

**VOLUME THREE: KNOWING WOMAN:
WOMAN'S RETURN TO WHOLENESS/HOLINESS**

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WOMAN'S RETURN TO WHOLENESS/HOLINESS

PREFACE

It is never wise to put a woman on a pedestal. Yet, there is a base upon which to view her that is essential; it is the one that underlies her meaning in God's universal plan. In the preceding two volumes of this series, we have explored diligently with the help of the Bible, the Church Fathers, Saint John Paul II, Saint Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein), and many other reliable sources, the intricately carved pedestal upon which the living woman stands in beautiful balance. We have examined carefully the divinely inscribed tablet implanted there whose runes must be transcribed into our own tongue and our own culture. These mysterious hieroglyphs are garnered from Scripture and the Holy Tradition of the Church, and are brought from the transcendent intellectual realm into the very stuff of life through a prism of magnification that is the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In Book One we proposed a theology based on Scripture to describe woman's being and her role in God's Original Order. In Book Two we traced her darkened walk through the Old Testament in the Fallen Order, and noted the ways that (even under the Law) the light of the Promise shown through her. We met her again through the eyes of Our Lord Jesus Christ and saw him, the Lord of the Universe, lift her back into wholeness. We then held our breath as the apostles saved her from a new deception of the Evil One, but noted that the same deception has been stepped up in intensity in our day.

The Apostolic words, which are God's own, will save the Church from the same old temptation of Eden only if this woman of today intelligently understands and heeds them. Jesus Himself prophesied that the End Time would be marked by woman calling barrenness blessed in direct contradiction of all that has been revealed to characterize her in the Original Order and

the Redeemed Order. We see anti-life so commonly expressed around us as to be a sign of our times; St. John Paul II named it the “Culture of Death.”

Both St. Peter and St. Paul send inspired words about woman powerfully down through the centuries. That they have been misunderstood and misapplied is not questioned. Fallen ways of thinking about things still dominate the scene, sometimes even, sadly the Church scene. We have taken those words and given them a good scrubbing in order to bring them back into the context in which they were written, trying to comprehend the words as they can only be understood in light of the Redemption of Jesus, and no longer allowing them to be encrusted with fallen meanings. These words are obedience and authority, submission and power, equality and freedom, hierarchy and patriarchy, and many other words that describe holy relationship. We have tried to comprehend the motives of the enemy of our souls, and discern carefully his moves, especially against woman.

Though this book can stand on its own, there is a reason, then, why it is preceded by two other volumes. The concepts that are here made practical have had careful development, and anyone starting with this book may eventually need to go back to the base that has been developed even if they don't enjoy a lot of theological thinking. This is especially true when the reader finds herself bridling at words and concepts she is not ready to accept. Otherwise, this volume brings the preceding intellectual theory into the realm of flesh and blood - that is, into the woman's everyday world where she works out her salvation with fear and trembling. For that reason, of the four volumes it is most like a self-help book, and incorporates, hopefully in a thoroughly Christian way, things that are of the psyche - psychological and spiritual. Again, the quotes from various sources are meant to tie down the argument with sound experts in the field, and for the average reader may be skipped over until that time that her curiosity to learn more motivates rereading these sources and mining them for their meaning.

CHAPTER I WHOLENESS FOR WOMAN

Obedience Grounded in Wholeness

How hurting! How miserable! How full of self-condemnation we women are. Sometimes, we scarcely wish to continue on day by day, but we must. This writing holds up a mirror – please, don't make us look into it! No one knows how disobedient each of us has been. For now, I am the worst! Though what is ahead may bring all of our deepest pain to the surface, I am assured that God is merciful and compassionate – “an ever present help to sinners.” Our misery is available to him if brought to the surface, but if we keep it hidden, it can only continue to fester and spoil. So we pray! I pray to believe that what is written here will not be taken as condemnation on you or me, but will show us the way out. We will find that way to wholeness and eventually, *dear Lord*, to holiness.

A firm personal base of faith, an enlightened mind, healed emotions and freedom of will are *not natural* for us fallen women, and none of them are presented in an unasked-for package to the “babe-in Christ.” That one is fed milk for a long time before coming to this meat, which is the analogy of both St. Paul and the writer of Hebrews. This maturity must be consciously and prayerfully worked toward with great patience for our continuing failures.

Throughout Jesus' ministry he emphasized the obedient orientation of those in the Kingdom of God; it summed up all he taught about living that life. But his direct contact with the ailing, failing person was to heal, deliver and set free, trusting that the seed of obedience to the Will of God would fall into this prepared ground for future fruition. So wherever we are on the road to wholeness in Christ, we beg for healing and deliverance and continue to do so. We are humbled before our failures, but have confidence that God wants us whole and will daily bring us closer to a life of obedience to his will. For this growth to occur, we must begin to understand. That is the goal of this writing, to help us understand and thereby to set a goal in our minds and hearts - it is not written to make us more conscious of failure. We have enough of that!

We have seen woman, now redeemed by Christ, called to a most basic incorporation of the concept of obedience. This for her is no longer theory, but a practical working principle which she desires to order the most minute of her daily concerns. Because of her greater grasp of psychological realities, and the wisdom that hindsight has given, Twenty-first Century woman has much to add to the comprehension of what this obedience means. False turns made in the past, which perverted submission into a pseudo and destructive imitation of the real thing, stand out in bold relief. To be real, and we want this self-yielding *to be real*, we must adhere to all those strands of eternal Truth which have bearing on it. Not all of these strands were sorted out for our predecessors, nor are they all sorted out now. But we have a clearer perspective both of what has often gone wrong with submission, and what must be present for it to be a faithful replica of the submission of the Divine Son to the Father, wherein it originates.

Before heeding God's call to this life, the woman in whom "a total gift of self" finds fertile ground, will have had a prior personal faith experience, and will begin to be nurtured in Scripture, prayer and the Sacraments. Just as in Jesus' ministry, forgiveness, healing, deliverance and much teaching precede the command to obey given to his apostles, these same experiences of saving love will precede any difficult commitment to obedience. This is the broad outline; of course, healing and the walk of obedience will continue to go hand in hand.

Wholeness, the beautiful completeness of a human being, wherein lies holiness and peace, is never finished in this life. However, a good measure of healing is needed before a woman sets out on this further stage of the spiritual journey. The reason is, of course, that to be a fully willing person ready to follow the will of another; able to contribute reflections, opinions, yes, and feelings that are necessary for cooperation with that other one, ready to refuse self-pity and bitterness, with a discipline to be importunate in prayer, demands a certain level, if it is only a beginning, of Christian maturity.

Whole and Holy

What is this Christian healthiness that we call wholeness? The answer lies again in who Jesus is and our ultimate goal to be remade in his image. St. Paul comes close to putting the theology of wholeness into two short sentences:

May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit, soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful and he will do it¹

In Paul's own Hebrew language, not the Greek he wrote here, the peace of God is expressed by the word "shalom" (or shelam, shalam, shalem) which etymologically links the idea of completeness with peace. When we are lacking - injured, deprived - we are not complete, and we are not at peace. How well we know it! To be complete, whole or perfect, is the definition of personal peace. Only when we are finished, standing whole as the person God had in mind when he created, will we know pervading peace. Only when we are finished, standing whole as the person God had in mind when he created, will we know pervading peace. When we speak of "heavenly peace" we are really speaking of wholeness, not of some static state.

In Greek, "sanctify" (haisos) means "to make holy" which in English is akin to "wholeness," both words coming from the same Indo-European root word, *kailo*.

And it is noteworthy that the idea of "holy" is intimately bound up with that of "whole, healthy" in a number of forms: *kailo* (whole and holy), *swento*(sound), and whence Latin *salvus* (salvation).²

The original meaning of *kailo* in that lost language was "wholeness," to be uninjured. In its development it found its way into the Germanic and English in two streams, one to mean holiness (consecratedness, sacredness) and the other to mean healthy or whole. It is rewarding to trace all the words related to that original root in light of the thesis that God wills his people to be whole and holy: *heal, health, healing, weal, wealth, whole, wholly, wassail, hail, wholesome, and holy*.

The Indo-European language dates 3000 or so years before Christ. Abram was called by God about 1900 B.C. It is fascinating that the metaphysical terms "whole" and "holy" were in formation then, with the association between them felt by the pagan Indo tribes, even as it was by the Hebrews who were told by God through Moses in the Levitical law:

Speak to the priests . . .you shall consecrate him, for he offers the bread to your God; he shall be holy to you; for I the Lord, who sanctify you am holy . . .Say to Aaron, "None of your descendents who has a

¹ Thessalonians 5:23

² American Heritage Dictionary, (NY 1969). 'p.1502 article "Indo-European and the Indo-Europeans."

blemish shall draw near, a man blind or lame, or one who has a mutilated face. . .”³

The theological idea springing from these related concepts is that wholeness is holiness. No priest can represent God or Man bearing obvious imperfections. This follows from our study of redeemed Man who returns to wholeness and holiness which is his original state, by the action of the Spirit of God. When Man again reflects without distortion the image of God, when he is once more perfect in the sense of being complete, he is also perfect in the sense of holiness. When the damage of the Fall is repaired we will know total *salus*, the root of salvation, which also means “*health*.”

When Jesus says, “Be ye holy as your heavenly Father is holy,”⁴ or “Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect,” he is not talking about some kind of external charade of piety which our imaginations contrive. Entertaining a poor understanding of holy that would be better served by words like sanctimonious, pious, or angelic, we need to ground this idea. We will never be angels, we will never be infinite, we will never be disembodied spirits; we shall be holy like Jesus - fully Man, fully human. He who is still wedded to human flesh, albeit glorified, is preparing a place for us which will be as physical as is his incorruptible body raised above the claim of decay or death.

Holiness is met by being fully human, not by being a spirit or by becoming an angel. The whole human person, perfectly reflective of the Divine intent, includes incorruptible flesh and blood, psyche and spirit. That human person was declared to be “very good” by God at his creation. When these “angelic” inclinations or supra-human aspirations appear as spiritual and holy for Man, they are fraudulent and foreign to Christianity. Christ makes Man more completely human than any person known since the Fall, not less or other.

The Catholic Church holds firmly to the concept of Man’s potential holiness, honoring his physical being even as an embryo in the womb, and ruling out the persistent false doctrine of the evil of the material body. Man does not *have* a body, he *is* a body. Jansenism, which judged and condemned the flesh, had its day with a bad effect on some pockets of Catholicism.

³ Leviticus 21:8,17-18

⁴ Matthew 5:48

Creating havoc, for which it is now paying a price, this has never been true Catholic doctrine. Mother Church has a real empathy for human nature in all its ages and stages, and carefully moves her children along toward holiness without damage to their humanity. “Grace builds on nature,” is the truism.

The Second Person of the Trinity sanctified all materiality by creating it and then by entering wholly into it in the Incarnation. Where Jansenism absorbed Calvinism, it absorbed one of Calvinism’s roots, the heresy of Manichaeism - that materiality is of evil origin. True Catholic doctrine embraces the physical as good creation, only flawed and subjected to concupiscence because of the Fall.

The words of the Hebrew Old Testament which are translated “perfect,” mean complete, whole, integral. The New Testament Greek words translated “perfect” mean: accurate, fitted perfectly (*akribeia*), to fill or make full (*epiteleo*), to be complete, or to be ended (*teleios*), also to fit thoroughly or to be thoroughly adjusted to (*katartizo*). These New Testament expansions of meaning lend themselves well to the truth that mankind will be perfect when he is adjusted thoroughly to his Creator. Luke 6:40 which reads in the RSV “but everyone when he is fully taught will be like his teacher” could then be translated:

A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is thoroughly adjusted (*katartizo*) will be like his teacher (Jesus).

When the Holy Spirit makes all those adjustments in us, we will be like Jesus, free and whole. Can it be accomplished on this earth? Concepts of freedom and wholeness are closely connected in Scripture, and we are encouraged to believe God wills us to experience them. An un-whole being is either lacking something necessary, or he has the addition of something alien; either of which causes him to be less than the integral person God meant to be. Such a being is not free to the extent that integrity is lacking. There are areas in which he cannot act freely. The freedom women seek, therefore, is not primarily an external freedom in her relationships with people and institutions, though she often believes that these are her inhibiting oppressors.

Psychologists tell us that woman’s bondage can never be broken without freedom from the real cause being effected psychically, or in theological parlance, “in the soul.” The Vatican II documents discuss lack of freedom in the social arena of life in the modern world by stating “of such is man at once the cause and the victim.” As a cause of injustice and as a victim of it, a woman, to find freedom, must begin interiorly, in her being, and work that new-found freedom

to the outside. As she ceases to be a cause, she will cease to be a victim. So Jesus says, “Be complete, as your heavenly Father is complete.”

There is nothing lacking in God, nor can there be anything more than is he - Whole and Holy. When Man is just what God intended, wholly, not one whit lacking, nor one whit superfluous, he will be whole and holy as he was in the beginning. The wholeness, says St. Paul in our Thessalonian passage (footnote 1), will be of body (*soma*), soul (*psyche*), and spirit (*pneuma*). He underlines that wholeness with adjectives repetitive of the idea: “sound” and “blameless,” giving us an even more precise picture of intact, integral personality.

It is the second sentence of the above Pauline statement that deserves the most emphasis. No matter the self-improvement rightly undertaken, this wholeness and holiness is an impossible and elusive goal. Its possibility rests entirely on “He who calls you,” because “He will do it.” Is there any sin of ours, any at all, that he does not save us from?

Though only God can bring us to our final goal, and there is no way we can save ourselves, we do contribute our continuous and most important “yes.” Scripture speaks of the whole process as “justification,” and Catholic theology may refer to “growth in grace,” or “gifts of infused virtue,” or even “merit.” All of these play their part in our progress toward eternal life with God, and we must put our own spiritual muscles to work in cooperation with the essential grace. Of the many references in the Catholic Church catechism to these words as works of the Spirit⁵, the following paragraph serves as a condensation:

It is a fundamental principle of Catholic theology that we can do nothing of ourselves towards our salvation. . . . But we can correspond with grace; and by corresponding we can increase the supernatural “life which we already possess. . . . St. Paul writes unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ,” and it is clear that this development is at least in part dependent upon our own personal efforts. . . . that we may deepen within ourselves the supernatural life of grace. . . we become more and more justified, . . . not by our efforts, but granted as a reward. . . we increase in Infused Virtues and Gifts of the Holy Ghost - as a result of merit. . . God alone gives grace and God alone increases it; but, as we have said, the increase can be merited, and it is in this sense that, with the help of God, our own actions can bring about the growth of the life of grace ⁶

6 See the index of The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994 for a full understanding of these terms.

St. Paul lines out three compartments for this healing: body, soul, and spirit. Now affirmed through modern psychology, the Hebrews knew well that these three designations are so interrelated that they are impossible of isolation and are not *compartments* of person. Jesus spoke of the human person in terms of heart, soul, mind and strength, which may seem contradictory. Problems are posed if we demand definite categories rather than these loosely definable terms. But we will use “body, soul, and spirit” to help us visualize woman’s total need for wholeness against a general Biblical concept of person.

Complete: Body, Soul and Spirit

When St. Paul referred to the body (*soma*) he meant the physical organism of a person. What he meant of “soul”, we now may call *psyche*, the tri-functioning of intellect (mind), emotion and will. By “spirit” Paul seems to mean that center of personality which holds an affinity for the Spirit of God and is able to respond to God. In using Paul’s tri-part designation for the human person, we do not intend to set up a theology of person - which is not done conclusively in Catholic theology. Chances are in the prayer form he used here, Paul did not mean to designate three parts of person; he probably held to the Hebrew two part concept, that is what most Catholic theology assumes - body and soul. The Jerome Biblical commentary states concerning the ways that prominent Fathers of the Church have addressed these differences, “All do not understand the relation of spirit and soul in the same sense. . .If a distinction between *pnuema* and *psyche* is justified, it would be the distinction between the higher and lower powers in man.”⁷ So, we will use these terms very generally.

The Protestant psychiatrist and theologian, Paul Tournier, sees the spirit working through the *psyche* but not being of the *psyche*, this seems the easiest way, if not the most theologically precise, for our purposes.

Mind, the *psyche*, is the domain of psychology: the will, intelligence, feeling, moral sense, etc. The spirit expresses itself through these, and also through the body, but it is neither the mind nor the body. It is concerned with the personal relationship of man with God . . . In itself it is indefinable; it is known only by inward experience. One can study psychology, even moral and religious psychology, without ever coming near the domain of the spirit. It is reached only when one is face to face with God.⁸

⁷ Jerome Biblical Commentary, (Prentice Hall, N.J., 1968) Part II, p. 233

⁸ Tournier, Paul. *Healing of Persons* (NY 1965) p. 61-62

If we look at it this way, before baptism, the spirit has the propensity to die away, to wither to death without the Life of God. If the spirit of Man dies without contact with the Holy Spirit which ultimately maintains and sustains it, the soul also finally dies, for the spirit of man is the avenue by which the Holy Spirit enters, bringing with him potential for healing psyche and body. C.S. Lewis in speculating about something of the kind wonders if there may be people who only look like people, but whose souls are dead. This may be related to the parable Jesus told when he concluded in Matthew 13:38, that there are people who are sons of the devil. It is tempting, however this is nothing we can or should judge!

Without letting it become categorical, another diagram might help us visualize this simply: a circle whose outer ring represents the body, a second inner ring marked off with three compartments, the soul with its three parts, intellect, emotion and will, and a center to the circle which represents the spirit. St. Aquinas would seem to have us reverse our diagram, putting the soul as all encompassing outer circle with the body in an inner ring, or perhaps the spirit as the all-encompassing outer circle with psyche and body as inner rings. However we visualize it, when the Holy Spirit enters the spirit, he flows into and out through the faculties of soul, motivating even the body to health and wholeness, and to action by doing the works of Christ.

.Thus the spirit is openness to being, or rather, it is the “medium” or “place” where the self-communication of being - experienced as an event - makes its meaning known and its absolute claim felt.⁹

Just as was noted: the Hebrew words for all these ideas are very loose and inclusive, the better to keep us from dissecting the human person, who is not a tri-part being, but a very singular and unitary one. So it is with Jesus’ use of “heart.” The heart seems to designate the very center of personality from which determination and self-exertion emanate. As such it is more akin to the will. Other times it is used to mean something like mind, while other usages make heart to be the center of the emotions. Jesus in using heart, mind, soul and strength overlaps the ideas - we are impressed by the need for our full personal potential, by whatever name, to be centered wholly to and in God. Strength (*sichus*) means physical well-being, but also means ability, might and power (all of which are more like volitional activities). So these categories are fluid, and fluidity speaks more of our experience than any attempt to separate us into compartments. But if we can hold to the interrelatedness, and still use general designations, we can more readily see areas in personhood where special healing is both needed and possible for woman.

⁹ Rahner, Carl, *Encyclopedia of Theology*, (Seabury NY 1975) p. 1621

Healing: Being Set Free

Where does such healing of mind, body and spirit originate? Only in the Redemption offered by Jesus on the Cross which calls us to believe that Jesus has already released us from sin and the maladies of sin. His love is poured out without condition so that with repentance all sins may be forgiven. Does emphasis on sin upset us? All illness of body and mind originates either personal or collective, either self-perpetrated, other perpetrated or inherited – but Sin. In the Garden of Gethsemane on the night of his betrayal, Jesus entered into agonies beyond human power of imagination. There he assumed the fearful burdens of Everyman as though responsible for all of them himself. It is not the dread of pain that brings blood as perspiration through his brow, nor the terror of death that makes him need angelic assistance; it is the weight and inhuman pressure of the sins and sorrows of each person which he assumes and takes as his own. That night he carries, through the whippings, spittings and revilement, the innumerable sins of every human being since Adam. It was not the weight of the cross alone, or the effects of the beating alone that flatten him three times upon the ignominious road to the site of nailing. He was a strong man accustomed to labor and strenuous effort, hardened by travel, by fasts and prayer vigils, totally without any weakness of body brought on by sin or bad habits. It was the incredible press of groaning, agonizing mankind that he strained to bear. He, God himself, was almost crushed by the immensity of horrors, my sin and yours, which he accepted.

Previous to that night, Scripture tells us that he was not touchable by the evil intent of men against him. They tried to lay hands on him, to pitch him off a cliff, to stone him, but he was indomitable in his perfection, like an impeccable surface that gave no room for anything to cling to, there was no toehold for injury or hurt.¹⁰ When in Gethsemane he took upon himself that nearly infinite load of hopelessness, his hour of vulnerability had come. Thereafter, he could be buffeted and knocked about by the most miserable of men. Only then, was he open to any evil intent, any physical injury, any venomous spite or spit.

So it was that my sins and your sins were borne to the Cross, there to be nailed in his body on the tree. Just 600 years before, the prophet Isaiah had so movingly foreseen:

¹⁰ See Luke 4:30, John 8:59, John 7:30

He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions and he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Yet it was the will of the Lord to bruise him; he has put him to grief; when he makes himself an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand; he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant make many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities.¹¹

The Old Testament evangelist, Isaiah, describes the awful act of God necessary to save us from the Evil One's hold. St. Paul gathers it concisely into his not always concise prose:

And you were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you *holy and blameless and irreproachable* before him, provided that you continue in faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which has been preached to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.¹²

St. Peter writes cryptically about the duration of Jesus burial in the tomb, adding another dimension to this tremendous effort of God to rescue us sinners.

For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit; in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is eight persons were saved through water.¹³

Jesus descended into hell, so we proclaim in the Apostles Creed. There Peter credits him with preaching the gospel to those confined from the Fall and on those waiting to be rescued. Sheol, or the place of the waiting-dead, is a timeless state where the dead of ages preceding Christ wait for his redemption. Here, timelessly, this apostle proclaims, Jesus brings the gospel of the Kingdom for Men's acceptance. The above reference continues:

Baptism which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and

¹¹ Isaiah 53:3-6, 10-11

¹² Colossians 1:21f italics added

¹³ I Peter 3:6

is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him.¹⁴

Jesus' authority as God extends over the unconscious depths of the living and the dead so that all may accept him and be brought to Life.

For this is why the gospel was preached even to the dead, that though judged in the flesh like men, they might live in the spirit like God.¹⁵

“Happy” or “blessed” would be all those who would appropriate for themselves this work of Jesus. Meaning “happy,” “to be envied;” the word “blessed” comes into English from Old English and Germanic words, *bletsian* and *blothesiojan* meaning to *hallow with blood*, or *make sacred by sacrifice*. This ancient linking of meaning is deeply apropos.

Jesus said, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.”¹⁶

We who have not seen, but yet believed, are then, hallowed, made whole and holy, by his blood. This is the blessed state (*makarios*) which makes us happy. Christian theology is affirmed even in the development of language itself, which Picard says, (the first book of this series) exists only to tell the Truth of God.

Standing now on the threshold of freedom, the redeemed man or woman is in a position of exercising his will according to the knowledge he has sought of God's will. The former limits to our freedom are broken down. Now all contingencies of life are either engaged for growth or transcended. By the blood of Christ, they are conquerable, or reshapable, or we are helped to deliberately surrender to them, thereby transcending them. After the acceptance of this redemption, the determinants of life: our inherited genealogy, temperament, cultural roots, environment, native intelligence, and abilities are no longer freedom destroying inhibitors.

When Jesus walked among us, his most obvious initial interest was to make people physically and mentally well. The Church is regaining that primary interest herself, in redirecting Viaticum towards healing instead of death, in offering the sacrament of Healing to Eucharistic groups of people (the elderly and chronically ill), and in reviving the healing ministry through lay and religious leaders. Even my pre-Vatican II reference bemoans the lack of the use of the sacrament for healing for those with serious illness:

The delay in asking for the sacrament till death is near or almost inevitable is a lamentable abuse, unfortunately all too frequent. It arises

¹⁴ I Peter 3:21-22

¹⁵ I Peter 3:18-19

¹⁶ John 20:19

from lack of faith, foolish superstition, or false kindness, or from all these causes combined.¹⁷

This sacrament rests on the passage of St. James who tells the elders of the Church to pray for the sick, anointing them with oil for salvation and the forgiveness of sins.

This sacrament did become known as Extreme Unction and was associated with dying. In false popular conceptions it became the Church's solemn farewell. Nevertheless, the official teaching of the Church and her approved practice consistently emphasized the purpose of the sacrament to heal the sick. The healing was to be first of the spirit and then a healing of the body as well.¹⁸

“A healing of the spirit, and then a healing of the body as well.” It is the physical body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit and Christians are encouraged to care for that body with disciplines of exercise, diet, sleep and prayer, so that it reflects holiness.

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy and that temple you are.¹⁹

The faith of the believer is also being strengthened to receive, as the healing sacrament it is, the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist. However lacking in wholeness we may come to it, realizing what it is that Jesus Christ is offering, we go away with a part of our healing accomplished - the bread of *life*, and the cup of eternal *salvation*. When we know what it is he has done for us, we know what to expect from eating his blessed Body and Blood; that is healings of mind, body and spirit. On the other hand, if we do not know, we do not ask: and if we do not ask, we do not receive. (God, however, does what he wills, and heals when he wills.) Penance, the great sacrament of reconciliation is primarily a healing sacrament. Protestant Dr. Tournier knows how important it is that the hidden “shortcomings” be addressed, because they can affect general physical and mental health:

There is a saying that there are three men from whom one should hide nothing: the priest, the doctor, and the lawyer. The truth is there are few people who hide nothing, even from the priest, the doctor and the lawyer! When I compare what I used to know about my patient's lives with what I know of them since I have learned to enter into real spiritual fellowship with them, I realize that only before God can we get rid of the formidable barriers which prevent a man from speaking frankly about his shortcomings, even to his

¹⁷ Smith, op.cit. p.1005 J.P. Arendzen

¹⁸ Scanlan, Michael T.O.R., The power in Penance (Notre Dame 1972) p. 60

¹⁹ I Corinthians 3:16-17

doctor. It is not difficult to imagine the new light that is thrown on the origin even of organic diseases by such knowledge. Man - body, mind and spirit - is a unity. The life he lives in his body corresponds with the life he lives in his mind and the life he lives in his spirit.²⁰

In delving into the power of penance, Fr. Scanlan, expert in deliverance and healing (the first president of the Franciscan University of Steubenville) examines the passage in scripture where the sacrament is rooted:

“Hence declare your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may find healing (Jas 5:16) The history of the sacrament of penance records a strong tradition of confession as healing and therapeutic and as placing the priest in the role of “physician of the soul” and “spiritual doctor to heal wounds.” This grew from the early Church practice of confession as spiritual direction to a holy man, usually a monk but not necessarily a priest. The Church continually taught that the sacrament provides healing and strengthening powers in the form of actual graces.²¹

Carl Jung, never a believer, nevertheless, about confession conceded:

It is significant that the psychological doctor (within my experience) is more consulted by Jews and Protestants than by Catholics. This might be expected for the Catholic Church still feels responsible for the *cura animarum* (for the care of the soul’s welfare).²²

After receiving the Sacrament of Penance and prayers for healing, a sister quoted by Fr. Scanlon wrote to him witnessing to the health that is ours by faith:

I really don’t believe we were meant to be limited any longer. We are meant to be FREE; free in the Spirit of Jesus Christ to do and to be all that the Father is calling us to do and be. Only by truly desiring this healing to take place in our lives, and by expecting it, by sincerely being repentant for allowing ourselves to have bound by the law of sin in the past, and by being aware of this constant process of healing within us as an ever-deepening union and relationship with Christ will we come to understand the great act of re-creation the Lord Jesus has accomplished for us and in us - restoring us even NOW in him, to the image of the Father! Amen!! May it be so!²³

Jesus healed the psyche, which healings he ascribed to releasing people from the power of the Evil One and his fallen angels. For all our psychoanalytic knowledge, we have no better

²⁰ Tournier, op.cit.,p.61

²¹ Scanlon, op.cit, p.21

²² Jung, Carl, “Approaching the Unconscious,” Man and Symbols, op.cit.,p.87

²³ Scanlon, op.cit, p.89

explanation than unclean spirits to account for many of Man's afflictions and certainly not as effective a one. For those who equate unclean spirits with superstition, author and psychiatrist, M. Scott Peck, made the idea respectable in psychological circles in his book "People of the Lie." The Church, too, is experiencing a resurgence of faith in the power of Jesus' name to deliver Man from the control of evil. Those in the healing ministry report that they are called by bishops from around the country who ask for names of those engaged in the "deliverance ministry." We may be on the threshold of seeing reinstated with full cognizance, the power of the Church office of Exorcist which for the last century has been too often only a quaint name. Empowered by the Spirit with this ministry of deliverance from evil, the Church like Ezekiel's dry bones is again gathering sinews, muscles and skin.

How do dark spiritual entities invade a Christian's life once the exorcism of baptism has taken place? St. Paul warns about giving the devil room in our lives, and tells us to armor ourselves. The faithful do not need to fear Satan, though they should pay healthy respect to the laws of the Church which protect them from him. The Catholic who lives within the protection of the sacraments has no need to live in terror of these spirits of darkness.

Place is given to the devil through any voluntary defection from the moral order; the evil spirit enters into our life through those weaknesses of which we are guilty through our own carelessness. It is as if infidelity to divine grace could not remain a merely human affair, it has prolongations which man does not intend, but which are unavoidable consequences. We are in the strong words of the Collects, exposed to the "diabolical contagion."²⁴

At this point it is helpful to reflect on the teaching of Pope Paul VI that one of the greatest needs of the Church today is "defense from the evil that is called the devil." The following excerpt is from the general audience of the Pope on November 15, 1972:

Evil is not merely a lacking of something, but an effective agent, a living spiritual being, perverted and perverting. A terrible reality, Mysterious and frightening.²⁵

After Father Scanlon, others following his lead practice the deliverance ministry through the powers of the Church which are available to those suffering from any of the various levels of demonic activity that plague man and woman. For most deliverance from evil, penance and the other sacraments are the usual instruments of the Holy Spirit to set free the sufferer. The last and deepest level of satanic affliction, true possession, needs the permission of the Ordinary to

²⁴ Smith, *op.cit.*, p.281 Abbot Anscar Vonier O.S.B.

²⁵ Scanlon *op.cit.*,p.38

authorize a formal exorcism. Father Scanlon wrote that in his time he had not encountered such a case of this type of exorcism. However in lesser involvements he made suggestions:

In cases of obsession, the priest prays a simple direct prayer of deliverance. This prayer should follow a prayer of protection that through the death, resurrection and shedding of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, both the priest and the penitent be protected from all evil. The deliverance prayer might be phrased as follows: "In the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord and Master of this child of God, I command all spirits of evil to be bound, to depart from him and be forever excluded from his life." Again it is advisable to pray in the Spirit and allow the prayer of God to meet a situation which is beyond the priest's understanding. The priest should then add a simple prayer for healing.²⁶

Scott Peck has, however, participated in true exorcisms with a group of dedicated Christians. His experiences with evil are available to those who feel a need to know more about this level of demonic activity in human lives.²⁷ However, interest in deliverance from evil should lead the reader first to the Catechism of the Catholic Church.²⁸

Jesus's final appeal to obedience and unity could be responded to only by a person free to commit himself. To be able to make his own choice for such a commitment, the will must be unsnarled from the darkened mind, the embittered emotions, and the entanglements of the Evil One. Casting out the power of evil, healing the body, ministering light to the mind, and freedom to the emotions, Jesus prepared men and women to freely exercise the will toward God once more. God so desires to institute that restoration that Jesus embraced suffering and death. Such is the value of Man to him - such is the unfathomable love of God.

For God showed his love for us in that while we were yet sinners,
Christ died for us.²⁹

Our hope for healing comes from this fact! This hope belongs to sinners not worthy of it. Jesus bestows it as his gift through his self-giving sacrifice. It is only when our goal in life is deviant from his goal of salvation for us, when we do not conform our lives to him that we stand outside his healing. We cannot expect from man-centered psychology or philosophy the healing for which Christ alone has the answer. These psychologies and philosophies, when based on assumptions

²⁶ Ibid.,p.52-53

²⁷ Peck, M.Scott, M.D., *People of the Lie: The Hope for Healing Human Evil*, (N.T.,1983)

²⁸ See CCC paragraph 1673

²⁹ Romans 5:8

foreign to the Kingdom of God, can only have a detrimental effect - the bitter fruit of false values. Another Catholic Christian psychiatrist, a convert from Judaism writes:

When our concept of values is distorted, when the ideas of the human person and human community is lost, then methods which are innocent in themselves become corrosive.³⁰

All the current flurry of psychological healing, so readily absorbed even by those in Catholic teaching centers - those that begin and end with Man, with self-affirmation, and self-fulfillment, may be rooted in a genuine concern for the suffering of people, but they are as limited as the usual human endeavors of self improvement. The Spirit of God alone restores Man's holy self-respect. Aside from the vertical dimension of grace, which recognizes Man's need and God's power to meet it, all horizontal efforts are the rearrangement of factors which are not changed, removed, or transcended, but are only left to re-inflict the sufferer from a more novel position. Self-affirmations will crumble under the persistent knowledge that comes from the unconquerable conscience that Man is not right in himself, and never will be by himself.

To rid the subconscious of self-hate demands rebirth in the Spirit. Hatred of self comes about because the self is powerless to rule itself and others according to its fallen, aggrandized ambition which apes its master Satan. In its weak and defeated state, constant frustration with its grandiose dreams of power breeds self-hate. When the human reason for self-hate - impotency and failure in the face of strong desire to be powerful - is ignored, or when sympathy is offered rather than loving confrontation that asks for personal repentance and responsibility, then grave distortions arise. These therapies only lead to further delays in establishing real personhood in Jesus Christ.

Process to Wholeness

We have reminded our readers many times that Jung never bowed the knee to Jesus as Lord, therefore any use of his scientific and intuitive research demands careful discernment. God, allowing his sun to shine on the evil and the good, however, has never withheld insights to those who seek. So we find useful and compatible with the Christian gospel his psychological perception that the human being needs four births.

³⁰ Stern, *The Third Revolution*, NY 1954., p. 89

The first, obviously, is our miraculous physical emergence from our mother's womb. (The early 21st Century Public Television series "The Midwives" astounds us with the truth of this marvel of God). Secondly, we must experience a birth into being our own person. Ego emancipation is the task of the mature youth when dependent ties, which confuse his personhood with that of his parents, are cut. The third, is the spiritual rebirth in which the person willingly submerges or opens his person to the Person of God (not Jung's definition). The fourth birth is death, through which the person emerges into eternal life. Jung notes "most people prefer only one" of these births.

The obvious missing birth in Jung's pattern is baptism, Man's new birth when the child of earth is transformed into the son of God by means of water and the Spirit. For a Christian, its omission makes Jung's other observations about births meaningless – without baptism there is no assurance that the "spiritual rebirth" will be the work of the Holy Spirit, or that union with God awaits in eternal life. By setting at the head of the list baptism as the most important rebirth of all, the other three births toward wholeness find parallels in the gospel.

Many a woman has entered a crisis at mid-life because the youthful task of ego emancipation was not complete. Transferring childish dependence from parents to husband, her ego was never recognized as integral to herself, nor was her individual consciousness strengthened. This is a familiar pattern for girls who went into convents before knowing themselves as persons standing alone. When with Vatican II, the authoritarian pressures that satisfied the immature self were lifted, these women began to restlessly emerge to a more mature place in mid-life. With emotions of anger and belligerence more often noted with teenagers, they became leaders in Catholic feminism as they belatedly cut the ties of dependency by rebelling against all Church authority.

With the rise of feminism, the same effect was seen with married women who had identified more with their children than with their husbands. They began to do something which was meant to be done in adolescence, but was now confusedly interwoven with the marriage relationship. In a woman's healing, this is most important to discern. To speak to a woman about "yielding in love" or about "total self-giving" or "submitting" when she has never known a definitive center of herself is to frustrate this primary need. Imposing ideas of submission onto childish dependencies, which are not, in any sense of the word, related to the Christian obedience taught by Jesus, will thwart any further personal growth. Only a caricature of a Christian can emerge from this misguided formation, and tragically it often has happened to both celibate and married women.

Jesus himself accomplished ego emancipation at the age of twelve when the Jewish lad underwent bar mitzvah to celebrate his becoming a man. Cutting decisively his childish dependent ties to his parents, he emerged as his own person fully capable and responsible before his heavenly Father for his decisions. However good and right these dependencies had been for the period of his childhood, no longer was he dependent on his parents' judgments, or on their formative guidance in his life. He established his own separate identity from them, and appropriated all of himself to himself in order to give that self totally to his Father and his Father's work. Yet significantly, he went back, putting himself fully under his parents' authority, but now not by necessity but by choice, and so very differently.³¹

If this emancipation third birth is thwarted and childish dependency goes on, the person will be caught in deteriorating stages of immaturity with all the character weaknesses indicative of it. For women these are self-pity, resentment, depression related to powerlessness, door-matism, neurotic masochism, manipulation, petulance, and passive aggression. For men it is apt to be manifested in ego-centricity, impatience, intolerance, passive aggression, and defiance.³²

Spiritual rebirth, central to Jesus' teaching and the backbone of this present writing, is a constant assumption basic to any concept of wholeness. He said, "You must be born again," - of the Spirit, and "Unless you become like a little child." Here begins a new *mature dependency* of which Stern writes

In the life of modern mystics there is particular emphasis of simplicity, or childlikeness. In phenomenology it is characteristic that, but for an apparent trivial difference, that which is morbid may be healthy in the highest meaning of the word. The English language expresses this difference in words, "childish" and "childlike;" to be the first is to be silly and to be the second is wise. We have seen that all neurosis means either arrestation at, or regression to, the infantile level. Apart from the primeval schema of the child, there is another child in every one of us. There is the child we have to keep preciously alive. The world of neurosis is characterized by an infantile dependence on people, on things: the world of faith is characterized by a childlike dependence on God. The one must diminish so that the other can be completed.³³

³¹ Luke 2:51

³² These are the findings of Dr. Richard Heilman, psychiatrist of the V.A. program for alcohol and drug dependent persons at Ft. Snelling, MN.

³³ Stern, *Third Revolution*, op. cit. p.288-289

Pain and Awakening

As we have seen previously, it takes appropriating, by conscious decision, the new birth of baptism to make its most telling affect in the life of a Christian. Usually the woman comes to a decision to take seriously the baptism promises, when by force of circumstances, she must. Wherever the woman is in the re-birth process toward wholeness in Christ, a new spurt of growth begins by an awakening caused by and accompanied with pain. God allows the effects of our wrong choices, even of moral evil, to have their day. His plan incorporates them and transforms them into his instruments.

The ills that human flesh is heir to may become instruments of divine providence in making us “conformable to the image of his Son,”

That God permits sin follows from the fact of his all-ruling providence. Nothing can happen apart from the will of God, that is, apart from either his positive sanction in the case of morally good actions, or his permissive tolerance in the case of morally bad ones. God permits moral evil in the sense that he does not impede it, though he prohibits it by his law.

It does not pertain to divine providence to bring about the total exclusion of evil from the universe, but to order to some good end whatever evils may betide. . . God would not permit evil were it not for the consequent good – (St. Augustine). . . In some way goodness is begotten of wickedness. . . It is precisely in the fact that out of moral evil comes greater good that we are to look for the basic reason of the divine tolerance of sin.³⁴

Experiencing life in these opening years of the Twenty-first Century, the woman knows psychic pain as she has not generally known it before. She has always suffered for the evil in the world; death, disease, and destruction that tears apart all that she holds dear - the babes from her arms, the man from her side, the roof from her house, the flowers and fruits from her land, the sanctity from her body, the love from her heart, the intuitive wisdom and knowledge from her mind. These things all go on as before, but more intensely, and thrown over it all is a meaninglessness and futility that threatens many with hopelessness and despair, Satan’s most potent weapons. It is this last pain that afflicts modern woman. Even when she has not tasted woman’s historic lot as a member of the “less fortunate women” of the world, she suffers the meaninglessness of it all through her empathy.

³⁴ Smith, op.cit.,p.241 Richard Downey D.D.

Feminism has sought to alleviate this pain by providing what seems to be a logical escape into the male world. Here activity for social change or for monetary gain, for prestige and for attention seem, for a time, to make a woman feel worthwhile. We have lived long enough with feminism to know it doesn't live up to its promises; and we are Christian enough to understand why.

Unhappiness causes a search for peace. The pressure may result in all kinds of expedient release: drugs, alcohol, frenetic activity now on the internet (just scan Facebook). Though they may anesthetize the hurt, applied to the outside these do not touch the real cause. Viewed spiritually, they are part of a search for good whose ultimate end is *the Good* - God. Some, awakening to reality through the press of misery, know immediately where to go for relief; others seek peace vainly for a long time. Jesus presents himself as the only and needed consolation.

“Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am gentle and lowly of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.³⁵

Just beyond that consolation lays a possibility of a life undreamt of which may begin in the here and now.

Process to Wholeness : Surrender to the Holy Spirit

To briefly review what we have already considered in Bible teaching (Book Two): the first step in that process for us women is turning around, repenting, being sorry that we have lived our own lives in our own way; that we have accepted and lived by a world view or a value system that is not God's. The second is to believe that salvation is already given to us in our Baptism and Confirmation. Turning to God we begin to appropriate those unopened gifts of the Spirit which are ours, allowing the Spirit to have more of us, even as we everyday accept more of him. This giving and receiving may be a strictly personal surrender to God in prayer; it may take place through the intercession of a group of believers; or it may come over us without any conscious invitation because of a heart already inclined to God. Sometimes when hearing or reading the Word, the human spirit makes a tremendous discovery to which the mind and the heart together breathe a fiat to God, the undying “yes.” Such a step into a deeper realm may be made upon receiving the Holy Body and Blood of Jesus in communion of the Catholic Mass. The Holy Spirit is

³⁵ Matthew 10:28-30

not confined to a pattern, but dovetails his approach to meet each one. About this intimate experience of the Spirit, Jesus said,

The wind blows where it will, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit.³⁶

However it may come, it is to be sought by all those who do not know the personal love of God for themselves, the “yada” experience. And it is the poor in spirit, the most needy and humble, whom God waits to bless.

In a personal reenactment of the eternal covenant, the woman accepts the love and promises of God, and promises love and fidelity in return. From this moment the Spirit leads her, “the newly betrothed,” to wholeness in preparation for that ultimate union that in eternity follows the fourth birth. Sometimes a woman may seek healing even before repentance. There is no protocol God keeps. Yet, penitence is a natural response in recognition of the errors and sins that have promoted conditions favoring sickness and misery. Even when her sin may not be the direct cause of suffering, when the condition is clearly an inheritance from the past, or the malevolence of others, no human person stands in unspotted innocence; all have been participants in the disobedience of the fallen world. St. Paul reminds us, “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”³⁷

Whatever may have befallen us, we have allowed ourselves to be in a situation that, had we consciously sought God’s guidance, we would not have been. Such an acceptance of ultimate responsibility goes back to a time before our wills were really our own. In a generalized sense, as one of the human family, we assume a share of the Fall of Adam.³⁸ We find in ourselves no natural inclination that would keep us from committing that same sin of pride over again.

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has redeemed us from the bondage of sin, and restored us to the Redemptive order, but there remain with us certain effects and evidences of the fall. The

³⁶ John 3:8

³⁷ Romans 3:23

³⁸ The Church does not find such sin culpable. It does not need confession for it is not a fault for which we are morally guilty, yet to be whole we must recognize this fallen nature of our inheritance and what God has done to bridge the impossible chasm it has created.

preternatural gifts of Adam have not been restored to us, and man is, as it were, wounded both in the clarity of his intellect and the strength of his will. Consequently, much of the physical suffering endured by man is traceable to the representative sin of Adam, and some of it to the actual sins of ourselves and others. Sin is the root of human suffering.³⁹

Imagine ourselves as we are surrounded by Perfection where no one could harm us and no evil befall us, wouldn't our selfishness do its harmful work despite our best intentions? Even as infants we were not innocent of the contamination of evil. In the following a psychiatrist is really speaking of those traces of original sin.

We do not like to associate childhood with hatred and destructiveness, yet our reasoning is strongly distorted if we think of the innocent age, the age without guilt, as also the age without evil.⁴⁰

One never errs in humbling oneself before God, coming empty and helpless to him. He takes no advantage of weakness, he is merciful. (John Paul II's *Dives in Misericordia* movingly explores the Divine Mercy). We cannot easily assume more responsibility for sin than we really have. We cannot easily overdo repentance. We are scarcely ever sorry enough for the mess we make of our lives, the affront that grieves God and the trouble that spills over onto those around us. If it is possible to be too sorry, the good God shall use our sorrow redemptively for others. If such sorrow is pathological, it is so only when forgiveness and healing are not expected, neither believed nor accepted, as with scrupulosity.

If we are mentally or physically ailing, if we are out of control with bad habits, addictions, obsessions, we preface our request for healing by taking responsibility for that condition and accepting the forgiveness of God mediated through the Church. To do this we withdraw blame from those who may have helped to bring this condition upon us; wiping clean the slate of parents, grandparents, or whoever we want to accuse. We are helped to do this when we remember our Lord accepted our sins though he had nothing to do with them.

Healing and freedom are contingent upon our wholehearted forgiveness of all those incidental to our problem. Had we, indeed, been as God had originally intended us to be from

³⁹ Smith, op.cit., p.240 Richard Downey D.D.

⁴⁰ Stern, *The Third Revolution*, op.cit.,p.1 10

our first breath, whole and holy, it is evident we would not have been injured either by the action or inaction of others, or by our own foolish choices. It is under the fallen conditions of this world that these things have happened, and however we look at it, we are contributing members to that ongoing condition. Any anger at belonging in this humiliating place points up our own disobedient temperament which still would blame God, realized or not, for all the sad things that have come upon us.

For his part, God offers mercy to his children, even to healing them in the face of their unresolved rebelliousness. But eventually, healthy as it may be at first, anger at God needs to be recognized for what it is - the contentiousness of one who would rule rather than serve. We also take for granted the healing of mind and body which is the revitalizing of nature, without gratitude to God who by the return of health gives us chance after chance to return to him.

Process to Wholeness : Prayer for Healing

After repentance, a woman continues to pray for healing. We see in Our Lord's acts what is now attested to by psychology, that healing, whether of body, mind or spirit, must be for the whole person. The breakdown of the body or mind to illness or malfunction is begun, not with germs or injury, as we now know, but by vulnerability in the psyche which permits these secondary afflictions to hold sway. Genetic failure itself must be related to original sin in some way we do not yet see. Jung pointed out that there are few such things as true accidents, that somehow we are predisposed to what eventually befalls us.⁴¹ Even the Law-perfect Job stated, "What I *feared* has come upon me."

The same psychoanalysts tell us that whatever is withheld from conscious life breaks back into it in disguise. However we strain to understand the hows and whys, this psychological principle at work may also speak of the action of the Holy Spirit. Because we all carry within the subconscious injuries and hurts received from the chain of original sin through others (whom we

⁴¹ Jung, Memories, Dreams and Reflections, op.cit.p.30-31

have forgiven and cannot blame), and because many of these injuries occurred even before were born, we must seek healing on a very deep level of our being.

Malformation is more monstrous the earlier the injury occurs. If we assume that a similar law exists in our psychic development, we understand much better why things which go wrong in a minor way (“minor” by grown-up standards) may have a tremendous impact on the formation of habits and in the structure of character when they happen early in life to a psychic tissue which like embryonic tissue, is still fully charged with potentialities.⁴²

The healing power of Jesus, who the Book of Hebrews proclaims is “the same yesterday, today and forever,”⁴³ reaches down to these experiences stored in the unconscious. He resolves the emotional tension whose energies cannot just vanish into nothing. The healing of the psyche does not restore it as though it were never injured. But rather, Jesus transforms these wounds from negative energy to creative energy - one time called “sublimation.” This is a healing that can only be envied, not matched, by psychology.

The terms or poles of contrast are, on man’s part, his limitation and sinfulness, which are essential elements of his psychological and ethical reality; and on God’s part, the mystery of the gift, that unceasing self-giving of divine life in the Holy Spirit. Who will win? The one who welcomes the gift.⁴⁴

There is a tendency among religiously oriented women to believe that spirituality negates any need to encounter the weaknesses and hurts in their psyches. They feel that prayer will mysteriously solve their problems without grappling with any unconscious hurt. Therefore, they resist aids to human understanding (for instance attending AlAnon meetings) feeling that their healing will come from far “above” all that. This error borders on pride. God made us human; granted before the Fall that this was a humanity far above what we know, but he calls us to become more *fully* human. And to be more human, we must get in touch with that humanity that is fallen, even when it is painful. He heals in *our full recognition* of the problem. How many women have been aided step by step out of a hell on earth through fearlessly looking themselves in the eye and calling upon God? We will see that for most individuals a group of others seeking the same goals is very beneficial in seeking this blessing of wholeness.

⁴² Stern, *The third Revolution*, op.cit.,p.94

⁴³ Hebrews 13:8

⁴⁴ John Paul II, *Dominum et Vivificantem* 3.3.57

Healing of the Memories

The well-being sought by the ailing psyche has been appropriated by many Christian practitioners today under the name of “Healing of the Memories.” Related closely to repentance and amendment of life, and of the acceptance of responsibility and forgiveness of others, this prayer is offered through the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit. With this prayer Jesus is asked to restore crippled psyches to wholeness. The concept is simple, and is formulated to inspire the human spirit to accept with faith the healing work of Christ. He who holds the past in his hands, even while he holds the present, is invoked by the priest or other concerned person to unroll the scroll of life of the penitent seeking healing. Here those offering the prayer ask that the place and time where the injury occurred be brought to the consciousness of the seeker. The process may be a painstakingly slow one, or it may happen very quickly, but the painful memories will surface and the intercession prayer for healing is then offered.

We have prayed for women who hated men, men who rebelled against all authority figures in their life, men and women who were convinced that they were unlovable and acted that way, men and women who couldn't place trust in anyone else, alcoholics, dope addicts, schizophrenics, those whose lives were substantially impaired by fears of darkness, being alone, failure, sex, and most commonly those dominating feelings of guilt and inferiority. In every case where there was a series of contacts there has been improvement. In each category there has been a person substantially or fully healed as best as we can determine.⁴⁵

Often in the course of such inner healing more serious psychic disturbances are encountered. Psychological counsel cannot be avoided in such cases. When serious disturbances are encountered, medical or psychological counsel should be followed carefully; God honors obedience when undertaken with trust that he is working through all of these healing sciences. Of course, a Catholic Christian counselor should be sought when possible, at least one who lets it be known he or she is a Christian.

If deliverance from oppressive, or even possessive spirits, is to be part of therapy, a way must be found to have this prayer offered under the protection and authority of the Church in right order. Deliverance, especially formal exorcism, is the last resort, and then only through the

⁴⁵ Scanlon, *Inner Healing*, op.cit. p.12-13 For a more detailed explanation, the reader is referred to books by Agnes Sanford, Ruth Carter Stapleton, Fr. Michael Scanlon, Dennis Linn S.J., and Matthew Linn S.J., Barbara Schlemmon, and Paul Tournier, M.D.

wise counsel of a Church who has encountered Satan and his disguises over the centuries. An education is called for here far beyond the limits of this book. Here we can only encourage all to seek the healing that is Jesus - his mercy, forgiveness and healing are powerful, the same as when he walked on this earth. For the seeker of freedom from disease, pain, guilt and anguish of body or soul, Jesus, through his Church, continues to heal!⁴⁶

Healing for Woman - A Step Further

Rebellion Against Physiology.

Woman's healing must also encompass a healing that lies one step beyond that of mankind in general. As her obedience goes one step beyond man's, so has her disobedience. Because her physical body is created to be acted upon, to be submitted to another for its fulfillment of promised fruition, she is often in rebellion against her very morphology. So repugnant to Man, male and female, especially to the female, is the posture of receptivity, rebellion has reached its nadir in the denial of the feminine physical body and its function. Few women are in touch with this rebel in themselves, yet in a day of abortion and contraception, and even denial of being female as with genderism, it is very pervasive.

With a rebirth of paganism around the world, in conjunction with the woman's movement, we must be careful about a pagan error that sifts into modern thought and denigrates the equal but opposite feminine. Cardinal Carter has pointed out that to those who conceptualize God as monad - a single being without distinction of Persons - the sheer diversity of the world of being is nonsensical and absurd. Such religious philosophy appears in a contemporary lack of regard for the differentness of man and woman, and in the attempt to pull down any spiritual meaning of woman's sexuality, reducing it to mere anatomical features.

[Pagan religious and philosophical meditation] remain in contemporary secular humanistic schemes, in which the suppression of the uniquely and qualitatively distinct human existence of a man or a woman with personal responsibility and historical freedom is instinctive. Now as then, the test case, the touch stone of orthodoxy, is sexual differentiation, the most entrenched of the qualitative differences experienced in human history. . [the pagan] standpoint, the masculine-feminine relation is an example of what is wrong with

⁴⁶ Seeking God and his healing, many fall into the hands of blind guides, but eventually, if the search is not forsaken, the Spirit will use those who know both the Scriptures and the power of God to begin the healing process. But, dear sufferer, continue to look for it safely under the protective canopy of the Church.

the world, and its elimination is basic to every rationalistic exorcism of the world's evil.⁴⁷

Wherever sexual difference is minimized, or disparaged, we see the mark of this error. To be whole, a woman is led to value all that makes her distinctly different from her proposed mate. Femaleness has a deep worth that speaks of something at the heart of things - something uniquely of God. The two previous volumes in this series are all about this. To be a happy woman, this intrinsic image of God is what she seeks in order to understand herself more completely.

In looking at Jesus and woman, we saw that on his way to death, he spoke to one last group who Luke names “the daughters of Jerusalem.” (See Book II, *The Feminine in Jesus’ Teaching*.) Wrapping up all the scriptural teaching about woman, his last teaching expresses to a representative group of women their worth and meaning in end time terms. These prophetic words are so significant that they may be the best Scriptural evidence that the Church is entering the “last days,” whatever that may mean eschatologically. Rebelling against their natural bodies in those last days, women will refuse God in the most primary level of their being, their sexuality. Rebellion will have run its course. “Daughters, don’t weep for me! But weep for yourselves and the generations of daughters who come after you - your children.” (paraphrased Luke 23:28-31)

St. Paul saw this. The end time was described by him as not culminating in the return of Christ “until the rebellion comes first.”⁴⁸ If there is any doubt that our own times are more rebellious than any time since Christ, the prevalence of abortion, contraception, and euthanasia is a persuasive indicator. So also is the revival of paganism that, on the one hand, attempts to reduce sexuality to monism, ignoring the sign of woman; and on the other, stresses her superlative value when not hinged in any way to her relationship to men.

Pope Paul VI with *Humanae Vitae* gave the Church the Holy Spirit’s assessment and correction of these anti-woman destructive errors that every Catholic Christian must heed.

Fruitfulness - Healing of a kind of Barrenness

⁴⁷ Carter, Gerald Emmett, Cardinal, “Do This in Memory of Me” A Pastoral Letter upon the Sacrament of Priestly Orders, Dec. 8, 1983, Toronto. 111.5. Actually written by a priest who has helped me in grappling with Covenant Theology these last few years, Father Donald Keefe SJ. 1.1 (italics mine)

⁴⁸ II Thessalonians 2:3

In the Christian dispensation, willingness to be fruitful for God demands a loving, open relationship to her marital other; it cannot be *simply* spiritual, and does not skip over biological fruitfulness. The more complete understanding of spiritual fruitfulness, engendered by Christ, still rests on the biological. If one says, “I am willingly fruitful for God,” and refuses openness to his intent for the conception of children, dishonesty rules. That is, unless a woman has pledged herself to celibacy for a higher fruitfulness for Christ and the Church; a state we will consider later.

Therefore in the function of handing on life, it would be unjustifiable for husbands and wives to behave arbitrarily, entirely on their own and independently, as if it were all right for them to define the right approaches which they might follow. On the contrary, they are bound to adjust their activity to the design of God, the Creator, which on the one hand, the very nature of marriage and its act portray, and which on the other hand, the constant teaching of the church proclaims.⁴⁹

Determining the extent of reproductive willingness, limiting the acceptance of God’s intent for our lives, is less than the total self-giving that we are meant to replicate in the Redeemed Order. Here again the complete infallible reference is St. Paul VI’s encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. Prayerfully and knowledgeably to co-operate with nature by practicing sexual continence during fertile periods is the only appropriate choice for a Christian couple who has legitimate reason for planning their family.⁵⁰ Strengthening the Spirit’s control of their lives by a discipline of body which both willingly assume, the Christian couple fulfills the desire of the Father. They approach him freely, speaking to him about their feelings and preferences about family size, but at the same time keeping their wills pliable and submissive to the will of God if he should contradict their inclinations. There is no oppression or repression in this obedience, only freedom and a growth of love that is encouraged by discipline and prayer. That this kind of discipline is psychologically healthy is attested to by those psychiatrists willing to put Man’s reason above his instinct.

Another grave obstacle to our becoming our sexuality as man or woman is the present day so-called sexual and sensual revolution, rooted largely in the mistaken belief that in order to avoid a neurosis and become fulfilled and mature one must fully gratify the sexual drive and feelings. This belief that one must counteract the fear of sex by a - not less neurotic or immature - relentless striving after sexual gratification can be held and defended only by those who do not understand the fundamental differences between neurotic repressions

⁴⁹ Pope Paul VI., *Humanae Vitae*, The Liturgical Press Edition (Collegeville, 1974) p. 49

⁵⁰ Natural Family Planning has made scientific leaps forward with the Creighton method which should be sought out by couples seeking a full understanding of NFP.

of emotions and their rational guidance. But whether it is from ignorance of psychological matters, or fear of becoming neurotic or not mature that one will consider masturbation normal, or recommend extramarital sexual relations and divorce on grounds that one's feelings of love must be expressed without restraint lest they be repressed, this way of thinking cannot be allowed to go uncorrected.⁵¹

A simple adage expresses the trust a couple who freely gives their sexuality to God: "Where God guides, he provides." This is another way of saying what Jesus taught,

. . .but seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things shall be yours as well."⁵²

That Christians should curtail their families because of the growth of the world population needs analysis in the light of faith. In a world of burgeoning population, who is most needed? Is there a task more critical to our world today than evangelization? Who will go with material help, the healing, preaching, and teaching God's Word on the love-mission of Christ? Our Lord commands that all nations hear. For Catholic Christians to fear overpopulation as a motive for limiting their family is to contribute to lessening the possibility of propagating the Gospel truth. Already we are vastly outnumbered by those who have not heard the Good-news. The emerging nations; the Far East, Africa, and South America are committed to life, to more children. Catholics, because of their love of Life and the Lord of Life, desire the salvation of all persons of every religious persuasion and none, and therefore, need a commitment to life that is even deeper than these peoples who have not yet heard the Good News.

Sexual healing is essential to the continuum of healing which ends in wholeness for a woman. In her sexuality she is called to make a commitment to God with her whole being. Receiving children from God demands this commitment. Remaining a celibate demands this commitment. Her sexuality is the direct expression of the divine "yada" which animates the love of Man and God. For that reason sexual development has undergone pressures from the enemy of our souls like no other area of human experience, and for that reason we trust that Jesus' healing is readily available for it.

Sexual Healing

⁵¹Baars, Conrad, MD., A Priest for All Seasons, Masculine and Celibate. Synthesis Series (Chicago, 1974) p. 17

⁵² Matthew 6:33

As sexual nature is, after all, what makes a woman a woman; her sexuality calls her to live out God's disposition of yielded love. It is on the basic sexual, biological level, that healing begins to make her a whole woman. Mary's "made-accepted" self was regarded by God as sexual in large part. Her psyche had formed perfectly in response to her female body. To be free of rebellion against that determinant - the requirement of that accepting posture which female physiology demands, is to realize why the words, "receive," "accept," "depend," "adapt," are considered degrading, and to know why the world devalues them. Feminism's *gran'dame* Simone deBeauvoir was revolted by the very physical position necessary to conceive. Analysis of attitude is a primary step toward resolution of sexual problems. A second is equally important: for each woman to accept that at the moment of her conception, God's will was expressed in her creation as a female.

For thou didst form my inward part, thou didst knit me together in my mothers womb. I praise thee, for thou art fearful and wonderful. Wonderful are thy works! Thou knowest me right well; my frame was not hidden from thee, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth, thy eyes beheld my unformed substance; in thy book were written every one of them, the days that were formed for me.⁵³

To accept on a deep level that the sexual nature of a female body is given, not in happenstance but by design; that the gender given in one's conception is for a definite purpose, to fit a specific place in the overarching Plan of God; these are foundations for a wholesome love of one's womanhood.

God has said, in speaking to a prophet that each person is formed specifically for a purpose, and each individual, far from a quirk of nature, is in every way lovingly "known." Remembering that "known" has sexual roots, Jeremiah declares that his own being was with God before his conception, and God told him so:

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; . . ."⁵⁴

A woman engulfed in the "activism neurosis" of Western culture described by psychiatrist Karl Stern as inimical to the feminine, must turn to the prayer level of her being to recapture what God purposes for her femininity. There she finds the meaning of her own identity rooted in her femaleness. There without limit or measure, her bodily form has a definite value and is rooted in an absolute. Intellectual assent to being made a woman is fairly easy to give; it is in the deep

⁵³ Psalm 139:13-16

⁵⁴ Jeremiah 1:4-5

emotive layer where modern woman needs further assurance, since all modern society seems to be aligned against her meaning and function. Difficulty in conceiving may be healed on that level.

Interwoven in this sexual healing is the ongoing need of everyone to feel loved by God. The slow release from bitterness and hardness of heart is paralleled with an incarnated experience of God's loving care. Woman is in the edifice of family life the basic piece of the structure. It is her sexual and human love which causes it to rise straight and sure; and, as she cannot give what she does not have, her sexual healing, that is the deep acceptance of her femaleness, invariably brings first to her the *experience* of being loved by God, and second, the actualization of a true family forming around her. This healing begins when she opens herself to God's love, when she discovers her real beauty, which as the song says is dependent on her experience of being loved. "Are you beautiful because I love you, or do I love you because you're beautiful?"⁵⁵ God's love instills a sense that she is somehow worthy, even though her worthiness circles back to depend on that love.

Interior healing affects beauty, which is certainly more than skin deep. God made beauty to be a strong influence on woman's happiness. Even the Scripture presents odes to feminine loveliness as we have seen in *The Song of Songs*. The apostles recognized this need of hers and helped her see where real beauty lies.

Let not yours be the outward adorning with braiding of the hair,
decorations of gold, and the wearing of fine clothing, and let it be
the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable jewel of a
gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.⁵⁶

There are many men who are close to Mother Mary, but they, though having their own beauty, are not as susceptible to this interior space of loveliness. It is a feminine phenomenon. It has to do with a deep submission to the Will of God which women may not even be aware of. But Mary has sunk into them. From a Hopkins poem, changing one word,

. . . For Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
To the Father through the features of *women's* faces. ⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Hammerstein, Oscar, Lyrics from *Cinderella*

⁵⁶ I Peter 3:3-4

⁵⁷ Gerard Manley Hopkins, "As Kingfishers Catch Fire"

With the acceptance of the form and function of her body and the release of eros love, a woman's ministry to those around her is human and immediate. How many spiritual women have been deceived by thinking that their ministry is "out there." In the process of being made lovable, she is able to love those closest to her which is her unique gift, "the fruit of her womb" in a spiritual sense. Though it is for every Christian to love, the woman makes it a palpable atmosphere in her home. She who materializes the spiritual, transmits this love to her husband who receives it by "knowing" her. Victor Frankl wrote of the reality of this spiritual exchange:

As the body is for the lover the expression of the partner's spiritual being, the sexual act is for the lover the expression of a spiritual intention.⁵⁸

When a woman in the love of the Lord surrenders to her husband, he experiences the content of her surrender, the obedience of love. It becomes a part of him also.

We saw that the key to our husband's denial of faith was his instinctive knowledge that the woman was way off base, and if what she espoused was religion, he wanted none of it, because the very basis of her spiritual being, her biological makeup, was rebelled against in the marriage bed.⁵⁹

With her healed nature, the woman realizes that for her "love is not a feeling."⁶⁰ At the center of love, to be rightly ordered according to God's will, love is a *willing*. There are many times when a woman may not be motivated by an emotional feeling of love. At times she goes against an emotional feeling, or the disposition of the emotions that cries, "I don't want to, I don't feel like it." This must be common because comedians for years have brought laughter about the wife's sudden "headache."

To be true love, it is centered in the will, not in positive or negative feelings about the requirement to love. In accord with acceptance of her nature and God's will, a woman wills "yes" when not accompanied by feeling. The gift of self is given, in whatever regard, to her husband with no strings attached, no hurt feelings held over, and no reservations made. In this is materialized again the ideal of perfect love which is a relationship springing from the free will of persons. There is deep spiritual significance to such love which we will consider at another point, and it is evident in these goals that reliance on the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the strength of

⁵⁸ Frankl, Victor, *The Doctor and the Soul*. op.cit.,p.137

⁵⁹ From an anonymous personal letter

⁶⁰ Finney, Charles G., *Love is Not a Special Way of Feeling*, (Mpls. 1963)

the Church is a necessary ingredient for any gains in growth toward them. Failure may be realized over and over again.

This love is not to be confused with the act of a woman who submits to sexual intercourse when she is repulsed by it, or gets no pleasure from it. It is not a grim duty that is accepted resentfully. Such a woman is not psychologically healed, and may precipitate impotence in her husband, as well as neurotic repercussions in her family. Christian psychological help is never to be shunned, though such help may well begin in the confessional.

With healing, the life of the freely-given-will may be as pleasurable, or more pleasurable than an exercise of pure sensuality. The whole person on whatever physical or psychical level is contemplated thrives on cheerful willingness. Joy and exquisite love are experienced when divine principles of self-giving are incarnated in physical expression. In the eternal realm such commitment echoes the command of the Lord to his people to be fruitful in mind, will and body for him, and his promise to make them so.

A significant part of the sexual healing of a couple depends on full acceptance of one's mate as the one and only, a choice made with God's guidance, even when his conscious guidance was not sought from the beginning. Now, at this moment, *whatever the circumstances*, this marriage with this man can be an image of the perfect union, God and Man. Until this recognition is made, not to be revoked, the door is ajar to question the covenantal union of the marriage, and the commitment to love is lessened accordingly.

Doubting God's action in uniting the two is not where a healthy union begins. How many divorces could be avoided with a woman's acceptance and trust of her mate as God's own choice? Only after the failure of marriage and a divorce, when the Church allows reconsideration of the marriage vow of a man and a woman within the annulment court is it legitimate to question whether or not it was the action of God that sealed two persons as one.

To be sexually healed also means cleansing from the impurity that her sexuality accumulates through a woman's maturation. We sadly experience daily, if we have any contact with others and with the media, how sex has been pulled into evil's realm.

The specific degeneracy of woman is seen her servile dependence on man and in the decline of her spiritual life into a predominantly sensual one. This is evident in several different types of women. It is most apparent in the type which E. Croner calls erotic but which might be better termed sexual. The degeneracy appears in this type of woman's fascination with sexual matters: her interest and imagination

are already preoccupied with such matters in early years, in any case, by the beginning of puberty; her whole demeanor changes in the presence of the opposite sex; her violent and uninhibited sexual drive makes her an easy prey to seduction and finally to prostitution. With the romantic type of woman, however, all this seems to be transmuted into the spiritual and the ideal: here we find the tendency to daydream and rhapsodize; her inner life with phantasy heroes in a phantasy world paralyzes her capacity for judgment and fitness for the real world.⁶¹

It is, in fact, difficult to see sexuality analogous to God's action of love toward Man. Most feminine psyches cry for a thorough housecleaning, though a gentle one, to restore true sexual responsiveness. In the duration of the healing process, the inner recesses of the subconscious gradually release their secrets which can be healed in the Sacrament of Penance, and further, through prayer for the healing of the memories. In our society, sex is used preponderantly for self-gratification, and in the pursuit of illicit pleasure; therefore, too often linked to sin. To regain it as the wholesome center of being, closest of all human potentials to communion with the Spirit, requires a righting of sinful upside-downness. Under the pressures of sexual urges, the body with the mind, subjugates the soul, and the soul cannot then freely respond to God. Reversing this order, the soul, in communion with God, guards the body and the mind from impurity, and sexuality is licitly expressed, or for the unmarried, sublimated.

No weight is heavier than the load of guilt carried by a woman who has had an abortion. No damage to her self-love is more extreme. But God waits with total love and acceptance for her to come to him. Many avenues are open for her to take a first step; many loving arms are ready to embrace her.⁶² Only Jesus knows her fear and misery – he who descended into hell – and only he offers complete forgiveness and reconciliation with herself.

To know sexual desire that is baptized, a woman also guards her conscious thoughts. It is not in Satan's favor that a woman comes to herself in a whole sexuality, so she can expect temptations. Idle dreams are destructive; indulging them deteriorates any wholesome intent; all stimulation of erotic fantasies, in books, magazines, television, and movies, she will avoid as delaying progress to her goal of happiness. Those who have been addicted to such obsessions universally tell of their unhappiness. Total commitment to this man and to these circumstances, in the belief that God brought her *this* man, and gave her to him for wife, is a basic rung in healing

⁶¹ Stein, op. cit., p.180-181

⁶² A start may be made at Rachelsvineyard.org

the whole sexual continuum. Equivocation here builds up a stress which marriage withstands poorly, and effectively blocks a woman's progress to wholeness.⁶³

There are no life situations which excuse us from our responsibility to grow in wholeness. "A faulty upbringing exonerates no one; it is to be surmounted by conscious effort," says Victor Frankl. The Christian woman knows that she may confidently ask the Creator of all to empower that effort. Frankl, who because he lived out his belief in the brutality of the German concentration camp and has the right of all people to instruct us, says:

Is he still spiritually responsible for what the concentration camp has "made" of him? He is, for even in this socially limited environment, in spite of societal restriction upon his personal freedom, the ultimate freedom remains his: the freedom even in the camp to give some shape to his existence.⁶⁴

The idea of acceptance and trust in God would be considered worse than bad advice in a situation like the following, were it not that an honored Christian psychiatrist, Paul Tournier, gives it as an electrifying example of the power of true Christian acceptance.

I was perhaps never more moved myself by the doctrine of total acceptance than when I was faced with a young woman we shall call Josette. She came to see me because she was worn out by the life her husband forced her to live. An alcoholic and bad tempered, his sensuality was such that he demanded that she submit to him a large number of times every day, uttering the direst of threats if she refused. The poor girl had, as a result, come to look on sex with horror and disgust. All I could do was to remind her that the love demanded of Christ accepts all things, forgives all things, endures all things. Such a love could win the husband better than any resistance or reproof. I hesitated to give such an answer to Josette, and yet could see no other. She prayed to God to give her the courage to accept joyfully. I learned later of the quite new love for her husband that was born in her that day, and the spiritual heights to which this extraordinary victory of the spirit over the flesh led her!⁶⁵

Though any such drastic exercise of faith needs the careful supervision of a spiritual director, or of some other doctor of the soul – it might not always be wise, such an example shows us how far we have come in the general disintegration of religious faith and knowledge, and the triumph of the truth in impossible circumstances.

⁶³ The movie Fireproof is highly recommended for all such marriage miseries.

⁶⁴ Frankl, op.cit.,p.97

⁶⁵ Tournier, Paul, *The Healing of Persons*, op.cit. p. 176

Depression - The Common Cold of Woman's Psyche

In the spectrum of female personalities, there are many types: St. Benedicta (Edith Stein) falls back on a previous listing of types: the maternal, the erotic, the romantic, the level-headed, and the intellectual. The list varies among observers, but the need is basically the same - a healing that is specific and personal; one tailored to free a woman for a deep commitment that will be realized as given to her by God. A creative reason for being, Frankl says, lies beyond the pleasure principle or the drive for status, and explains the neurosis of many women. Larger than any individual, part of the overarching plan of God, this creative reason for her being fits the principles of creation, and calls her to contribute mightily, by her own choice, to the great enterprise of God to restore his people.

When she is shown how that Plan is dependent on everyday life and the decisions she makes in it, she will begin to feel, not just better, but well. Of course, all depends on whether she will accept what she is shown - her will is free and inviolate. Many, because of the gratification of self-pity, or the addiction to negative attention, or the addictions of the moment, will not choose to be free. Others, willing to make the choice, may first need the deliverance ministry of the Church, discussed earlier.

Dr. Tournier speaks about depression caused by the drain of nervous energies in those who do not turn to God for moral strength:

It is like a commercial firm in difficulties: it borrows and borrows again to maintain the appearance of prosperity, until the day comes when the hold to be plugged is too big, and its credit is gone.⁶⁶

Protestant though he was, in the exercise of his medical skills he found it necessary to ask his patients for a full confession. He found that self indulgence and moral laxness, abuses and lack of self discipline both physically and morally, prepared the way for sicknesses and depressions through many years before they took over. Depression, Jay Adams, Christian psychologist, claims is often treated as a cause, "I can't do it, I'm depressed," when actually it is an effect, "I am not doing it (meaning my moral duty), therefore I am depressed."⁶⁷ Frankl's logotherapy would follow the same reasoning.

Conscience exists to be faced. Though painful, the wrongs that cause real guilt must be righted. However, there are times when the person is "not doing it" not because of unwillingness,

⁶⁶ Ibid p.27

⁶⁷ Adams, Jay, *Competent to Counsel*, op.cit. p.148f. I deplore other books he has written, Left Behind, etc.

but because of inability. This indicates the need for other therapies based on spiritual principles - healing of the memories, deliverance prayer, Alcoholics Anonymous or another 12 step group that takes the necessary spiritual component one step at a time.

Modern studies of clinical depression in women are apt to deal superficially, looking for causes that will exonerate women and lay the blame on the social system - most often at the feet of men and marriage. Often the very theology we are espousing in this treatise receives the onus. The submission of women to men, these critics claim, causes fear, inadequacy (because of trying to live up to goals set by others), underachievement, suppression of feelings, helplessness and self-effacement (imposed as expectations upon women), and worse - physical abuse. Giving to everyone and getting nothing in return simply indicates the lack of success in life which brings on guilt and all the rest. When analyzed by Christian criteria the belief that underlies such criticism is based on a view of life alien to Christ, but is also often exactly right in its observation. Indicating an erroneous presupposition and immature understanding, a whole new base must be laid correcting both. That is what we are attempting.

The sick submission that psychologists see in women, when analyzed, is really unrelated to Christ, has no base for wholeness and is rooted in the belief that power is desirable, and obedience abhorrent. The secular helper, therefore, encourages these stunted women to an activism that looks out for self rather than others, sets personal goals first, and learns assertive techniques in personal relationships. From a position outside of the radical insights of the gospel, these appear to be the only answers.

Sometimes it seems as though the gospel's emphasis on self-gift does serve as an excuse for the depressed, the neurotically inactive or the fearfully subservient. Again, Simone deBeauvoir, was motivated to write *The Second Sex* by her hatred of this attitude. With passion she set the fire brand into the dry wood of angry women "victimized" by submission. Hopefully, all who have come this far in our study can clearly see the difference commitment to Christ makes in self-assured feminine self-giving.

Fear links directly to anger, rage being the defense of the defenseless, the impotent and helpless. Graham Greene wrote in a novel, "Hate is an automatic response to fear, for fear humiliates." And we loathe humiliation. When we turn to become humble again, looking to God with trust and faith, admitting our weakness and impotency, fear dissipates, and hate vanishes,

too. One who is humble cannot be readily humiliated. When fear is alleviated it ceases to contribute to the vicious circle of anger, remorse and depression.

Woman's fear, how is it healed? Can a fearful woman really learn to trust God? It is trust that cures fear and breaks the cycle of anger and depression. Fear of men and fear of power makes it difficult for some women to trust Jesus and God the Father. The very maleness of the names may pose an obstacle. It may be one of the reasons that Jesus gave us his mother to be our mother. The Mother of God leads the frightened woman past the fear of the masculine, and on, to the right feminine attitude. More will be added to this in the chapter "Mary: Model of Obedient Love."

The Christian counselor, then, offers the healing power offered in both Lord Jesus and Mother Mary, through the vast dimension of the Holy Spirit, believing that it is disobedience to the command of God which fosters guilt and depression. Individually this is only in small part a willful disobedience, more often it is simply neglect and ignorance - a collective disobedience that is the inherited condition of all Men. Jesus leads the woman to the meaning God has given her from the beginning - to be his sign, the actual sacrament of a principle of his Being. In Christ's healing power the subconscious is touched, and old fears which have caused detrimental habit patterns are reached. That negative energy is then transformed into the positive potential for releasing others rather than controlling; for allowing others to see their way with God rather than manipulating; for letting go and trusting rather than seeking to arrange lives. The basic orientation is also corrected, from self to God, so that success and power are seen in their right context. Without fear, freed from the pressure of false values, the woman can begin to help set free those around her. Saint Benedicta knew where and how these psychological healings come:

Through his sacraments, he purifies and strengthens us. And if we turn confidently to him, which is his will, his spirit penetrates us more and more and converts us; through union with him, we learn to dispense with human props and to gain the freedom and strength which we must have in order to be the support and mainstay of others. He himself guides us and shows us how we should guide others. We therefore achieve total humanity through him and, simultaneously, the right personal attitude. Whoever looks to him and is concentrated on him sees God, the archetype of all personality and the embodiment of all value.⁶⁸

The right personal attitude. And what is that? Our saint tells tells us:

⁶⁸ Stein, op.cit. p.252

The surrender to which feminine nature inclines is here appropriate; on the other hand, we also find here the absolute love and surrender for which we seek vainly in people. And surrender to Christ does not make us blind and deaf to the needs of others - on the contrary.⁶⁹

The Place of Personal Discipline

Often in order to effect the completion of the healing which has begun, a woman finds the need to accept a discipline of mind and body. Witnessed to by all the saints, she is aided in opening her psyche with its layers of intellect, will, and emotion to the action of the Spirit, by an asceticism which is not dry, but productive of the spiritual life. The pillow and the plate can both delay progress to wholeness. Prayer, fasting, continence, poverty; these are the ancient and venerable tools to hasten the fullness of spiritual growth. Jesus spoke in a hyperbole necessary to balance the hold of negative habits upon us:

If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away, it is better that you lose one of your members than you whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.⁷⁰

Obedience as Healing

Remembering the assertion of C.S. Lewis that “obedience does not die for lack of love, but love dies for lack of obedience,”⁷¹ a list of steps toward the goal of wholeness finds obedience at the top. A woman is motivated by recalling the obedience she is to exemplify: the obedience of the Church to Jesus Christ, the obedience of Jesus to the Father, the obedience of Man to the Holy Trinity. For the woman, this means being obedient to those placed over her by Our Lord. A wife will adapt herself to her husband, heeding him, joyfully giving him her all, trusting him to provide and protect, thus being a source of strength to the three part relationship of husband and wife in God. When she fails, which will be often, she knows the way to be forgiven and start again.

⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 253

⁷⁰ Matthew 5:29-30

⁷¹ Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*, op.cit.,p.147

Perseverance to the sign she is of the triune unity demands radical dispossession of self for another, and calls for a continual self renouncement. That both husband and wife enter the spiritual quest together does not often happen. It may well fall to the woman to begin alone. Such a life entails suffering; the self-concerned self does not die easily. Therefore, it is a course lined with suffering until her obedience has revived God's love in herself, and finally love in her husband. Frankl writes, "What is to give light must endure burning." In the most bitter of circumstances, he found human life is not only fulfilled in creating and enjoying, but also in suffering.⁷² Other deep thinking participators in the human quest have always agreed:

It is a place where one will meet one's own insufficiencies and failures, it is a school of faith and charity.⁷³

Seeking holiness in her marriage, the efforts of a woman to have it become a microcosm of the Kingdom lead her to accept her husband as she desires God to accept her, or as the Church is meant to accept the Word. She remembers that the Word is creative; that it goes forth; that it accomplishes; that it is dynamic and active; that it impregnates. Believing that the masculine principle at the heart of things is manifested in her husband, she allows his masculinity the freedom to unmake her world and scatter her neat arrangements, just as the revelation of God unmakes Man's concepts, his selfish world, by the very eruptiveness of the eternal Masculine.⁷⁴ The old autonomous self is changed in this encounter for it must freely dispose itself to him. It is by adherence to this principle that true union develops, for the man will experience directly the beatitude of her surrender to be absorbed by him as well.

A woman, however, often must wait in hope for a time to come. This is part of her meaning, part of the spiritual continuum which begins with sex, continues through eros, and ends in agape love (total self-giving). This is the spiritual meaning of her morphology, in which, faith tells her, nothing is meaningless. "Nothing appears in vain, no act remains unaccounted for."⁷⁵

Though a modicum of maturity is required for self-giving, which is why healing comes first, wholeness for a Christian rests finally in the laying down of one's life. Herein, lies the great

⁷² Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul*, op.cit., p.97

⁷³ Bouyer, *Introduction to Spirituality* (Collegeville, 1961) p. 171-173

⁷⁴ All Lewis' ideas from *That Hideous Strength*

⁷⁵ Frankl, op.cit.,p.33

difference between wholeness and fulfillment as known in Christianity and the other secular therapies.

The way in which he accepts, the way in which he bears his cross, what courage he manifests in suffering, what dignity he displays in doom and disaster, is the measure of his human fulfillment.⁷⁶

The trends of our times, inimical to this truth, are inundated with what psychiatrist Karl Stern labeled the *activism neurosis*. It is the same neurosis that Victor Frankl calls the *noogenic neurosis*. It places persons out of touch with interior life, service, dependence, receiving, nourishing, feeling, passivity, trust, belief, simple wisdom and surrender. With the feminine side thus cut away, the masculine side becomes pathologically warped and distorted. Man and woman are restless, unduly intellectual, overly ambitious. He and she alike are frigid in feelings, coldly rationalistic, putting reasoning acumen where it does not belong in human life. Together they believe in the mechanics of managing human beings, and take up positivism as a defense against any feeling of dependency which they deplore. If he is neglectful of love and affection, espousing a Spartan attitude toward the nourishing side of life, she apes him. If he makes a good organizational man, a hustling go-getter who is recognized as the managerial peptic-ulcer candidate, she is trying hard to be that, too. Pitted against nature, he may have a fetish about biological processes; earthly common realities he may scorn, and she is struggling to divorce herself from those nitty-gritties, too - paying the daycare worker to change the diapers. He proceeds through life attacking and overcoming, knowing nothing of anything trans-rational, and she imitates him with pseudo empiricism.⁷⁷ When a woman takes up the masculine role to the neglect of the feminine, she adds to it bitterness and envy for what she is not and what she cannot be, and she unwittingly allows her animus to control her. Clearly, the woman is meant to balance the man's outward thrust, not imitate it.

Man is consumed by "his enterprise," and he expects others will be interested and helpful; generally, it is difficult for him to become involved in other beings and their concerns. On the contrary, it is natural for woman, and she has the faculty to interest herself emphatically in areas of knowledge far from her own concerns and to which she would not pay heed if it were not that a personal interest drew her into contact with them.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.44

⁷⁷ See Stern *Flight From Woman*, op.cit., chapter one.

⁷⁸ Stein, op.cit.,p.44

On the other hand, the man may be the photographic negative of this go-getter, in rebellion against his harsh outlines. Rather than striking a balance, he becomes soft and effeminate, the caricature of a male who leans on a pseudo-concept of the qualities of the feminine. Just as distasteful an image of the masculine as the other, he cannot serve as a model of the masculine, the physical reality of the Initiative Principle of the Father God.

Healing and Reconciliation with the Animus

The healing Holy Spirit leads forward to the Redeemed Order which reinstates the triune principles underlying the Original Order, now with the joyous addition of the One who restored them by living among us.

In the Garden, yielding to her husband's authority constituted woman's peace and joy, protecting her whole femininity from Satan's attack. However, indoctrinated with the Fallen Order's masculine envy, even if she has consciously assumed little of the masculine herself, pain comes when she faces the animus, her masculine side, and realizes his devastating usurpation of her being.

. . . the conscious attention a woman has to give to her animus problem takes much time and involves a lot of suffering. But if she realizes who and what her animus is and what he does to her, and if she faces these realities instead of allowing herself to be possessed, her animus can turn into an invaluable inner companion who endows her with the masculine qualities of initiative, courage, objectivity, and spiritual wisdom.⁷⁹

Aided by the Holy Spirit, coming to more consciousness is a move to wholeness worth the pain. The animus is put under conscious control when a woman allows her husband to be her head, something you won't find in Jung. In time, under this tutor the animus will become a friend and ally to the woman in the way Dr. von Franz describes in the above quote. Why is this? Under godly authority, the animus is obliged to willing obedience himself, and the proclivity to take over is not allowed. *Under* true masculine headship of a husband, this woman's masculine side becomes a source of unified strength and integrated qualities in her psyche which are highly creative and helpful. Likewise, when a man has a woman who is rightfully yielded to his headship under God, his feminine side is put in her rightful place in his psyche - a compassionate, empathetic dimension is at his disposal which enhances his true masculinity, but which cannot master him (the negative possibility of the male's anima).

⁷⁹ von Franz, *The Process of Individuation*, from Carl Jung's "Man and His Symbols," op.cit., p.194

Growth in Wholeness

Androgyny?

Correctly developing the masculine side of her psyche cannot be ignored by a woman or she becomes the bubble-headed woman of the comics. Androgyny, however, meaning non-differentiation of the sexes is a throwback to the pagan view, but a corrected androgyny that simply recognizes the masculine in the woman and the feminine in the man is observed in the first persons of our race.

The human man Jesus and the human woman Mary have the same basic qualities of personality. Perfect man and perfect woman together with the Holy Spirit reflect the truth intrinsic to the Trinity, “of one substance, not confounding the Persons.”⁸⁰ Perfect man and perfect woman are of one substance, both share the abilities and characteristics of perfected mankind as a whole. Yet in Perfect woman, Mary, the feminine attributes are to the fore with the masculine as the strong support to her total personhood in the background. In Jesus, Perfect man, the masculine attributes are to the fore with the feminine attributes, a strong support to his whole human personality, in the background.

Observing Mary, we see her intellectual, decisive, assertive, reasoning, questioning, organized, principled and conscious. These strong qualities of the masculine side balance and enhance the intuitive, accepting, available, hidden, surrendered feminine which are perfectly present and most obvious. Wholeness necessitates the development of the other side, but sexuality decides the observable attributes fitting to that sex. A woman carries the feminine observably and naturally; the man the masculine. The complementary side should be vibrantly essential but unobtrusive.

Jesus cannot be imagined without the contribution of the feminine side of his nature. He listened, was compassionate, nourished others, and loved deeply. His gentleness with the weak, his tears for the sorrowing, were however, more than balanced by his toughness with the arrogant, his formidable anger with the religious hypocrite all enhanced by his strong, physical

⁸⁰ We go back to the Athanasian Creed discussed in Book one.

endurance. Carrying full authority of Godhead, he fulfilled his masculine physique, even as the Godhead's authority he bore demanded he be male.

The Inner Life

To be feminine has an observable link to the inner life - those qualities which spring from the psyche because of a female's physical development. These qualities have an inward thrust entirely compatible with nurturing, mothering, and accepting. Because of this tie to the physical, these things, as we have seen in Book I, have been called feminine in all ages and cultures. Interiority makes a woman more in touch with the world that transcends sense - the trans-sensual; while the man's world is the world of the senses - the exterior. Yet, paradoxically, woman is closer to matter and earthly realities, while man's arena lies in the spirit, intellect and will - that vital principle and activating force of the human being that makes us humanly capable of responsiveness to God.

The essential difference can again be understood in light of what God revealed to us in Mary and Jesus. By obedience and trust, Mary reached into the world of the spirit, a world far beyond the senses, to hear and believe the Word of God. It was this trans-sense experience that Elizabeth praised her for:

Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.⁸¹

By reaching into the realm of the spirit beyond the senses, Mary's faith-belief was the medium the Holy Spirit used to incarnate the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. What was spirit became matter, first through her belief and then in her womb. The immaterial became material. Truth became flesh. However we see it, woman has this unique place, one foot planted firmly in two realms, her being the matrix in which one realm "comes into" the other. Such giftedness depends on an inner life by which she experiences all other being with her whole self. This intrinsic knowledge of other beings, a poetic connatural knowledge, is part of woman's normal world. For the woman who feels that she has somehow missed it, she may in the healing process regain, along with her sexual nature, her inherent interiority. It is an important gift which operates for the benefit of all around her, in the family and the Church, but most of all for her husband. He may

⁸¹ Luke 1:45

sense it as “a word of wisdom.” Often the woman will receive a strong impression from the trans-sense reaches of her being which will provide important information for his direction.

Saint Benedicta has most carefully analyzed the differences between man and woman.

I would like to emphasize only two criteria differentiating man from woman from those which are usually mentioned since they have particular significance in helping us understand the intrinsic value of woman.

1. Man appears more objective: It is natural for him to dedicate his faculties to a discipline (be it mathematics or technology, a trade or business management) and thereby to subject himself to the precepts of this discipline. Woman's attitude is personal; and this has several meanings: in one instance she is happily involved with her total being in what she does; then, she has particular interest for the living, concrete person, and, indeed, as much for her own personal life and personal affairs as for those of other persons.

2. Through submission to a discipline, man easily experiences a one-sided development. In woman, there lives a natural drive towards totality and self-containment. And again this drive has a twofold direction: she herself would like to become a complete human being, one who is fully developed in every way; and she would like to help others to become so, and by all means she would like to do justice to the complete human being whenever she has to deal with persons.

Both of these characteristic impulses as they emerge from nature do not demonstrate yet any initial value; indeed, they can be harmful. But correctly handled, they can become most valuable. Let us clarify the value of the personal attitude and the tendency to completeness, and then consider how this value can be developed from the raw material.⁸²

A man's function is to deal with the material world, using his senses and his reason to receive data, extrinsic facts, converting this practical knowledge into ideational forms. He conceives the world in terms of thought and logically transforms this material, as it were, into something non-material, principles or theorems, which are “spiritual.” Man's knowledge is chiefly extrinsic to himself and without real materiality even when he builds his concepts into things. In Jungian language, therefore, man is the archetypal image of the spirit (immateriality); woman is the archetypal image of the earth (materiality). Yin and yang would not be far from this, except for the Christian that particular formulation lacks the most important Third Person who alone has the power to unify these opposites in himself - the Holy Spirit. (Also discussed in Book I)

Woman as Guide

⁸² Stein, op. cit.p. 248-249 also p.94

Woman's contact with the trans-sense world, call it intuition, and her identification with materiality, being the matrix within which something develops, often finds her bringing to materiality something from the realm of the intangible. Love is an intangible until a woman makes it a palpable experience; life itself is a theoretical concept until it becomes an infant in her womb. Mary experienced an unseen world and believed, enabling the Word to become Flesh. It is not happenstance that matter and mother have the same etymological root, as we discovered earlier (Book I).

Man, on the other hand, more in harmony with the world of the theoretical, needs woman to materialize these principles and anchor his humanity in the material, in the here and now. She in turn needs him to discern and judge her "irrational" experience in terms of principle and practicality. In the Bible's depiction of patriarchal times we have seen the unseen, theoretical promise (covenant) given by God to the man come into actuality in flesh and blood in woman's womb.

In this gift of hers, she becomes the guide for the two-become-one. Not the leader, not the author or discerner, but the guide. With a familiarity and comfort in a realm beyond the grasp of the intellect, she brings impressions, messages from that realm to her husband for his discernment. She does not judge the appropriateness of these, the timeliness or the significance to their lives; she merely brings what she intuits, freely, without emotional attachment, though she may feel it is "right." For this reason, along with others, it is important that a woman learn to speak openly as an equal to her husband about all that is on her mind and heart. Without her contribution from a realm only interiorly accessible to her, he cannot make the same informed decisions or be the wise head of his family.

The story of Sacagawea, the Shoshone Indian woman, who served as a guide and interpreter to the Lewis and Clark expedition, is a helpful analogy. At home in a geographical terrain unfamiliar to the expedition, she was to guide the travelers through miles of wilderness. Contributing her knowledge, though her information was invaluable to those decisions, she did not make decisions herself. She had no authority over the expedition; yet without her input bringing it to a successful conclusion would have been difficult, or impossible. This historical circumstance makes a worthy analogy for the importance of woman's spiritual guidance in her family. Woman's unique guidance is a valuable element in the man- woman union, especially when her intuitive superiority is aided by the Holy Spirit. Guiding, even leading, is not the same as the role of headship.

In the spiritual realm, Mary's intercession for us with the Trinity is similar. She brings to God what she knows to be the needs and desires of the human heart. There she leaves them to the judgment and will of God, but God because of her intercession's validity is most apt to grant her request. Jesus also, The Second Person of the Trinity, informs his Father, but does not judge or make unilateral decisions.

Without discernment, the impressions which woman receives from her intuition cannot uncritically be assumed to be of God. They are psychical in a certain sense, but such impressions of the psyche are neither good nor bad; for this reason, we have seen St. Paul insist that a woman be under authority "because of the angels." (Book II) There are many fine distinctions to be made in the relationship of husband and wife, but this one, of her guidance rather than headship, is for both the family and the Church an important one.

Woman's domain

Growth in wholeness brings with it another quality that falls in an area dependent on both masculine and feminine capabilities. With this valuable contribution, a woman brings to her surroundings a feminine gift of poetic knowledge combined with her masculine gifts of logic and reason. The union of these two attributes results in her ability to order and rule over her environment contributing peace and beauty to the places where her family plays, works, rests and grows. Even avowed feminist, Germaine Greer (*The Female Eunuch*), in her later books has come to the realization that;

The quality of daily life is what matters, the taste of the food on the table, the light in the room, the peace and wholeness of the moment. "Perfect love casteth out fear." The only perfect love to be found on earth is not sexual love, but the wordless commitment of families, which takes as its model mother love.⁸³

Though a woman is the basic denominator of the stance of obedience, and has no ruling office in the Christian body, she has a domain over which she is despot. St. Paul tells us in passing, referring to the problems of widows in the early Church:

So I would have younger widow bear children, rule (*Grk. oikdespoteo*) their households, and give the enemy no occasion to revile us.⁸⁴

⁸³ Greer, Germaine, *Madwoman's Underclothes*, (N.Y., 1988) p.?

⁸⁴ | Timothy 5:14 parenthesis added

The italicized Greek word means to be a “house despot or ruler.” Just as Bathsheba (Book II) ruled a household of many facets, which demanded her decisions and actions, so the Christian woman runs a complex corporation within the walls of her home. One thing is necessary - that what she does there increases her husband’s trust in her. This is so if her whole intent is to please him. Augustine’s maxim, “Love God and do as you please,” in the context of running a home may be translated into, “Love your husband wholly, and do as you please.” Loving her husband means to work according to his overall will. A household thrives in this framework. Many women have strong organizational abilities which applied in the home make it a happy, efficient place.

When woman’s own unmet need manifests itself as a compulsion to control, it becomes a blight on freedom of husband and children, and a killer of spontaneity and happiness. When rightly exercised, however, order and control in the arrangement of time, space, and things, bring beauty into daily life, a temperate pace to living, a proper functioning of persons with things (clean shirts, ironed (thankfully, we no longer must do) and a comprehensibility which makes the home a peaceful place. There “letting down” is possible without the chaotic confusion.

Part of her natural feminine concern for the right development of the beings surrounding her involves the creation of an ambience of order and beauty conducive to their development.⁸⁵

A woman ordering a home in such a way not only makes life there happy, she supervises an economy that makes any financial worth she might have as a laborer outside the home look very small indeed. Where disorganization and mismanagement obscure the physical ordering of the house, a similar description fits the interiority of those who live there. Obstacles to mere physical functioning of living hinder family members from carrying on energetic cultural and spiritual work.

The discussion of the financial order of the family is outside of the consideration of this book though very important for the Christian family’s happiness and success. Of the many principles of godly manhood and womanhood, a sufficient material well-being rests on trust in God, right order in headship, and maturity of the man and woman to put God’s will in all things ahead of their own wants and wills.

⁸⁵ Stein, op. cit., p.77

Uniqueness of Personality

All women, despite their common sexual calling and spiritual signness, are not made out of the same psychical cloth printed out in the same psychical pattern. There are many differences of ‘type’ as we have seen above. All the adepts of psychology from the classic to the Jungian make allowances for the great differences of personality which are found in people, male and female. A woman seeking wholeness needs a tool in order to see herself. Such a tool may give her a better comprehension of her natural talents and gifts, her strengths and her weaknesses, which with understanding she may balance and strengthen.

Some years ago, the classical terms, sanguine, choleric, melancholic and phlegmatic received new vitality for Christians in evangelical, Tim LaHaye’s book, *Spirit Controlled Temperaments*.⁸⁶ Jung had probed the individual psyche with the help of four similar functions but named differently and seen from a new angle: thinking, feeling, sensing and intuiting.⁸⁷

The *thinking* function is ideational and intellectual. It is the function by which a woman (or man) attempts to comprehend the nature of the world and herself. *Feeling* is a value function (not necessarily an emotional feeling) and motivates the person by what she values. *Sensing* is the perceptual function whereby a person is most influenced by the concrete facts of the physical world. *Intuition* is perception by means of unconscious processes and contact with its subliminal contents. There are no relative values of these functions - one is not better or more valuable than another.

If the four are imagined as the four points of a compass with North at the top, the four functions pair up as opposites. Sensing is the opposite of intuiting; feeling is the opposite of thinking. Whichever of the four is the imaginary north point in a woman’s psychological makeup, that function we will call her strongest, the one opposite it is her weakest. The other two poles at east and west are rather more in balance, though of the two one usually predominates.

⁸⁶ From 1969 Available on Amazon.com for under \$8. Stay away from his Left Behind series.

⁸⁷ See C.G.Jung, *Psychological Types*, (N.Y. 1974). Kersey and Bates, *Please Understand Me* (CA 1978) The author would not suggest too much emphasis on this, only to the extent that it helps the reader understand herself and others. Enneagram’s emphasis is exaggerated and experts who have studied it warn that it may be detrimental to Christian understanding of wholeness and holiness. Our wholeness is not something we manage - God is the savior.

For example, a woman with a north point of intuition would find that her sense function would be diminished, possibly even buried in her unconscious. She would find it difficult to remember details of sight, sense and smell, though she might have a strong mystic sense of the beauty she appreciates through the senses - music, art and nature. Her intuitive sense would bring her knowledge (more than hunches, but somewhat similar to that idea) about a world of experience quite unseen. At E and W would be functions of feeling and thinking. If one or the other predominated, for sake of this case let us say feeling, the other, the thinking function would take a third position in the general gifts of the psychological compass.

Not having a strong thinking function does not at all imply that this woman lacks intelligence, rather it describes the form that her thinking takes. The feeling function merely orders her thinking to her strong sense of what is valuable. Her thinking, rather than being reasoned from hypotheses, or from observed facts towards conclusions, begins with conclusions (because they feel right) and rationalizes back, seeking reasons to support her conclusions. An intuitive-feeling woman can make, under the aegis of wholeness, a contribution of unique value to life, as can a woman of any of the other multiple combinations with their variables of intensity. To increase the possibilities, which are already many due to the unique personal contents each individual brings to his function, each compass can be either extraverted or introverted. The introvert is more in touch and comfortable with his own inner life, and the extrovert more in touch and comfortable with others in interaction.

In seeking wholeness, it helps to see that one's interests and inclinations are accounted for in a basic God-given personality, which like no other on earth still has a commonalty that helps in the understanding of oneself. Those areas which are in need of more conscious effort of strengthening stand out. For wholeness, the intuitive-feeler, just described, needs to exercise what for her may be "boring" thought - the reading of directions, and of the other kinds of formal mental work. With conscious effort, she will employ her senses for more awareness to others and her real (not poetic or artistic) environment. In such a way she rounds out her personality, finding that she is able to do things well, though perhaps never expertly, that she thought she could not do.

Even superficial awareness of these functions helps a woman understand better those who are close to her. Many puzzling things about others rest in basic personality differences rather than what sometimes seems to be willful contrariety. Husbands generally have a compass-opposite

personality to that of their wives, much to the distress of both until they learn to accept the benefits of their complementariness.

Gauging Maturity

How does a woman gauge the level of maturity she has reached?

It would be impossible to describe here all the positive signs of physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual maturity, or the various signs of emotional immaturity, neuroses or psychopathic disorders. Suffice it to say that a mature person should evidence a sufficient degree of assimilation of the lower orders of *her* nature into the higher, a rich balanced emotional life which responds readily to direction by intellect and will without being suppressed in the process, a spiritual life which is ennobled by the fullness of feeling and emotions, and an unshakeable sense of self-worth and self-love grounded in true humility. To a large extent that person must be the realization of his unique natural disposition, possessed of a readiness and capability of going out freely toward the good and opposing evil - and thus capable of possessing the happiness for which *she* is destined by *her* Creator. That person must possess *herself* lovingly and gratefully as *woman* or as being - in peace and harmony - what in analysis *she* is - singular and alone.⁸⁸

These qualities of personality, as psychiatrist Baars points out, are the marks of those on the threshold of making a mature vocational commitment. These are the qualities which mark the woman who is ready to respond to the call to the obedient life.

Christian wholeness will be attested to only by fruits (Book II). The woman engaged whole-heartedly in the process of Salvation, with her psychic injuries on the mend, will be known by the fruits of love; joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and self-control.⁸⁹ The Beatitudes of Matthew 5 will become daily more expressive of her being. These personal attributes will produce even more wide-spread blessings in the lives of those touched by the Christian. She will wonder that life ever seemed meaningless or uneventful.

This woman now steps to the threshold of the obedient or submissive life, ready to encounter the practicalities of it. Before taking the plunge, we must clarify and deepen the theological base (the thorough exposition is in Book I) of the juxtaposed poles of obedience and

⁸⁸ Baars, op.cit.,p.13 (pronouns and nouns changed for the reader)

⁸⁹ Galatians 5:22-23

authority as we see it in Jesus and Mary, for it is only in these two that the principles governing the whole and holy life of man and woman can be clearly discerned.

CHAPTER II. JESUS: AUTHORITY AND SUBMISSION

Fully God - All Authority

Mystery of mysteries! Jesus, God and Man, lived both of his natures fully. As the Second Person of the Trinity incarnate, he came into the earth scene *fully* God - the *Author*, in whom *all authority* originates. In the Gospel of Mark, which gives us the Apostle Peter's immediate impressions of Jesus, the attribute making the greatest impact is his astonishing authority. From the first, everyone marvels at this commanding Presence whom every natural and supernatural force must reckon with and which sorts out evil from good.

He spoke with a knowledge and power unknown on earth. This contrasted sharply with the scribes and rabbis of the Law who for generations were the authoritative spokesmen for God in Israel.¹ When this One commanded, things happened! When this One acted in word and deed, he overturned Man's small religious apple-cart.

So for the sake of your tradition you make void the word of God!
You hypocrites . . . teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.²

The ultimate Command of God was unmistakable in Jesus, as was the fact that all provision on earth originates in him. God, in Jesus, demonstrated his eternal love by providing for his people. On the Galilean hillside, from five loaves and three fish, Jesus made miraculous but very real food enough for the multitude. Multiplying bread, he fed thousands from little. It is important when we later consider the role of the Church, to see that this initial provision continues to be a masculine function.

¹ Mark 1:22

² Mark 15: 6-9

Anthropologists, as we have noted previously, observe that a man's authority over his family is a universal. But equally universal is his responsibility for providing for that family. A woman nourishes the dependent infant from her own body, while the man provides for both of their needs so that breast milk is there. Here the instinctual level points to the truth of the eternal spiritual; God is the ultimate provider of everything for the benefit of his creature, Man. Coming to us as fully representative of Godhead, Jesus demonstrates provision of the eternal masculine principle (Book I). God, the Provider, gives to his Church the Body and Blood of Christ as provision to feed her children. Mother Church is dependent on God the Father for the needs of herself and her children.

Yet, true to the feminine principle, *ad intra*, of the Second Person incarnate in Jesus, he feeds his children his own glorified body as astounding provision. (To be clear about the meaning of the masculine and feminine in these analogous circumstances, and their overlapping, we have the diagram of Book I as reference.) Julian of Norwich spoke of Jesus as Mother because of our dependence upon his flesh and blood.

“Christ in his mercy works within us, and we graciously cooperate with him through the gift and power of the Holy Spirit. This makes us Christ's children.” It is upon this that Julian builds her concept of the Christ-Mother. He is the mother of all the living. He is our mother because he made us. It is in him that we grow and develop. It is from his own self that we are nourished. Jesus is, therefore, our Mother. “Indeed, our Saviour himself is our Mother for we are for ever being born of him, and shall never be delivered.”³

A review of our earlier diagram of the three triune unities helps us visualize that (*ad intra*) within the Trinity the principle of the Second Person is Patient-Receiver; while the Holy Trinity of three Persons confronts Man only as Agent-Initiator. Because these distinctions in her writings have not been carefully observed, Julian of Norwich, is often quoted in support of calling God, “Mother” followed by the pronoun, “she.” Actually, when Julian writes, “he is our Mother,” she is combining the Second Person's two aspects *ad intra* and *ad extra* in the right way, but they must be carefully distinguished - the

³ Swanson, John OJN, essay, “*Guide for the Inexpert Mystic*,” p. 84 *Julian Woman of Our Day*, editor, Robert Llewelyn, (CT 1987)

masculine pronoun, “he,” combined with the feminine word, “mother.” This is because *ad intra* the Holy Trinity, the Son is the Person in whose image woman is made; but *ad extra* he comes to us as God - the eternal masculine.

She does not say that Christ is like our mother, but rather that it is Christ whom our mothers are like. “It is not that Christ’s love is like a mother’s love; it is rather that the source and origin of mother-love is Christ. Our mothers love us with Christ’s love. To be a loving mother is to be Christ. And just as we forever resemble him, so we resemble our mothers. Just as we are forever his children, so are we forever our mother’s children. Just as he loves, teaches, rules, heals and nurses us, so do our mothers as well - in imitation of him. The maternal and feminine is not something Christ imitates, it is something Christ originates.⁴

Mothers imitate Christ, Christ does not imitate mothers. The origin of motherhood is in Christ, in God and in the Holy Trinity.

This is a wonderful quote - one that puts all the elements in their right order. It deserves to be read and reread. All in all, the light that Julian sheds on the matter of the Motherhood of Jesus must not take us away from the irrevocable masculine designation of Godhead. In Julian’s specialized sense, yes, Jesus can be seen and experienced as Mother feeding us his flesh, though it might be suggested here that he gave us his own mother so that difficult concept would not deceive us in other ways.

God comes to Man as the eternal Author, Initiator, and Agent from whom all agency on earth receives its authority. He comes to act out God’s own agency among Men. Agency *does* works; Initiative inseminates for the fruitfulness of the receiver to the “glory” of the Initiator. So the result of agency is seen in both works and fruits.

“Do you not believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I say to you I do not receive on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the sake of the works themselves.⁵

In the gospel, we watch the masculine, intrusive principle of God in Christ, disrupting a fictional and false world rule, and reordering Creation, now so deviant from his Original Order. He angers those who claim authority over this distorted system,

⁴ Ibid

⁵ John 14:10-11

because he makes foolish their pompous wielding of power. While they rage over their loss of face in his authentic, commanding Presence, he hands himself over to them, empowering them to do their worst. Giving himself to those over whom he has complete authority, he overcomes them by his submission.

I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it up again; this charge I have received from my Father.⁶

Man confronted by Jesus falls to his knees before the Ultimate Authority. But Jesus raises him up and allows him to look at him eye to eye. In looking at Jesus, *graced by a kind of equality and encouraged as a friend*, Man may no longer fear God's inevitable Command, or hate his authority.

Unhappily learning about power by experiencing overlords serving the Prince of this demented world, Man has rightly learned to despise it, unless he wields it himself, in which case he loves it. But when authority is viewed in Jesus, the anger and fear must give way to trust and gratitude; and any desire for power give way to a prayer that we never gain it.

Jesus carries the Agency of God which is *only* benevolent. Facing Man, he represents the full Godhead, demonstrating the very Author of Creation. In him we see that it is only for Man's good that the Father commands Creation; only for Man's good he *authorizes* - it is only Mercy. God is not a tyrant expecting more than we can give. He does not inflict burdens on his subjects, nor does he manipulate their lives for his own gratification. He does not take away their loves because of his greedy need to be the center of everything (though, paradoxically, they come to offer their loves and enthrone him as the center of Everything).

God, among Men, heals all their diseases, not refusing a single one; he comes without judging their sins, releasing them from condemnation. He does not find a person

⁶ John 10:18

who is unworthy of his full attention and care. When his authority is cutting, it is only to free Man, severing him from the bonds of Satan and other false lords.

“Woe to you lawyers (interpreters of the Law) also! For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers.”⁷

“Come to me all you who labor ... I will give you rest.”⁸

Acknowledging Jesus as his Lord and Master with authority over every aspect of his life, eventually Man rediscovers his place, and finds himself reestablished with a shared divinity, in the continuum of the Original Order, but now it is the Redeemed Order enhanced by the Lord. This is how Jesus fulfills the *Godhead side* of his mission, wherein he is the very face of God to Man.

. . .the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.⁹

In the Gospel of John, we are privileged to *see God* when we look at Jesus. From the pen of the apostle whom “Jesus loved,” deeply reflective of the Blessed Mother, this gospel knows Jesus as the great I AM of all revelation. We recall from Exodus that Moses asks for the identification by name of the One who speaks from the burning bush, and from the vortex sounds the dizzying reply, “I AM WHO I AM” or “I AM WHO AM.”” Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”¹⁰

That One of *pure Being* thus establishes his name on the earth, in Hebrew, *YHWH*. These letters are etymologically related to the verb *hayah*, “to be.” In the Old Testament, these consonants with vowels added are not spoken but, out of holy fear of

⁷ Luke 11:46 parenthesis added.

⁸ Matthew 11:28

⁹ Philippians 2:10-11

¹⁰ Exodus 4:13-15

the most transcendent of names, are replaced with *Adonai*, which in English is translated “Lord.” In this writing the author avoids the use of that holy tetragram.

Jesus identifies himself with this name! He is the One who spoke to Moses, “I AM,” the one eternal God. In his continuing confrontation with the Pharisees, challenging their authority, he concludes one argument by infuriating them with the assertion:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”¹¹

St. John is very sensitive to this truth, and to Jesus’ continued use of it in describing himself. He uses a special format throughout his gospel to underline this tremendous revelation that Jesus is “I AM.”

You are from below, I AM from above; you are of this world, I AM not of this world, I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I AM HE.¹²

We cannot avoid Jesus’ insistence that the Divine name is masculine, again not in terms of sexuality, but in terms of the *significance* of the masculine. It is not ambiguous, that masculinity. It cannot be repeated too often that our language is formed by our observation of the female and male sexual function, that this functioning is the basic rung of a continuum that extends, speaking truth, from the Godhead himself, right down to the most rudimentary biological manifestation. *It does not mean that God is male!* It means that maleness is an expression of a Principle in Godhead that we recognize as Author, or Generator, or any of the other words we have used to describe this First Principle (Book I).

St. John goes on, extending with linking thoughts and descriptions the great I AM HE.

I AM the bread of life (6:35)

I AM the light of the world (8:12)

JAM the gate (10:7)

¹¹ John 8:58

¹² John 8:22-28 (caps added)

I AM the good shepherd (10:11)
I AM the resurrection and the life (11:25)
I AM master and lord (13:13)
I AM the way(14:6)
I AM the truth
I AM the life
I AM the true vine (15:1)

Behind all these affirmations is the Author, the Eternal God, the Holy Trinity, I AM HE, and Jesus exemplifies all the action of that Agency of Godhead. Certainly there were many other ways Godhead could have been expressed in these predicates that follow the divine name - "I give you the bread of life, eat of me;" I bring you the Light, see by me," come to the Gate and enter by me, " etc. The form Jesus chose was deliberate, he is YHWH. It should be enough to send chills down our spines and cause us to fall on our faces.

Fully Man -Submission

But there is Jesus, wholly Man, facing Man as God, he turns and faces God as Man. He, therefore, speaks and acts as the first principle of Man, male and female. As Man, Jesus acts out perfectly the Trinity's expectations for his creature. All that he enacts as perfect Man is summed up by the feminine principle found fundamentally in the female of the species. Representing mankind, his maleness, not at all incidental in representing God, may be more incidental. If this were all that Jesus is when walking the earth it might have been possible for him to have come as female, though the first and second principles at the core of reality would have been confused at that. However, it is not possible for I AM to incarnate in other than the male body; the inconsistencies otherwise are unthinkable.

Besides, Mary fulfills our need to see perfect mankind as feminine to Godhead. She is wholly human and demonstrates mankind's faithful relationship to God from the entirely human and female side.

Jesus, representing whole and holy Man, is completely obedient to the authority of the First Person of the Trinity, the Father. Here St. Paul contributes one of the most

moving insights of all Scripture. (It immediately precedes the quote of footnote 9 which is its ending). Paul sees that it is this example that Jesus, wholly Man, calls all Men to imitate:

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow. . .¹³

The man Jesus was wholly submissive to God. And he receives and passes on every Word and action from him:

For I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. And what I say, therefore I say as the Father has bidden me.¹⁴

Looking at our original diagram of three triune unities (Book I, page 90?), we visualize simply what otherwise is complex. The principle of God's ultimate agency became flesh in the human being Jesus, the "Son of God;" but the same Jesus also bears the principle of patient of perfect mankind who was made in the image of the Second Person, the "Son of Man." Son of God and Son of Man, two principles of the Trinity are manifest in Jesus in whom they work together seamlessly, perfectly and wholly. The Agent (masculine) principle of the Father, and the Patient (feminine) of the Son, opposites, are united in the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the complete Model of Man's authentic position and response to God. From him we Men learn who we are, and who we are meant to become - his image and likeness. Fully explained in Book One.

Consistent to these principles, Jesus as a male could have married, impregnated a woman and held authority over a human family. He chose, for other eternal determinants, to live out his masculine powers on a different plane than the biological. Man and woman may choose a celibate life with no denial of their God-given sexual

¹³ Philippians 2:5-9

¹⁴ John 12:49-50

nature. Thus, Jesus is the pivotal point for all universal order, facing God as Man, facing Man as God.

In him the irreconcilable opposites of authority and obedience, masculine and feminine, are absolutely and eternally united in the Third Person of the Trinity whose power it is. Thus, he is the New Covenant, which is the marriage of God and Man! Isaiah prophesied in two places, chapters 42:6 and 49:8, that the Messiah to come would *be* the covenant between God and his people.

Further along in this study, we will view the biological male as he looks to Jesus and orders his life by what he sees and hears. He, too, looks in two directions and lives pivotally. He faces God, or Christ, as a dependent patient; he faces his wife as a responsible agent. He learns the meaning of those two exercises of his will from both the contemplation of Jesus, and importantly, experientially, from the obedience of his wife whose dependence and obedience to himself he “knows.” Within himself, he experiences the unity of these opposites in the Holy Spirit.

As we have seen previously, it is popular, but pagan, to talk about androgyny or gender as though wiping out the differences of the sexes would make real unity between them possible. It is popular, but non-Christian, to think unisex is the answer to the problem of authority and the competition of man and woman’s polarity. It is also common today to blame cultural conditioning for sexual differences, and to attempt through the schools and media pressure to remove that conditioning - again at the center it is an anti-Authority (Satan in the Garden) therefore, anti-God move. The Scripture says no such thing. “The two shall become one flesh.” There is unity in polarity through the action of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER III THE WHOLE WOMAN, MARY

Jesus demonstrates by word, by deed, and by his Being, *Truth at the heart of things*. Mary, too, expresses truth - at the wholly human place. She is the consummate representative and expression of the perfect response of Man to God, and the perfect relationship of woman to man, and woman to mankind - all from the exclusively human side. Mary epitomizes Jesus' teaching, she epitomizes perfected Man, male and female, she epitomizes perfected woman - she is the whole and holy feminine.

Hiddenness

In Book II of this series, Mary was pulled forward from her chosen obscurity and was presented from the Bible's references to her. Book III would be missing the unblemished image of woman if we did not visit Mary again. Sometimes this will mean a retelling of the concepts presented more fully earlier, but there is always a new way of turning the facets of a diamond to catch every ray of light. In presenting before the mind's eye the whole spectrum of Mary again, we only hasten the reader's development toward reflecting that whole spectrum in her own being. This is the surest way for a woman to attain *shalom*.

The very sparseness of scriptural references to Mary tells us something that is importantly borne out when we reflect on what God loves to find in his human creatures. The small ones of God are extolled in the Old Testament. Called "*the anawim*" that littleness continues to be the character that Jesus looks for. . . "unless you become like little children." Examine the Beatitudes! So Mary's very hiddenness in the Biblical account begins a revelation of her whole femininity that must not be overlooked. This quality of a particular humility is to be sought by the woman who desires to realize a womanhood that will make her truly happy. So contrary to the spirit of our times, it is costly as something with so much value must be. This extolled hiddenness is not a physical hiddenness necessarily, though it implies modesty. Yet, it is a life out of the public eye and its importance is lost entirely to the world which will always look for glitter for glamor. Mary's life was ordinary, obscure and laborious. But women with this rare quality of smallness may be active in the world in all kinds of enterprises as Saint Benedicta tells us:

Whether she is a mother in the home, or occupies a place in the limelight of public life, or lives behind quiet cloister walls, she must be a handmaid of the Lord everywhere. So had the Mother of God been in all circumstance of her life, as the Temple virgin enclosed in that hallowed precinct, by her quiet work in Bethlehem and Nazareth, as guide to the apostles and the Christian community after the death of her son. Were each woman an image of the Mother of God, a Spouse of Christ, an apostle of the divine Heart, then would each fulfill her feminine vocation no matter what conditions she lived in and what worldly activity absorbed her life.¹

A picture comes to mind of Mother Teresa standing at a small sink, patiently filling old coke bottles with the dribble of water for some thirsty children that was released through the obsolete plumbing. (Was she contemplating “I thirst”, that meant so much to her?) Was there no one less important to the scene to stand filling water bottles? No one heard, “Sister, come here and fill these bottles, please.” There is no need in such a woman to be remarkable or significant to the world. The hiddenness of a rich, silent depth of empathy for all mankind, of continual communion with God, and of meditation flows like a subterranean river beneath all the outward bustle on the pavement of her life. Here she is always in retreat, but no one knows of it; even her left hand does not know what her right hand is doing. We know now the interior suffering she endured. The volumes of this writing are meant to help woman discover this hiddenness, the desert interior where scripture says cryptically that God will nourish her for a time, times, and half a time. Reversing the metaphor, the God of universe stoops to nourish such a woman with *living water*.

Made Acceptable - Full and Balanced

Now in the context of woman’s return to wholeness and holiness we will review and make more specific the qualities of Mary that a woman wishes to emulate in order to claim her godly, feminine heritage. There is a deep cord in the psyche which pulls us toward that which we admire; secretly that is what we would like ourselves to be. A desire to be the inner godly woman is in all women; God has put it there from the beginning. If Mary is held before the visionary intuition of a woman’s mind, that vision will develop into reality within her. A mother of twelve, phrased it this way:

Picture her within our mind . . . ourselves with her. We hold that picture, believe it, work at it. We put ourselves within her, and we see what we shall be. We hold it within the mind and let it be developed. In the process it becomes clearer and clearer, down to the little details .

¹ Stein, *Woman*, op.cit, p.52

. .we wait as servants, maidservants of the Lord, listening with ears and watching with eyes of faith. All women can actualize it.²

When Mary was asked for consent to be the mother of the Son of God, the angelic greeting held special words which told of her perfection in God's eyes. Presented in Book II more completely, different words are used in various versions of the Bible. "Full of grace" was the phrase commonly known until later versions substituted "highly favored." The Greek word means, as we have seen, "made- accepted." In her immaculate conception God did everything for Mary to make her acceptable to him as mother of his son, but, in the end, he did nothing more than he does for every human person through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Mary was simply made-accepted a little ahead of the rest of the race of men, and for its benefit.

To be called so by the Archangel Gabriel, the rest of scriptural references must reveal for us the true, total woman who is Mary. To be made-accepted means that she stands before God as complete and holy as God meant woman to be from the beginning; she is a new start, a new Eve, coming for the human family to be its perfect new Mother.

So what are the qualities of character that we may observe at the Annunciation itself when she first appears? She must be open towards God and towards Man, wholeheartedly given to God and willing to be given to mankind. That clear, openness was caught inexplicably on film in the portrayal of Mary by a young actress in "Jesus of Nazareth." How did the director find such a face as Olivia Hussey's? A spiritual opalescence rushed forward to meet whatever God had in store for her. No vestige of fear flickered there, only limitless trust. How do we gain such openness when we have come into the world as female babies already touched by sin, knowing fear from the first? There are only a few steps we can take, and they hold true for every growth in holiness we wish to make; the rest is God's work.

A later movie, "The Passion of Christ," was just as surely assisted by Providence with the choice of another actress portraying the holy mother, now immeasurable weighted with grief during the days of the sacrifice of her son. A memorable face stained with his blood again depicts the depths God may ask of a woman's self-giving.

Primary for we women is the desire to be whole and holy for God which begins with repentance; then, we pray asking Mary's intercession and help to become like her; thirdly, we watch confidently for answers to come to us from God, but through unlikely places; and lastly, we allow God to continually heal us through the Sacramental life of the Church, especially

² From a friend's letter: Garnet Lukosh

Penance and Eucharist. That is the answer for all growth in holiness - and it will happen. He will, says St. Paul, “fulfill every good resolve and work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you. . .”³ Only Believe! Or in the order Jesus gave us, “Repent and Believe the Good News!”

Keen awareness of the plight of the world without Christ – certainly Mary was. We are older now, and we look out of ill-focused eyes, so accustomed to seeing humankind suffering and oppression that we hardly remember the next morning the excruciating news of the night before. When we acknowledge this hardening of heart, the Holy Spirit begins to reverse it, bringing us to what the prophet Ezekiel promised would be true of God’s redeemed people:

A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you;
and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone, and give you a
heart of flesh.⁴

Emotionally, Mary had that strong emotive center indicative of woman, and had it in fullness and balance. Balance is seen in the control and objective reasoning she displays when confronted with a dazzling spiritual presence, an angel who proposes something she had meditated upon for God’s People, Israel, but had not dreamed of for herself. Certainly, she felt a chill of awe, but she was not reduced to quivering, unthinking emotional chaos. Her wits were quite with her. She was, says the scriptures, “greatly troubled, and considered in her mind.” We understand this as part of the masculine strengths that were such an important part of her wholeness. Reasonableness and objectivity balance the high feeling level of her feminine eros. Yet, when the pieces fit together in her mind, her heart willingly lets go of all of its expectations, its hopes and girlish dreams about what her future would be, and out of love for God and for Man she simply says, “yes, do to me according to your word.” At that moment she expresses a simple and uncomplicated soul, filled with one desire - to please God, to be what he intended, to fulfill his every desire for her and for the world.

He does not merely regard her from the outside; he becomes an actor in her. It needed the Virgin for this to be possible, the Virgin who made available her whole person, that is, her embodied existence [*Leib*], her very self, as the place of God’s dwelling in the world. The Incarnation required consenting acceptance.⁵

³ II Thes. 1 :11-12

⁴ Ezekiel 36:26

⁵ Ratzinger, op.cit, p.83

Epitome of Obedience

“Blessed are the pure in heart.” Obedience under these conditions is anything but onerous; obedience is the greatest praise of God a woman can give. Blessed means happy. Can we think of a greater cacophony of joy than that then exploding in her being? She sings it out in words from the Old Testament revealing another side of the whole woman. She has memorized the Scriptures, and she knows how they speak to the present moment. There is orderliness in her thought-life which nets around her emotions, containing them, aligning them to God’s Word, without dampening the spirit. From the heart comes a torrent that is channeled through intelligent understanding. She comprehends the meaning of Israel’s history, and how it culminates in her. Without pride, yet without dissembling, the effect only true humility can have, she accepts her unique and special place in God’s tremendous plan, and realizes it will bring this maidservant the blessings of faithful people throughout the ages.

She cries, “My soul magnifies the Lord!” A woman echoes this cry when she too gives God space and no longer magnifies herself – her natural propensity.

To magnify the Lord means, not to want to magnify ourselves, our own name, our own ego; not to spread ourselves and take up more space, but to give him room so that he may be more present in the world. It means to become more truly what we are: not a self-enclosed monad that displays nothing but itself, but God’s image. It means to get free of the dust and soot that obscures and begrimes the transparency of the image and to become truly human by pointing exclusively to him.⁶

To be so honest about one’s self is humility, so honest because of being unafraid of seeing one’s reflection in the eyes of God! That is a gift a woman may beg. Then whatever she accomplishes for the kingdom, she is free to revel in for his sake! No more pretense that what she does for him is nothing.

But, unlike Mary, most of us women are called into a sexual relationship with the man to whom God gives us. It is rarely an easy adjustment for a woman to accept that, in St. Paul’s words, she may “not rule over her own body, but (that) her husband does.” (Of course, this is reciprocal; St. Paul says she also rules over his body, though from all the advice written about sexual problems, it seems that she rarely desires to exercise her half of the rule.) Mary and Joseph never needed to work through such problems. Yet, even here, Mary’s self-giving is the way, and St. Paul’s further injunction on the subject is to be taken seriously,

⁶ *ibid*, p.75

Do not refuse one another except by agreement for a season, that you may devote yourselves to prayer, but then come together again, lest Satan tempt you through any lack of self-control.⁷

For the married, the sexual act becomes the renewal of the sacred covenant made at the altar; how can it be refused if we want the grace of God to form our union and become the sign of the eternal union of God and his People? How vigilant we must be under the pressures of the media age to keep our heads and hearts pure to engage in this covenant renewal in a humble, self-giving that is pleasing to God. We can be sure that the Marian woman will have a happy husband.

Virgin - Standing Alone

Mary's next action is one easily overlooked. How did this young woman set out on a sixty plus mile journey all by herself? The text does not say that she checked out this action with anyone; not even Joseph, though he may have known of her departure which was "with haste." And she was off to help her kinswoman Elizabeth with her old-age pregnancy. This should scatter any nonsense that the obedient woman has no inner voice and does nothing without direction. She was dependent on God alone, and listened to his word to her - this word was compelling and needed no other confirmation. Yet, because at this point though a virgin, she was not exactly a single woman, having by her engagement accepted the future headship of Joseph, it seems probable that she had his blessing on her decision.

The very word virgin, as we have seen, means "standing alone" and "belonging to no man." For his sake, and for her own, she would act in a different way when God gave her to Joseph to be the head of their holy union. There is also in this account a feeling of spontaneity, of youthfulness, and of joy in the miracles that have happened to both her cousin and herself, and a normal, healthy desire to be with another woman who completely understood what she herself was experiencing. How fearless she was in setting out for a three day journey that may have included going through unfriendly Samaria. Perhaps a little donkey pulled her in a small cart, and perhaps she found the home of relatives (everyone in the area was somehow related, rather like eastern South Dakota and other areas in our nation), or a friendly inn at nightfall, but what a different woman she appears than any pale image of her. If we were to write the story in what comes to the natural mind, after the angelic visitor, we might have her piously withdraw for a month of solitude and prayer - but that would be a mythical flourish, wholly unreal! She

⁷ 1 Cor. 7:5

was energetic and outgoing, and her natural need for relationship and sharing was quite as strong as her beautiful surrender of self to the will of God.

In Mary the true greatness and surpassing simplicity of Christian mysticism emerge into view: it does not consist in extraordinary phenomena, in raptures and visions, but in the abiding exchange of creaturely existence with the Creator . . .⁸

Women need women.

Women need relationships where heart can speak to heart in things that cannot be shared with even the most caring man. For that reason small groups of women who are spiritually seeking have formed in every time and place; it is a necessity, especially at a certain juncture of life. Here both the mystical and the earthy can be shared and sorted, new insights gained, and hurt and withered emotional limbs healed and fleshed out again because of the loving acceptance of another woman.

Mary and Elizabeth had a warm familial relationship from the time that the child Mary lived in Jerusalem and served in the Temple (so tradition says), yet their relationship changed with this visit. The Holy Spirit gave Elizabeth a surprising understanding immediately that “the mother of her Lord had come to (her).” But, though she realizes her set-apartness as mother of the Messiah, and that “all generations will call her blessed,” Mary takes no position other than the one she has always had, a servant of God, one of “low estate.” It is to do the chores for her aged cousin, to fetch and to carry that she stays three months until the birth of John. We see her with sleeves rolled up, apron tied around her swelling waist, sweeping out the house, doing up the dishes, fixing the food, and washing the clothes from early till late so that the older Elizabeth may stay off her feet.

Willing Servant

What feminine qualities may we list from such a scene? In all the parishes that the author has been a part, there have been a few women who come in to every church event to look for the unassigned work. They arrive early with extra home-cooked food that has not been solicited for a funeral, they immediately find an unfilled niche, fill the dishpan with suds or take out the broom, and when the last of the cleanup is accomplished they are there to turn out the lights. They expect no notice, and receive none. This very woman and her sisters have been held up as what is wrong with the Church - women held in no regard who are relegated to the kitchen. This

⁸ Ratzinger, op.cit., p.73

opinion rests on the human dislike of what God loves. This is Mary; she loves enough to serve and thinks nothing of it. This is the Church's model in everything the Church may do for the world. How we stand in need of repentance and reformation of our thoughts in order to be like Jesus and his Mother!

“Adapt Yourself to Him”

We presume that it is after John's circumcision that Mary, now in her fourth month, reattaches the donkey to the little cart, and sets off home to Nazareth. Soon Joseph will be aware that his bride-to-be is pregnant - she perhaps must tell him herself. And he is in a quandary. What to do with this young woman whom he loves, but who has seriously betrayed his trust. How miserable for the two of them! We can only imagine how fervently Mary prays, and how firmly she relies upon God until the issue is resolved by an angelic dream.

Life brings a great many serious trials and troubles into a woman's life. Times without counting it will be because of her spouse. Mary, no doubt, had no way of knowing how the giant knot would be untied - the angel did not tell her everything, and she had to exercise faith just like everybody else. At any moment she had the freedom to do as Eve had done and figure things out for herself, setting in motion sad consequences. How grateful heaven and earth are that she didn't! Women long to be less Eve and more Mary. In a story that is about a woman, not incidentally, Jesus taught in the story of the importunate widow that God has promised to act in reply to persistent prayer (see Luke 18:2). At the end of telling this story, Jesus wonders out loud if there will be faith on the earth when he comes again. Women are the vessels of this faith and are called to consciously exercise it in a hostile time that erodes faith faster than the morning sun melts the frost.

It happens that this is being written during the Advent Season when the birth story of Jesus is told and retold, even in unexpected places, like shopping malls and Public Television. Is it really so bad that the whole world comes to the crib year after year? How amazing! Buddhists and animists acknowledge Christmas. Despite unbelief, despite ridicule, despite all manner of wrong motives, the songs are sung, the words are spoken, and every knee does bow, consciously or unconsciously, if only at the cash register. It is quite wonderful! The focus may be very hazy, but the image is there behind all the falsity - a young mother, a strong father and an innocent newborn in the poorest of poor places, and a saint who put them first in his life, St. Nicholas.

St. Peter tells women, “adapt yourselves to him.”⁹ Adapt? To him? How far? Joseph must go to Bethlehem to answer an official edict, an even further journey than Mary’s visit to Elizabeth. Mary is in her ninth month, but she must go with him, unlike the woman of our times who says, “you go, and I’ll see you later - after all I’m not an object, and I have this big concern to see to . . .” The vehicle this time is the donkey - or is it the small cart? The scripture doesn’t say, but the tradition is strong and the image persistent that the pregnant mother rides this small beast of burden, the same that her Son will ride when acclaimed king. Either way, the journey is torturous - perhaps four days of jolting along.

(Woman) has the gift to live in an intimately bound physical compass and to collect her forces in silence; on the other hand, she is created to endure pain, to adapt and abnegate herself. She is psychically directed to the concrete, the individual, and the personal: she has the ability to grasp the concrete in its individuality and to adapt herself to it, and she has the longing to help this peculiarity to its development. An equipment equal to the man’s is included in the adaptive ability, as well as the possibility of performing the same work as he does, either in common with him or in his place.¹⁰

Adapt yourself to him. Adapt? How far? As far as is required. God has made woman to be adaptable; when she is not, when things must adapt to suit her, she is in a process of deformation. It is always a temptation to be the one who forces others to adapt to our needs, our wants and desires. But such a woman is deformed. We recognize that whenever we are near her.

Visions of Glory?

With religious experience, when she visions a prospect for doing or being on a new level of faith, a woman is tempted to make assumptions. Her adversary is at hand to hint at what will emerge on this new plane with God - glorious, good, important things. The adversary knows there is no surer way of destroying her mission. “Mary, not only will all people call you blessed, but this child will be a King with all the glories of Solomon, and you, like Bathsheba will be at his right hand, the honored Queen Mother clothed “in the gold of Ophir!”¹¹

Is that so? There is no room in the inn, the trip has brought on birth pangs, and you, Mary-beloved-by-God, will deliver your glorious child in a cow shed. After brief adulation of the

⁹ 1 Peter 3:1 Amplified Bible

¹⁰ Stein, *Woman*, op.cit p. 101

¹¹ Psalm 44:9

child by strangers, all will forget even they, and you will go, an exile, into a strange land. Then you will go back to your indifferent hometown to be no more notable than your neighbor women until they try to throw him over the nearby cliff, and later you stand by your ignominious son as he dies the death of a criminal. To the saints this truth of Mary feels exactly right. It is the very essence of coming close to God, and of accepting his Will. And with Mary, those like her walk on unfazed, strong and sure, despite their circumstances.

In meditating on her life. . .we learn what it means to live for and with Christ – in the everyday, in an unsentimental matter-of-factness that nonetheless enjoys perfect inner intimacy. Contemplating Mary’s existence, we also submit to the darkness that is imposed on our faith . . .”¹²

So where is the richness and fulfillment of the godly life? It certainly doesn’t show exteriorly. We see it alluded to in a short phrase, “Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart.” Thinking toward God and receiving his thinking toward you is meditation; the rewards are sensible, an enlightenment that brings joy, a great feeling of uplifting towards God. Pondering has to do with that. Loving toward God and receiving his loving of you is contemplation. The heart has to do with that. And the reward, they say, is more like darkness, like falling into an abyss or the “cloud of unknowing.” We think of Mother Theresa’s experience. But it would not be exchanged for all the gold of Ophir. Mary both pondered and kept in her heart. She knew both the Light of Lights, and the Unfathomable Depth - her soul was excruciatingly full of the agony and the ecstasy of God. What she is all women in Christ may be.

Women know the experience, almost daily, of watching lives of their loved children without comprehension of what God is doing. Things look impossible. Mary with Joseph did not know everything. They were not set apart as seers.

. . .“they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them” (Lk 2:50). Even for the believing man who is entirely open to God, the words of God are not comprehensible and evident right away. . . . Where there is no humility to accept the mystery, no patience to receive interiorly what one has not yet understood, to carry it to term, and to let it open as its own pace, the seed of the word has fallen on rocky ground; it has found not soil. Even the Mother does not understand the Son at this moment. . .

¹² Von Balthasar, op.cit.,p117

Above the Law?

When we women have scaled even these small spice mountains of the Eternal, what need have we for the prosaic ground level, for all those rules of the Church, for instance? What are these changeable disciplines that have nothing really to do with the Gospel, like not eating before communion, or avoiding meat on Fridays, which they say is a rule that may come around again. Isn't it the heart condition that is all important and the rest is like the error of the Pharisees whom Jesus chastised for being enmeshed in man-made rules?

But, here comes the Mother of God! Love this picture in your mind! She is entering the Temple carrying the baby Jesus, with Joseph alongside, or more than likely, he is carrying the infant. They have just purchased with their little money a sacrifice to offer according to the Law of Moses - two young turtle doves, which Joseph carries fluttering by their feet. This is for Mary's purification. Purification from what? Mary is simply preceding her Son who will say to John the Baptizer when he protests at being asked to baptize him; "Let it be now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."¹³

John was baptizing for repentance, what did Jesus need to repent of? Why were either of them submitting to such mere human prescriptions? But what would be their witness to the world if Mary had shunned any need of purification according to the Law of Moses, and if her Son had stood apart from any sign of repentance in his identification with the human race? And what is our witness to the world when we set ourselves above the laws of the Church body on the basis of superior experience or spiritual understanding? We simply are in such a case witnessing to the truth that we have been deceived. This is the deception that presents itself in Gnosticism which has been a plague in the Church since the First Century, and reappears perennially, now in the form of New Age "knowledge" which sets its adherents apart and above the rest of the common religious herd, or current day prophetesses who do the same. Eagerly the woman who is religious observes the laws and authority of the Church, and teaches her children so; there is no wholeness or holiness otherwise.

¹³ Mat 3:13-16

Mothering Love

With all her amazing gifts both human and divine, with all the facets of understanding insight into earth and heaven, was being a mother and a wife all Mary could contribute? What a shame she did not live in an age where those capabilities could be put to work in a wider arena. We know that such a statement is nonsense. What better thing could be done than to bear the Christ child and bring him up to the time of his mission? But, we might say, "If my child were the Christ, I would find that is the best thing I could do, but seeing my child is not, it is better for me and for him that I find my fulfillment working five days a week and bringing home a paycheck." In the judgment of our coarsening culture, mothering is no longer worth much; we know now that anyone can change a diaper, hold a bottle, or rock a baby. And it is "anyone" who is doing it. Can anyone pour into the unseen, but avid emotional mouth the necessary element for that baby in every touch, in every word, and glance - mothering love? That mothering love, they say, is more formative to the soul and spirit of the hungry psyche than mother's milk is to the little body. And we realize how mother's milk gives the child immeasurably better nourishment than formula feeding, even to protection from future disease. So what does mothering love provide?

As society crumbles around us in proportion to the neglect of the family, when will women awaken to where real importance lies? Mary was the channel that brought nourishment of body and soul to Jesus, and she completed herself in so doing. Women cannot become whole if they are unconcerned with the wholeness of their offspring; no cultural or professional experience can make up for this crater hole of lack. We have further discussed in chapter one openness to fertility and its dedication to God in a woman's orientation to fruitfulness and life.

It was in following the dictates of the Mosaic Law that Mary encountered God in a new way. Two elderly faithful of God, Anna and Simeon, prophesied to her and over her baby son. Through them, no longer directly from God as in her angelic encounter, she learns something new. The two could be easily overlooked because of their age and societal insignificance; but in God's eyes these were giants of faith, having ears in the heavens that heard what no one else was hearing, not even Joseph and Mary. What wisdom to keep the father and mother unaware of what they were, and to let the old tell them great things. But such sobering things. The mission of this child, known to them to be God from God, would not be smooth and unchallenged. He would not be accepted, not even by his own, even as Simeon and Anna were the only ones of the multitudes of his people to welcome him in the Temple. He would be spoken against and

would be the cause of the fall of many in Israel (though the cause of some to rise as well). And, Mary would suffer. The sword piercing him would extend through him into her own soul.

The scene in which Jesus, teaching those gathered around him in a certain house, refuses to receive the visit of his Mother, who is standing outside, seems almost unbearable to us. . . Did Mary herself understand it? We have to accompany Mary in spirit as she makes her way home and try to imagine her state of mind. The sword gnaws at her soul; she feels bereft of her inmost self, as if the point of her life has been drained away. Her faith, which at the beginning had received so many sensible confirmations, is plunged into a dark night. . . And she is once again pushed back into the rank and file of believers when the woman of the people praises the breasts that Jesus suckled . . . and Jesus changes the subject.

The purpose of this constant training in the naked faith Mary will need under the Cross is often insufficiently understood; people are astonished and embarrassed by the way in which Jesus treats his Mother. . . He himself is the first one to wield the sword that must pierce her. But how else would she have become ready to stand by the Cross . . . ?¹⁴

Mothers hold that sweet small form, breathing in that distinctive baby smell, and never imagine that each little one will, in making his way in the world, be the source of her suffering - suffering and suffering. It is nothing compared to *the* Mother and her suffering, but, nevertheless, sometimes all we can bear. To stand by and let experience be the teacher until the child, sometimes at middle-age or later, but still a spiritual embryo, turns and has his born-againness of baptism take hold in a living faith, that is the excruciating role of mother.

To accept and to be available is the first step required of her; to let go and release is the second. Only in this way does her motherhood become complete. . . Her Son remains a sign of contradiction, and she is thus kept to the very end in the pain of this contradiction, in the pain of her messianic motherhood.¹⁵

We cannot fix it; though when there is an unmistakable God-given opportunity, we do not hesitate to act. The fixing is God's work.

It is wise to recognize that disparagement about "fixing" is part of secular psychology and not part of the Christian Gospel. Jesus came to fix everything for those willing to let him, and we have his Truth to dispense - a Truth that has the power *to fix* the human condition. Just how engaged is the Old Enemy in the worry we have and the reluctance to help to take the speck from our brother's eye - that is, after we have diligently worked at removing the beam from our

¹⁴ von Balthazar, *Mary The Church at the Source*, Ignatius 1997 p. 108-109

¹⁵ Ratzinger, *op.cit.*, p76

own? The great saints were not loath to act when God opened the way. We need the boldness of Esther and Judith when the opportunity is given; we need the intrepidity of St. Catherine of Siena to march in when God opens the door. To hold this possibility of action in tension with our more frequent inability to say or do anything in the lives of those around us, is part of the Christian's reason for spending his life on his knees. There is that wise prayer:

God grant that me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.¹⁶

Standing

Mary could only hold in her heart all the pain of the rejection of Jesus, and at the end could only stand at his cross. But standing was in itself something very great. When we are tried to the end of our wits, when we are drained of all we can humanly give, when our hearts are lying broken in pieces, what is our stance? Do we sink unto a fainting couch, like the Victorian ladies, only to be revived with smelling salts? Are we supine in a feather bed, bemoaning our fate, and demanding sympathy from every person in the vicinity? Do we writhe and thrash, sinking into depression, so that all know of our overwhelming grief? What is the whole woman's example?

Is she in agony? Has that sharp sword that pierced his heart, releasing water and blood, finally found her own soul? Yet, she stands. No one is supporting her; that is, no human person supports her, though we believe John's eyes were traveling between her and Jesus with profound concern. Her son is falling into the depths of desolation; she falls with him, yet she *stands*. He must drink the last dregs of humanity's sin and separation from God to fulfill his humanity and the prophecies of the past. Realizing fully his total bereavement as he cries out his abandonment by God is the final turn of the sword in Mary. She would never, never have him feel lost from the Father. My God! My God! And still she stands.

So dear woman, what strength do you want when you are in the most difficult of straits? Have you come to that point where the next moment feels like a drop-off into oblivion, and wanted to take it? To become part of the blankness? So, what do you do? What does wholeness and holiness tell you? Because of your long steadiness in prayer, your knees are firm by the

¹⁶ Known as the Serenity Prayer, it has been credited to Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr

exercise you have given them in the small things, and you keep on moving into that moment when under the press you cannot pray. Like every other human endeavor, spiritual strength needs daily exercise. If, because of Christ and his Way, you have been unwilling to take the short-cut, or to demand someone else take over, or looked for inordinate pleasures and comforts, then at the moment of supreme exaction you, too, will stand unsupported except by God's grace and it will be sufficient.

How did Mary feel when Jesus looked down on her standing there, called her, simply, "Woman," and gave her to be John's mother and he to be her son? Just "woman?" Another son? She his mother? Really? Within her wrung heart, was there room then for any love for a new son? Or did she immediately recognize the greater meaning - she is to be mother to all Jesus loves? This seems the most incredible thing of all. That a mother, devastated by the writhing agony of her only son, should be so overlooked in her own depths of misery that she be asked to take in at once all suffering humanity - hasn't she done enough? Isn't this the wrong time, Jesus, if you have any compassion for the Woman?

No, gather your strength *again*, Mother; put yourself aside *again*, Mother; open your arms *again*, intercede and comfort others *again* - the whole wide world, enter into uncounted others' joys and sorrows *again and again and again*. There is to be no end to your self-giving; it is eternal. And you, reader, are you willing to be this whole and this holy in your own small, insignificant way? Because, if you are, it will surely be yours! Mother Mary will be your loving mother to comfort and aid you.

CHAPTER IV LOVING AUTHORITY : THE HUSBAND

Do we understand that Jesus displayed for us two natures with two distinct stances in regard to authority? First he shows us both how a benevolent authority is exercised on the part of God – his God-nature with all its authority stunning everyone, and second how joyfully to obey God’s command on earth – his man-nature with its total submission to the Will of God. So from his dazzling example, we turn to watch the Christian man carry out his headship over the human family. Just what his authority is there, and what it is not, certainly has been well defined, but for a woman to realize her meaning, she necessarily juxtaposes herself to the man and his role and, therefore, must understand it thoroughly in order to help him carry it out.

Headship

When questions arise about headship’s proper realm of responsibility and its exercise, there is only one source for answers. It lies in contemplation of that Holy and Whole Relationship *ad intra* of the Holy Trinity (the whole thesis of Book one of this series – diagram page 90?), and the desire to be holy as God is Holy. St. Paul outlined the headship of each triune unity in I Corinthians.

But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ. The head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.¹

The man, the head in his triune unity of man, Holy Spirit and woman, meditates on the purpose and execution of authority seen in the First Person of the Holy Trinity - Christ’s head. It was in God the Father’s image that the man was created. His gifts of headship are a stepped down, human version of that eternal headship of the Father.

¹ I Corinthians 11:3

Ever since Satan redefined authority as power and prestige in the Garden of Eden it has been abused. That those under oppressive authority hate their position is the obvious sign of Satan's world rule which is experienced both with the abuse of authority and the resentment of being made to obey it. For woman to embrace her role, the headship she receives must be conformed to that of Jesus and his Father - utterly contrary to the way authority is wielded in this Fallen Order. Authority, in accord with him who bestows it, is not privilege in terms of human power, but *responsibility* in terms of *obedience* to the Divine command. It is not prestigious over-lording, but it is marked by humble service. Obedience to this benevolent authority is sweet for everyone who answers to it.

As head of the family, the husband is the person responsible. Father Boylan expresses the necessary humility for this position.

There is another case where humility insists on holding the reins, and that is where God's will has made a particular man responsible. The father is head of the family, because he is the person responsible. Quite often he has not got the best judgement, and in any event, prudence and love demand that he take counsel with his wife; but the final decision should be his. And he can insist upon it in all humility, for there he has the "grace of state." This means that where God has made a certain man responsible for deciding, he will see to it that those concerned do not lose by submitting to his decisions, if their motives in submitting are correct.²

"Grace of state." This is when the wife and children look over the shoulder of father and husband – the family's head, to see Jesus standing there with ultimate headship. By his grace working through the order of headship that he has established, those "concerned" will not lose by submitting to his decisions. It is a protection given because of obedience to God's command. There is a "however" to this order. We live in a fallen realm. Not every man exercising headship will do so in even the least conformity to God's will. There are degrees of sin and error that cannot be tolerated by the obedient woman. This fine distinction will be examined later.

Energy Source - Generation

Representing the Father, the first principle of his human triune unity, the man is first of all the source of energy for the marriage covenant. As a human man, he is, of course, a secondary and imperfect source, for as a creature, he is dependent totally on his Creator. As the human source of

² Boylan, This Tremendous Love, op.cit., p.249

energy, he exemplifies the First Person, the Agent, who creates through the matrix of the Second Person, the Patient or Responder.

. . .for *in him* all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether throne or dominions or principalities or authorities – all things were created *through him* and for him. . .³

As the source of energy for their union (woman, of course, has an energy source of her own which she also contributes - but this is not *the source for their union*) the man begets children *through* the matrix of the woman even as the Father creates all things *through* the Son. The man, then, becomes the father of human children.

We know about fatherhood by observing our human fathers, but that is not where fatherhood originates. Human fatherhood, though often good, is never good enough to provide insight into real fatherhood. Human fatherhood is pulled up to the Revelation of God's fatherhood, rather than the anthropomorphic opposite being the case.

. . .I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.⁴

Man is a father because of God's primary fatherhood. In the image of God, man and woman were made - the man to image the Fatherhood of the First Person of the Trinity. Saint Bonaventure says, ". . . the Father of Light from whom the whole concept of fatherhood in heaven and earth derives." To know fatherhood we must come to know God the Father through the experiences of his first family, the Hebrews, through their prophets, and then through Jesus, his only Son. Within history, God has revealed himself as *the Father*. If this seems in any way contradictory to the analogy of the Trinity as *husband* to mankind let us consider the parallels.

Reviewing again our theological base in the Trinity: The Father initiates creation through the Son. These two ob-positioned Persons in the Holy Spirit are one God, who stands over against our humanity in a way we perceive as masculine to feminine. By making husband and wife the analogue of a great dynamism of love at the heart of things, and by naming Man his spouse, God made evident the gift of equality given to his Beloved. Such equality that was Man's in the Original Order is hard for us to realize within our fallen experience, but that very equality is affirmed many times in Scripture as we have seen. (Book I)

God granting Man an equality of holiness in Perfection, can be expressed equally well and differently by another analogue used in Scripture. We first contacted it in our discussion of Genesis 5

³ Colossians 1:16 italics added

⁴ Ephesians 3:15

in chapter two. God is not male, and mankind is not female; so this same relationship may be expressed in the human analogy of father and son, though not as completely or ideally.

The idea of sonship, however, does not play a predominant part in the religion of the Old Testament. The relationship between Yahweh is for the most part conceived of as the relationship of a lord to his slave (both ideas are found together in Mal 1:6), often also as that of a king to his people, a married man to his wife, or a bridegroom to his bride (marriage).⁵

Just as a father is first a husband, so God reveals himself as both. Whether called “his spouse” or “his son” the picture is of Man as his beloved dependent for whom he cares and provides. St. Paul puts the two aspects together in his letter to the Ephesians - Jesus, heads the body which then must be masculine, but the Body is also Bride. (It must be noted that Jesus is careful to separate his Sonship which is wholly God, from the sonship of Man who is son by adoption, when he differentiates, “*my* Father and *your* Father” - see John 20:17.) Use of either son or spouse designates full participation in his life, and grants a kind of equality. Both are necessary to complete the picture of the relationship of Man to God.

Because we are all being changed into the likeness of Christ Jesus, the Son, and the male is the head of the human family, it is also right to see ourselves, male and female, designated as “sons of God” in the eternal realm of heaven. Accepting this adopted sonship like unto Jesus, woman submits her singularity to become one in union with a single designation, “son and he”. The final triune unity takes the designation of the Head.

The man stands in the human race as the Father does in the Trinity. As the energy source he not only impregnates the woman for new life, but he energizes, initiates, and leads the enterprise of his family.

The analogy holds true in relation to the children. It pertains to his duties as head of the family to make sure of the order and harmony of family life, to see to it that every member is made not only to care for his own individual development but also consider the others and to practice the self-denial required in the performance of his household duties. And finally, through concern for the well-ordered natural life of each individual and of the entire house, he must not neglect the family’s spiritual life. In his small community, the husband imitates Christ as head of the entire family and, according to his powers, to

⁵ op. cit., Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology, p. 863

further all seeds of grace which are stirring in them. The more intimate his own union with the Lord, so much the more will he succeed.⁶

The function of fathering a man seems to fulfill biologically simply by following his natural sexual desires (openness to children we have written about earlier); however, to rise to the fathering revealed by God, he must also fill that function spiritually and psychically (mentally, emotionally, and volitionally). His sexual energy is obvious, but he must be the energy source for his wife and children on many levels. This energy flowing generously into and through them is creative, not manipulative.

The multi-leveled energy of the father and husband behaves in a most appropriate way considering its ultimate God-source. It is self-giving, and loses its identity in rousing the dormant gifts of his wife and children. These gifts, whether they are physical or mental, in the arts or sciences, are their own, not his, though his energy is needed to make them grow. This self-gift of energy is expressed in the interest, time and money that he devotes to these persons; by the resources he provides, by the touch of a hand which encourages and strengthens, by the patient teaching which broadens the abilities to handle life, by the laughter which enlivens, revitalizes and refreshes, and by the spiritual leadership which eventually wins their free wills to Christ. His energy flows out to many forms of matrix, psychic and spiritual, mental and physical, furthering the fulfillment of the lives around him. If he does not do this, then another energy will fertilize these hungry potentials, and the results of their giftedness may not be advantageous to the persons or to the Kingdom of God.

If the man is to be the leader, ("the head")- and we can add accordingly, likewise the head of the entire family - in the sense Christ is the head of the Church, so is it the duty of man to conduct this microcosm of the great Mystical Body in such a way that each of its members may be able to develop his gifts perfectly and contribute to the salvation of the entire body, and that each may attain his own salvation. The husband is not Christ and does not have the power to bestow talents. But he does have the power to bring talents which are existent to development (or suppress them), as a person most certainly can be helpful in developing the gifts of another. And it is wisdom on his part not to allow these gifts to atrophy but to permit them to be developed for the welfare of all. And since he himself is not perfect like Christ, but rather a creature with many gifts and many defects, his highest wisdom may be to permit the gifts of other members to compensate for his defects, just as it could be the highest political wisdom of the sovereign to allow a judicious minister to rule. However, it is essential for the well-being of the

⁶ Stein, op.cit.,p.76-77

organism that this should come about under the guidance of the head. If the body rebels against the head, the organism will suffer as much as if the head were to allow the body to atrophy.⁷

Is anything more deleterious to the Christian family than the father who withholds attention and strength from his family, who either spends it all upon himself and his own interests, or who never stirs it up within himself? He must not hesitate in the exercise of leadership, in the way men did in the time of the Judges. Then, as now, when men lay down their responsibilities, Deborahs and Jaels come forward - masculinized women who fill the vacuum of headship, but whose fruitfulness for Yahweh is lost in the process. The Deborah/Jael syndrome appears everywhere. Men retire, and strong women take over. It gets the job done, but it ends by spiritually impoverishing the woman and the children. The woman will not be stimulated and freed into that higher fruitfulness by which her family and society becomes blessed. This is the disease of the modern family. The germ of the disease may be the weakness of a man which in turn stimulates a woman's aggression which, in a vicious circle, further weakens the man. Scripture describes life with the contentious woman as the cause of the man's weak knees. However, many a woman has accepted her receptive role, only to have her husband refuse to be the source of energy for her and her children.

One of his duties is to strengthen the spirituality of his wife, not permitting her to lapse into a life of mere sensuality; this could be done by letting her participate in his own creative work or in independent activity of her own. Should she be deprived of both alternatives, should he try to confine her to a sphere too narrow for her talents, or should he relinquish her entirely to the merely sensual life, he would carry a great share of responsibility for the resulting consequences: responsibility for the atrophy of her higher life, for pathological disturbance, for and excessive dependence on husband and children, one which becomes a burden to them, and for the desolation of her life if one day she is left behind on her own.⁸

The man can do much to help his wife become a whole woman. She needs his encouragement to stimulate the creativity which makes her happy. Helene Deutsch, the psychiatrist attuned to women in particular, found this need in her investigation of the feminine psyche.

Even talented women are often uncertain of the value of their own ideas until they receive them from someone they respect. This remarkable combination of projection and identification is doubtless connected with woman's generally passive attitude. The feeling of

⁷ Ibid., p.67,69

⁸ Ibid., p.76

insecurity in creative ability corresponds to the deep rooted need of woman to be fecundated from outside in order to be creative.⁹

As the one where the buck stops, the husband is responsible for the spiritual growth of the family members in all the externals; participation in the Church and the Sacraments, acts of charity, the life of communal prayer, and the disciplines that promote healthy growth for each one. The initiative for all this, along with the provision of roof, food and clothing, are his, though under special circumstances of necessity he can be aided in providing for his family by his wife.

Provider

Though ultimate fathering is the Fatherhood of God, and though even the fallen male has a faint imprint of this perfect origin, the human father now learns his role from the family and the society into which he is born. Anthropology tells us that the idea of father varies from society to society but the important things are constant - the faint imprint of his origins remains. In the following quote, Margaret Mead uses “nurturing” when the more accurate word would be “providing.” Nurturing refers to a more personal feeding, even a nursing aspect we would associate with the female and not the male. The male *provides* rather than *nurtures* though the spiritual energy just examined could translated into a kind of nurture.

When we survey all known human societies we find everywhere some form of the family, some set of permanent arrangements by which males assist females in caring for children while they are young. . . . Its distinctiveness lies instead in the nurturing behaviour of the male, who among human beings everywhere helps provide food for women and children . . . Among our structurally close analogues - the primates - the male does not feed the female. He may fight to protect her or to possess her, but he does not nurture her . . . Somewhere at the dawn of human history, some social invention was made under which males started nurturing females and their young.¹⁰

We would be pleased to tell Ms. Mead that this distinction between mankind and animals lies much deeper than she supposes, and that the traits found in humans come from their original unfallen nature created by God in his image and likeness. Her “social invention” is God’s invention. Women and children in the human society are universally the dependents of men. Men as fathers are providers. This vestige of perfection has persisted since “somewhere at the dawn of human

⁹ Deutsch, op.cit., p.132

¹⁰ Mead, Male and Female, op.cit., p.145 We have noted before that Mead’s science was imperfect, slanted by her prejudices.

history” though today with woman’s assuming the masculine role, it is being dismissed, to the detriment of the family. When it is lost in any segment of society we find social upheaval and disintegration.

As provider, the man meets his family’s needs without their asking. Needs are to be distinguished carefully from wants and desires. In meeting real needs he is more generous than they “deserve.” That is, his care in this provision far exceeds their awareness, nor does he look for constant recognition or thanks. He moves to their needs out of love and not for self-gratification. Yet, he knows the necessity of teaching his children gratitude, and encourages this by slowly giving them responsibilities that teach the value of work, money and things. There even may be times when the family’s welfare makes their work and financial contribution necessary.

When it comes to the material provision for the family’s needs, it is often stated that the financial pressures of our times make it necessary for the woman to supplement the income. It has been true at specific times in history that the mother must work outside the home. But this must not be assumed without first taking a critical look at the family needs and wants. The mother’s presence in the home while the children are young is so vital to the whole growing process; no one else can be an adequate substitute. Better that some material wants, if not critical in terms of food and clothing, are set aside, than that the mother leaves the home to supply them while neglecting the more important dimensions of family life.

What causes financial pressure? Has the family absorbed values which are questionable in the light of the gospel? Is the family not content with a standard of living less than the extravagance pictured in the media? Can the wants that cause us to go into debt, adding interest payments to our already stressed resources, be resisted? What about the temptation of fads, and things designed to become obsolete? Can the family reject advertising pressures which whet appetites for the new, whatever the cost? Alvin Toffler, fifty years ago, estimated that in one lifetime the number of goods it is possible to possess will multiply thirty-two times.¹¹ Imagine what fifty years has wrought. Then families had four times the possessions our parents had at the same stage of life, what would it be now? Is our life happier, freer, or more meaningful than theirs? At the same time, we recognize that man’s ingenuity in creating things has freed us from much drudgery, and has given us a dominion over nature that makes possible many spiritual pursuits. This computer has made possible

¹¹ Toffler. Alvin, *Future Shock*, (N.Y., 1970) p.24

work unthought-of previously; we are not burdened by its materiality; rather we marvel at what Man can do within the providence of this wonderful material world, and dedicate this potential to the glory of the Creator. God's Providence may, with prayerful wisdom, be aided by Amazon.com.

"God helps those who help themselves," that deceptive slogan wrongly attributed to Scripture, is often heard in place of "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be yours as well."¹² "These things," if you read the entire passage, refers to the essentials of food and clothing. Not only does the compulsion-to-buy distract the family from Christian goals, but such values obscure the promise of Jesus that our daily needs will be met by a loving Father. Once true of the Christian family, hard work and trust in God's provision is a forgotten virtue. Jesus remonstrates with his hearers when he realizes their unbelief about God's provision, "O, you of little faith."

Finances are, for a trusting husband and father, not a matter of mere addition and subtraction, but more like the multiplication of loaves and fishes. It is one of the sad realities spilling out of feminism, that the father of the family begins to look at his wife with dollar signs in his eyes rather than with appreciation for her essential mother/ family centering role. If a working wife is a sign of the times, is he aware of all the dire societal sicknesses that have come along with this *sign of the times*? There have been historic times, and times of family tragedy when economic realities forced the woman to work to keep the wolf from the door. But that is hardly the case for most families in our times. Does the man want more money regardless of the power this desire has to open the family door to a different kind of family-devouring wolf?

The prophets of old and Jesus himself have given us another guide to bountiful family provision, and it is not to win the lottery, rather, it lies in the attitude toward giving. The measure given to charity, pressed down and flowing-over, will be given back. The tithe given to God's work will never be missed, because our providential God will not see generosity go unrewarded.

The material well being of a Christian family is geared to God's will. A woman does not leave the family to become a co-provider unless living the gospel way of trusting God finds critical needs still are unmet. There are, of course, women who have no choice - widows, single women, and women whose husbands are disabled. There are also societal times when both parents must work just to provide a roof over their children's heads, and not the roof of what most of the world would regard a mansion. However, for the good of its members, it should be considered normative

¹² Matthew 6:25-33

for the woman to be at home during her child caring years, and the husband to be the sole support of his family. In this, it goes without saying, that any personal financial resources of the woman go not into a private account but into the family account whose oversight is her husband's.

Justice

Headship means that the father is the final decision maker. The children make their requests of him, and he is the person responsible for "yes" and "no." This is true until they reach the time of responsibility, in Jung's terms, the second birth of ego emancipation. The father encourages this step of maturity, slowly relinquishing them to their own decisions, while maintaining the necessary tension to keep them from pulling away too soon. Allowing them to become their own persons, he will aid them in transferring their need for true authority from him to God and his Word. In helping them, he will not foster dependency, but rather recognition of who they are as God's children. This crucial timing he realizes varies with individual children, and because of their need for self-motivation will not be free from mistakes. This is not an easy task as any parent of a teen-ager will tell you. A father relies on prayer and faith; and his wife is an inestimable help to him in contributing all her insights and knowledge. He does not fear any loss of headship when he depends upon her intuition to guide him; rather it marks his strength.

The family burden which the husband bears in addition to his professional duties would seem all too heavy if his helpmate did not stand by his side; she is called in accordance with her nature to carry more than half of this load. She craves for an unhampered development of her personality just as much as she does to help another toward that same goal. And thus the husband will find that she can give him invaluable advice in guiding the lives of the children as well as of themselves; indeed, often he would fulfill his duties as leader best if he would yield to her and permit himself to be led by her.¹³

Though no human being, struggling to grow in Christ, can expect to order his home perfectly, we have God's promise that he helps us to fulfill his will. . . that it may be on earth as it is in heaven (pray God). An ordered home, in which the law is not a binding set of restrictions, but the basis for a stable organization based in love, is the environment God intended for little children to grow in. In such a home penalties for choosing wrongdoing are appropriate, constant and fair.

With justice comes a sense of security that makes enforcement of rules rare. Something in the atmosphere of a just home, headed by a just man, brings about interpersonal respect and makes

¹³ Stein, op.cit., p. 77

trouble between family members the exception. Yet, just as God the Father punishes and disciplines those whom he loves, when need be, so does the loving father.

Have you forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons? - "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished by him. For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons; for what son is there that his father does not discipline. If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers to discipline us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.¹⁴

At his coming into this world, each child is a weak descendant of Adam. In order to protect him from himself and from others, he must live under the law until the time when as a mature person he cuts his dependent ties to his parents. Thomas Howard writes of the importance of teaching a child all these rules and holding him to them:

But there it is. It is what your nanny and your mother and your father and your schoolmasters taught you: let him go first! pass it to her first! wait till the others have been served! stand up! hush! smile! shake hands!

Oh damn, damn! Why won't they leave me alone?

They won't leave you alone, boy, because left thus alone you would turn into a cad and thence into a monster and thence into a damned soul.¹⁵

Like letting go of one hand to take another, a young person, at that point of transition, makes a free choice to heed and love the Lord who eventually sets him free from any burden of the law, though not from God's law itself which has become part of his nature in loving God. But in the meantime, the law-enforcer in the family functions as the rewarder of obedience and the punisher of violations. In this the father must be governed by the law of love that he observes in the Father of all. During their childhood the line must be clear; boundaries are established within which the child is free, but beyond which he does not go without consequences. This is the way God deals with his children.

¹⁴ Hebrews 12:5-11

¹⁵ Howard, Thomas, C.S.Lewis Man of Letters(San Francisco 1987)p.84

No human father has infallible wisdom. Mistakes happen. But a man admits his mistakes without loss of dignity, if he exercises authority only in obedience to God.

Emotional Remoteness

Even though we are taught about our loving Father of the “Our Father,” and through Jesus came to show his love for us, of the Three Persons of the Trinity the Father is the most remote to us. Theologian John MacQuarrie writes,

The Father, as primordial Being, is the depth of the mystery of God. We could not possibly know anything of him “in himself.” We know him only in so far as he does pour himself out in the dynamics of Being and is revealed in and through the other persons who are joined with him in the unity of Being.¹⁶

The function of fathering is a more hidden activity than that of mothering in the very nature of things. It is also in the first of fathers. Because of the very nature of command and justice, the father finds that, comparatively, he is emotionally remote to his children. The ties to the mother are by nature closer. She has gifts of empathy for the fruit of her womb that God has not given to fathers. She it is who receives that newborn into her arms and to her breast. The man cannot come between them, he recedes from being first. As law giver and law enforcer, no matter how mildly and wisely this governance is carried out, the human father is often less well known to his children even though he loves them deeply.

His role requires impartiality, not sentiment; it demands fair judicious decisions, not emotional ones. We have seen in many ways that God did not equip man and woman in the same way - the attributes shared are found unequally in the sexes. A man does not easily do inner weighing, “pondering in the heart.” That is the natural emotive base of a woman’s psyche, Very often he finds out what is going on in the inner life of his child from his wife.

Under the pressures of feminism, a mother and father may feel there is something wrong with the kind of love the man exhibits toward his children, when it simply indicates the interdependence of the relationship of husband and wife. Efforts toward helping the man become more relational are not wrong, a little balance to his more exterior approach to things will be appreciated by his family; but on the whole, a father finds that his wife is his invaluable aid in

¹⁶ MacQuarrie, op.cit.,p.112

understanding his children, while she relies on his judgment of what is best for them. This is an informed judgment, because he will listen to his wife before making decisions. St. Benedicta pictures the way mother and father contribute to the self-concept of their daughters, her special concern, which can be equally true of their sons:

Finally, it has already been emphasized also that the mother is called and equipped to detect her child's individuality and the needs which arise from it. The mission of being a prototype of pure humanity holds for the father in like measure (even if he brings the ideal of perfection to fruition along other paths). In order to further the girl's formation to authentic womanhood, her relationship to the father must needs pave the way for trustful association, for a loving self-subordination and readiness to serve. Although an understanding of individuality and its claims is generally less true of man than of woman, it is yet the father's duty to consider it reverently, to try to understand it (possibly with the help of the mother's more sensitive faculty of empathy), and to meet or at the least allow the necessary practical measures for the girl's development. It is incumbent on both parents that, in mutual agreement and by suitable methods, they counteract in the child's nature all those urges which impede their goals.¹⁷

Our saint writes of the father's duty to "consider reverently" his child's individuality. One of the positive contributions brought to family relationships by the Woman Movement is the insistence that men try to develop more of a listening ear. Children need to be listened to by their fathers in communications that are not always verbal. His listening ear and watchful eye will oversee them, often meeting their needs before they ask. Yet, answering immediately, or affirmatively is not always necessary. Children must also learn to pass the tests of patience and perseverance appropriate to their age. Denial of their desires helps them learn attitudes essential in the Christian household where God's ways are not our ways.

Protector

Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking some one to devour. Resist him, firm in you faith.¹⁸

With special vigilance, a husband and father will protect his children and his wife from evil. The Wisdom of Sirach (much wisdom is here) has the father warn his children of how their safety is in his hands.

¹⁷ Stein, op.cit., p.207

¹⁸ 1 Peter 5:8-9

Listen to me, your father, O children, and act accordingly, that you may be kept in safety.¹⁹

In realizing his God-given powers as master of his house, a father guards it from raids by the Enemy. By protecting the avenues to the minds of those under his authority, he defends against all that may lead to moral illness. By guarding the avenues to their bodies, he defends against all that may lead to sickness and disease. Believing that the healing power of Jesus Christ is available today, with faithful expectation he prays for healing for body, mind, and emotions with his children, while at the same time he does not deny or avoid doctors and medicine.

Confirmed by others, Dr. Paul Tournier estimates that as many as 80% of all physical illness is spiritually caused, and is remedied by revision of life (penance) and prayer. The father will oversee his household with faith in God's healing power through the Sacraments, and through his personal prayer, and will watch that spiritual ills do not overtake those under his charge because of his laxity or ignorance. In a solemn trust that God has given him power to work in his name, the father exercises powers of protection and healing.

Particularly dangerous moral fevers are transmitted daily into the home by the internet, television programs, books, magazines and newspapers. Today even the educational institutions cannot be trusted, but must be carefully monitored. Schools, elementary to university, now freely transmit gross immorality that a generation ago would incur judicial penalties. The mental and emotional aspects of a child's life may be deformed by these unrelenting pressures and persuasions. The secular world worries about the effects of the internet and television on children, how much more should Christian parents, chiefly the father, be concerned and alert. Action must be taken to prevent this infection transmitted by a cynical, immoral, and rebellious world.

A wise woman will realize that her husband has been given the duty to guard her own spiritual growth against deception, and will value his gift of judgment to steer her in safe and sane paths. Earlier, we discussed what St. Paul meant in regard to angelic interference (Book II), and that woman, because of her larger bank of spiritual antennas, was more in danger of being spiritually deceived. Because of this, always with her assent, he guides her to sort out from her rich intuitive life, those things which are questionable. If her spiritual life is dramatic, he doesn't set her on a pedestal. Unless he is of a more emotional temperament, his spirituality is usually more observant of the doctrine and worship of the Church, and less spontaneous. However, lightness, or

¹⁹ Sirach 3:1-2

numinosity, is not proof of godliness. She needs his practical discernment, just as his spirituality needs the discernment of a spiritual director. If he can do it with love and tact, it may be appropriate to puncture some spiritual balloons. In the course of time, this will work out for the best for both partners for it requires humility and gives the Holy Spirit freedom in their lives, individually and together.

Does his spiritual headship mean that she is not responsible for her own interior growth in holiness? Not at all. Clearly, from all that has gone before, her spiritual growth is between herself and the Lord; it is her own ongoing task.

As Spouse

The woman whom God has given to a man is his completion. She is not in his life by chance of circumstance, or by mere demand of psychological or physical need; it is not human motivation, conscious or unconscious that brought them together. God is the Third Person in their union, and he will work out the purpose for which he brought them together.

. . .even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world,
that we should be holy and blameless before him.²⁰

Just as the Father does not exist without the Son, so man and woman coexist as equals before God, not a whit is one less than the other. Equal, but ob-positional, meaning positioned at opposite poles, the man appreciates her ob-posite-ness (not her opposition). Not competitive need, but the completion of his own being, is what he longs for. Though her polarity may be puzzling, it brings him one of the most exquisite of human experiences. That union of opposites augurs other great joys to be discovered - she will help him find in himself his feminine attributes which will fill out his whole masculinity. Together they will balance each other, making available to their unified existence the strengths of both. Their union is formed by willing self-giving of two free-standing persons - a marvelous union in the Holy Spirit, a miraculous union of opposites.

Obviously then, the woman does not come to marriage as the second best of the two. A man who thinks he is superior because of the authority he will bear is not ready for Christian matrimony. The Holy Father in his apostolic letter on woman spends much time stressing the mutuality of their submission. Generations of Christians have made the wrong assumption - that

²⁰ Ephesians 1:4

submission is a sign of woman's lack of worth, and a sign of man's superiority. The abuse of authority and submission has hurt them both.

A human being, whether male or female, is a person, and therefore, "the only creature on earth which God willed for its own sake; and . . . cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self." Here begins the relationship of "communion" in which the "unity of the two" and the personal dignity of both . . . find expression. Therefore when we read in the biblical description the words addressed to the woman: "Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" (Gen 3:16), we discover a break . . . in regard to this 'unity of the two' . . . But this threat is more serious for the woman, since domination takes the place of "being a sincere gift" and therefore living 'for' the other: "he shall rule over you." This "domination" indicates the disturbance and loss . . . of that fundamental equality which the man and woman possess in the "unity of the two. . . While the violation of this equality. . . involves an element to the disadvantage of the woman, at the same time it also diminishes the true dignity of the man."²¹

Domination simply cannot be in the picture as the man and woman attempt to live in the Redeemed Order established by Christ. To balance the scales, so long heavily weighted on the side of male domination, and often defended by a misinterpretation of Scripture, the Holy Father, emphasizes the mutuality of submission which we have discussed earlier:

Corresponding to the truth of this institution is the exhortation: "Husbands love your wives," love them because of that special and unique bond whereby in marriage a man and a woman become "one flesh" (Gen 2:24, Eph 5:31). In this love there is a fundamental affirmation of the woman as a person. This affirmation makes it possible for the female personality to develop fully and be enriched. This is precisely the way Christ acts as the bridegroom of the Church; he desires that she be "in splendor, without spot or wrinkle" (Eph 5:27). . . all men should do the same in regard to women in every situation. In this way both men and women bring about "the sincere gift of self."

The author of the Letter to the Ephesians sees no contradiction between an exhortation formulated in this way and the words: "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord."²²

We have seen that Scripture does not admonish the woman to love her husband, only for the husband to love his wife. Christian love and self-giving is closer to her nature, we could say "more natural" (submission to headship, however is not), while for him, this self-giving love is a *willed act*, something not immediate to his nature. This is *agape* not erotic love. A man may neglect this act of will called love unless it is called to his attention by his growth in obedience to God.

²¹ *op. cit.*, *Mulieris*, IV.10

²² *Ibid*, VII.24

Physical love needs no prompting by God, but it is the will to serve, to care for, to notice and be attentive to others with patience and kindness - that kind of love does need encouragement. His wife with awareness and a special patience of her own can help him. As the marriage act creates new beings, so the man, exhibiting agape love, will stimulate his children to aliveness in God.

The husband, remembering that this love requires the dispossession of himself as much as submission requires it of her - it is a mutual submission, begins the road to self-sacrifice for the well being of his wife and his children. His model is Jesus who in exercising God's own authority lay down his life for his beloved.

A warning, heavily underlined, is always in order to those who exercise God's authority. The world cannot be the teacher of headship, or the exercise of authority; the world has learned its values from "he who prowls like a ravening lion." Only Sacred Scripture and the Holy Spirit can undergird the necessary understanding. It is only the power that prayer affords that can be the power employed. The role will not be abused when the man remembers that he is only acting as an agent of God. He only acts as he believes Jesus would, with no more pretensions than his slave, not violating this trust by "laying down the law," by being legalistic, hard, unyielding, inflexible, or stingy. "The law kills, only the Spirit makes alive." It is life in Christ with all its flux and flow that he administers in his family - the Spirit life, the abundant life.

He will never make the mistake, nor will she, to understand her submission to his authority to mean silence. For this vital communication between them, the husband provides time free from distractions, letting his wife know that he needs her rich resource of wisdom. In this way he shows her the reality of his love and respect. Listening is a gift of love unparalleled. The loneliness so many wives experience can be eliminated that easily. It costs nothing but willingness and time. How can a woman resist the headship of a man when she is treated with such honor?

A fighter

By his masculine nature the man is active in the world, using his skills and knowledge to earn his family's keep by action and competition. His activity, extensive as it may be, does not keep his family from their own participation in the world, but actually stimulates their active life. This is not so if he falls into passivity. When the woman assumes the larger share of the outward action of the family, there are distortions in the psychological wholeness of the family members.

It seems that when a woman's activity goes beyond a definite degree of intensity, it is accomplished by forces that inhibit the

activity of persons in her entourage, and thus becomes dangerous, especially for the male members of the family.²³

In his activities on behalf of his family, the man is also a fighter. To fight for the Kingdom seems a contradiction only on the surface, for this battle is against the “principalities and powers” against “the world rulers of this present darkness.”²⁴ These powers oppose the Kingdom and threaten the internal peace of the family and the larger family of God. The current softness that goes by the name of compassion and sensitivity has smothered knowledge of the dangers which threaten the peaceful continuation of the family and the Church. Conrad Baars seeks to instill courage, even fight into the man where it belongs.

The idea of modern man . . . being a fighter may seem ridiculous when those to whom the welfare of society has been entrusted imagine, as Joseph Pieper says, “The power of evil not so gravely dangerous that one could not ‘negotiate’ or ‘come to terms with it.’” It seems that personal charity, brotherly love, and fortitude need to play only a subordinate role in a welfare society whose liberalistic world view - characterized by a resolute worldliness, earthy optimism, and a middle class metaphysics, anxiously bent on security - is blind to the existence of evil in the world of men, as well as in the world of the spirit. Evil in the two fold form of guilt and punishment, i.e., the evil that we do and the evil that we suffer.²⁵

We may wonder why the Church and the family are suffering the inroads of evil that now appear in every nightly news, in every newspaper, and in the lives of those who sit next to us Sunday morning in the pew. Where has this outbreak begun? Have our men become passive and given up the role of strong protectors under the pressures of uni-sex, along with the condemnation of any show of strength as chauvinistic? In the moral relativism of this modern age, standing for right when oppressors parade as victims, takes moral certitude and courage. Women and children need men who will lead in a response to evil.

In fact, it is when that government abandons moral principles and refuses to recognize and protect such a fundamental right as the right to life of its citizens, that individual men and women are called upon to fight these evils. Men, though, attack with thrusting power and physical strength; women, through

²³ Deutsch, op.cit. p.285

²⁴Ephesians 6:12

²⁵ Baars, op.cit., p.30-31

endurance in her kinship with pain and her closeness to the goodness of being.²⁶

The Man's other role - Obedient Representative of Mankind

A man does not, however, just order, lead, discern, provide for and protect his family. Acting as the first principle of the marital union, he also takes another stance - he, as first person of the human race, within that unity, is a responder to God. This is a tricky balancing point. The words may seem complicated; the concept is simple. Like Jesus, the man is responsible in two directions: he portrays two principles on life's stage; in the first he is agent, in the second he is patient or responder - only one of the obedient members of the body under the headship of Christ. In the second role he yields his will to an authority beyond his own. With authority delegated to him in one context, in the larger context of his relationship to God he is submissive to the overarching Will of God. The authority he has on the smaller plane is checked and balanced by his submission on the larger plane.

The husband, in his obedience to God, is just one of the members of the body of Christ, one person in the family of Man. How is this obedience manifested in daily life? Any lawful authority of government, anyone with claim on him as employer, any spiritual authority in the apostolic succession within the Church, represents God's will. (Don't give up here, because there are carefully proscribed limits to this). To learn to correctly communicate as an equal to those in authority over him, to rightly assert disagreement while maintaining an obedient heart is a graced art. His wife will be his teacher.

The hierarchy of the Church is the divine order by which God has established his Church. So St. Peter tells us:

. . .you that are younger be subject to the leaders. Clothe yourselves all of you with humility toward one another, for 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'²⁷

For woman and man alike, there is always the higher authority of conscience. Obedience to a lawful authority who may command an action contrary to a conscience enlightened by the Word of God in Scripture and Church teaching, is not an option. There is a specific way, to handle such

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ 1 Peter 5:5

conflicts, because, though he must obey the voice of God in his conscience, he cannot rebel against lawful authority.

In such a case, he states his objection to the one set over him, explaining why he cannot obey. Then he leaves the disposition of himself and the situation in those hands. Especially to be commended for reflection are the lives of Sts. Thomas More and John Fisher. One is tempted to speculate what it would have meant to the universal Church if Martin Luther had handled his conflict with Church authority in this way. Rebellion can never be the answer to a Christian's dilemma, because it only perpetuates itself, delaying the time for the return of mankind to obedience. There is no righteous cause for which rebellion is a legitimate excuse. If it were so, the Lord himself had it, but he denied it:

Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?²⁸

There have been many conflicts of conscience for which martyrdom has been the only good outcome. Being submissive to legitimate authority lawfully ordered does not make a man a manipulated hireling; he must know the difference between rebellion and refusal, and be ready and willing for the consequences if ever his Christian conscience is transgressed by those who are heads over him. The book of Esther, as we have seen earlier, presents God working through pagan authority for those obedient to that governance. It was to the Roman government, hardly a model of Christian charity, that the apostles told Christians to be obedient.

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right.²⁹

First of all, then, I urge supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. This is good and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.³⁰

²⁸ Matthew 26:52

²⁹ 1 Peter 2:12-14

³⁰ 1 Timothy 2:1-3

Peace is always the goal. Like the apostles who took a fearless stand against the authorities after the resurrection, a man states his mind respectfully, without fear or dissembling. In Church history the great martyrs of the Church, suffering under persecutors, spoke boldly but did not resist with physical force. Not raising opposition to their overlords, they were able to stand steadfast, taking the consequences. This is the kind of fight expected from men of God. A man's total accountability to the command of God makes his stance finally to be an obedient one.

The obedience of faith (Rom 17:26 cf,1:5; 2 Cor. 10:5-6) must be given to God who reveals, and obedience by which man entrusts his whole self freely to God, offering the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals, and freely assenting to the truth revealed by him.³¹

Such obedience to godly authority does not imply pacifism. Just as we saw in the Book of Judith (Book II), an obedient, trusting stance is not incompatible with complete resistance when Christians are forced to deal with illegitimate, illegal, even evil, authority that tries to impose itself on the People of God. Historically, the crusades can still be recognized, despite their human mistakes and sins, as valiant attempts to counter the anti-God threat and militancy of Islam.

³¹ Vatican II documents, *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* 1.5

CHAPTER V. TRUSTING OBEDIENCE, THE WOMAN

Authority exercised with humility and obedience accepted with delight are the very lines along which our spirits live.¹

We have spent many pages filling in the background for this chapter. Coloring in the participants, drawing in detail the setting, we have a picture. However, in the center of our drawing is a blank form which delineates the submissive woman. The form itself is now obvious in its posture and relationship to the background of heaven, earth and the figures with whom she lives. She is the central figure of the drama, the one set in relief by the careful etching, burnishing, and coloration of the rest of the picture. It has been our purpose to bring her just this far, in order that she may emerge from a total setting. Filling in from this point may seem repetitive because much about her may already seem quite plain. In multitudes of books and articles many other people, more thoroughly than we will attempt here, have taken up the task of drawing in the details. However, many thoughtful persons seeing her without the theological and scriptural setting in which she must move, have found her to be an odd figure who simply does not fit into the modern world's scene. Confused by this they have cast woman's submission into that proverbial dust bin.

Wrong-headed teaching about submission has distorted her emotionally and intellectually. Charismatic leadership of the late Twentieth Century, because of a resurgent legalism regarding headship, eventually made amends to their communities and to the women who were harmed by their zealotry. This bitter experience taught important lessons. No human person may interfere, imposing particular ideas about the meaning of headship, into the triune unity of covenantal marriage. The heart conditions of the man and woman are in competent hands - those of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus says,

¹ Lewis, C.S., *The Weight of Glory*, (Grand Rapids, 1965) p. 38

“that they may be one Father as you and I are one,” that oneness comes from the Spirit, he alone brings unity and the disposition for mutual submission. It cannot be imposed from without, no matter the good intentions.

Perhaps against the background of her origins in the Blessed Trinity, in the framework of Mary which we have presented, she will be seen as a whole person, vital and believable. Perhaps from here she can be a source of hope for women, or better, a source of enthusiasm.

Freely Submitted Woman

“Submissive woman” she is called in Scripture. But the word “submissive” has by ignorance and misunderstanding, accumulated so many deleterious connotations it is almost unusable. Submission, the heart of the gospel of Jesus, remains a word against which even Christians stop their ears. Under the best intentions and because of the same reasons, other words meaning submission have suffered the same loss over the centuries: “patient,” the word of Aquinas; “passive,” the word of the pre-feminist psychologists; “subject,” the word used by St. Paul along with “submit;” “obedience,” a word used with “authority,” none of these can be used without active resistance. This resistance is based in part on a good intuition that protects woman against another invasion of her dignity and integrality. However, all of these were once good words, accurate words, before they suffered distortion of the fallen realm where they lost their pure meaning. So, we must either reinstate them or find a new word, perhaps a phrase, “yielded love,” which in time may suffer the same fate. John Paul II uses the phrase, “total self-giving,” or “gift of self” in his Theology of the Body, and he presents it for both man and woman.

“Submission,” the word itself, which means “sent under” is very accurate to the meaning of Scripture and subsequent theologies. Jesus was “sent under” by the Father, it was his *mission*. Woman is “sent under” by God, it is her *mission*, her calling. This mission does not imply a low state of inequality or indignity; in the Kingdom it is a very *high calling*, perhaps the highest when we regard the Cross.

Man is “sent under” civil authority, all Christians are “sent under” Church authority. These are *missions* whereby the will of God is achieved in all kinds of adverse earthly circumstances, and which are foreshadowings of the life of “sent under-ness” in ultimate Perfection.

As missions they are appointed by the love of God, and are callings to a life closest to that meant in the Original Order. They reflect the acceptance and open receptivity called forth by those who love God, the willingness to lay down one’s own will, to even die *for love*. They eschew reliance on one’s own understanding, one’s private judgment, or on force of any kind, other than the power of the Spirit of God. From such faith, mountains, obstacles to the Kingdom life, are moved. The key to Christian

submission, as St. Peter tells us, is *trust in God*. Without that living trust, the real dimension of submission is missing.

If God sends persons on this mission, he also empowers them with all they need to successfully accomplish it. Those who are sent, are sent equipped. The vision is of a strong woman, aware of her gifts, knowledgeable in the ways of the Kingdom, armed with the armor of the Spirit: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, shoes of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.²

When a woman accepts the concept of obedience to her husband as to the Lord, and catches the impact of the call of God which she now hears, she almost invariably comes to it on a legalistic level. This was the plight of reinstating submission in the Catholic covenant communities (charismatic communities) in the 1980's. There she tried to learn from others what she should do and what she should not do; and she built from her reading and study of the Bible a mental picture of what the yielded woman was like. Perhaps the picture is from *Total Woman*³ and she thinks she must wear baby-doll pajamas and white boots to meet her husband each evening. The image might be from any number of other books which make her think she is to be so scrupulous in obedience as never to make a move without first checking with her husband. She may conjure up an image of lowered eyes and folded hands, while she waits for the end of the football game, all the time wishing she were in her garden, but "submissive" nevertheless. All these and other images are not just ridiculous to onlookers, but they put the whole reality in disrepute. The woman herself as she looks back on this stage finds it the Kindergarten of her spiritual walk.

Probably no woman comes to the threshold of her yielded place without painful recognition of just how competitive, willful, and disobedient she unconsciously is. Her first realization of this may bring with it an awful conviction that she has been responsible for making her husband weak and passive, or arrogant and rash, or she may see her own willfulness has boiled over into rebelliousness in her children. With this insight she feels eagerness to undo the damage and get herself in right order at all costs. She works at it valiantly, and the cost only increases. Finally, nervous and exhausted from the effort, she is depressed and miserable with pent-up anger. The problem is that rather than waiting for the *mission* she has "put herself under" – even, thrown herself under . . . the bus!

² Ephesians 6:10-18

³ Morgan, Marabel, *Total Woman* (N.Y.1973)

The difference in the two motives is great. The Spirit gives life, the code of the law kills. Living up to a legal code by one's own effort is killing. Yet, even this low level of obedience will work toward good, it is ultimately better for the person and the kingdom than ignorance and willfulness. First, it shows the heart's desire for holiness, and second, the law, as unfulfilling as it is, is better than lawlessness. Many women, when they finally end this difficult effort, are counseled by people who are rightly horrified by the confused person who sits before them. In sympathy they tell the woman to renounce "fundamentalism," especially when the husband they struggle to serve seems unworthy. This is a sad mistake; the person is just at the door where she can enter a Spirit-led stage of real life-giving submission. In the dimension of grace, which is the Holy Spirit's work, without effort or strain, being wholly herself - yes, even with a sharp tongue - the woman takes up the obedient life and finds herself every day freer.

How can this be? In the first place, the important thing is *orthodoxy*, not *orthopraxis*. This means that believing the true thing is more important than being able to practice it. That is the Church's understanding about the moral life and why she provides the Confessional. When we reject the truth, we have a serious problem that will only be compounded. However, when a woman agrees in heart and mind that headship in the family, and her own submission to headship is the command of God and that she desires to live it . . .but somehow can't, failing time after time, the knot of rebelliousness is unraveling, and there is great hope for progress. In the meantime, she must be her own self, even if that self is willful and rebellious. Let her not pretend! There is always the confessional with forgiveness and a new start.

Psychiatrist and victim of Nazi camps Viktor Frankl has shown us that freedom is achieved over all "givens" by the exercise of will - simply to will God's will. (He is not contradicted by St. Benedicta (Edith Stein) and others who say that we cannot achieve anything by the will - when she speaks of opening to *God's will*, she is describing the same "willingness" that Frankl is telling us about.) His "givens" in the shadow of the death house were all the inhumanities and cruelties of Auschwitz. Only in a few particulars can we choose our circumstances in this life. Marriage often becomes a prison cell of unforeseen determinants. We may feel that we have little choice left about anything, with only a restricted existence stretching ahead. Obedience, however, offers freedom. By obedience, trusting in the gifts of the Spirit, we can exercise our will as to how these givens will be received; the excitement and promise of life returns. Seeing that this exercise of willingness, because of its alignment in faith and trust to the Will of God, brings widespread benefits enlivens us, and banishes depression. Willingness is enough. Carrying out obedience is wonderful, but if we cannot *do* it, willingness is enough.

It is Frankl's thesis that we see the effects of nihilism all around us, the "noogenic despair" over the meaning of life, just because this choice is never made. Woman has been frustrated in her "will to meaning" because she has not seen the choice that is hers to make, and has not accepted the responsibility of making a decision; then the only alternative to an unhappy marriage is divorce, or perhaps counseling with only moderate hope of a happy outcome. That there is a challenging alternative, as challenging to woman's full ability, energy, and resources as climbing Everest to a mountain climber, one demanding a daily deepening of contact with God, with the promise, not of success, but of meaning, is never described to her. There will be pain, yes, but meaning and thereby joy, too. The freedom of the adventure is exhilarating; it is the freedom of Christ.

Without this alternative, the woman is trapped in symptoms of frustration wherein we see her weak and tired, numb, even paralyzed in spirit. On the other hand, with commitment to living out obedience to her husband in its full context as God's will, "nothing appears in vain, no act remains unaccounted for" and it all has meaning.⁴

A woman, trusting in God and with his strength choosing this way, finds the contingencies of her life are no longer bonds. They are either conquered by faith, or reshaped because of acceptance, or transcended because of submission. A woman's choice of obedience challenges her in every case, and meets the need for meaning. Added to that meaning is the amazing realization that her small step predicates the return of all Men to faith and obedience to the will of God - that is at the heart of the secret we are exploring. Women are first! Either first as Eve, or first as Mary!

Willingness to accept his headship and to assume a self-giving life in whatever circumstance, *trusting* God to carry the weight, she will be free from the burden of effort. Willingness alone will not effect what she desires, it is trust in the grace of God who so honors this trust that he lifts her to a level where it is possible. By exhibiting the humility to obey, he says to her, "I no longer call you servant, but friend."

When a woman, in some degree healed and forgiven, is in touch with the gifts of the Spirit for the success of the obedient life, and begins to put her husband's will ahead of her own, many questions will arise. The way various practical problems are worked out will vary from couple to couple. There are no rules to follow. Only the underlying principles remain constant, and each couple adapts their relationship the best they can to their understanding of those principles. All sources that might be

⁴ Frankl, *The Dr. and the Soul*, op.cit.,p.33

guidance need to be looked at carefully; the spirit of obedience is kept, but suggestions of *how* are never taken as the law. In other words, the couple never allows their responsibility before God to be taken over by someone else. That there will be growth in understanding, and changes over time in the way particular things, like finances, are handled is to be expected. For young women who have been raised in the feminist milieu, it may be difficult at first, but assuredly life together will become smoother and more comfortable as time goes on.

Each woman has two models, models who are living and offer real help, one is Jesus her Savior who empowers her to live this life and commissions her to it. The other is Mary her Mother, who intercedes for her, understands her, and encourages her. The day, therefore, begins and ends with prayer. Like Martha of the Scriptures, she often is too busy. Putting some protection around her listening and spiritual refreshment time - setting it aside, will help her keep the most important part of her day. Saint Edith Stein tells us how she kept her own obedient life well tended. This extensive quote is so helpful it can be kept at hand for frequent reference with the prayer that the grace of God will effect the changes in us that we desire.

Open ourselves to grace

. . . We are not able to attain this condition by willing it, it must be effected through grace. What we can and must do is open ourselves to grace; that means to renounce our own will completely and to give it captive to the divine will, to lay our whole soul, ready for reception and formation, into God's hands.

Empty and still

Becoming empty and still are closely connected. The soul is . . . in constant agitation, often in tumult and uproar.

The duties and cares of the day ahead crowd about us when we awake in the morning (if they have not already dispelled our night's rest). . . We must then take the reins in hand and say, "Take it easy! Not any of this may touch me now. My first morning's hour belongs to the Lord. I will tackle the day's work which he charges me with, and he will give me the power to accomplish it."

So I will go to the altar of God. Here it is not . . . my minute, petty affairs, but of the great offering of reconciliation. I may participate in that, purify myself and be made happy, and lay myself with all my doing and troubles along with the sacrifice on the altar. And when the Lord comes to me then in Holy Communion, then I may ask him, "Lord, what do you want of me?" (St. Teresa). And after quiet dialogue, I will go to that which I see as my next duty.

Joyful entry into the day's work

I will still be joyful when I enter into my day's work after this . . . : my soul will be empty of that which could assail and burden it, but it will be filled with holy joy, courage and energy.. . . Love burns in it like a composed flame

which the Lord has enkindled, and which urges my soul to render love and to inflame love in others . . . And it sees clearly. . . a new vista will then be opened.

Facing the distress of the day

Now begins the day's work . . . We cannot achieve in each hour what we want, perhaps none. We must contend with our own fatigue, unforeseen interruptions. . . diverse vexations, indignities, anxieties. Or perhaps . . . disagreeable supervisors and colleagues, unfulfilled demands, unjust reproaches, human meanness, . .

Noontime: an hour of refuge with the Lord

We come home exhausted, shattered. New vexations possibly await there. . . The soul would like to seethe and storm again: indignation, chagrin, regret. And there is still so much to do until evening. . . No, (allow) calm . . . for a moment. Each one must know. . . where and how she can find peace. The best way. . . is to shed all cares again for a short time before the tabernacle. Whoever cannot do that. . . must for a moment seal off herself inwardly . . . and take refuge in the Lord. He is indeed there and can give us in a single moment all we need.

At the end, the day is given to God

Thus the remainder of the day will continue, perhaps in great fatigue and laboriousness, but in peace. And when night comes, and retrospect shows that everything was patchwork and much which one had planned left undone, when so many things rouse shame and regret, then take all as it is, lay it in God's hands, and offer it up to him. In this way we will all be able to rest in him, actually to rest, and to begin the new day like a new life.

Sunday, a holy day of rest

. . . Sunday must be a great door through which celestial life can enter into everyday life, and strength for the work of the entire week, and how the great feasts, holidays, and the seasons of Lent, lived through in the spirit of the Church, permit the soul to mature the more from year to year to the eternal Sabbath rest.⁵

Saint Edith, let us remember how to achieve this peace and rest! Our enemy, Satan, now finds this woman a cause for dread; she will gradually undo much of his work. His hold on her, her husband and their children is daily loosened. This time of prayer, with eyes and ears closed to the outside world, in which she picks up the still small voice within, the sure Guide, the Comforter, the Counselor, remains her protection against the subtle ways Satan will try to divert her from her goal. The obedient life is so contrary to the Prince of this World's being, he will try anything to undo it if he can.

Without this, without touching base with God in prayer, instead of being obedient, she will wake up one morning to find that she has been subtly deceived into using a new tool for

⁵ Stein, op.cit., p.130-134

the furtherance of her own will, a subtle manipulation. Somehow she had begun to think that God would honor her self-denials, and that by subterfuge she would get her way. That is followed by disappointment, then self-pity, and then?

Or, instead of doing God's will, her goal has been twisted to doing her husband's will. This may seem an unimportant difference, but it is a crucial one. Her motivation to work within her husband's will is not just for his pleasure! It may have that effect, but the motive is quite different - it is to do God's Will, to honor and glorify God alone. This distinguishes her from Jung's "heitera" woman who needs not be a Christian at all, just a man-pleaser in the human way.

Nothing gets one in touch with her disagreeable character traits and glaring weaknesses so much as the obedient life does. To see one's self disclosed can be depressing; only the daily contact and comfort of the Spirit will reassure and encourage a woman to keep on toward the goal. Those supernatural gifts of prayer and faith are the fountain of living water to be tapped daily.

If the woman is married to a man who is also attempting to assume his place in God's plan, her way will be clearer of pain and obstacles than is true for most women who take up their place while their husband is still far from his. For one who is missioned to be "sent under," the relationship that her husband does or does not have with God is not a consideration for her own acceptance of God's will. Recall again St. Peter's encouragement to wives for total self-giving whether the husband obeys the word of God or not. The difficulty of such a path in today's world is obvious. This sub-mission is not weakness! It is not childish dependency! Door mat women cannot win a husband to Christ; they actually act as a detriment to the Kingdom. A whimpering woman makes a man feel superior to the Gospel she witnesses to; she stands as a fluttering emblem, or a sagging flag, which justifies his contempt of the Christian life. "Submission" has gained some of its stain for just such reasons.

We have presented in chapter one of this book that there is another primary healing needed for such a woman. There is a starting place in the Christian life, and obedience is not it - repentance and healing come first. A self touched with love and made lovable is then ready to stand on two feet and accept a walk of submission and obedience. First things first! First be embraced by Love! Wait for God. HE IS COMING!

The Gritty Reality of Obedience

From a place of prayer the woman moves into the practical aspects of everyday life, watching for answers to the problems of daily situations. Abstract Christian principles become visible through her. The following reflections on how some of the problems may be met, are merely that, and can be rejected without guilt. Every path to obedience is one pointed out by God, and not by someone like this author who stands outside of a couple's life.

If a man needs to listen to his wife, carefully weighing her feelings and thoughts, it is important that she learn to communicate with him clearly and fully. When she begins this walk, things may not be good between them; she may have had too much to say, then it may be necessary for her to become very quiet for a time, though not for the rest of her life. This silence is meant for a temporary time of healing. She may have been too vocal about her wants, her needs, her likes, her dislikes; she may have worn him to distraction with talk, much of it with a fine cutting edge. Developing a less dogmatic tongue, she becomes quieter for a while. His ears need rest; his psyche, torn by self-doubt because of chronic complaint, needs mending; and together they need, however long it takes, to build trust. Deeds are better than words.

On the other hand, the fearful silent woman, steps out to speak, to express herself. Beginning to speak up may relieve tensions in the one, but may cause them in the other, especially if he/she has been the keeper of quiet. It is not uncommon for early days to be times of stress.

Such stress may mean that the woman is "shrinking" to become obedient. She may feel painfully aware of this, as though her ego was being loped off at the knees so she can stand small enough. If she has been active and purposeful, her husband may be passive and incommunicative. In our society women are often the strident and discordant ones, while men could be said to be retiring.

To exchange these habitual rituals, upsets everything comfortable about the status quo. A man may enjoy being passive, he may shirk the manly role and its responsibilities for many reasons. To turn things around is confusing - why is this woman coming to him to ask advice and direction? Why can't he remain behind his book or newspaper, or be left to the lull of his T.V. while she manages the children and the family affairs like she always has? Under such circumstances the woman assumes her role with gentleness and concern, but she persistently leaves a vacuum that eventually he will fill if his world is ever to run smoothly again. She will

not force him to action by nagging - gentle reminding may be necessary, or even a written note. She tells him of her need, clearly and urgently, or the need of their children, and then leaves it at his doorstep with trust in God to fill the need; then she waits. The early months of this new order are usually shaky, as if the whole life of the couple were coming apart at the seams. Nothing should be carried to extremes, common sense must be applied. The intent, however, remains constant, that eventually a union will emerge for them both in God-given order.

Adapting to her husband, means seeing everything through his eyes, and at first this takes conscious effort. She will think about the things he likes, the way he does things, the way he likes her to look, to care for the children and run the house. To begin just by asking about the way money is spent, about his preferences in small decisions, heeding his guidance in the setting of her schedule will slowly deflate her too large profile and inflate his. A good maxim is St. John the Baptist's submission of himself to Jesus, "He must increase, I must decrease." Later the effort to do this disappears. We assume by now that the reader knows that in each of these statements, the woman is not relying on her self, her cleverness, her ability, or her spirituality - but on the intercession of Mary, and the grace of the Holy Spirit gifts.

The same is true about the sexual relationship with her husband. Rarely are sexual matters at a godly pass when God's order is first accepted; often healing and growth are needed here. It is possible that by seeking her own healing, the woman will see the man benefit without actively seeking healing himself. It is in the self-giving of the sex act itself that the essential communication between husband and wife takes place. She communicates her deepest self by giving herself without reservation. Unwillingness to do so, she may believe is because she does not love her husband. C.S. Lewis' insights in addressing the problem of a young woman, quoted earlier, hit the mark:

. . .you do not fail in obedience through lack of love, but have lost love because you never attempted obedience . . . No one has ever told you that obedience-humility is an erotic necessity. You are putting equality just where it ought not to be.⁶

Of all thinkers about the sexual relationship of husband and wife, Lewis is most eloquent. In the science-fiction trilogy, Out of the Silent Planet, Perelandra, and That Hideous

⁶ Lewis, C.S., That Hideous Strength, op.cit.,p. 315

Strength where the theme of woman and her meaning underlie the last two books, he writes that the feminine response, based in the reality of sexuality, is the key to understanding our ultimate relationship to God. In this he is a forerunner to John Paul II's Theology of the Body.

. . .she had been conceiving "spiritual" in the negative sense, as some neutral, democratic vacuum where differences disappeared, where sex and sense were not transcended but simply taken away. Now the suspicion dawned upon her that there might be differences and contrasts all the way up, richer, sharper, even fiercer, at every rung of the ascent. How if this invasion of her own being in marriage from which she had recoiled, often in the very teeth of instinct, were not as she had supposed, merely a relic of animal life or patriarchal barbarism, but rather the lowest, the first, and the easiest form of some shocking contact with reality which would have to be repeated, but in ever larger and more disturbing modes on the highest levels of all?⁷

Many women are repulsed by their husband's excessive interest in sex. Though she is never to transgress her God-informed conscience, a woman must be honest with herself at this point, It may not be conscience that raises objections; it may be any number of other motivations as Lewis suggests, in which case, the will of God is not at stake. "The marriage bed is undefiled"⁸ declares the writer of Hebrews. We are to keep it that way. The only defilement that can take place between husband and wife is a sexual practice clearly stated in Scripture and by the Church to be sinful. Though a husband's desires may be stronger than his wife's, drawing back is not an expression of submission, but of control. To entrust herself to her husband is to be part of the enjoyment of their sexual sharing, and it begins by putting aside scruples for his sake, in accord with what she knows to be God's will - that she give herself without reserve to her husband.

. . .do not refuse one another, except perhaps by agreement for a season, that you may devote yourself to prayer, but then come together again.⁹

If the opposite is true, that the husband's sexual interest is less than his wife's, she may encourage his interest by sacrificially adapting her desires to his. This removes any threat to his masculinity, and with prayer and trust, the man may be freed to become whole in his

⁷ Ibid p. 147-248

⁸ Hebrews 13:4

⁹ I Corinthians 7:5

sexuality. He may recover from any insecurity that a failure to satisfy his wife may have caused, or from a subtle feeling that he is weak in an area where he is expected to be strong. Is his reticence to do with a bad conscience? Is the confessional a place he has avoided?

When, contrary to the spirit of our age, a woman seeks to live the life of submission, it is to put her husband and his needs ahead of her own, and this by conscious choice. Determining to release him from all her expectations and to live by his, she joins with the grace of God's love to free and heal him. If, by this, she reassures him that she is happy and loves him in every circumstance of their lives, and could ask for nothing more, she is doing a better and more creative psychotherapy than any professional can. Not manipulating, she attempts to be utterly sincere in accepting what she believes is God's will in their circumstance. This means that she has let go of her own ideas and live happily with what God sends in the way of fulfillment on all levels, including the sexual. Though psychological help may sometimes be indicated in these problem areas, it is wise to revise one's expectations, to strengthen one's trust in God, to wait patiently, to work at the spiritual tasks at hand, and to watch for signs of God's healing before turning to professional help. There are few psychologists who would understand or approve of Christian submission.

When the couple becomes more compatible sexually, many other disagreements will dissolve. So many of the cutting remarks, the bitter asides with which couples lacerate each other are formed in the unhappy bedroom.

Modern psychology, trying to account for the soaring divorce rate, has begun to look at the "outrageous expectations" our modern society puts on marriage. These expectations, usually in the form of material well-being, the "good life", all-for-me, and other selfish concerns, will not come true. Not having their expectations met, each spouse blames the other. If even one of the two, the woman, withdraws those expectations and begins to live to make her husband happy, the reversal of the downhill course has begun.

To submit the children to her husband's authority is yet another "yielding." Many men are not interested in assuming the disciplinary responsibility, though in the present day fathers have been encouraged to do more parenting. He may have abdicated discipline to his wife, letting her do the scolding and punishing, much to her frustration and eventually to his. To let bedlam and confusion take over for a while seems a dear price to pay when the mother lets go, but the reordering of the household is well worth the price. To become less active than her

husband in the discipline of children, she believes that God will bring order to the children in his time and his way. Though the interim is full of anxiety, if she is growing spiritually, and if she uses common sense, the changeover may be surprisingly smooth. If she has had a stricter idea of discipline, she needs to relax and tailor her approach according to her husband's perception of what is needed. She will realize the benefit and wisdom of this when she sees the sense of security it gives children to be under the fair but consistent discipline of their father. If both have been lax – oh, dear – some real adjustments are needed.

In these practical things is the woman encouraged to be irresponsible? Is it fair that the father carry the burden of the household's order? Man and woman have been gifted by God to do a certain things and do them well. Strain comes when a couple works at cross purposes, or has no purpose at all. Defined roles are really a relief, not a burden as many young couples are finding out.

The mother naturally tries to thwart severe discipline. It can be that the father is too harsh. *If a child's health and well being are at stake, this severity must be referred to a professional*, but if that is not the case, then the woman tries to be on her husband's team. She may disagree, and needs to find ways to discuss their differences out of hearing of the children. But in yielding the disciplining to him, she furthers any reasonable approach, no matter how she feels about it. The children may be comforted by their mother after disciplining by their father, but with never a hint of negating his judgment or questioning the rightness of the punishment. She always seconds his action. Children thrive under such justice. Without being conscious of it, children make the most of any chink in the loyalty of their mother to their father, and learn to apply a wedge when the opportunity is given. It is a foolish mother who allows a child to separate her from her husband on any count, and a very sad child.

A strict disciplinarian is apt to moderate if he feels his actions are not being undermined by his wife. When he has her support, he no longer directs anger toward the child that he feels toward her. Men often act and speak out of resentment because of their wives' insubordination and lack of respect.

To have a united front, constant agreement is not necessary - it is nearly impossible. Just the willing choice of the woman to yield in love will provide that united front which is the best medium for a child to grow in. In such a climate, he cannot continue his natural desire to be the center of everything; he cannot wedge into the middle; he is placed safely in the

right order. With his parents assuming their role, he is freed to be what he is. At his place he has freedom to be a child in the best sense of the word. Here he won't misjudge his own importance, nor learn to be the cunning manipulator of guilty adults. When he can feel the unified, supervising love for him which radiates from his parents, he will have a place of peace and security.

These days when the father is often the absent parent because of his work, perhaps in the military, being gone long periods and then re-entering, his family life can be problematic. How is a wife to manage being the authority at home for long periods, only to move aside when the husband is home again? If she keeps in mind her husband's intent while she is alone and in charge, if the discipline of children is done on his terms, if the money is spent according to his priorities, there need be no painful changeovers when he reenters the family after an absence. A woman makes the test of her obedience to headship - not how many of the decisions she must assume, or how resourceful she has become, but only how well the heart of her husband trusts in her. There will be no power struggles, because my-power-over-you will not exist.

With the confidence of her husband, she will have a free hand to run her household efficiently, even to managing the household accounts if that is the best for both of them. It is not necessary that he manage the money himself, as long as the money is managed according to his methods and priorities. In the matter of money, the ideal, as we have seen, would be that she not hold any money in her own name, that all she has be his. Is this impossible? It is often the last test of mutuality. By what authority is this ideal raised? It is simply the logical projection of what she desires to exemplify - a projection of how mankind responds to God, of how Jesus holds nothing in his own name, of the dependency of Mary on God for every aspect of her life, giving back to God everything she is. If a woman could be granted a vision of what this kind of love and trust can do for the man she married, she would not hesitate. Most women do not want money, they want love and perish for lack of it. If a woman dearly wants money, her soul's attachments need reassessment.

Questions about work or professional life outside the home can be answered similarly. What does the husband say? What is his will in the matter? Will the income be for the good of the whole family and under his administration? A father who believes that the family will prosper as he provides for them, and encourages his wife to maintain the family life full-time,

will not be disappointed. Couples report having more resources after the woman has stopped working.

“Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be yours as well.” The world does not know how to align money to the Gospel. It deserves a Christian’s deep consideration. In discussing the husband as the provider in a previous chapter, we saw that finances are simply another realm of faith action. An important aspect is to believe that giving is the road to receiving.

A woman has gifts; we have seen just how gifted she is. How can she exercise her particular creativity in total self-giving? When her husband’s heart has reason to trust in her, there are no conflicts. However, rarely is that trust there from the beginning; it must be earned. It may be some time before she can put her creative talents into useful and fulfilling projects. The man is naturally put off balance, or made unhappy by those things he suspects are more interesting to her than he is. When some activity she loves absorbs her time, she may unconsciously put him on the fringes of her life. If she gets praise and pleasure from others rather than primarily from him, or if she becomes taken up by praise from others and has none to give him - then the marriage is going to suffer serious strain.

Jealousy is a specter in many marriages, and generally the woman cannot understand why her husband behaves in such an irrational way. She has no inclination to unfaithfulness. But jealousy is not necessarily just of other people who seem threateningly attractive to one of the spouses. A vague jealousy of time spent away, or of a mind wandering to other interests on the part of one spouse can be subtle and damaging. It is jealousy when the husband glowers at his wife for a shopping trip that runs a half hour late. This symptom frequently appears when the woman’s allegiance is not fully committed to her husband. Obviously then, his heart cannot trust in her; he does not feel that wherever she goes, whatever she does, she is in the Scriptural parlance, “wearing his veil.” (Book II) As an unveiled woman, she is acting unfaithfully toward him because she is not under his headship. Acting on a logic deep in the meaning of marriage that he rarely understands, he may feel guilty about what seems just an irrational feeling. While she has no unfaithful intention, her actions, independent of him, are casting that shadow. She is meant to face him fully, being his in wholehearted mind and heart. For this reason, watching a football game and drinking a beer with her husband can be a holier activity than withdrawing to read a religious book. How does her spiritual life relate to her husband? Is she putting her husband in God’s place - a common objection to a woman’s role

of submission? If it is that, it is all wrong. There would be no motivation, no strength or ability to understand and incorporate these concepts without the Spirit of God. A woman receives new life in Baptism exactly the same in quantity and quality as any man. That is what St. Paul is saying in the oft quoted Galatians passage. With the Holy Spirit she comes to obedience for her own holiness and wholeness, and for the sake of the Redeemed community. In all of this, she is dealt with as a child of the Father, directly and lovingly. Without this primary relationship, nothing else makes sense. When she arrives at the time to follow Jesus in obedience, she forfeits none of this personal relationship to God, but in a kind of death to her own version of spiritual life, she is asked in her relationship to headship alone, to put her husband between herself and him for God's sake. Uniting with another person, without giving up her singular identity, she, nevertheless, allows it to be superseded so that a new unity may arise whose first principle will be God himself. Such is the mystery of this union of man and woman in Christ. We have seen Mary give up her first hand spiritual encounters when put under Joseph's headship. Joseph then administered God's will in regard to their joint life. Why should she have given up that direct encounter and obedience to God? Because God asked her to - it was in direct obedience to God that she accepted the headship of a man. It is only because a woman is sent by God that she goes under the spiritual and temporal authority of her husband.

God's place in her life is always first. Humanly, he asks her to put her husband first in everything except what would contradict God's word in her conscience. Her husband then becomes the discerner of her spiritual insights; he is her first spiritual director, though he may guide her to a second (preferably a woman). This is not because he is more spiritual, rather it is based on trust that God works through the authority he has placed over her, and only for her own good. Even in the unlikely event of his objecting to religious gatherings, and the like, a woman need have no fear about her spiritual life. She will have her spiritual needs met more quickly in obedience than she ever can in disobedience.

There may be times when the woman must say, "no." Her will is obedient, she wants only to be submissive to her husband's headship, but he is asking something that transgresses her conscience. With prudence and prayer, following in the tradition of other obedient women like Esther and Judith, she will with respect draw a line. Men may test their wives' obedience, but few are ogres. A reasonable talk should solve such a problem, but in case there is real evil or abuse, a woman has other recourse. Submission is not an excuse for abuse; it is

meant to be practiced by two Christ-centered persons. When all kinds of love have been expended, but peace eludes the couple, St. Paul gives permission for separation. However, if the marriage is sacramental, both must be prepared to live celibately or else return to each other.¹⁰ Based on Scripture that is the stance of the Church.

The self-giving required in obedience is done hopefully. A Christian experiencing the Redeemed life comes to death itself, the final yielding, with hope. Obedience and death - both have that dimension that is expressed as “death to self and life to God.” Hopelessness means the point has been missed. It is with trust in God that hope is always there; trust is the victor over all bitter or evil circumstances. This trust is a magnet for God’s grace; it demands no particular solution because it relies on God to work all things together for good. It is only with this trust and expectation that a woman is self-giving to her husband. Anything else does not approach the models of obedience, Jesus and Mary.

“Praise” is a word to consider. The whole attitude of heart described by the word “submission” when applied to the Creator and given by the created is best called “praise.” When a man or woman stands full face toward God, their hands raised, when their eyes watch him, and their ears listen to him, it is joy to do his command, and peace to be in his presence, then gratitude for his ways and his word are the hourly experience, and the fitting word is “praise.” It can be silent, but it is no less adoring for that.

In the same way a woman praises her husband, not by flattering words, but by her attentive stance. “Praise” has a dictionary definition “an expression of warm approval or admiration, strong commendation.” How better to express that in one’s life than in self-giving, in submission or yieldedness? It is so simple to make a man happy - a happiness that brings to her the deepest desires of her heart - to be loved and to achieve a loving union.

The sooner she gives up the effort to be her husband’s conscience, the sooner he is free to assume responsibility for the good and bad in his life. Sometimes perversity causes a man to continue habits that his wife thinks are wrong. Or perhaps it is an inner logic that tells him she is deceived in her judgments, but a woman who attempts to monitor her husband is doomed to frustration. If he eventually submits to this judgment, she is faced with an even unhappier situation, a man under her spiritual headship. When a woman steps out from a place of

¹⁰ I Corinthians 7

spiritual superiority, she will cease being a stumbling block to her husband's religious life. God asks a special kind of mediation from her, one that comes wordlessly with yieldedness and self-giving. That mediation he can use very well, and it often happens that the husband, once estranged from things of God will take up a faith life. He must be freed for his choice, even as she knows she must be free for hers.

Test for Submission

John Henry Cardinal Newman's test for orthodoxy of a developing doctrine is that the idea has a lasting life without falling into sterile conservatism. In this he echoes Our Lord, "You will know them by their fruits." The development of any doctrinal position must be fruitful. The fruit of woman's yielding to her husband is manifold from the biological to the spiritual. In a rightly ordered family, the door is always open to a new member. Spiritually, the fruits of the Spirit are daily ripening on the vigorous plant that is the family. These are not theoretical, but palpable fruits of love: joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These fruits are an adequate definition of submission and proof of its holy origins; tangible, they are capable of being seen, and are not just ideas heard from pulpits, or part of the popular religious game "Let's pretend love is the greatest thing in the world."

Woman is commissioned by Christ and his Gospel to be the Christ bearer, to bring all he is into the center of the family. She materializes the immaterial and brings spiritual realities down to the level of nourishment. Her effectiveness in the Church community which is the family of God could not be greater for the Kingdom. No social justice or benevolent effort can match it. By being an obedient subject of the Kingdom, she establishes that Kingdom with its King, in the heart of the basic unit of God's creation, her family.

CHAPTER VI. WHOLENESS IN CELIBACY

If woman exemplifies something at the very heart of things, that is, if she images a certain principle of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity who we comprehend as feminine (Book I), then that principle applies to all women, married or unmarried. We have been concerned only with the married woman; it is time to see how the single woman, called to celibacy as a vowed religious or as a lay woman, may see herself responding to the same principle.

A Call to the Ideal of Virginit

As our chief guide in an area which the author does not know first hand, we will turn again to Saint Benedicta (Edith Stein), a woman who lived out her sexuality in consecrated virginity which led her to the Cross. She finds all the superlative values of virginity in the New Testament beginning with Jesus and Mary.

Moreover, the New Testament holds up the ideals of virginity. And, with all due respect to the sanctity of marriage, it is a matter of faith that the state of virginity takes precedence over the married state. Thus, from the point of view of the Catholic faith as well, it is impossible to consider marriage and motherhood as woman's exclusive vocation.¹

John Paul II also devoted part of his apostolic letter to considering the call to consecrated virginity, specifically in terms of spousal love, the union of two in a Third.

. . .by freely choosing virginity, women confirm themselves as person, as being whom the Creator from the beginning has willed for their own sake. At the same time they realize the personal value of their own femininity by becoming "a sincere gift" for God who has revealed himself in Christ, a gift for Christ, the Redeemer of humanity and the Spouse of souls: a "spousal" gift. One cannot correctly understand virginity -- a woman's consecration in virginity - without referring to spousal love. It is

¹ op.cit., p. 174-175

through this kind of love that a person becomes a gift for the other. This cannot be compared to remaining simply unmarried or single, because virginity is not restricted to a mere “no,” but contains a profound “yes” in the spousal order: the gift of self for love in a total and undivided manner.²

Maturity for the Call

Psychiatrist Baars presents the person who is mature enough for the “yes” demanded by either marriage or the religious life:

(a person must) possess himself lovingly and gratefully as a man or woman, as being - in peace and harmony - what in the ultimate analysis he is - singular and alone.³

“Singular and alone!” To be free and self-possessed means that a woman has appropriated the gift of new life in Baptism, has made this her own, and has freely given herself to God. The person’s ego has been emancipated from childish dependencies enabling her to give herself to him in a new dependency of personal choice. At this time, she is uniquely a celibate, for that is precisely what caelebs (celibate) means: “singular and alone!”

Even when called to matrimony by God, a woman is first celibate in the spiritual sense - virginal in the deeper sense. The term “virgin” understood in its fullest sense, means not only one who takes on a life of celibacy, but a woman who belongs to no one, or who is owned by no one but herself. Such is the meaning of the Greek “parthenos,” and an alternate meaning of the Hebrew “almah,” or virgin. We have seen that a woman must first belong to herself if she is able to give herself to God who may give her to another if he wills. The best adjusted in marriage are those who are free to give from their own self ownership. We see Mary free in this way, bound to no one for her decision, and virginal in this inner owning, as well as in her choice of physical celibacy.

Baars commends this as a freedom to be a person who can “be love” to other persons without the necessity to “make love.” The emphasis on genital sexual activity has been so overblown in our society, furthered by misconceptions both about the role of sexuality in human wholeness and a mistaken philosophy of human nature, that people have come to believe genital

² Mulieris, op.cit., VI.20.

³ Baars, op.cit., p.13

sexuality as important to health as eating regularly or sleeping. It is not glands and physical organs that determine the need for sexual activity; it is the mind and feelings that are responsible. This does not place genital sex in the same category as food, drink and sleep.

Repression and satanic oppression make sexual activity obsessive and neurotic, but the cure for repression or obsession is not, contrary to public opinion, active, uninhibited sexuality. Such ideas undermine the Church's teaching on sexual morality, and stand in need of correction from both psychological and psychopathological insights. For a woman to wholly enter her calling, whether to marriage or to the celibate state, she must first be her own person who enjoys her sexuality without compulsive and obsessive preoccupation with genital sex. Since whole men and women need this grounding from which to enter their calling, all begin at a level of consecrated continence - a sexuality dedicated to God, which gives them freedom to choose virginity perpetually, or to be given in marriage. In our culture, over-colored as it is with invasive sex, to raise young people with an appreciation of sexual continence so that their call may be clear and not interrupted by compulsion, is a challenge to every parent.

The Celibate Life is a Gift

It is well to recall Jesus' instruction about the celibate life:

“Not all men can receive this saying, but only to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it.”⁴

To whom it is given - these will be able to receive the celibate life as a gift from God. Jesus himself, the one in whom the theology of celibacy resides, is the one who gives this gift.

(Jesus')virginity is constitutive. This does not mean that He was not free to choose but that there was no question at all of choice. In this He is exalted above all human beings; there is the possibility of choice for everybody else . . . nobody can attain union with God other than through free choice. In this respect, Mary's freely chosen virginity is the example of all humanity, men and women alike. . . “I am the handmaid of the Lord,” Mary's whole being is articulated. It bespeaks her readiness to serve the Lord and excludes every other relationship. Of course, the celibacy of priests also is founded in their undivided readiness to serve the Lord. . . He makes the priest his proxy and permits us to see the Lord Himself in the priest.

⁴ Matthew 19:12-13

In Mary we do not see the Lord, but we see her always by the Lord's side. Her service is rendered directly to Him: through the prayer of intercession, she intercedes with him for humankind; she receives from his hands graces to be bestowed and does indeed transmit them. . . . Her position is thus analogous to that of Eve by the side of the first Adam. But Mary is beside Jesus not for his sake but for ours. . . . In her virginity, she is the pure prototype of womanhood because she stands beside Him who is the prototype of all manhood and because she leads all humanity to Him.⁵

Those called to celibacy testify to the special gift it is. St. Paul, experiencing this gift himself, instructs others to consider whether they, too, are called to accept it.

I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; but the married man is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried woman or girl is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit; but the married woman is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please her husband. I say this for your own benefit. . . . If any one thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry - it is no sin. But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well. . . ." (RSV In the Greek the word translated "betrothed" here would better be translated "virgin.")⁶

There is No Escape from the Masculine

The woman who chooses celibacy, does not choose a life merely of avoidance of male intrusion into her life; she also must be willing to be encounter the masculine or she will not live out her calling maturely. There is, in the choice of celibacy for a woman, no escape from the eruptive masculine, as C. S. Lewis depicts so well in this dialogue which has been used earlier.

"Yes," said the Director, "there is no escape. If were a virginal rejection of the male, he would allow it. Such souls can bypass the male and go on to meet something far more masculine, higher up, to which they must make a yet deeper surrender."⁷

⁵ Stein. op.cit. p.190-191

⁶ I Cor. 7:32-38

⁷ Lewis, op.cit.p.315-316

If a celibate life is chosen simply not to suffer this intrusion, to keep one's world in neat order and under control, there will be a rude awakening. For the woman celibate more acceptance and openness to intrusion and disruption will be demanded, for she has chosen to give herself to a higher masculine, the Lord himself, with all his energized missioning. He demands a surrender that costs everything.

As a bride of Christ, a consecrated virgin does not deny her womanliness, she opens herself in all her sexuality except genital to be a sex object of her Beloved, so that she may be fruit-bearing beyond the mere biological. Because of the choice of such an impregnating "Husband" this is to be more fruitful, in terms of other lives, than the married.

Sing, O barren one, who did not bear;
 break forth into singing and cry aloud,
 you have not been in travail!
 For the children of the desolate one will be more
 than the children of her that is married, says the Lord.
 Enlarge the place of your tent,
 and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out;
 hold not back, lengthen your cords
 and strengthen your stakes,
 For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left,
 and your descendants will possess the nations
 and will people desolate cities.
 For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is his name.⁸

Did not the virgin Mary love this prophecy and somehow claim its promise as her own? Think of the vast tent that must stretch out to encompass her children all over the world. Your Maker, Mary, is your Husband! Praise God!

Consecrated celibacy will not necessarily make a woman holier than her married sister in Christ, though that possibility lies open; it just depends on how surrendered, obedient and submissive she will be to the demands of the Lion of Judah. Sometimes a woman having difficulty with the married life of submission, is tempted to envy the quietude and freedom she imagines is the life of a celibate. If what she imagines is true, then the one she envies is unfulfilled and lives a constricted existence. For it is in giving that we are receive . . . the choice is always there.

⁸ Isaiah 54:1-5

The Animus - Positive and Negative

The masculinizing of many women religious is one of the most obvious and regrettable signs of the upheaval of the Church in our times. It points to a rejection of the principle that underlies woman's life in both the Original and the Redeemed Order. Assuming the masculine role does not observably bring a celibate woman to peace, but to further restlessness. The "old" submission may not have brought fulfillment but it can hardly hold a candle to the general dissatisfaction and decline which plagues many religious orders today. When reevaluation takes place in the light St. Ignatius' two standards, Satan or God, the rebellious origin of the stance of many women religious, that has been a contagion through the Church, will be made clear. A complete picture in its garish color is painted by Donna Steichen in her book Ungodly Rage, published by Ignatius Press in 1991, which in careful detail chronicled the decay of religious women's congregations, too often lead by avowed feminists, often lesbians, barely distinguishable from pagans and witches. In the past twenty-five years this rebellion has diminished as the perpetrators age, but the damage done will take much longer to heal and continues to bedevil these congregations which are often by-passed by young women seeking a faithful celibate witness to Christ.

A woman cannot integrate her masculine side without the benefit of obedience to an outside authority established by God. Satan, the usurper's, success with Eve lay right here, as it does with what Steichen documents. The animus domination possible in the celibate woman needs the same built-in correction as the married woman - a headship for discernment and authority. For this reason it is necessary to have a chair of authority in communities of religious. Without it there is no subjection of the animus in the individual woman who identifies with this inferior masculinity and displays all those negative characteristics that are lumped under "aggressiveness" or simply "bossiness." To say, "I'll be obedient to God, not to man," is questionable if the person denies any earthly designate carrying God's authority whom she will recognize and submit to.

The chair of authority is a legitimate masculine principle in the religious community of women. It is through obedience that the women under that authority come into the rich inheritance of life, "self- forgetting love," in the religious order.

The motive, principle, and end of the religious life is to make an absolute gift of self to God in a self-forgetting love, to end one's own

life in order to make room for God's life. The more perfectly this is realized, the more richly will God's life fill the soul. Then, God's . . . wants nothing for itself but bestows itself freely; mercifully, it bends down . . . need, healing the sick and awakening the dead to life, protecting, cherishing, nourishing, teaching, and forming; it is a love which sorrows with the sorrowful and rejoices with the joyful; it serves each human being to attain . . .s the love of the divine Heart.⁹

An absolute gift of self in obedience to an authority put in place by God will assuredly manifest such fruitfulness as this. Under obedience, the masculine side of a woman vowed to a religious life is forced to integrate, making her whole and strong, a woman with all her maternal gifts available to the suffering world, and capable of delivering them. When a woman is obedient to authority, she comes to grips with her need to order, control, manage, decide and command. Each of these masculine strengths are assets only when properly ordered by a submission of will. Without that, the inner drive is presumptive, divisive and destructive of relationships. It has a tendency to block the spirit of unity, and refuses submission which it considers to be degrading weakness or childishness. Even though she may be in the forefront of peace and justice movements, ironically this independent woman, for what seem to her good reasons, prefers personal war to peace.

The Unvowed Celibate

The celibate women living in the world, not in religious communities, are not without this provision of headship, though it is not as evident. Before the age of majority they are, of course, under their fathers' authority. Afterward, they prayerfully seek God's guidance as to whom this work has been assigned by him. The choice needs to be made very carefully. It may be a spiritual director, preferably a woman, gifted in spiritual direction, who is under authority herself. It may be a brother, a Godparent or another person with strong Catholic values who can act as discernor over the larger pattern of life. In rare cases it may be a priest- pastor. The good effect does not always come with pleasant experiences. The recalcitrant will is always a student - learning, and rarely a docile student. Docility is gained only under years of obedience.

Fruitfulness a Hundredfold

It is the fertile, open, receptive ground, not rocky, shallow ground that yields forty-fold, sixty- fold, and a hundred-fold. And it is fruitfulness that eventually tells what the soil is really

⁹ Stein, op.cit., p.51

like, despite its appearance. Lives touched with good by the woman who is fertile soil are numbered in multiples. It takes the action of spiritual wind, rain, heat and cold upon her life to make her response to God like pulverized soil, ready to bear such a harvest. Though this means suffering, what a woman purposefully leaves behind in order to commit herself to God, she will gain many times over in the Kingdom.

If a seed fall into the earth and die, it will yield a rich harvest.¹⁰

Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundred-fold now in this time, and in the age to come.¹¹

Mary, committed in her heart to be the handmaid of the Lord, is the inspiration and help to those who answer this highest of woman's vocations. Like her, they have chosen a single life in answer to his call to fulfill the role of spouse and mother - with Jesus, rather than with a man.

But before the annunciation . . . this woman called to the most exalted maternity had not wanted marriage and motherhood for herself; . . . against every tradition of her people. She was determined to live free of marital obligations. As *handmaid of the Lord* she bore God's Son and was mindful of the man placed at her side for the protection of her child and herself. . . What else could have induced her decision to remain a virgin than her desire to be wholly *the handmaid of the Lord*. . . And how . . . explained otherwise than through divine inspiration and vocation?¹²

Each woman responds with her "fiat" continually. Women who carry Mother Mary's rich meaning in their lives know the value of the same submission and obedience she exemplifies. As monads of obedience, they are wholly demonstrative of the truth at the heart of things.

He has called women . . . to the most intimate union with him: they are to be emissaries of his love, proclaimers of his will to kings and popes, and forerunners of his Kingdom in the hearts of men. To be the Spouse of Christ is the most sublime vocation which has been given, and whoever sees this way open before her will yearn for no other way.¹³

¹⁰ John 12:24

¹¹ Mark 19:29, 30

¹² Stein, *op.cit.*, p.189

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 83-84

CHAPTER VII. THE “OLD” SUBMISSION AND CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE

What Went Wrong?

If the preceding is a true picture of God’s command for the ordering of his people, a goal not out of reach for all Christians; if *submission* holds the power of the gospel for the edification of the home, and promises rich spiritual fruit for the family of God, what went wrong when it was a central principle for all Catholics? There was a time when submission to the rule and the superior in religious communities, to the priest and the bishop in the local church, to the structure of Church hierarchy overall, to the father in the Catholic family, was general, where were all these touted spiritual fruits, where was all this joyful meaning? What went wrong when there was little or no rebellion in the Church, when everything was held tightly by cords of command and obey? Not everyone would say that overall it was a good time. We have seen that charismatic communities with all sincerity in following Christ, who placed Biblical emphasis on submission, have had to apologize to those who were “victimized,” and rethink their position because of the detrimental effects in many lives. Some point to the gravest fall of all – the priest scandal of the early 21st century as being the rotten fruit of this submissive attitude and demand.

First, though the public gets only a view of the dirty laundry and the negative washout, and never the positive from these efforts, the result of the obedience/ authority equation in many cases has been great fruitfulness. We can still remember the faces of faithful nuns and priests who were shining lights of sanctity because of their submitted lives, even when they were under trying authority. We know many of them today.

Yet, obviously, submission for many resulted in childish dependency which benefited neither the one subject to authority, nor the one exercising it. The innocent, many times children, suffered from the pent-up feelings of women religious who had no arena for legitimate expression. Some priests held their parishes in fear by their abuse of authority; and to the daily horror of the faithful, it is apparent now that this authority/submission mentality also led to sexual abuse. The fruits of submission, if they can be called fruits, in such cases were bitter, even

vile. Discernment would conclude that the plant was not of God. His fig trees do not bear thistles!

What can we learn from the past that will keep us from making the same mistakes in the name of submission? How did manipulation and fear become imbedded into a system of Christian obedience? And when we rightly threw out the bath water, how do we find and retrieve the important and valuable baby?

For my part I hate and distrust reactions not only in religion but in everything. Luther surely spoke very good sense when he compared humanity to a drunkard who, after falling off his horse on the right, falls off it next time on the left.¹

How do we get on this horse and stay? Or do we want to get off? The mistakes seem to lie with both parties, those exercising authority and those attempting to obey, and in two directions, the first the misuse of responsibility, the second the restrictions imposed on freedom.

Submission was not always fraught with error

It must be underlined that these errors were not always present. There were very spiritually sound expressions of obedience and authority in the Church before Vatican II, and the Spirit moved in marvelous ways through mature, faith-filled people to produce spiritual fruits. The priesthood was oversubscribed, the convents were full, and Catholic families were vigorous in faith. Sometimes it was individuals who had found the narrow way to life - willing the will of God, and sometimes whole communities were blessed in surrender to the Holy Spirit through obedience to their superiors. Harvests have been gathered from these obedient souls a hundred-fold. Such priest-abbots as Eugene Boylan were spokesmen for thousands who read and understood.

All power is from God,. Where lawful authority lawfully orders, there faith hears the voice of God... A religious has a vow of obedience, and his day's work is appointed for him by a superior. He has absolute certainty that the work appointed for him is God's will, and all he has to do is to carry it out with as much purity of motive and of intention as he can. That is one reason why as a state, the religious state is the more perfect.²

¹ Lewis, CS., *The World's Last Night* (N.Y. 1960) p.94

² Boylan, Eugene, *This Tremendous Lover*(Maryland, 1964) p . 205

The true woman rules by submitting; she humbles her husband by the generosity of her love. She strengthens him by her dependence, she builds up his character by throwing responsibility upon him; she is queen of his heart by her love.³

Though Fr. Boylan thoroughly presents the beauties of submission within their rightful context - his whole book is a treatise on self-abandonment for Christ - most people do not have his fine sense of the principles involved. Paradoxically, the secular Woman's Movement has made clear some of the strands of the concept that were in need of finer separation.

Finer distinctions are being made

In all ages the Church's direction to souls has been apropos to the times. As part of God's respect for Man's developing potential, the Church's spiritual direction has met the need of the consciousness of the times, no more, no less. We can't, therefore, look back and condemn Mother Church. We are at a different place now, thanks only to where the faithful were then. From pressure of the world's growing knowledge and *growing sinfulness as well*, we have been forced to new insights in applying the ancient truths.

We are involved in yet another sorting out of truth from error. Perhaps the general group of Catholics was not ready for this freedom until our century, at least not many Catholics. Always there are persons ahead of their time, the exceptional spiritual souls who envision the future; but even they are usually at home in their times and accept the Church as she is. The divine and human are always mixed in the Church. From the vantage point that this moment in time provides, we see that the "old" submission had to fade away in order for the new to come. The distinctions are finer now; we have learned from our sinfulness and can make more demands on our growing understanding, attempting to keep at the front the essentials that had been left behind. Those fine distinctions make the difference between something that does not have the hallmark of true Christian obedience and something that does.

Mistaken Ideas - coercion, fear, inequality

One thing stands out, God does not expect obedience to be accomplished by heavy-handed coercion. It is not by fear or force that the King of Love reigns. Man does not resume equality as His Beloved in covenant, nor enjoy friendship with Him because of fear; it is just as

³ Ibid p.324

impossible as to imagine human love and friendship on such a footing. Though hell and damnation are realities, the fear of them is not sufficient for life to be lived to its fullest.

In the man-woman relationship, the truth of Christian submission cannot be experienced if one partner considers himself superior, and the other inferior; nor can a relationship of equality and freedom be maintained when women are held down by social mores and political sanctions. Egalitarian democracy in society (not meaning equality before God which is an entirely different thing) is necessary for people to be protected against the harm of wrongful authority. Human beings, even those heedless of God, nevertheless, have to be protected against the voracious greed and selfishness of others.

Since we have learned sin, we have found as Lord Acton says, that “all power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” The only remedy has been to take away the powers and substitute a legal fiction of equality. The authority of Husband and Father has been rightly abolished on the legal plane, not because this authority is in itself bad (on the contrary, it is, I hold, divine in origin) but because Husbands and Fathers are bad. Theocracy has been abolished not because it is bad that learned priests should govern ignorant laymen, but because priests are wicked men like the rest of us. Even the authority of man over beast has had to be interfered with because it is constantly abused . . . The function of equality is purely protective. It is medicine not food.⁴

Civil society, in pressing for a recognition of equality, no longer tolerates the existence of rights which imply the superiority of one person. . . Church law should radically and resolutely reject any claim that might suggest inequality among the faithful on principle, whatever the function.⁵

In light of these quotes we see the feminist movement as part of an essential move in the economy of the development of Christian doctrine in our day. It has helped us see that for woman to fulfill her destiny in Christ, she must be free from compulsion whether of spoken or unspoken expectations, and free from political inequalities. Women must be recognized as fully equal with men, and in full freedom be able to accept whatever responsibility God may give them. The obedient life is only a sign of truth when it is freely chosen and intelligently grasped by an individual whose goal is to bring God’s will to pass on earth as it is in heaven. The covenantal image gained from understanding the relationship of Persons of the Holy Trinity

⁴ Lewis, *The World’s Last Night*, op.cit., p.37

⁵ 156 Kinney, Bishop John F., *Doctoral Thesis, The Juridic Condition of the People of God* (Roma 1972) italics added

clearly presents two persons, equal and free, held together in love by the condescension of the Holy Spirit who himself respects their equality and freedom with himself.

Freedom to choose obedience

Freedom is for the choices toward God and His will that make self-determination a worthy attribute. Self-determination was a concept that authoritarians felt their subjects totally unready for and unable to handle. Freedom, it was suspected, would lead only to sin and the damnation of the soul. It was better to restrict the immature, keeping them from evil they might ignorantly court if they were free.

It demonstrates the dimension of grace that the Church, when the time was right, was able to break free from this hold of power. The rigid hold of legalism, and the idea of authority and submission that had sometimes grown monstrous, was thrown off. That there are pockets of clericalism today can't be denied, but they are fading. From historic experience we expect human institutions to perpetuate power and to strengthen and protect it rather than to break its hold themselves. The Spirit is clearly in control of the Church.

The freedom which has come from disallowing any dogmatic or social incrustations posing as submission has allowed the Christian woman to choose her husband's headship (or her religious superior's) as the mature act of a free woman. She is not trying to live up to any social image, she is not responding in fear to coercion. Even in the face of great difficulties, she is making this choice because at last obedience stands free for what it is. It claims her by its inherent truth, through it she gives her loyalty to Jesus Christ who asks her to obey and love. She chooses it in full awareness of the responsibility and commitment she has accepted in exercising her will to do God's will. Gone are the fictions that confused her real motivations. It has always been possible to make a free choice, even when living under compelling circumstances, but the choice is more satisfying when made in freedom.

One cannot judge a woman to be obedient or disobedient by any exterior test of the role she plays in society. She may be a corporation president, or a political officeholder, or hold any of thousands of professional jobs. Her self-giving will be known only to that one who has been given headship in her life. If we were to rewrite Bathsheba's criteria for the good wife today, we still would see her as Bathsheba did, doing many things, engaging in commerce and trade - yet in everything ultimately prospering her husband. She rules her life and her household in order and beauty, and he benefits. Position, prestige, and money are not motivations for her life, her

priorities are set and one thing alone is necessary, to be what God made her to be, and to accomplish His will on earth in her sphere. That will, she believes, is expressed to her safely and profoundly through her husband (or her religious superior).

Not blind obedience

Jesus did not submit blindly. A Christian does not either, though blind obedience has often been praised in religious writing. Jesus may not have foreseen all the details in the sequence of events, but He did know what would happen. He went from moment to moment in pain in those last hours; he felt all the human feelings including a time of despair at His separation from the Father, but it cannot be said that He was obeying blindly. He *knew God's plan*, even to crying out the Twenty-second Psalm to express His identification with it. He was not ignorant or uninformed, but knew that He was carrying out a mission for which He had been sent. Likewise, the Christian in his obedience takes up the cross because he has chosen to participate in Christ's suffering. Evil may seem to hold sway, his own consciousness may go under in that darkness, but he perseveres to the end, knowing what he is doing. The specifics may be vague, the timing may be mysterious, he may not see the next step, or know when it will end, but the vast outlines of the salvation plan are clear to him, and his part at this moment makes sense.

In looking back we see that authority and obedience needed refocusing when the demand was for blind obedience, a submission which required that there be no understanding of why. It was only, "Do as you are told. It is good for you because it thwarts your own selfish will." There is some truth in that, but not enough nourishment to satisfy the needs of the hungry spirit with its strong will-to-meaning placed there by God. He does want us to *know* and love Him. This knowing is not brain-facts, but experience and inner-knowing as we have seen from the use of "yada" in the Old Testament.

Obedient People Express Themselves

To be true Christ-like obedience, whole expression of thought and feeling is essential. Jesus Himself asked the Father to allow the cup to pass from Him. "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." If authority is to rightly order and judge, it needs the input of those who benefit from its order. The authority side in the human dimension does not have the whole case, *it must listen*. On the other hand, the side of submission must learn to speak prudently, respectfully and completely, never jumping to the conclusion that "right" is on its side, and the overseer is "wrong." Both must listen and heed a different Judge for that determination.

To be truly Christian, alongside the offered obedience, there is a readiness to confront authority in the right way if conscience is troubled by overarching decisions. It does this as above, but fearlessly. Authority begins, in our time, to understand this obligation to listen to those in its charge, and not only to defend its seat. God speaks through those He has placed as opposites, but *equals*, to that authority.

To say nothing and to submit out of fear may be an easy way out, but it does nothing to rectify the misuse of authority. Power exercised wrongly is very threatening. However, a Christian must refuse to carry out directives which go against conscience, but only when every avenue of possible compromise has been explored, and then with utmost regret that such a course must be taken. When a Christian exercises dissent or opposition, there is no place for rebellious talk or actions; there can be no stirring up of others, or undermining the one who holds headship. Most conflicts are personality clashes and not conscience affairs, therefore they end in the submission of the obedient one. Whether concerning conscience matters or not, all the results must be left in God's hands, including one's own future.

It is necessary for the Christian community to first be informed, and then to give counsel to the leader as to possible courses of action. A community is in on the planning; input from all is heard - this is what collegiality means. After the input is received and considered, the decisions are made by the head of the community, whether family or church. Then the input ceases; the case rests in the hands of God; and all hands, hearts, and minds, even though suffering from the decision, are lent willingly in the new direction.

For obedience, it is not necessary for the authority in question to be personally a Christian, or to understand the Christian position - religious persuasion of two parties can be and often is lopsided. In such situations - think of Esther's submission to an ungodly ruler (Book II)- God's action through His servant may be even more dramatic. We recall that God's action to redeem the world was through Jesus' submission to those who legally had authority over Him. Authority that should have been exercised for God was being used, as it generally is, for political power and self-interest. In standing against their abuse of authority, Jesus corrected them, but submitted to them. It was an unbalanced situation - the Holy One who obeyed was not met by holy authority. Yet, God used it. The tremendous act of Redemption for the whole world came about when God, by submitting to that perverted authority, overcame sin and the Evil One. He told us to be willing to do the same.

The Apostles Culture Made Them Do It.

When the “old” submission for women was discarded there was much discussion that the concepts found about women in the New Testament were merely cultural, similar in sociological background to the Apostles vagueness about the morality of slavery. The reasoning went that if the Apostles were unenlightened about the wrongs of slavery, they were also unenlightened about the wrongs of woman’s subjection. In this way, went this argument, human rights had not sunk in to the Apostles’ consciousness. Analysis of the scriptures involved, finds this explanation unsupportable.

When the matter of cultural influences on the Apostles and Biblical writers comes up, the real issue needs to be clarified at once. Isn’t it wiser to assume that cultural conditioning is the great influence on the minds of today’s critics rather than the Holy Spirit being that influence, and its corollary, that the Holy Spirit was the decisive influence on the minds of the Apostles and not cultural conditioning? Is it logical to assume that the Twenty-first Century culture is truer to God’s intent than the culture of the First Century, or that the years past were the less enlightened to moral issues than we are today? It is hard to find evidence to support our superior enlightenment.

If we are to believe that God is restoring His creation, we must believe that Scripture and the Apostles were inspired by the Holy Spirit of Truth. Scripture cannot have been so unguarded by the Spirit as to be merely a hodgepodge of cultural influences to puzzle generations of misguided people. We have it well attested that the Apostles were not confused about woman’s role, but saw her significance clearly. All Christians were enjoined by the Apostles to practice obedience in emulation of their Lord, who like a lamb was led to the slaughter.

It is true that the Apostles consistently counseled slaves to be obedient to their masters. They never counseled revolt because they could not find a shred of that attitude in Jesus. They were well aware of cultural, political revolt. They resisted those who thought their road should be that of the Zealots who had hung on crosses all over Palestine in the years before and after the death of Jesus in their revolt against Rome. They did not consider revolution or rebellion as in accord with the Will of God. They saw slaves, as servants of Christ, to have a singular opportunity to be exemplars of His way of obedience. This does not mean that they thought slavery was God’s will. Nor does it mean that they thought the slave’s submission to a master and the woman’s submission to a husband to be the same, or that they considered women and

slaves in the same category. It does not mean that they thought slavery and submission related, or that they thought both marriage and slavery to be proper human institutions.

The Apostles everywhere write of slavery with negatives, as they everywhere write of marriage with positives. They never encourage people to seek slavery as a way of life because of its spiritual possibilities; on the contrary, they tell them to shun slavery. The word “slave” carries negative connotations in all regards, the only exception is when Paul uses it as an analogy of complete servitude to Christ. St. Paul says:

So, brethren, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman. For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not again submit to a yoke of slavery.⁶

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear.⁷
You are no longer a slave, but a son.⁸

When Onesimus, the runaway slave, was sent back, St. Paul wrote to his master very gently suggesting that he be received by his old master as Philemon would receive the Apostle himself. He wrote gently because neither Paul, nor the Holy Spirit who inspired him, would coerce the will of a free Christian.

Perhaps this is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back for ever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more so to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.⁹

There was no lauding of slavery as an opportunity to die to self and live for God, no suggestion that Onesimus should be kept in slavery because of the moral value of that institution or because of its spiritual value to the slave. In fact, Paul says,

Were you a slave when you were called? Never mind. But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.¹⁰

⁶ Galatians 4:31 -5:1

⁷ Romans 8:15

⁸ Galatians 4:7

⁹Philemon 15-16

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 7:21

On the other hand, submission in the married state is never considered negatively. Women are always being called back to it, which makes it unlikely that submission was generally any more practiced then than it is today. Never is there a suggestion that they should avail themselves of the opportunity to be autonomous. Under obedience, submission is held up as Man's restoration to grace, and woman is the sign of it. Slavery was never used for any such valuable lesson. The Apostles were convinced of this, and were not confused about slavery; they simply knew that the Lord's way was not of rebellion. His way was submission with trust in God to overcome evil. It was the only way to go. It has been tried so little, who can say that it has been found wanting. Resistance to slavery would have taken a different way, as with Mahatma Ghandi's and Martin Luther King's non-violent crusades - both of which were influenced by Christ.

All in all, the practice of submission to lawful authority in the Church, discredited by those misrepresenting the thrust of freedom and responsibility in Vatican II, can now be re-accepted by the faithful who will hold those emphases intact. In Book Four we will look carefully at the full implications for the Church. In such acceptance, woman poses the most redoubtable threat to her ancient foe, Satan. He is already putting up a fight so intense over this very thing that the battlefields, chiefly the home and Church, are filled with the smoke of confusion, and both are marked by many sad casualties.

CHAPTER VIII. TODAY'S WOMAN AND HER ADVERSARY

In considering Satan's hatred of woman, the reason is apparent. She is the ever present threat to his rule and his system: she, in the flesh, is the ever present statement of Man's true relationship to God, if he is to live according to His will. With the Holy Spirit, she can by opening herself to the obedient life, rout Satan's hold on the Christian family and the Church, and from there loosen drastically his grip on uncounted lives.

Enmity Between Woman and Satan

John Paul II quotes scripture from Genesis to Revelation to point out the continual enmity that will be between woman and Satan until redemption is complete.

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." It is significant that the foretelling of the Redeemer contained in these words refers to "the woman. . . And since the redemption is to be accomplished through a struggle against evil - through the "enmity" between the offspring of the woman and the offspring of him who, as "the father of lies" (Jn 8:44), is the first author of sin in human history - it is also an enmity between him and the woman.¹

. . . the same Woman . . . also appears within the eschatological perspective of the world and of humanity given in the Book of Revelation. . . "a woman clothed with the sun," with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of stars (cf. Rev.1 2:1. . . she is "suffering the pangs and anguish of childbirth" (Rev 12:2) like Eve "the mother of all the living" (Gen 3:20). She also suffers because . . . there stands "The great dragon ... that ancient serpent" (Rev. 12:9), already known . . . the Evil One, the "father of lies" and of sin (cf. Jn 8:44). **Is not the Bible trying to tell us that it is precisely in the "woman" - Eve-Mary - that history witnesses a dramatic struggle for every human being, the struggle for his or her fundamental "yes" or "no" to God and God's eternal plan for humanity?**²

¹ op.cit., Mulieris JV.11.

² Ibid

The “yes” or the ‘no” - Eve or Mary – all women. To insure her disobedient “no,” Satan struggles with her day in and out. How does Satan counter the threat that she might still say “yes” today? The feminist movement has been his instrument; whether a cause, or merely a symptom, the feminists have been in the forefront of renaming good and evil in her regard.

Renaming Good and Evil

In terms of the furtherance of the Kingdom of God, the woman’s liberation movement in itself is amoral, neither good nor bad. A Christian enlarging her understanding of herself by pure feminist insights of a St. Benedicta (Edith Stein), only deepens her effectiveness as an obedient wife, or as an obedient single celibate. A non-Christian, by the same token, moves further away from Christian belief by espousing a liberation philosophy with its commitment only to self-determination.

The motivation of a liberationist is the desire to be free from all authoritative claims, to be “free” from absolutes. Then one is able to name for oneself good and evil. We stand back at the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil with Eve. The tragic drama is re-enacted; the protagonists are the same - woman and Satan.

In the first rank of those who hold views radically opposed to the views of the Church are the feminists, in particular those feminist theologians who call themselves Catholic. Indeed, the difference in views here is so great that what the Church calls good these women call evil, and what the Church calls evil these women call good. Even more alarming is the fact that the feminists themselves are only the tip of a very large iceberg in society today. Large numbers of Americans. . . have adopted, to one degree or another, . . . a view of reality not fundamentally different from that of feminism. That view of reality rests, in the final analysis, upon a rejection of the sacramentality of the good creation as the Catholic Church understands that sacramentality.³

And so, we observe the current rage for relativism; the false doctrine that it is possible to live and move in Christ with no commanding signposts to be observed, the rejection of the paradigm of human nature which includes original sin, and ends with the negation of any kind of submission to God’s will. It includes the fatal error that all people will be saved. Woman is susceptible because she is so hard-seeking for freedom which means freedom from constraints –

³ Little, Joyce, “Naming Good and Evil,’First Things, May 1992, p. 23

no good, no evil - and so intent on her personal meaning. When she accepts the Church's oversight as divinely given, she is protected from reliving this tragedy.

The cleavage between the Church and the world will deepen when Christian people awaken to what is really at stake, and who it is expressing himself by this renaming of good and evil.

As John Paul puts it, "the words which express the first joy of man's coming into existence as 'male and female (Gen 2:23) are followed by the verse which establishes their conjugal unity (Gen..2:4), and then by the one which testifies to the nakedness of both, without mutual shame (Gen.2:25)." Herein is revealed to us, . . . the nuptial significance of the body which, as male and female in the communion of marital love, makes visible in the created order the invisible reality of the Trinity as a community of love.

All of this is quite beautiful. . . But there is a catch . . . it comes in the form of a command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. . . the command . . . "Do not claim the ability to name or to define what is good and evil for yourselves because you do not know enough . . . Only I know how I can properly be imaged, and therefore, only I can tell you what is good and evil for you."⁴

When deciding what is good and evil for ourselves, we will continue unraveling unity down to the last shred. Divisiveness will reign. Where the sign of the work of the Spirit is unity, and unity is only achieved by submission of will, the sign of autonomous woman struts through the world. Where this desire for unity is not so strong as to compel Christians to willingly submit their wills to God's authority, there is a question of the Spirit being the one in charge. Therefore, we are told to "test the spirits."⁵

Where the hearts of believers ache for unity, there is a willingness to give up dear ideas and submit to headship trusting God to work out the Truth which He has promised to do. Submission to the head established by Christ Himself till His return is the only way the Body of Christ can come back into unity. Far from this spirit of obedience, the feminist theologians have taken up the task of "a new naming" of self and world.

⁴ Ibid p. 24-25

⁵ I John 4:1-6

It was already apparent then that this new naming of self and world was simply the most recent rerun of Eve's renaming of the forbidden fruit back in the garden of Eden.⁶

Return to obedience is fraught with trials

The Christian woman who returns to obedience under the primary authorities in her life, her husband and the Church, is under pressure. She hangs on to her belief only by inner tenacity of prayer and the assurance of the Scriptures that this is indeed the way of Christ. But she is buffeted, not just by the social milieu which she might expect, but also by persons in the Church which she does not expect. At times she feels that her vision has isolated her, though she knows this cannot be true. There must be others, "thousands who have not bent the knee to Baal," but more apt today to be the female goddess, Asherah.

So she diligently seeks others with whom she can communicate, others whom she can encourage and who will encourage her. Grieving over her inability to put into language the truth that has guided her own life, she seems to be mouthing a strange tongue and rarely gets beyond a few words. She finds that many of those with whom she would share her convictions have so absorbed the humanistic, relativistic thought that any reference to Scripture or to Truth is greeted with incredulity. These persons are indeed crippled on a battlefield that has been razed by onslaughts of philosophies originating in the councils of the Adversary.

She is bewildered and appalled at the theologians and moralists who lead her sister Christians down the most flowery of primrose paths. Arriving at the end, the betrayed looks back on a life littered with debris - broken ex-husbands; lovers with whom she has had "meaningful" relationships; lonely, hurt and estranged children; as well as her own inner despair of finding anything meaningful in life.

Shield Against the Onslaught

The believing woman finds protection provided by God in her obedience to her husband and the Teaching Magisterium of the Church, and in being faithful to the sacraments. She will find in these two areas the shield against all the attacks of disbelief, and she will be consoled by the unmistakable fruits of the Spirit that she perceives are growing around her, a fruitfulness for which she takes no credit, other than having provided a matrix.

⁶ Little, op.cit., p. 26-27

Another place of safety, to which St. John in Revelation leads her, is the wilderness. This is allegorical for the desert of contemplation and prayer. It is in this spiritual desert that she is strengthened to stand despite the opposition she daily faces in the world, and where she realizes that Satan's threat to dash her hopes is only that - a threat.

. . .and the woman fled to the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God. . but the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness to the place where she is to be nourished.⁷

It is the desert of prayer where the feminine is nourished by God - the woman of the Apocalypse so graphically pictured is Mary first of all, but also in a layered way, the Church and Everywoman. In this place of solitude she is replenished and fed by God. Here in quietude the roaring of the enemy can be heard, but she is safe. Her fears allayed, she charts a wise course for the days of buffeting.

There are those who, precisely because of the depth of their religious experience, are in even more danger from the Evil one. Because she has experienced the love and power of God as reality, and she realizes spiritual gifts, the charismatic woman stands in critical need of the practice of obedience. Giftedness is no protection against the wiles of the disobedient spirit. The will can be rebellious, the gifts misused in spiritual things as well as with purely human things. What gift has not been misused by fallen Man? Without the humility that realizes the need for the discernment of spiritual headship, the most charismatic person will be the most deceived, for subtly the evil one will use every small piece of uncommitted will.

⁷Revelation 12:6-14

CHAPTER IX. THE AGONY AND THE ECSTASY OF OBEDIENCE

Surrender

The heart of obedience lies embedded in the Cross of Christ, a sign which speaks of total surrender. Submission is not an exterior that says “yes,” while the interior goes on saying, “no.” It is not the superficial accepting of life as it comes, with the hidden, unspoken resolve that “there will come a day” when the tables will be turned. It is not a supposed yielding while inwardly the need to control continues. There can be no feeling of reservation, no tug in the direction of non-acceptance.

We are thus confronted with the question: What does produce wholehearted acceptance? The answer is, as before, surrender. But surrender is a step not easily taken by human beings. In recent years, because of my special interest in the phenomenon of surrender, I have become aware of another conscious and unconscious phenomenon, namely compliance - which is basically partial acceptance or partial surrender and which often serves as a block to surrender. . . Compliance means agreeing, going along with, but in no way implies enthusiastic, wholehearted assent and approval.¹

It is surrender that God asks for in obedience. The surrender of all the “I wants,” “I must have,” “I can’t stand,” “I hate,” “I will never be happy until ...,” “I need. . .” In Christianity any parallels to self- fulfillment philosophies end abruptly. We are healed to die to self; not to have self taken from us, but to give it up freely. Before we are healed, Satan takes our life from us against our will; afterward, by divine grace, we give it up to God.

I preach Jesus, and him crucified. . .²

¹ Tiebout, Harry M., M.D., Surrender versus Compliance in Therapy, with special references to alcoholism, Quarterly Journal of Studies in Alcoholism - Vol 14: No 1, pp.55-68

² 1 Corinthians 1:18

This Jesus, who is LIFE, allowed himself to be put to death. St. Paul knew that such preaching was foolishness to the thinking, philosophic Greek, and a stumbling block to the theological, God- centered Jews.

Many have described the Cross' meaning by the two bars, up and down, right and left, which it is. The vertical bar symbolizes God's will, the horizontal bar our own. Bishop Fulton Sheen tells us that we are pinned on this cross, suffering until our own will slowly turns from the horizontal to the vertical, becoming one with the Will of God; then the pain ceases.

Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple.³

A Cross?

Before they saw Jesus on it, his speaking of the Roman instrument of torture-to-death as something all are called to bear must have seemed bizarre to his disciples. What could it mean to them when he repeated it over again?

...and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. he who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it...If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.⁴

It is a theme that never is far away in Jesus' teaching of the disciples:

Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. he who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life, If any one serves me, he must follow me..⁵

Following Jesus leads to the Cross where so many turn away. "Narrow is the way and few there are who find it,' obviously sorts out those who persevere through the crosses in their lives.

In our Baptism we die to the old nature and rise in a new nature. We put on the new Man after death of the old Man. We enter then into a Redeemed Order that is meant to bring us

³ Luke 14:27

⁴ Matthew 10:38, 16:24

⁵ John 12:24-26

back to the perfection God intended in the Original Order, only more so because of the one who has made it possible - Jesus. This becomes a living reality to be worked out in our lives day by day. With Baptism and Confirmation we have been given the *spiritual power* we have lacked to bring this new nature to fruition. The Holy Spirit is working in us to bring into actuality in our conscious experience all we potentially are. For a woman this kind of surrender, obedience unto death, must be the free choice of heart, soul and mind, a living sacrifice. That beautiful hymn of Philippians referred to earlier, has a final postscript of St. Paul:

. . .that may know him and the power of his resurrection and may share his sufferings becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection.⁶

This death is not futile like death may seem to be; this death is not a sinking into despair, we are not asking for eternal nothingness, a nirvana, in this death. It is a death to self so that “if possible we may attain the resurrection.” Paul describes this death as the giving up of all ‘fleshly’ things, the embracing of a spiritual poverty that is the loss of all things in order to know Christ.

The writer of Hebrews describes Our Lord as praying earnestly to be saved from death, and he was heard. But even though he was the Incarnate Son, he was called to suffer. This was his perfection, this obedience to death. Had he avoided it . . . well, that is unthinkable. To be the source of our salvation there was but one course - obedient suffering unto death. We rarely believe that we are meant to follow in his steps. Yet the saints have all believed it. Among thousands of beautiful prayers of surrender they have prayed, here is one:

Lord Jesus I unite myself to your perpetual unceasing universal sacrifice. I offer myself to you every day, according to your most holy and adorable will. You have been the victim of my salvation; I wish to be the victim of your love. Accept my desire, take my offering, graciously hear my prayer. Let me live for love of you. Let my last heartbeat be an act of perfect love!⁷

Death prepares for Resurrection

⁶ Philippians 3:10

⁷ Prayer of St. Theresa Couderc

When we commit ourselves in surrender to God, we surrender our ideas, our hopes, our plans and dreams for the future. When he raises us, he gives back life on every level, and with it comes his idea, his hope, his plan and his dream for the future. In dying to ourselves, he has returned to us immeasurably more than we could ask or think. We die for resurrection. We let go of our life, letting God give us his life. “For it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.”⁸

Spiritual relinquishment comes down even to the gifts of the Spirit. Sometimes to the spiritual Man who has been reborn in Christ, it comes as a surprise that the very abilities and powers he has been given in his new Christian walk must also be relinquished. Abraham and Sarah were blessed by the birth of Isaac despite Sarah’s barrenness, a miracle baby given by God to meet their need and fulfill God’s plan for Salvation History. Abraham knew Isaac was a gift from God. Yet, that same gift was called back to be placed on the altar. Abraham was willing for he knew that even a miraculous gift could become too dear, could get between himself and God. He took Isaac to the very brink of being a sacrificial victim because he had completed that sacrifice in his heart. God stopped his raised blade because he had given Isaac back to him, and a sheep was provided by God to take Isaac’s place. Oh, the chills, when we realize what is meant, “God himself will supply the lamb.” Even the spiritual fruition of God’s promise, the godly gift, is called back to the altar.

Take O Lord, all my liberty, receive my memory, my understanding and my will. You have given me all that I am and all I possess I return it all to you and surrender to the guidance of your will. Give me only your love and grace. With these I am rich enough and ask for nothing more.⁹

When we pace back and forth on this side of the gate to the Cross, surrender sounds ominous. The gate looks like an entry into a dark path whose destination is shrouded. Abandonment to the Will of God, dying to self-will, surrender, relinquishment, to those who have only looked on them from afar form a very bleak landscape, indeed. But look again! What do the saints tell us, what does Jesus proclaim in his resurrection? Hear! Listen! The shout of joy, the triumph of victory! The glory of the abundant life lies just on the other side. There is ecstasy there, and it is not reserved for the few; the gate to glory is open to all those who follow Jesus.

⁸ St. Francis’ Prayer of Peace

⁹ Ignatius of Loyola

We hear it in the words and see it in the fruits of those who while still in this life went through the gate.

Three Steps to Loving Ourselves

We are hardly ready for self-love before stepping through into that darkness. It is after we go through that narrow gate that we can love our self. How foolish it is to encourage self-love in those immersed in modern therapies. The three levels of faith-life call for two steps before the third. The first is to learn to love God for our own sake, the second, stepping through into the dark, is to learn to love God for his sake, and the third, possible only well beyond the gate, is to love ourselves for God's sake.

The first step is to meet the Saviour, to accept his saving death for oneself, to allow his healing touch on our bruised psyches, to recognize his care for our daily needs, to ask for his deliverance from evil, and to embrace his loving restoration. We love him, we adore him, for all he does for us. Day by day amazing gifts of grace arrive at our doorstep. This is an entering into the life of Christ, an essential starting place that can no more be skipped than elementary school before any higher education.

The second level of spiritual experience is the dark night of the senses that we have seen is the time of submission of self will. We learn then to love God more purely for his sake. We give up all our soulful loves, and cling to him no matter what he requires of us, all because we love him more than all life's goods. "Though he slay me, yet shall I love him," says Job in the King James Bible. But this is not the last stage of the faith life. Sheer perseverance is required, but it leads to the third stage of faith.

This level of faith speaks of resurrection. It is the stage of the life wherein we are taught to love ourselves because God himself has loved us enough to die for us. If we are so beloved of him, how can we do less than to love what he loves. This is a self being purged of selfish dross, a self in which God lives to glorify himself by making the soul abundantly fruitful for him; this is a self that sings the praises with the angels every day, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." It is a new self which cannot but love itself in the realization of what God is doing to bring it to perfection, thoroughly enjoying with surprise all that God has wrought in it.

For most Christians these stages are hardly totally distinct, they overlap and merge and sometimes go on simultaneously. Analyzing is out of our hands; the Lord is bringing about in his

beloved what he wills when he wills. The soul abandons itself in his hands and trusts that he is doing what he has promised even though no particular “stage” or “level” is discernible.

Obedience is the initiation into that level of loving God for his sake. That much we can understand; and when we see the efficacy of obedience in the spiritual life, we take heart. With obedience a woman learns to give up her ways and live out the ways of another who expresses to her the Will of God. She learns to wait, and wait, and wait. She learns to take rebuke without resentment. Here Mary is again our pure model.

. . .the Son educates the Mother for the greatness of his task, cultivating in her the maturity she need to stand under the Cross, and, finally, to receive, at prayer within the Church, the universal gift of the Holy Spirit.

From the very outset, this education reflects Simeon’s prophecy that a sword would pierce the Mother’s soul. It is a pitiless process. All the episodes handed down for us are more or less brusque rejections.¹⁰

With some “pitiless process” a woman learns real humility and confronts her prideful weakness. She experiences the radical dispossession of herself for another. The monastic professions become also part of her way of life - chastity, poverty and obedience. If married, the chastity means belonging to one man with single-minded purity. Here her abject need for a Saviour is met minute by minute as she sees her own “awkwardness, meanness, grossness and emptiness of her best.”¹¹

When she accepts her cross, what she needs is not sympathy from spiritual directors but understanding and encouragement. Sympathy can soften her resolve, make her turn back to easier but often deceptive ground; encouragement will have her keeping on until the purgation has accomplished its work. A woman threshing around in submission, hating it and wanting to shed it, can be shown the real enemy is not submission, but the tenacity of her own will that refuses to cross the stream at the narrowest point. Willfulness makes tough work of the most difficult crossing where the stream is not forded with ease. Some exterior to her situation will pity her, even be horrified at this ordeal in the name of the loving Christ Jesus; they will see her husband, perhaps, to be an impossible man, and her efforts too grueling. This is unwise advice -

¹⁰ von Balthasar, op.cit.,106

¹¹ Bouyer, op.cit.,p.

God is in control or the Scriptures are misleading us. The husband's difficult personality is usually equally matched by the woman's self-will, and the tough work is no more than is necessary to bring a transformation in both.

No temptation (peirasmos) has overtaken you that is not common to man, God is faithful, he will not let you be tempted (peiraso) beyond your strength, but with the temptation (peirasmos) will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.¹²

When the horizontal cross bar of the woman's will (we are so willful) submits to the Will of God, and lies next to it, the pain is over and she will know peace. With the immensely creative life just beginning, all stubbornness, self-pity, and misery will be, not gone, but diminishing, and a new pliable will, open and soft toward God will be the ground of a hopeful new growth.

Yahweh, you have seduced me, and I was seduced; thou art stronger than I, and thou hast prevailed.¹³

Why do we struggle so long against him? He who wants only to love us so that our knowing may be "yada" knowledge - it is for this that he pleads with us:

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today when you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. Therefore, I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'they always go astray in their hearts; they have not known my ways,' So I swore in my wrath, 'They shall never enter my rest.'¹⁴

When we reflect on the Trinity, or on the relationship of perfect mankind to the Godhead we see no such suffering because we see no self-will, no hard hearts. Obedience is only a trial to our fallen souls. When our wills are finally released from the grip of self-gratification we will be free of the evil one and will have full joy in that friendship with God which comes with obedience to his command. That state is *Shalom*. We will have entered into God's rest.

¹² Corinthians 10:12 Peirasmos means trial.

¹³ Jeremiah 20:7 (Jerusalem Bible)

¹⁴ Hebrews 3:7-11

CONCLUSION TO BOOK THREE

Dear Friend, if you have persevered through all these words and still have strength, you are well on your way to the wholeness and holiness for which you long. Pray for the poor author who has wearied you. If you begin to have a taste for more of Jesus, there is one promise to remember; it is one of the beatitudes, “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be satisfied.”¹⁵

There was, a few years back, a movie and a song - unfortunately oozing New Age religion - but one we can appropriate for our use, “On a Clear Day You Can See Forever.” Often we are lifted by the Spirit out of the doldrums where everything is unclear, and we suddenly perceive clearly the Eternal Dance that plays all around us, and miracle of miracles find that we have learned the steps and are engaging in the pattern with a beauty and proficiency we could not have dreamt we had. It is a glorious moment, which is almost never more than a moment, and never a day. Then we know that God is truly remaking us in the divine image, and our hearts nearly burst with praise. We want to stay this aware! We want to cling to the very mountain rock, like St. Peter exclaiming, “It is good for us to be here.” We would like to pitch a permanent tent - he did, too. But it’s down to the murky places we must go; down to where we try to cast out demons and are unsuccessful.¹⁶ There we stumble on; our heads beneath the clouds again, and we forget all we saw on that clear day.

St. Paul knew that the process of redemption was like that. He writes about how we see in a mirror dimly - mirrors in his day were imperfect and cloudy.¹⁷ But, then - face to face! Now, he says, we know in part, but then we shall understand fully, even as we are understood! In yet another place he calls the process “metamorphosis.”¹⁸ We know this word in connection with the earthbound worm’s transformation into becoming a gorgeous butterfly. Already on the chrysalis, which might have the appearance of a cruel cage, we see the imprint of the divine form in the making. Let us give in happily to all the restrictions of the cage, and gladly accept the confinement meant for our eventual emergence into God’s perfect new creation which will glorify him.

¹⁵ Matthew 5:6

¹⁶ Mark chapter 9

¹⁷ I Cor 13:12

¹⁸ II Cor.3:18, 5:1, 17