following anecdote: "Sister Rose of Santa María always had at hand the books of Fray Louis of Granada and of them all, she preferred the *Book of Prayer and Meditation*. In one of her struggles with the devil-tempter—a true phenomenon that frequently happened in the lives of the saints, as St. Teresa of Avila tells us—she protected herself by reading this book. Once the devil became very furious and snatched the book from her, tore it apart, and threw it on a rubbish heap. Rose remained unmoved, certain that the Lord would return it to her, as He did."

As regards North America, I admit my inability to speak of the diffusion of Granada. In the Library of Congress in Washington there are many editions of Granada but the major part of them were published in England. Before the flowering of its own magnificent presses and publishing houses, the United States received most of its books from England, as Canada did from France. But some translations have been made in the United States with greater or less success. However, a few Americans have written brilliant doctoral dissertations on Granada. One of them, by R. Switzer at the University of

Columbia, treats of the Ciceronian style of Granada; another, by M. B. Brentano at Catholic University in Washington, treats of nature in the works of Fray Louis. At the present time there are several others in preparation.

Epilogue

The century, the sixteenth; the empire, Spain; the writer, Granada. The dawning of the sixteenth century appeared on the horizon of history with a sign of complex problems. The harmonious synthesis of medieval theological thought had been rent by the destructive attack of Nominalism and the inertia and indifference of a Scholasticism that was lost in a maze of byzantine disputes. There was metaphysical anarchy in thought, social anarchy in nations, and religious anarchy in monasteries. Two movements, Humanism and the Protestant Revolt, burst forth like flowers of evil from the chaotic decadence of Europe. Reform! The cold and rebellious cry pierced Europe to its marrow while the doctrine of external justification sought to smother the true interior life of the soul.

The Protestant Revolt overran middle Europe with its anti-Roman fanaticism; Humanism, like a draft of poisonous air, penetrated the very head and members of the Church. A unanimous voice throughout Christendom begged for Catholic reform. The rhetorical attempts of Erasmus and his humanistic evangelism were inefficacious; more futile still and dangerous was the attempt to effect a compromise or concordance between radically opposed doctrines and dogmas. The literature of the controversialists answered as best it could but it did not produce the desired effects. Some even attempted a Catholic reform without Rome's guidance or approbation.

The plan was absurd and doomed to failure. True reform would have to be a work of the Church herself.

The infamous sacking of Rome in 1527 brought the Curia a bitter taste of the chastisement of God's wrath. Pope Clement VII expelled his cardinals. The true reform of the Church had begun and Catholicism, faced with the moral indignity of its deserters, stoutly and robustly defended itself. The Church manifests herself as mistress of truth in the Council of Trent; she shows the holiness of her head and members in St. Pius V and the legion of saints who flourished during the time of Trent; she knows how to oppose the humanistic evangelism by reviving the old religious orders and establishing new congregations. The Church has a compassionate heart for those who suffer (St. John of God); she does not, like the mercenary shepherd, abandon her sheep (the pastoral zeal of St. Charles Borromeo, Fray Bartholomew de los Mártires, St. Thomas More), but goes out in search of erring souls (St. Francis Xavier in Japan and St. Turibius in South America). The Church is founded on a rock and has the divine assurance that the enemy will not prevail; she suffers, she struggles, but in the end she conquers. When the storms and battles are over, the Church appears more beautiful, more brilliant, more joyous, and more secure than ever before. At the end of the sixteenth century, listen to the angelic music that St. John of the Cross sings on the summit of Mount Carmel; it is the Church singing in her heart.

In that same century we find Spain close to the Church. Spain lives and keeps vigil as a defensive vanguard of the Church. She is the "evangelizer of half the world, the hammer of heretics, and the light of the Council of Trent."

The Catholic Kings, Ferdinand and Isabella, have unified Spain geographically by the taking of Granada; politically, by their bond of matrimony; religiously, by the expulsion of the Jews. Spain rapidly becomes the first power in Europe. The sword of the great captain is invincible in Italy, Columbus discovers a new world, the Spanish battalions command Flanders and conquer the Protestant army of the Elector of Saxony. At San Quentin, the Spaniards defeat the French; at Lepanto, they overwhelm the Turkish might that had been a constant and terrifying threat to the Church. Thanks to the labors of Spanish missionaries, the Church obtained a kind of recompense or indemnity for the Protestant break. All Spanish America, the Philippines, and other Spanish dominions were converted to Catholicism. It is a sin which the intransigent pacifists have never forgiven Spain.

It is of minor importance to note that the sun never set on the Spanish Empire; it is much more important to realize that it was starred with figures of great magnitude. We recall Fray Francis Vitoria, who modernized theological methods and introduced international law into the lecture halls of Salamanca. His disciples then carried his teachings to the Indies and to Trent, to give a new period of splendor to Catholic theology.

We recall Fray Louis of Granada, the spiritual writer of the Spanish Empire. Born in Granada of a humble family, his life develops along most interesting channels that run parallel to the cultural and psychological problems of his time. From Lisbon, then the center and watchtower of the Spanish Empire, radiate the figure, the word, and the work of Fray Louis to all the known world. Through translations into most of the languages of the civilized world of his time, his books circle

the globe. Together with St. Teresa of Avila and Fray Louis of León, Fray Louis of Granada has justified the famous phrase of Charles V. "Spanish is the language made to speak with God."

The mortal remains of the humble Dominican friar rest at Lisbon, near the sea, but neither the world nor forgetfulness will ever bury his fame.

ALVARO HUERGA, O.P.
Regent of Studies
Convent of the Holy Cross
Granada, Spain

BOOK ONE

*The Existence and
Perfections of God*



Prologue †

JUST AS THERE is a diversity of tastes and opinions among authors, so also is there a variety of subjects and themes which they treat. Some are enchanted by the beauty of eloquence and, consequently, they attempt to create the perfect orator, taking their pupil in his earliest years and leading him through all the steps and phases of this art until they place him at its very summit. Others use the same method to fashion a perfect prince, a great captain, a courtier, and so forth. Thus each writer strives to clarify and illustrate whatever he esteems most highly.

But it is certain that of all human vocations there is none more lofty than that of the perfect Christian who, being ordained to a supernatural end, lives a life that is likewise supernatural. For that reason the saints call such a person a celestial man or an angel on earth. Now if authors have most diligently taught whatever is required for those other vocations in life, which are so much the less noble as their ends are less noble, how much more necessary it is to do the same thing as regards the Christian vocation which, since it is so much more lofty than the others, is much more difficult to attain.

The Apostle wrote to the Colossians⁹ that the words and doctrine of Christ should be preached abundantly among them and that they should teach and admonish one another concerning their respective duties. If there is no occupation, however lowly, that does not require rules and regulations in

⁹ Cf. Col. 3:16.

order to be well done, how much more is this true of the greatest of all occupations, which is to serve and please God, to conquer the kingdom of heaven, and to prevail against the powers and deceits of the enemy.

How will the uneducated man know what this occupation demands if he is not reminded of God's promises and warnings and the weighty obligations that he has of serving Him? How will he be able to confess correctly if he is not taught the parts of the sacrament of penance and how to perform each one of them? How can he have sorrow for his sins and a purpose of amendment if he is not reminded of the reasons and motives for lamenting them? How can he receive Communion worthily and profitably if he is not taught the things required for this? How will he be able to regulate his life, cultivate virtue, and flee from sin if he does not know the means by which he must seek the former and avoid the latter and does not recognize the temptations and snares of the enemy? How can he formulate a prayer that will be fruitful and accompany it with the necessary conditions and virtues if he has not the doctrine for this? How can he ever reach the love of God if he knows not the means by which it is attained, as well as the things that impede it? We need enlightenment in all these matters, for we did not receive them in the womb of our mothers before we were born. Hence, with good reason are we likened to that man in the Gospel who was born blind from his mother's womb.

For many years I have desired to see a book that would treat of the formation of the perfect Christian and would be a *summa* of all that pertains to the Christian vocation. Good workmen strive to have at hand all the tools that are necessary for their labor and those who study any art or science seek some book in which is compiled all that pertains to their subject. It would

seem profitable to do the same in regard to this art of arts and science of sciences. Possessing such a compendium, those who truly desire to serve God would easily find doctrine and light for their life, while preachers and confessors zealous for the good of souls would have something from which they could readily dispense to their hearers whatever is necessary for the fulfillment of the Christian vocation.

I am well aware that there is no lack of books on sound Catholic doctrine, but most of them treat of some particular aspect and do not attempt to treat of everything in a brief space. Furthermore, although the various catechisms, which are syntheses of Christian doctrine, treat of everything that pertains to the Christian life, they state merely the bare substance of doctrine and only that which is necessary for a clear understanding. They are more speculative than practical, for they are meant to enlighten the understanding rather than move the will to the practice of the virtues. For this reason I have decided, with the help of the Lord and the writings of the saints, to compile this book wherein all these matters will be treated. My purpose is the formation of the perfect Christian and I shall lead him through all the steps and exercises of the Christian life from the beginning of his conversion to the summit of perfection.

The project that we are here attempting—the formation of the perfect Christian—is properly the work of the Holy Ghost, but just as grace does not preclude our own industry but rather concurs with it, so also neither does the interior instruction of God exclude the exterior teaching of men, but necessarily demands it. This office belongs especially to the priests and ministers of the Church to whom God commits us so that they may teach us and inform us of His law.

So important is this office that Moses reserved it for himself alone, at the advice of Jethro, his father-in-law, who told him to refer all temporal matters to other judges but to keep for himself whatever touched upon religion and divine worship.¹⁰ And because certain priests were later careless in this office, God spoke to them through a prophet, saying:¹¹ "Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will reject thee, and thou shalt not do the office of priesthood to Me." Again, through the mouth of Isaias,¹² God threatened them with a severe chastisement, saying that because of their attachment to their sins He would punish them with a terrible scourge in which wise men would lose their wisdom and the understanding of the prudent would be obscured. If the lack of wisdom in the elders was considered a great and terrible chastisement, the same is true if wisdom be lacking in the Church's ministers, for without the light of the intellect which guides and regulates the whole Christian life, what can be expected but blindness, irregularity, and other serious evils?

Although it is the office of preachers to cure this blindness with the light of God's word, preachers are not always available nor do they always treat of the matters that are most necessary. Neither are they able, as a rule, to descend to the particulars that moral doctrine demands, for this requires individual instruction which is not usually given from the pulpit. Therefore the reading of good books is highly profitable, for books are mute preachers that neither weary us because of their length, for we can always put them aside, nor leave us

¹⁰ Cf. Exod. 18:13–27.

¹¹ Cf. Os. 4:6.

¹² Cf. Isa. 29:14.

wanting because of their brevity, for it is within our power to continue reading as long as is necessary.

Although spiritual reading has always been necessary, it is even more so at the present time. In the ancient days of the primitive Church pastors and priests were so fervent and conscientious in the ministry of the word of God that preaching was of itself sufficient to preserve and promote the virtue of the faithful. Today, however, many priests think that nothing more is required of them than the administration of the sacraments and the celebration of Mass at specified times, and they content themselves with this. Therefore, the greater the lack in preaching, the greater the necessity of supplying for this deficiency by means of good books.

The fruits of the word of God, who can expound them? For His word is the light that illumines our understanding, the spark that inflames our will, the hammer that softens the hardness of our hearts, the knife that cuts off the excesses of our passions, the candle that illuminates all the steps of our lives, and the seed that bears fruits of eternal life. It is a food and nourishment that sustains us and a delight that enlarges and fortifies our souls in God. Whoever reads books on sound doctrine is able to partake of and enjoy such fruits.

So great is the light and fruit of spiritual reading that we know from experience many persons who have changed their entire lives by this means. When asked the root and cause of such a change, they responded that after reading such and such a book they resolved to amend their lives. So also the treasurer of the Queen of Ethiopia was reading the prophet Isaias while riding in his chariot and God converted him through St. Philip, who took as the text of his instruction the very passage

that the eunuch had been reading.¹³ Moreover, the remarkable and heroic works that King Josias performed during his reign, whence did they proceed but from the reading of a sacred book that had been sent to him by the priest Helcias, as is related in the Book of Kings?¹⁴ And the astounding conversion of St. Augustine, did it not also begin with the reading of a holy book?

So sublime are the mysteries that the Christian religion proposes to man and so powerful for moving hearts that I would not be surprised if they effected a great change in anyone who attentively considers them. Moreover, spiritual reading serves not only to arouse those who are sleeping but also to safeguard those who are already awake. For that reason the word of God in Scripture is called bread or nourishment, because it sustains and preserves souls in the spiritual life just as material bread sustains the body in its corporeal life.

This is not a business to be hurried, but one that requires great deliberation, for it concerns the government of your entire life and what follows after. How insistent you are that your worldly affairs be carefully sifted and examined. You are not content with only one opinion concerning them, but you consider and review your case in numerous conferences with experts lest you make a mistake. But in this business of your Christian life you are not dealing with things of earth, but of heaven, nor of external affairs and interests, but of yourself. Realize, therefore, that the discussion of it must not be accompanied by dozing and yawning but with utmost attention. Therefore, do not read this book rapidly, as you would any

¹³ Cf. Acts 8:28.

¹⁴ Cf. II Paralip. 34:14 ff.

other kind of book, scanning the pages hurriedly in order to reach the end. But sit down as a judge in the tribunal of your heart and listen to the words in silence. If up to this point you have erred, take care that you make a fresh start. Be sensible; cut the thread of your mistakes and begin to wind it in the other direction.

Which of you will say now that you believe me and will listen with attentive ears and later, like a good judge who has heard the allegations and proof, will pass sentence on yourself? What a blessed enterprise! What an effort well expended! I know well that I am attempting a great deal and that no amount of writing is sufficient to realize this task. For that reason, at the very outset I entreat Him who is the virtue and wisdom of the Father, to be present here and give spirit and life to my words so that they will move the hearts of those who read them.

Therefore, Christian reader, receive this little work which in a short time and with a little effort on your part will partially supply your needs. It will serve as a preacher, exhorting you to live well, and will furnish you with doctrine that will teach you how to live well. It will serve as a guide in your examination of conscience, as a preparation for the reception of Communion, as an impetus to prayer, and as a fruitful source of meditation. If this book has any merit at all, it is because it treats of everything that pertains to all Christians, whether they be beginners or proficients in the Christian life. Finally, if it has required great diligence and effort to compile all this material and present it in a smooth and easy style, all will be considered well spent if the fruitfulness of the book is equally as great, for no physical labor can begin to compare with the least spiritual benefit.

CHAPTER 1 ✚

God's Existence

THE FIRST THING proposed for our belief among the articles of faith is that there is a God, for it is necessary to know that there is a ruler of the universe, a first truth and goodness, and a first cause on which all other causes depend and which itself depends on no other. This is the very foundation of our faith and the first thing which must be believed. Therefore the Apostle states: "For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and is a rewarder to them that seek him."¹⁵

This truth is so manifest to the natural light of reason that it can be acquired through an evident demonstration, as was done by many philosophers and is still done today by all wise men who, from a knowledge of the effects existing in the world, rise to a knowledge of the first cause from which they proceed, namely, God. For that reason St. Thomas says that learned men do not have faith in this first article because they possess evidence of its truth, and evidence is incompatible with the obscurity which is annexed to faith. But the ignorant do not possess such evidence and therefore they have faith concerning this article. They believe it because God has revealed it and the Church has proposed it for belief.

It may seem that one could be excused from discussing this question among Christians because they all profess this article of faith. So they do; but in spite of that, we have seen and still see daily men who are so impudent, so impious, and so perverse that although intellectually they confess that there is

¹⁵ Heb. 11:6.

a God, they deny Him in their works. They do not live any differently as a result of believing in Him than if they did not believe in Him at all. For such as these, who keep the light of faith so hidden and forgotten, it will be beneficial to show clearly by the light of reason that there is a God. Perhaps this will give them a sort of jolt so that they will look to themselves. In addition to this, there is another and greater benefit which is common to all, namely, that the very things that proclaim God's existence likewise declare many of His perfections and especially His wisdom, omnipotence, goodness, and the providence by which He rules and governs all things.

Let us now see what principles the philosophers used in order to attain this truth so that we shall embrace with greater joy what our faith teaches. For when faith is wed with reason and reason with faith, the one attesting to the other, the soul enjoys a most lofty knowledge of God which is firm, certain, and evident. Faith strengthens us with its firmness and reason gladdens us with its clarity. Faith shows God to us covered by the veil of His greatness, but reason partly removes this veil so that God's beauty may be seen. Faith teaches us what we ought to believe; reason enables us to believe with joy.

These two lights together dissipate all darkness, calm the conscience, satisfy the understanding, remove doubts, and make us sweetly embrace the sovereign truth. Hence, we have two teachers: Sacred Scripture and creatures, both of which aid us greatly in the knowledge of our Creator. Therefore, let us consider some of the principles and arguments that the philosophers used for attaining the truth of God's existence. I say some, because we shall treat only of those that are most clear and best accommodated to the capacity of the laity, leaving the more subtle ones for the schools of theology.

Of all these arguments Cicero places great importance on the following: Among the many and varied nations in the world there is none so barbarous or savage that, although it may not know the true God, it will not at least understand that a God exists and honor Him with some type of veneration. The reason for this is that apart from the beauty and order of this world, which give constant testimony that there is a God who governs it, the Creator Himself has imprinted on the hearts of men a natural inclination to love and reverence God as the universal Father who sustains and governs all things. From this inclination proceeds that outward expression of religion which we see in all the nations of the world. And so strongly is this inclination impressed on human hearts that in its defense one nation will battle against another without having any other reason for fighting, as happened between the Christians and the Moors. For each side believes that its religion is the true one wherein God is fittingly honored and feels obliged to speak out in behalf of God and to wage war on those who do not honor Him as they believe He should be honored.

Moreover, each day we see men pass over from diverse sects to our religion, sometimes making great sacrifices to embrace the true religion. So also in the days of Esdras, when the children of Israel returned from the Babylonian captivity, those who had married women of Gentile lineage abandoned them, together with their children, in order not to break the law of God which forbade such marriages. From this we can see how deeply the Creator has planted the affection for religion in our hearts, for it prevails and conquers man's greatest natural affections.

The philosophers state yet another proof of God's existence which is based on the natural inclination of which we have

spoken. Whenever men find themselves in some great and extraordinary conflict or danger, they naturally and instinctively raise their hearts to God and ask for help. This movement is so spontaneous that it precedes any reasoning process; it flows from the very nature of man. For this recourse to God is the voice and testimony of man's very nature confessing that there is a divine Ruler who sees and foreknows all things and is present in every place. It is an admission of His providence, His goodness, His mercy, His love for men, and His desire to assist them. God Himself, when He created man, implanted in him this natural inclination which would move him to have recourse to God as to a true father in all his trials and afflictions.

Another motive which the philosophers, and indeed all men, have for acknowledging the Divinity is the structure, order, beauty, and grandeur of this world. Nothing can be found in the administration and government of the world, says Cicero, that could be justly criticized, and if there be anyone who would like to change something already made, he will either make it worse or will not be able to change it at all. But if it is true that everything in the world is so made that it could not be improved upon as regards the needs of life nor made more beautiful to look upon, let us see whether such things could be made by chance or could remain in the state in which they are if they were not governed by a divine providence.

If the works of nature are more perfect than the works of art and yet the works of art are made according to reason, then it follows that the works of nature cannot be lacking a reason for their existence. For who, after seeing a well-painted picture, does not realize that it is a result of art, or on seeing a boat plying the waters afar off does not realize that this movement is

caused by reason and art? Would he then dare to say that the world, which produced these very arts and artists, is lacking in reason and art?

But let us raise our eyes to greater things. In the heavens shine forth the lights of innumerable stars, the greatest of which is the sun, which illumines all things and is many times larger than the earth. Yet these great fiery masses never do harm to the earth or the things upon it; rather, they help it in every way. Yet if they were to change their places and positions, the whole world would very likely be consumed by fire.

Let us imagine, says Cicero, a heavy darkness such as that which is said to have proceeded in times past from the fires of Mount Etna and obscured all the surrounding region. And let us imagine further that for a space of two days no man was able to see another. If, then, on the third day the sun were again to brighten the world, it would seem to these men that they had risen again. And if, as Aristotle says, men dwelt beneath the earth in subterranean palaces and had never seen the earth, although they had heard by rumor that there was a Divinity in the outer world; and if the bowels of the earth were suddenly to open and these men were to come forth and see the earth and sea and heavens, the grandeur of the clouds, the velocity of the winds, the beauty and efficacy of the sun, the phases of the moon, and the variety of the stars, without a doubt they would know that the rumor was true and that there was in the universe a sovereign Divinity on whom all things depend.

But since they are accustomed to see such things every day, men do not marvel at their beauty nor try to understand the reasons for things. As if the novelty of things should move us more than their grandeur to inquire into their causes! Yet who would consider him a reasonable man who, after seeing the

relation and fitness of all these things, would say that they were all made without prudence or reason and that these things which no intelligence can comprehend were due entirely to chance? When we observe the movements of a clock or any mechanical figures, do we not realize that there is some art and cause of these movements? And seeing the remarkable regularity of the movements of the heavenly bodies, are we not forced to acknowledge that all this is done according to an intelligence, indeed, an excellent and divine intelligence?

But putting aside the subtleties of arguments, let us look upon the beauty of the things that have been made by divine providence. First, let us consider the solid earth which is held together by its own spinning movement, clothed in flowers, grass, and trees, and peopled with an incredible multiplicity of things so varied and different that they cause unending pleasure and delight. Add to this the perennial fountains of refreshing springs, the clear waters of the rivers, the green garments of their banks, the height of the mountains, and the smoothness of the prairies.

Moreover, what great diversity we find among animals, both tame and wild; what flights and songs of birds; what expansive pastures for herds and numerous forests for the life of wild animals. And what shall we say of the races of men who have been placed on this earth as laborers and cultivators? They have not let it be taken over by the wild beasts nor become a wild entanglement of trees and shrubbery, but by their industry they have made the fields and islands and river banks resplendent with houses and cities. Consider also the beauty of the sea: what a multitude and variety of islands are in it; what freshness and delight on its shores; what diverse species of fish, some in the depths of the sea itself, others swimming

just beneath the surface or leaping among the waves. Or consider the air that alternates between day and night, how it vaporizes and ascends on high as clouds above the ocean and then how these clouds are moved from place to place by the winds before they condense and irrigate the earth with rain. This same air supports the flight of the birds and gives all animals the elements by which they are sustained and conserved. Finally, consider the heavens that gird the earth and enfold all things as the ultimate terminus and extremity of the universe. See how the glimmering lights of the stars follow their orderly course and how the sun, with its rising and setting, is the cause of day and night, so that the earth is saddened at its absence and gladdened at its coming. See how the moon lightens the earth with the light it receives from the sun and passes through its various phases from a crescent to the full moon. Consider also how the planets trace their courses through the heavenly space and how the fixed stars are arranged in such a manner that they portray certain figures according to which they are named, such as the Dipper and the Ram, and which serve as guides for those who sail the seas. If we were to see all these things in one glance of the eye, as we now picture them in our imagination, none of us could doubt the existence of divine providence.

All these observations were made by Cicero and arguing from the construction, beauty, and benefits of the lower world and the order and invariable constancy of the heavenly planets, he proves that things so great, so beneficial, so beautiful, and so well-ordered could never have been caused by chance, but must come from a most wise Creator and Ruler. For who would say that a large and excellent painting of many beautiful colors and designs had been made by the chance blot of

paint that happened to fall on a canvas? And what painting is more grand and more beautiful than this universe? What colors more vivid and pleasing than those of the meadows and trees in the springtime? What forms more exquisite than those of the flowers and the birds? What could be more resplendent than the starry heavens? Who, then, will be so blind as to say that they are all the result of chance?

In addition to the above arguments, there is yet another no less forceful for the proof of God's existence, a very palpable reason which is easily understood by every intellect, however uneducated. This argument proceeds from the observation of the skills possessed by all the animals regarding the things necessary for their preservation, defense, cure of sickness, and production of offspring. In all these things they do no less than they would if they actually possessed perfect reasoning powers. Thus, they fear death, they flee from dangers, they seek what is beneficial to themselves, they know how to make their nests and care for their young, even as do men gifted with reason. More than this, from among the multiple varieties of herbs in the fields, they know which ones are fit to eat and which are not, which are beneficial and which are poisonous; and however hungry they may be, they will never eat of the latter. The sheep fears the wolf even if it has never seen one, but it does not fear the mastiff, which greatly resembles the wolf. The chicken does not fear the turkey, though a very large bird, but it is afraid of even the shadow of a hawk, a much smaller bird. The chicks fear the cat but not the dog and this even before they know from experience the harm that may come from contrary things.

All the animals lack reasoning power, for in this respect they differ from men, but they do all things that pertain to

their preservation as perfectly as if they possessed reason. Therefore, we must confess that there is an infinite reason and perfect wisdom which so assists all these creatures and so governs and directs them that they act just as they would if they possessed reasoning powers. For by the same act that the Creator formed them and willed that they should be and live, He likewise gave them everything necessary for the preservation of their existence. Otherwise He would have created them in vain and without reason.

If we were to see a child of three years speak with the discretion and eloquence of a great orator, we would say that another person was speaking in that child, for at that age a child is incapable of such eloquence and discretion. So also when we see that all the creatures that lack reason perform their actions in accordance with reason, we are forced to confess that some universal reason exists, some lofty wisdom which, without bestowing reason on them, gives them inclinations and natural instincts that will effect in them what reason does in man. The philosophers recognize this clearly when they say that the works of nature are works of an intelligence that does not err, meaning that they are works of a supreme wisdom that labors with such perfection that no defect can be found in its effects. The consideration of created things moved St. Augustine to say that he would more readily doubt that he possessed a soul in his body than to doubt that there is a God.

Now tell me, if you carefully consider the beauty of the royal house of this world and the structure and provision of all things that are in it; if you consider the great vault of the heavens, painted with a variety of stars; and if you consider the table of the earth, filled with diverse meats and fruits and other edibles, with its shady nooks and gardens and fountains,

its expanses of green grass across the mountains and valleys and meadows, the illumination it receives by day and by night from the tapers and fires in the heavens, the gold and silver and precious stones that are in the veins of the earth, the various dwelling places it affords—the waters for those that swim, the air for those that fly, and the earth for the rest—and finally, if you consider how all the things in this royal house are ordered to the service of the prince, who is man, how could you believe that all this came about by chance? How could you fail to see that all this had and has a powerful and wise Maker?

Therefore, the beauty and grandeur of the world and its unity amid variety moved not only the philosophers but all nations to believe that things so great and beautiful and well-ordered could not have been made by chance but that they had a most wise and powerful Maker who created them by His omnipotence and governs them by His wisdom. That is why David exclaims: "The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands."¹⁶ In other words, the beauty of the heavens, adorned with so many lights, and the marvelous order of the stars with their movements and courses, preach the glory of God and make all nations praise Him, marvel at His grandeur, and recognize Him as the Maker and Lord of all things. Likewise, the order of the days and nights, their lengthening and shortening, so suitable to the needs of our life, preach and testify that works so great and well-ordered cannot be attributed to chance or fate but that there is in the universe a sovereign ruler who in the beginning created all things and now conserves them by His providence. But these admirable works do not speak or

¹⁶ Cf. Ps. 18:1.

testify to this truth in human voices, which could never reach the ends of the universe. Their speech and testimony is their invariable order, their beauty, and the art with which they are so perfectly made. This type of language is heard in all lands and it draws men to the worship and veneration of the Creator.

CHAPTER 2 ✚

The One God

HAVING DEMONSTRATED THAT there is a supreme Lord of the universe and Governor of all creation, whom we call God, it is now necessary to show that there is only one God and impossible that there be many. Briefly, it can be proved by the following argument: If there were two Gods, distinct from each other, one would necessarily have to possess something by which He would be differentiated from the other. Now, if that possessed by one and not by the other were an imperfection, then the first would not be God because there can be no imperfection in God. But if it were a perfection, then the second would not be God because he would be lacking some perfection. For God is eminently perfect and to such an extent that there cannot be anything else more perfect.

The same truth is also confirmed by the following example: We see that in any good government there must be one head by whom all else is governed and maintained in peace and concord. Likewise, in any army there is a supreme commander who controls all, in a kingdom there is a king who rules all, in a city there is one mayor who governs it, and in a home the