

induce priests to encourage those who show interest and help them to find their way through the intricacies of the Rubrics, for the Office is, as Father Bede says, an exceedingly complex structure; but once mastered it does provide for simple people an unfailing source of prayer and devotion which never cloys and which becomes not exactly automatic but regular and self-absorbing.

I think too that the liturgical movement would gain much if, instead of insisting so much on music and so on, organizers of schools and conferences would give practical instruction on the Breviary itself, how to apply the instructions of the Ordo, sponsor articles on those lines, and get more and more people to take part in the recital of the Office in English. It is surely in the interest of the Church that people should clearly comprehend the catholic and communal nature of the Divine Office; that it is indeed 'a prayer which embraces all mankind and reveals the meaning of all history'.



HUGH OF SAINT VICTOR ON THE CELESTIAL HIERARCHY OF DENYS THE AREOPAGITE

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Hugh of Saint-Victor's Commentary on Denys' Celestial Hierarchies profoundly influenced the writers on mystical theology of the twelfth and following centuries. Richard is greatly indebted to him and makes use of his ideas and his examples. The following extract from the section on the Seraphim in Book VI of the Commentary (chapter VII in Denys) shows how Hugh transferred what Denys said of Angels to human love and contemplation. The insistence on love rather than knowledge as the means of union and contemplation far outstrips what Denys thought and is responsible for the whole of the later trend of mystical theories. This passage is the source of many of Richard's illustrations in the Benjamin Major. Hugh's commentary on this section is longer than that on any other part of the work and he obviously lets himself go freely on the subject which was dearest to his heart.

The translation of the appropriate sentences of Denys is taken from that published by the Editors of the 'Shrine of Wisdom' in their version of the Mystical Theology and Celestial Hierarchies. (Brook, 1949.)

'The name Seraphim clearly indicates their ceaseless and eternal revolution about Divine Principles, their heat and keenness, the exuberance of their intense, perpetual, tireless activity and their elevative and energetic assimilation of those below, kindling and firing them to their own heat, and wholly purifying them by a burning and all-consuming flame . . .

IF I were to say what I feel, I should first confess that I have heard words not spoken to a man or not spoken by man. For it seems to me so great a thing that a man should have said these things that nothing higher could be attributed to man. Perhaps these words were born of those which a man might hear but which it is not lawful for a man to utter.¹ For he who spoke or taught these things had attained to the third heaven and entered into Paradise, and there through the Word had heard words of God, altogether secret. And then had come the silence to which man's ear cannot attain, which none should hear until he can understand. They were heard inwardly where they were spoken, and they could not come forth to the place where man is. Therefore he that was within, and greatly inward, could hear them inwardly and within; but they were not to be uttered to those without, lest those outside might forsake them, if they had not been called by him who was within. Words are born of words as words were born of the Word. From words which ought to be kept in the heart come words which may be brought forth outwardly, great words from the boundless life, dark words from the hidden things, deep from the impenetrable depths; whether these things are heard by us or known by the understanding, I know not.

These are the very words which the disciple of the Master, and the master of the disciples, gave us to examine. For the first disciple of the Word heard words from the Word, and he was made a teacher by other words and had a disciple whom he made a teacher, and descending from him, for our instruction, a voice as it were from heaven, echoed through the world and filled our ears with amazement until at last it enlightened our hearts with a revelation of truth. Therefore those who were men but could not yet understand divine things said that it thundered, for they were dumbfounded but not yet instructed. Others who were a little more enlightened but not yet set on fire, thought it was an

¹ 2 Corinthians, 12, 4

angel and did not understand that it was God. So we also have heard the thunder of the celestial voice and began to wonder but were not yet illumined. But if we were awakened to wonder, we should be converted by wonder and so by our conversion we should be enlightened. And if we begin to hear and understand those sweet words, we shall not only wonder but also love them, if indeed, we yield to their grace. If they are not loved they will not be understood, nor can they be loved if we do not taste them. So what then? Why did we hear if we do not understand, and how can we understand if we do not love? I say on my part that if I am not bold about love yet I never cease from wondering. Perhaps by this wonder I may come to understanding and if I am little stirred to knowledge, yet shall I be moved to love. And meantime love shall be my food until contemplation is born of it and contemplation leads to illumination.

What is this motion of the angels, 'always moving and unchangeably revolving'? If we were to say that love is thus, we might be thought to have said very little, for we know not what love is. For he who speaks of love never says little, unless perhaps he says that love is short! But this man who speaks so much of love did not mean its shortness. He says, 'it is mobile and unceasing and hot, keen¹ and most fervent'. Mobile because it is life, unceasing for it is perpetual, hot because it is love, penetrating for it is wisdom. Is this not enough? He calls it life, describes it as everlasting, sets it down as love, adds wisdom thereto. And all this is contained in one act of loving and is one love. How is love also life? Hear that beloved lover commending love! 'He that loveth not abideth in death' (1 John 3, 14). So therefore love is life and what a life! Charity never faileth. And if charity never faileth, love is everlasting life. And what is love? Where is such heat and fervour found in love? As they walked in love, grew warm and fervid, what did they say of Jesus on the road, whom they heard but did not recognise in the way?² They walked and were moved and were driven by the impatience of love, as if to stand still were not to be. For mobility and heat belong to love so that love may not be sluggish. So they walked with the movement of love and glowed with its heat, saying:

¹ The word used by Hugh following Eriugena's translation is *acutum*, which has both the sense of something piercing and intelligent or clear-sighted, sometimes sharp or passionate.

² Luke 24, 32.

'Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way?' Because they walked they had this mobility and because they were loving they had this heat, but they had not the penetration for they had, as yet, no knowledge. So because they lacked this intelligence they heard the words: 'O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.'¹ Therefore they were stunned and slow to understand, but not lukewarm or lazy in loving. So first they loved and afterwards understood, so that there might be intelligence as well as warmth in their love. First warmth, then insight, for he said not 'penetrating and warm' but 'warm and penetrating', even as it was first mobile and then unceasing, so that 'mobility' might stir us to enquiry, and 'unceasingness' that we might be confirmed in perseverance.

Warmth to revive the senses, but keenness that love might penetrate to the understanding. For he indicates that sharp urge of love and that vehemence of ardent desire, which bears in upon the loved one, entering and penetrating so that he may be there where the beloved is, with him and in him, so that he may be not only warmed by him but pass over into him by point of desire. For a man might be warm, warmed as it were from afar, if he were satisfied thus to love an absent one and not to see him who is present, nor to possess that intimate presence. But the love of the angelic hierarchy would not be perfect thus, nor very attractive, unless it attained that keenness, passing through all things until it reached the beloved, or indeed passing into him. If you do not go on into the beloved your love is still external, and you have no penetration in love. But you are divided and remain so in sluggishness; you are outside him and are not made one with him. For Love desires to unite you with himself and therefore he penetrates all things and draws as near as he can to the other one.

Consider how penetrating was their love of whom it was said: 'Whither the spirit was to go they went.'² For the impulse was urgent or fluid, as it says in some other place, of the keenness of love. And I think the person who was speaking was the Bride, nor was it right to mention anything hard or rough (in speaking) to a timid person, full of fears. Therefore this thing is called liquid instead of sharp, in the blandishments of love. For liquid penetrates as a sharp thing does, and will not desist until it come

¹ Luke 25.
Ezekiel 25-14

into the inmost place. Thus it is said: 'My soul melted when he spake, I sought him and found him not.'¹ She sought him because she was melted for him, if it were not so she would not be running after him but would remain hard and would not enter into him. But now she is melted and begins to run but does not find him at once, until at last she reaches him. So the quality of unceasing perseverance was also necessary that she might enter in and penetrate and say: 'I held him and would not let him go until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.'²

'I will bring him into my mother's house and into the chamber of her that conceived me.' So he will come in to you and you shall go in to him. You will enter into him when he shall come in to you. When love of him enters into your heart and penetrates and when love of him touches the depths of your heart, then it is that he enters into you and you come into your very self, so that you may go in to him. Therefore bring him into yourself but not in such a way that he remains or lives just outside yourself, at the gate or in the forecourt or at the door of your house or even just inside your house. For passionate love will not think much of this love or call it great unless it finds its way into the sleeping chamber and into the bed, penetrating to the interior and resting in your inmost heart. And I say further, he may not delight in your mother's bed unless he is brought in there where love is most tender and delights most sweet, so that he may find no rigid or obstinate human resistance. But all shall be melted and made soft by the fire of delight. Let, then, no resistance stand in the way, that charity may reach unto the inmost place, and let love be passionate to penetrate all things. We had to say this of the penetrating and melting nature of love that you may understand how great is the power of love and delight. This can be understood since love surpasses knowledge and is greater than the intelligence. For loving is more than understanding and love enters in and draws near where knowledge stays outside. Nor is this surprising for love always anticipates and is always confident, love rushes in impetuously without tarrying. Therefore it is both penetrating and liquid, piercing all things, and it follows the urge of its ardent desire until it reaches

¹ Song of Songs, 5, 6. Vulgate.

² *Ibid*, 3, 4.

the beloved, being incapable of pretence. Moreover, because of this, love thirsts to enter into the beloved, and to be with him and so near to him that, if it were possible, he might be the same thing as the beloved. It is this urgency which suffices to penetrate all things and to enter into the secret place so that no power can prevent it from reaching what it loves. 'Who', says the Apostle, 'shall separate us from the love of Christ? Persecution or famine or the sword?'¹ And so because love is sharp it cannot be held, but it passes through and penetrates, escaping freely and running to its desire.

Now if the heat and keenness of love is so great, what will the power of the next word signify? Namely the glowing ardour of love (*superfervidum*). For we must now enlarge a little on what this epithet adds to the foregoing virtues. And we are called to reflect on what more we mean when we say 'glowing' rather than 'heat and keenness'.

For you know that a glowing object is projected outside itself by the violence of its heat and burning and is taken up above itself and makes a great movement through the force of that covered and invisible conflagration that produces the glowing. That which is not seen is the latent heat of the conflagration which is within and moves; but that which is moved is seen; and from what we see we conceive and understand the great power and intense strength and exceeding violence of that which is hidden and not seen. Who can worthily compare the striving of material things with the majesty of invisible things? A natural spectacle serves as an example. We see glowing come from heat and from humidity, or rather it occurs in the humidity through the heat. We see in what way heat penetrates humidity without disturbance so that having entered in, it may powerfully and violently cast humidity out. It infiltrates invisibly so as to remove it openly, as if it were unwilling to suffer the presence of that humidity. It hastens to eject it, as if moved by some impulse of vehement indignation. Thus warmth passes into keenness and this develops into ardour. That which was first both piercing and melting to circumvent the resistance of love and capable of penetrating all things, now becomes a glowing fire, an inward seething, unable to keep still within itself. For love is piercing when it despises all things and passes through them, and it is

¹ Romans, 8, 35.

glowing when it condemns and abandons itself. For he who desires solely that which he loves, despises himself in comparison with the object of his love. For his desire would not be for love alone, if he loved himself as well as his love. And he could not love thus except by the power of a great and singular love. So that for love of him who alone is to be loved, the man himself who loves, is in some way despised by himself. Therefore it comes to pass, in a wonderful way, that by the fire of love he is lifted up to him who is above himself, he begins to be cast out by the power of love and to go out from himself. How great is the burning and seething in the heart of a man who has conceived the fire of heavenly love, when he is made eager for him alone who is above all, and by thought and desire is cast out from himself and raised above himself. And how shall he think about himself at all, while he is loving God only?



REVIEWS

MEDICAL GUIDE TO VOCATIONS. By René Biot, M.D., and Pierre Galimard, M.D. (Burns and Oates; 18s.)

The importance of health in religious life can hardly be exaggerated. Breakdowns are only too common, and superiors of communities and seminaries may well feel the need of competent medical advice in considering the acceptance of candidates whose health is in any way in doubt. Health includes so much more than the mere absence of serious disease; it is a question whether an individual's health will stand up to the particular kinds of strain involved in different types of community life or in seminary training.

This book, by two French doctors, is the fruit of their own experience in these matters. It is a disappointing book, at least in this translation, which is American, with American spelling. The authors are very much in earnest and seem determined to omit nothing. They begin with a philosophical section on the unity of soul and body, and range through almost every topic bearing upon the health of seminary students and religious: canonical legislation, bodily and mental diseases, neuroses, heredity, temperament, aptitudes, the vows, age, dress, diet, asceticism and the vocation of those rejected on medical advice. There are sound principles and good advice to be found, but they are hidden in a maze of technical terms, some of them unknown in English medical parlance. There is little discrimination between the important