

THE CONTEMPLATION TO ATTAIN LOVE

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FROM THE earliest directories and commentaries, the Contemplation for Attaining Love (*La Contemplación Para Alcançar Amor*) has lived under widely divergent interpretations and issued under contradictory instructions. Part of this conflict lies with the text of the *Spiritual Exercises* itself. The Autograph of 1541, the copy of the *Exercises* written in Spanish, used and continually corrected by Ignatius until 1548, does not list the *Contemplación* under the heading of the fourth week, placing it after this period and before the instruction on the three methods of prayer.¹ Nowhere are there indications when and how this contemplation is to be engaged.² Thus the second directory of Mirón, the directory of Hoffäus, and the *Breve Directorium* of Brussels do not hold for any intrinsic mystical content and understand this contemplation as an exercise indifferently connected with any stage of prayer. James Mirón maintains that it should be placed at the conclusion of the Exercises, even when these have been confined to the first week.³ The *Breve Directorium* allows it to be given, like the three modes of prayer, in the second or third or fourth week, according to the discretion of the director.⁴ Gil Gonzalez Dávila notes that some directors place it at the beginning of the second week as the foundation for the election.⁵

In strong contrast stand Nadal, Polanco, Gil Gonzalez Dávila himself, the directory of Granada, and the directories of 1591 and 1594. For Jerome Nadal, the *Contemplación*, together with the entire fourth week, is proper to the unitive way in which the structure of the Exercises climaxes as a school of prayer,

¹ *Exercitia Spiritualia Sancti Patris Ignatii de Loyola, Monumenta Ignatiana, Series ii, tom i* (MHSL, Rome, 1969), pp 306 ff. (Hereafter cited as *MI Ex.*) For the use of the Autograph and its relationship to the *Versio Prima* and the *Versio Vulgata*, cf Joseph de Guibert, *The Jesuits: Their Doctrine and Practice* (Chicago, 1964), pp 110-13.

² For these as well as for divergencies in vocabulary, cf William A. M. Peters, *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, Exposition and Interpretation* (Jersey City, 1968), pp 153-4.

³ *Directoria Exercitiorum Spiritualium (1540-99)*. MI, Series ii, tom ii (MHSL, Rome, 1955). For a thorough treatment of these early directories on the *Contemplación*, this essay is very much indebted to the important article of José María Díez-Alegría, 'La Contemplación para alcanzar amor en la dinámica espiritual de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio', in *Manresa* (April-June 1951), pp 171-94. Father Díez-Alegría cites and comments upon most of the texts selected here.

⁴ *MI Dir*, p 459.

⁵ *MI Dir*, p 528.

comprehensively including the 'three ways on which the contemplative walks'.⁶ John Polanco so connects it with the fourth week that it can be made either intermingled with the contemplations of the risen Christ or on the days which follow.⁷ Anthony Cordeses and the directory of 1591 follow this same identification between the unitive way and the Contemplation for attaining Love, and add practical directions how this exercise can be merged with the days given to the fourth week.⁸ For these authors, it is not a matter of indifference where this exercise is placed: the contemplation involves that kind of union with God which presupposes purification and choice, the ordering of affectivity and intentionality of the previous weeks, and it possesses its central experience only when it issues organically out of this history.

The controversy has continued down into the present. De Guibert judges that the Contemplation for attaining Love does not form a conclusion to the Exercises, though it can well be used for this purpose. Rather it occupies the same place as the three methods of prayer. He cites both sets of the early directories as indication of this, without adverting to the critical divergence between them.⁹ Iparraguirre, on the other hand, believes that in this contemplation Ignatius provides 'in a highly condensed form the very kernel of the Exercises': the contemplation must be seen as a 'kind of concrete synthesis which, simplified and in a concise form, may be used in daily life as an ideal containing various elements scattered here and there in a hundred and one particular truths'. To buttress this opinion, he cites the view of Le Gaudier that the Contemplation to attain Love 'is truly a summary not only of all the Spiritual Exercises but of perfection itself'.¹⁰ The issue is not whether

⁶ *Epistolae P. Nieronymi Nadal*, tom iv (MHSI, Madrid, 1905), p 673. (Hereafter cited as *MN IV*.) Note the extraordinarily strong statement (instructions) dictated by Alfonso Ruiz to Fabius De Fabi: '*De amore spirituali non detur nisi in fine, cum pertineat ad vitam unitivam*' *MI Dir*, p 171. This intimate unity between the fourth week and the Contemplation for Attaining Love is found also in the instructions given to the novices of Rome by Anthony Valerio; cf *MI Dir*, pp 194-5.

⁷ *MI Dir*, pp 322-3.

⁸ *MI Dir*, pp 560 and 734. It was this opinion, ultimately the judgment of Polanco, which found its way into the official directory of 1594. Cf *MI Dir*, p 735. That even then the conflict swirling around the place of the *Contemplación* did not cease, cf the very severe criticisms of this position by Fabianus Quadrantinus in his *Notata in Directorium Exercitiorum*, *MI Dir*, pp 768-9. The view of Yanguas and Iparraguirre that Cordeses is the author of the directory of Granada has been adopted here. Cf Yanguas and Iparraguirre, 'Antonio Cordeses, autor del Directorio Granatense', in *Manresa* 22, 84; pp 351-67.

⁹ De Guibert, *op. cit.*, p 130, n 38; cf also p 548. De Guibert distinguishes the controverted understanding of the contemplation into two possibilities: either 'a genuine form of prayer which can be employed in regard to God's gifts and blessings', or a 'definite exercise to be made once in passing'. The former possibility, for which he opts, would understand the *Contemplación* as a method of prayer, like the examination of conscience or the imaginative contemplation of the gospel mysteries in the second week. In such an interpretation, its place in the Exercises is indifferent.

¹⁰ Ignatius Iparraguirre, *A Key to the Study of the Spiritual Exercises*, trans. J. Chianese (Bombay, 1959), pp 102 and 107.

it can be used after the Exercises; all agree to this. The question is much more: what is being used? Is it a method of prayer, equally viable at any stage of religious development, or is it a synthesis of the Spiritual Exercises, dependent for its efficacy upon the evolution that has gone before into loving union with God? There is another way of putting this same question. For Ignatius, the election demanded an antecedent maturity, a freedom from deranged affectivities, and a sensitive identification with Christ. This religious liberty, which emerged from influence of God and a concentrated human co-operation, stood as a presupposition to finding God in a decision. Now the issue is: are there similar presuppositions for entering into the Contemplation for attaining Love? Does it demand that one has progressed through the struggles and the graces of the four weeks of the Exercises and now draws them into a unity, or does it find a legitimate place at any stage of this development? Perhaps an additional study of the internal argument of the text can assist the resolution of this question — a question which is critically important for understanding not only the structural dynamics of the Exercises, but for the entire movement of man into the Love of God.

What Ignatius saw, he saw as movement. The reality about him was essentially in process. His own life was understood as the history of a pilgrim, painfully learning as a child taught by God to grow into the contemplative for whom God was always present.¹¹ His Constitutions are radically unlike many a religious rule, containing neither a daily structure for the community nor a detailed list of officials and obligations. They rather chart a history, the progress through life of a Jesuit from admission to final incorporation, mission, government and the development of the entire Society. Whatever is said of structures and obligations comes as functions of that history.¹² The Spiritual Exercises are not a series of prayers to say as an office. They form an organic sequence of meditations and counsels, moving through the entire span of a man's life appropriated in prayer and choice, as he attempts under the influence of God to harmonize his personal history with the movements and intentions of the life of Christ. Each meditation within the Exercises develops from an initial request in the preludes to the final grace experienced and articulated in the colloquy. Grace itself was a process, almost imperceptible in its slow growth; temptation constituted a parallel but antithetical movement, entering little by little into inspiration and turning good resolutions into evil.¹³ Ignatius

¹¹ For the english translation of Ignatius's *Autobiography*, cf *St Ignatius' own story as told to Luis Gonzalez de Camara*, trans. William J. Young (Chicago, 1963).

¹² For the english translation of the *Constitutions*, cf *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, trans. George Ganss (Chicago, 1970). The original spanish and latin texts can be found in the *Monumenta Ignatiana*.

¹³ For the temporal dimension of grace and temptation in the Rules for Discernment of Spirits, cf Michael J. Buckley, 'The Structure of the Rules for Discernment of Spirits', *Supplement to the Way* 20 (Autumn 1973), p 31.

understood himself, his Society, Christ, the Kingdom of God, good and evil as developments, as histories rather than as atomic moments, and his various treatments attempted to realize and to embody this development.

So also the purpose of the Contemplation for attaining Love is developmental. It immediately aims at an elevation of consciousness, a growth in awareness, that kind of total human perception and experience which Ignatius called 'interior knowledge', which caught up understanding, sensibility and feeling.¹⁴ Every serious religious process for Ignatius, whether of the Company, of Christ, or of an individual meditation, is not something to be watched, but something to enter. To abstract from the process and to study it only speculatively, is finally false. One is called to a meaning that is radically dynamic and invitational. A man grasps this meaning only when he himself is grasped by what he knows, when he possesses a knowledge from within, when he senses not something other and objectified that is occurring, but a process which he shares and is living through. In this way, interior knowledge contrasts with abundant knowledge, though both could trace their origins either to personal inquiry and discovery or to divine enlightenment. Unlike erudition, learning or science, this knowledge was profoundly personal in its subjective participation and comprehensive in its penetration of human sensibility. It was knowledge, but felt knowledge, one that identified with life itself and whose experience could only be compared with taste and sensation.¹⁵ The Contemplation aims at this kind of sensitive, unifying consciousness in which a man deeply becomes what he knows and by which he grows into whatever personal depths his life is to possess.

Interior knowledge of what? Of the goodness with which God has surrounded him.¹⁶ The initial purpose is essentially an assimilation of the good within life, but the good as interpersonal — as from God and for me. It is to experience the good as gift. It is to perceive human history and physical nature, to perceive it as good, to perceive that it is of God. The awareness constitutes a twofold openness: of a man before all that is created, of a man before God. The dynamic unity of these three terms lies with the giving of God and the acceptance of man. It is the first moment of reality, all being issuing from God into the possibilities and achievements of man. It is for a man to experience overwhelmingly that he has been loved by God, loved by God in all things.

Organically out of this recognition emerges human love. The final term of the giving of God lies in the love of man; the product of his passivities before God is his activity towards God. Even the power of human love is gift, and the

¹⁴ 'Contemplation to attain Love', second prelude. Exx 233. Hereafter this exercise will be cited as 'Contemplation'. Since this second prelude is of such critical importance in the grasp of purpose, it should be given in full: 'El segundo, pedir lo que quiero; será aquí, pedir conocimiento interno de tanto bien recibido, para que yo enteramente reconociendo, pueda en todo amar y servir a su diuina maiestad'. *MI Ex* pp 306-08.

¹⁵ Second annotation, Exx 2; and cf Exx 63, 104, 322, 426, 65, 316.

¹⁶ Exx 233.

culmination of all the divine actions is gift. The culmination of the divine actions lies in the love they draw from men. Love cannot be forced. It emerges spontaneously from consciousness. An elevation of consciousness gives way naturally to a heightening of love. One has only to realize what God is doing to love him, and this recognition itself constitutes a new power within a man. It enables him to do what otherwise would have been impossible: to be so caught up in God, to be so attracted and drawn by him, that he finds that he loves him. Love is not forced; it is evoked. A man is drawn to God. And the power of this evocation is only the growing appropriation that one has been loved.¹⁷ There is nothing violent here or different from ordinary human experience. A child learns from his parents what it is to love, and they teach him long before he is able to articulate anything. They teach him by loving him. The child who has never experienced himself loved is psychologically inhibited for the rest of his life, and will be unable to love anyone. One is taught to love only by being loved, and this pattern of ordinary experience repeats the most profound models of religion.

And again, this second ascendancy of purpose evolves into its own fulfilment in service. Affectivity and choice move easily and authentically into direction and history. One has been loved in all things, so one returns to God in love and service in all things.¹⁸ The purpose of the *Contemplación* is not contemplation simply, but a contemplation that transcends itself and moves into the decisions and directions of a man's life. This unity of three moments — interior knowledge or realization, love or affectivity, service or action — constitutes the full goal of the contemplation of the goodness from God. It is not an understanding of the sources and implications of love, but rather the personal experience of a development, of a history in which this source is apprehended and its implications accepted. Knowledge, love and service are moments of a single line of interpersonal surrender. Just as a knowledge which did not issue in love would not be interior, so also a love that did not embody itself in service would be deceptive. Ignatius has been called by Nadal a contemplative even in action.¹⁹ This was possible because of the intrinsic unity he demanded between affectivity and activity and which formed the articulated and initial presuppositions of the *Contemplación*.²⁰ Just as love did not bias knowledge but fulfilled it, so activity did not drain off interior energies and contemplative love, but completed them within a total human experience. This second prelude, then, explains the title of the contemplation, which is not to

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Exx 54 and 71.

¹⁹ Jerome Nadal, *In Examen Annotationes MN IV*, p 651: '... tum illud praeterea in omnibus rebus, actionibus, colloquiis, ut Dei praesentiam rerumque spiritualium affectum sentiret atque contemplaretur, simul in actione contemplatius (quod ita solebat explicare: Deum esse in omnibus rebus inueniendum)'.

²⁰ For this intimate union between contemplation and activity, cf Nadal, *Apologia Pro Exercitiis S. P. Ignatii. MN IV*, pp 863-4; and J. P. Conwell, *Contemplation in Action: A Study in Ignatian Prayer* (Spokane, Washington, 1957).

win the love of God, for this is always present to men. It is rather to receive it so consciously, with such interior knowledge, that the love of man for God is evoked and develops into an integrated comprehensive affectivity, which infuses every aspect of his life. Thus is it a way of prayer which grounds a way of life.

The purpose of the *Contemplación* indicates, then, an event, a religious integration of human development: the integrity of man in love with God. But has this not been achieved or attained before? Knowledge, love, and its commensurate expression in discipleship formed the constant and repeated petition of the second week of the Exercises.²¹ Presumably, this interior knowledge has grown to such an affective identification that one is assimilated to Christ in the sorrow of his passion and in the enormous joy of his resurrection.²² Further, the first colloquy of the first week contemplates what Christ has done for me and what my response should be, while the fruit of the entire first week is gratitude for *tanta piedad y misericordia*.²³ Finally, at the very beginning of the Exercises a man has been encouraged to a generous offering of all that he is for the service of his Creator and Lord.²⁴ What is here that is more?

En todo: in all things. The sweep here extends beyond the history of the individual's struggle with evil and with choice, beyond the history of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. It extends to a recapitulation of all things and of all times, for which the action of God in Christ and in the individual is paradigmatic. This contemplation is not simply of sin and its forgiveness, nor of the mysteries of the life of Christ: it is the contemplation of everything, either as the goodness in which God has loved or as the medium in which a man loves and serves in response. Everything, the comprehensive subject of the *Contemplación*, can only be understood by what has been learned before, by what has been experienced before. What God does in everything can only be grasped by perceiving what he has done in Christ, what he has done in my personal history.

So it is that the comprehensive nature of the subject-matter reflects the comprehensive integrity of its purpose. A man progresses through all things and all times in contemplation, that he might attain a unity of knowledge, love and service in surrender. The integrity of the person mirrors in its internal wholeness the comprehension of all reality.

These two unities — of surrender and of reality — issue in a third: the unity of God and the human person in the intercommunion of love. The integration of God with creation allows it to be his expression, as deeds and gestures are the embodiment of love. The integration of human meaning, affectivity and action allows a man to respond authentically within that same creation in a personal surrender that is both the expression and experience of love.

²¹ Exx 104, 105 and 113.

²² Exx 193 and 221.

²³ Exx 53 and 71.

²⁴ Fifth annotation, Exx 5.

Finally, Ignatius allows these three unities to emerge through a series of developmental contemplations which constitute the Contemplation for attaining Love. The Contemplation itself brings into synthesis what has gone before, with the four points of its progress catching up the four weeks of the Exercises.

In all things. What is achieved then, is a fourfold comprehensive unity in the love of God: (1) within the human person: of knowledge, love and activity in the surrender to God; (2) within all that is in the goodness and service of God; (3) between the human person and God: of the lover and the beloved in the intercommunion of giving; (4) within the development of the Spiritual Exercises: of all four weeks reaching their dynamic integrity in this self-transcending contemplation. Among all these disparate terms and experiences, there is a steady movement towards comprehension and integrity, a union in which all things are included and dynamically integrated in a love which catches up all that is and that has gone before. The purpose of the *Contemplación* is finally attained when a man can love and serve the divine majesty in all things (*pueda en todo amar y servir a su diuina maiestad*).

Within this understanding of the converging integrity of the *Contemplación*, the import of the first two prefatory notes becomes obvious. The first states the natural union within a single person of actions and love; the second states the natural union between persons who love in intercommunication.

The first note places such an integrity between actions and love, between life and affectivity, that the vector lines of their engagement can move in either direction. One can experience the activity and use it as a criterion for the commitments of love, or one can experience the love within oneself and understand that it must express itself in deeds. Action is either a gauge for authenticity and intensity, or it is the most appropriate field of necessary expression and experience. The *Versio Prima* asserts action as the criterion of love, while the Spanish Autograph emphasizes action as the connatural expression of love.²⁵ What both do is to integrate the exterior with the interior of a single personality, and this allows the conjunction of action and love to function as the general subject-matter of the *Contemplación*. This integrity of love and activity establishes the double movement at each point of the contemplation, a double movement which responds to the diverse vectors found in the two versions of the note: one can ascend from the actions of God to the love that has caused such goodness, and so his creating and saving deeds become the criteria or measure of his love; secondly, one can move from one's

²⁵ The Spanish Autograph reads: 'La primera es, que el amor se deve poner más en las obras que en las palabras'. The *Versio Prima* A. of 1541 reads: 'Primo, quo amor monstrari et lucere magis in operibus quam verbis' (emphasis added). Both versions indicate a critical integrity between love and activity; the Spanish moves from love to its expression on action, while the Latin emphasizes action as the criterion of authentic love. Cf *MI Ex.*, pp 306-07. The subsequent Latin versions follow the thrust of the *Versio Prima*.

own awakened love into discipleship and service as the expressions in which they are authentically and necessarily embodied.

This responsive structure of each of the points of the *Contemplación* emerges more obviously from the second prefatory note, as the general subject-matter came from the first. This second develops the interrelation between love and activity by specifying that single activity in which the lover and the beloved become one.²⁶ That activity is intercommunion, personal communication, a mutual giving and receiving, an intense interchange in which they both share. While the first note speaks of the general expressions of love, this second maintains that love not only expresses itself but actually consists in the activity of intercommunion. While the first spoke of love and its integration within a single person, this second speaks of mutual love and its integration of different persons. The unity of a man occurred when his life was shaped by the love he possessed. The unity of persons occurs when they give and receive whatever they have, whatever they are able to share, with one another. The depth of what they share is indicative of the intensity of their mutual love. So, for Ignatius, the interchange of wisdom and knowledge becomes a deed in which the lover and the beloved are united. Whereas before, riches and honours, in the meditation on the Two Standards, could be destructive and deceptive movements toward evil, within friendship they become the interchanges in which love consists. Giving is the gesture of love; mutual giving is the embodiment of friendship, of a mutual love. And the quality of this love, its possession over one's life, is indicated by what one shares. In the *Contemplación*, the giving of God evokes the giving of man; and in this mutual surrender they become one in their love. They become interchangeably lover and beloved. Each point begins with God as lover and man as beloved; it develops as God becomes beloved and man the lover.²⁷ The note allows this evolution to be in stages, corresponding to the intensity of the communication of God, according to the intensity of his giving and of the intercommunion which he offers. The effect of both notes is to assert the unity achieved and demanded by personal love: within a single person, between lover and beloved. Their influence within the contemplation itself is threefold: they provide its general subject-matter by interrelating love and action; they provide a dialectical structure

²⁶ The Spanish Autograph reads: 'La 2a, el amor consiste en comunicación de las dos partes, es a saber, en dar y comunicar el amante al amado lo que tiene, o de lo que tiene o puede, y así, por el contrario, el amado al amante; de manera que si el uno tiene ciencia, dar al que no la tiene, si honores, si riquezas, y así el otro al otro'. *MI Ex.*, p 306.

²⁷ This structure of each point of the *Contemplación* transposes to the order of spiritual experience the same order which St Thomas employed in the *Summa Theologiae*. 'Following the suggestion of Alexander of Hales, he divided the three parts of the *Summa* ultimately into two vast visions of God: the *exitus* of all things from God (I), and the *reditus* of all things, particularly man, to God as to his ultimate goal (II-III)'. James A. Weisheipl O.P., 'The Meaning of *Sacra Doctrina* in *Summa Theologiae* I, q.1', in *The Thomist* (Summer 1974), pp 53-54.

to each point, by asserting that reciprocal love consists in an intercommunicating activity; they found a developmental progress as the intensity of the divine communication mounts.

But the notes remain formal and abstract. They are to be understood, but not contemplated. The purpose of this exercise is surrender, not speculation. They must be grasped if the contemplation is to achieve intelligibility, but they remain its presuppositions, not its subject-matter. The preludes introduce the actual and the concrete, and with this introduction, the contemplation begins after the usual preparatory prayer. The first prelude engages the persons; the second prays that they might become mutually lover and beloved. There is a strong development between the two preludes. In the first, a man is asked to see how he stands before God, with the angels and saints interceding for him.²⁸ In the second, this is to see that he stands surrounded by the divine goodness towards him. The first prelude recognizes man for what each man is. It is Ignatius's vision of everyman: one who stands before God, and for whom the blessed pray. The second begs for the highest reaches of their prayer. It is Ignatius's vision of the destiny of everyman: that he be intimately one with God through knowledge, love, and service; that as God is reaching out towards him, he might in love reach back towards God. The second asks that a man might sense that he is loved by God and make this love embodied in all things. All creation and all persons somehow unify in these preludes: concretely standing before God and dynamically issuing from him and returning in love.

The preludes of the Contemplation involve all three unities of love: the internal integrity of affectivity and action; the interpersonal integrity of friendship and communion: the universal integrity of all creation, moving out of God and returning to him in friendship. And these three unities are not simply understood as the formal necessities of genuine love, but as the initial meaning of the activity of God and as the enormous possibility and destiny of man.

The four points of the Contemplation occasion another and more immediate unity: the comprehensive of the Exercises into a single period of prayer, into a single dialectical synthesis of the giving of God and the surrender or offering of man. The *Contemplación* brings the major stands of the Exercises into their synthesis in love by recapitulating their graces in a heightened form. Nor should such structural procedure surprise us. Ignatius put enormous stress upon the repetition, a period of recapitulation of major consolation or desolation, in which the discursive ignatian meditation or contemplation moves into greater simplicity of focus, concentration of attention, and quiet. There is much of this repetition in the Contemplation for attaining Love, a summary in consciousness and affectivity of major consideration of the previous four weeks.

²⁸ Exx 232, 233. The Spanish Autograph for this first prelude is strong: 'la *preámbulo*. Primer *preámbulo* es composición; que es aquí ver cómo estoy delante de Dios nuestro Señor, de los ángeles, de los santos intepellantes por my'. *MI Ex.*, p 306. For the second prelude, cf *supra*, p 95, n 14.

The first week ranges from creation to personal salvation. The Exercises open with the creation and destiny of man, and the first week evolves through meditations upon sin into the recognition of personal redemption and forgiveness. Concomitantly, one understands all things: initially, as given to man for the service of God, then as thoughts, words or deeds by which a man refuses that service, finally to wonder aloud that things have not failed man even when he has become so violent in turning from God.²⁹ Similarly, the first point of the *Contemplación* also moves from creation to redemption and expands these to all personal graces. God is primarily to be experienced as one who has done so much for me: how much he has given me of what he possesses and how much he wants to give himself to me. What has gone before in the first week makes this moment of the *Contemplación* intelligible, the personal experience of those days draws into a unity of focus all that God has done and would do. Things are primarily to be experienced as gifts, either as *los beneficios recibidos de creación, redemptión y dones particulares*, or as all personal things within which a man can love God. Even God and the man are gifts: God, longing to give himself; the man, able to give all that he possesses and himself along with this. The sweep is universal: God and man moving through all things towards each other.³⁰

In the second week of the Exercises, God does not remain outside of what he has created; he enters it. The development of the first day of the second week traces the decision of the Trinity that the *Logos* should enter the universe as a man, to wonder how it is that the Lord came to be born in extreme poverty.³¹ The meaning and value of things are altered by the degree to which he is present to them, working out a transvaluation of poverty, insults, and foolishness because they merge with the contours of his life, 'in order to imitate and be more like Christ our Lord'. These negativities have no value — religious or ontological — in themselves. Their value lies in this: that Christ is present to them, that he identifies with them in some way. So that rather than riches, one would 'desire and choose poverty with Christ poor'. The second point of the *Contemplación* considers how God does not remain outside of his creation, but dwells within creatures, effecting them to be what they are by this presence. The meaning and worth of things come out of the presence of God, ranging from his presence within sub-life until the divine indwelling that makes a man into his temple. For such a consideration, the incarnation becomes the highest instance of presence, but it does not exhaust it. What God has done in Christ is indicative of what he has done to man as his temple. What he has done in man is itself indicative of what his presence is in animals and things. The presence of God issues into the variations and values of all that is, constituting them in definition and in degree. The advance over the previous point is

²⁹ Exx 22-71.

³⁰ Exx 234.

³¹ Exx 102, 104, 116.

obvious: God not only gives, but he lives within his gift. There is his presence in everything. Things are not only gifts, they are holy: for they contain God.³²

In the third week of the Exercises, one contemplates Christ at what Ignatius called his labours, the greatest costs and suffering which the Kingdom forecast.³³ The call had been to labour with Christ, so that this discipleship even in suffering would eventuate in glory. The cross is where this leads, and the retreatant is urged for the first time to labour (*trabaxando*) through these mysteries of the passion, as his perspective focuses upon how Christ suffers in his humanity, how the divinity passes from experience, and how this event is for the sake of each man, 'frequently calling to mind the labours, the fatigue and suffering which Christ endured . . .'.³⁴ Similarly, in the third point of the *Contemplación*, the vocabulary of Ignatius is strong and reminiscent: 'to consider how God works and labours (*trabaja y labora*) for me in all creatures upon the face of the earth . . .'.³⁵ This theme of the third week is resumed now as the work of God in all things, the work of which the passion of Christ is paradigmatic, and in which all things, whether cosmos or the subatomic, are seen as events and moments in which he labours. Again the internal development is obvious: God who gives, God who indwells — now God who works out the salvation of men within all things. And the concomitant growth in the vision of all things: first as gift, then as holy, now as sacred history.

This third point is critically ignatian. Much metaphysical doctrine and religious teaching has found things as the gifts of God, while religious and even mystical experience emphasizes his dwelling in all things. Either of these first two points can be documented from widely divergent traditions and even contradictory philosophies. But that God works, that he labours in all things, that he struggles when the galaxies move, that the rush of all life is indicative of his sacred toil, that all things are caught up in the redemptive workings of God: this is not so common a tradition, though it has had continual advocates in the history of religions and of philosophies. It is critically ignatian because it stands as the foundation for discernment. God is at work within the universe, within all things. It becomes religiously imperative that a man discover and read these labours, that he merge his choices and his actions with the workings of God. This attempt to read, to interpret and to understand things as caught up in his labours and directions, bears upon any contemplative apostolic life. To do so in particular is religious discernment; to do so universally, to recognize in general what is taking place, is the vision of this member of the *Contemplación*.

³² Exx 235.

³³ Exx 93. This is to interpret the contemplation of the King as moving through the remaining three weeks of the Exercises, and not confined simply to the consideration of the second week.

³⁴ Exx 195 and 206.

³⁵ Exx 236. The Spanish Autograph reads: 'El tercero, considerar cómo Dios trabaja y labora por mí en todas cosas criadas sobre la haz de la tierra, *id est, habet se ad modum laborantis*. . . .', *MI Ex.*, p 310.

The fourth week of the Exercises turns from the Jesus of history, living out his temporal life and death, to the Jesus who is now the Lord and Christ. Jesus is not seen in the fourth week at a period of his development, but in the glory of his personal victory and fulfilment. He is complete in his own evolution through time, now the perfect manifestation of the divine, and therefore able, as an abiding friend, to cause that consolation by which a man's entire affectivity is caught up in God. Jesus as he is, divine and the source of consolation: that is, the experience of affectivity touched and caught up in the Spirit of God.⁸⁶ In the fourth point, the *Contemplación* now moves from the acts of God to their source. What is seen is not simply indicative of his love, but of himself. They express not only his care, but what he is. They speak him out because they are not so much given as they descend; they issue out of him as waters stream out of a fountain or as rays of light pour out of the sun. Human justice is of divine justice. Human energy is of divine power; and the goodness we love in others, is of the goodness that is God. As the risen Christ is the source of consolation, that is, of the holy Spirit, so God is the source of all that is. All things descend and they speak out the 'above' from which they move. What is found through them is not only a moment of blessing and the enduring love behind it. What is found is any moment of created goodness and the God whom it resembles. Everything speaks of God as it resembles him, and calls back to God as the image calls back to its reality. This is to catch some glimpse of Who is giving, Who is present, Who is working and labouring for men. The transition of this point is from the acts of God to the reality of God in himself, a shift made possible because things are not only gifts and holy and sacred history — they are participations in his nature. It reveals how interior God is, and how everything exterior flows from within him. All that is done, everything that is made, is not called from the outside by some sort of pressure; it is the spontaneous result of his own inner richness and goodness. His doing is of his being. And the last stage of interior knowledge is to reach the interior life of knowledge — to reach but not to grasp, to apprehend but not to comprehend. The ascent of the Contemplation is to a deeper interiority, into the depth that is God.

This transition in vision is paralleled by a transition in affectivity and love. In the earlier points, the focus was on God who was good to me. Now the focus is upon God who is good in himself — good with the greatness of his own reality. In the earlier points, love could be indentified with the gratitude which came with much reason and justice (*con mucha razón y iusticia*).⁸⁷ Now the love of man is much more directed towards a joy simply in what he is. Each of the points contains a moment in which recognition gives way to love, and love to concrete surrender: each of them contains the *Suscipe*. It is the recognitions which differ, the content of the interior knowledge; and, accordingly, the

⁸⁶ Exx 219-24. Cf Exx 93. For the special meaning of 'consolation' in ignatian usage, cf Buckley, *art. cit.*, pp 28-29.

⁸⁷ Exx 234.

quality of love is altered. Each integrates creation with God, but differs on the dynamic of the creation contemplated. The first three points outline the goodness of God towards me, and from this experience of his personal involvement with my life comes a love that answers, founded upon gratitude. This last point reaches beyond my personal life, to recognize how things speak of him who has given them, who dwells within them, who works in them for the liberation of men. It reaches to a love of God responsive not simply to what he has done, but to what he is in himself. This does not oppose the previous considerations; it completes them. What God has done is indicative of how much he has loved; how much he has loved is finally explained by what he is. All things descend out of this, this sun and this fountain, and it is finally back to this that the love for God must come. He must be loved and surrendered to simply for what he is.

This dynamic of the *Contemplación* can be put very simply. God is not finally loved because he is good towards me. He is to be loved because he is good in himself. But if God were not good to me, I would never experience his goodness, I would never know that he is good in himself. Through his actions, I know that he has loved me; through his actions, I know something of him who has loved me. In the fourth week of the Exercises, the retreatant is for the first time explicitly called a friend of Christ.⁸⁸ It is in this interchange of personal knowledge that love consists; and the *Contemplación* reaches its zenith in the surrender of perfect love — the love of God for what he is.

In all things. The purpose of the contemplation was entirety, a comprehension of all that had gone before, a comprehension whose integrity was the sharing of personal communion. Within the single person, there is the ecstatic unity in which knowledge, love and service become total surrender. Within the universe, all things are finally understood as descending from God as gift, as holy, as sacred history and as participations in the divine reality. The merger of these two — of the surrender of man and of the descending creation of God — is that unity in which the lover and beloved become one, integral in their mutual communication and commingled in personal communion. And to allow for this, *La Contemplación Para Alcançar Amor* resumes the principal themes of the four weeks of the Spiritual Exercises into a synthesis by which a person moves gradually to God as he is and to whom he surrenders himself in all things.

⁸⁸ Exx 224. For a study of Ignatius's development here, cf Peters, *op. cit.*, p 147.